

177-247
Paul Claudel

PPF 5847
CLAUDEL, PAUL

STANDARD FORM NO. 14A
APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT
MARCH 10, 1926

FROM

The White House
Washington

5
TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1929

April 18, 1933.

HIS EXCELLENCY

MR. PAUL CLAUDEL

S. S. PARIS

PIER 57 North River
NEW YORK, N. Y.

BON VOYAGE ET AU REVOIR

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Aboard USS HOUSTON,
February 23, 1939.
February 30, 1939.

P.P.F.

5-847

My dear Mr. Hassett:

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

Permit me to thank you for your letter of January 25 transmitting some suggestions on the international situation offered by Count Wladimir d'Ormesson, which I have read with great interest.

x197-359
I hope that you and Madame Claudel are in the best of health.

With cordial remembrances.

Very sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

1. Letter to the President, with enclosures.
2. Draft reply.

His Excellency

Paul Claudel, #
Mr. William D. Hassett,

4, Avenue Hoche,
The White House.

Paris, (VIII), France.

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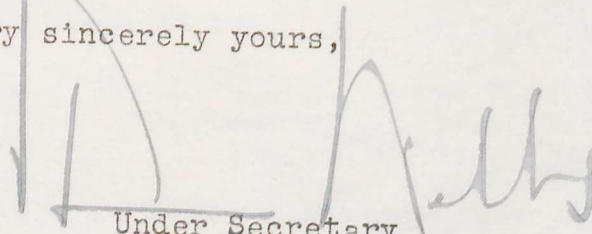
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 20, 1939.

My dear Mr. Hassett:

I return herewith a letter with enclosures to the President from Mr. Paul Claudel, former French Ambassador in Washington, together with a draft reply which the President asked me to prepare.

Very sincerely yours,


Under Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Letter to the President, with enclosures.
2. Draft reply.

Mr. William D. Hassett,
The White House.

Department of State

RECEIVED
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ENCLOSURE

TO

17, 1939.

France,
1939.

February 20 1939

Letter drafted 2/18

ADDRESSED TO
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Mr. William D. Hassett

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F. D. R.

Sumner Welles

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Under Secretary
Enclosure: Letter to the President, with enclosures; Draft Reply.
Letter from Claudel, Ambassador of France, 4, Avenue Roche, Paris (VIII), France, 1/25/39, with attached note which was sent to the Ambassador by one of the newspaper writers of France, Ormesson, an editor on the translations also sent to State. Translations retained for our files.

Mr. William D. Hassett,
The White House.

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Department of State

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ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted 2/18

ADDRESSED TO

Mr. William D. Hassett

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE

x20

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY
FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F. D. R.

Letter from Hon. Paul Claudel, Ambassador of France, 4, Avenue Hoche, Paris (VIII), France, 1/25/39, with attached note which has been sent to the Ambassador by one of the most notable newspaper writers of France, Count Wladimir d'Ormesson, an editor on the Figaro staff. Translations also sent to State. Copy of translations retained for our files.

[Translation]

4, Avenue Hoche,
Paris (VIII), France,
January 25, 1939.

His Excellency
President Franklin Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

Encouraged by the good will you have always shown me,
I take the liberty to transmit to you and commend to your
study a note which has been sent to me by one of the most
notable newspaper writers of France, Count Wladimir
d'Ormesson, an editor on the Figaro staff.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my
regards and devotion.

(S) Paul Claudel

Ambassador of France.

[Translation]

The weak point of our military forces lies essentially - and almost exclusively - in the air. Now, if it is exact that in six months our production of airplanes will amount to 300 to 350 per month and that England for her part will exceed that figure, the two countries will begin, at that time, to dispose of an air force which, still without equaling (due to the delay, but old planes have a rapid depreciation) that of our possible adversaries, would nevertheless enable us to face them and would correct, consequently, the defectuous side of our present situation.

Moreover, the German economy, like the Italian, gives manifest signs of exhaustion. Now this might incite the dictatorships to risk everything while they still have a margin of superiority in the domain of the air.

The problem being thus stated - and it seems that we are justified in stating it thus - its solution, for us, consists therefore first of all in gaining time.

Gaining time, that means hindering the adversary, putting sprags in his wheels, preventing him, by any and all means, from proceeding to acts of desperation.

It was doubtless these tactics which inspired Mr. Chamberlain's journey to Rome, and it succeeded, for the

English

English Prime Minister succeeded in binding Il Duce by precise obligations to peace. But such obligations quickly expire. At the present time, promises are good for a short period only. What we have to do, then, is to bring about a succession, with a rather rapid rhythm, of what one might call "peace traps", in order to paralyze, by a series of initiatives, the decisions, perhaps irreparable, of the dictators.

Now, in this respect, a powerful auxiliary exists, both in Germany and in Italy: public opinion. There is no doubt (the September crisis proved this) that the masses of the German, as well as of the Italian, people fear war, and are restraining, rather than exciting, their leaders. The latter feel this and know this. The tactics consist therefore in bringing pressure indirectly on this public opinion which exists without power to manifest itself, by hindering, with respect thereto, the action of the dictators themselves.

Hence I wonder whether, in order to attain these various objectives (which besides are one and the same),
^{best}
the/method would not be to suggest to President Roosevelt that he take the initiative of convoking as soon as possible, at Washington, under his personal chairmanship, a multilateral conference, to which the principal European

States

States would be invited, the purpose of which conference would be to study the means of tying up a limitation of armaments with economic agreements (great "international" works, etc).

Of course, there is small likelihood of arriving at any concrete result of any kind. But we would in this way gain a few months - (the real purpose to be obtained) - and it seems that it would be more difficult for the dictators suddenly to provoke a serious crisis in Europe while their representatives were in discussions in Washington in direct contact with the President of the United States.

That would, moreover, put them in an extremely delicate position with the Americans and that would be not the least of the advantages of the arrangement.

It will be objected that Hitler as well as Mussolini will at once suspect the plot and will politely decline the invitation.

Everything would depend, in this connection, on the manner in which that invitation was presented and offered.....

It would be necessary that the proposal of President Roosevelt - addressed in identical terms to all the States - be couched in such broad and generous, in a word, in such human terms, that it would create a veritable psychological
shock

shock in the masses, and it would have to be accompanied here and over there by such a combination of publicity, broadcasting, etc. - that its appeal would be in a manner irresistible....

It would doubtless not be impossible to secure formal support of it by the Pope.

The dictators would, under those conditions, hesitate to evade the issue. But if they did, it would be necessary that President Roosevelt insist. And even if in the face of such insistence the dictators, on one pretext or another, rejected the suggestion, their personal position would thereby be weakened in their countries, for they would thus have given evidence, before their own public opinion, of their unwillingness and consequently betrayed their evil purposes.

But Mr. Roosevelt should be approached very promptly.

Wladimir d'Ormesson

January 23, 1939.

[Translation]

4, Avenue Hoche,
Paris (VIII), France,
January 25, 1939.

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[Translation]

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January 23, 1939.

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4. AVENUE HOCHE, VIII^e

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But Mr. Roosevelt should be approached very promptly.

Wladimir d'Ormesson

January 23, 1939.

an Figaro.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président

les assurances de mon respectueux dévouement

Paul Claudel
Ambassadeur à France

W307 H

4. AVENUE HOCHÉ. VIII^e

WAGRAM 08-25

Le 27 janvier 39

Son Excellence

Le président Franklin Roosevelt
à la Maison Blanche
Washington D. C.

Monsieur le président

Encouragé par la bienveillance
que vous m'avez toujours montrée,
j'ai permis de vous transmettre en
la recommandant à votre examen
une note qui m'a été remise par un
des plus notables journalistes de France,
le Comte Vladimir d'Ormeron, rédacteur
au Figaro.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président,
les assurances de mon respectueux dévouement
Paul Claudel
Ambassadeur de France

Le point faible de notre état militaire réside essentiellement - et presque exclusivement - dans l'aviation. Or s'il est exact que dans six mois notre production d'avions atteindra environ 300 à 350 par mois et que l'Angleterre dépassera elle-même ce chiffre mensuel, les deux pays commenceront enfin à disposer, à ce moment, d'une puissance aérienne qui, sans égaler encore (en raison du retard, mais les appareils anciens se déprécient vite) celle de nos adversaires éventuels, permettrait cependant d'y faire face et corrigerait, par conséquent, le côté defectueux de notre situation actuelle.

D'autre part, l'économie allemande comme l'économie italienne donnent des signes manifestes d'épuisement. Or ceci pourrait inciter les dictatures à risquer le tout pour le tout pendant qu'elles disposent encore d'une marge de supériorité dans le domaine aérien.

Le problème étant ainsi posé - et il semble qu'on soit fondé à le poser de la sorte - sa solution, pour nous, consiste donc avant tout à gagner du temps.

Gagner du temps, revient à gêner l'adversaire, à lui mettre des bâtons dans les roues, à l'empêcher, par tous les moyens, de passer aux actes désespérés.

Cette tactique a sans aucun doute été celle qui a inspiré le voyage de M. Chamberlain à Rome et elle a réussi puisque le Premier Anglais est parvenu à lier le Duce par des engagements précis de paix. Mais ces engagements s'épuisent vite. A l'heure

actuelle, les paroles données sont à court terme. Il s'agit donc de faire se succéder, à un rythme assez rapide, ce que l'on pourrait appeler des "pièges de paix" pour paralyser, par une série d'initiatives, les décisions, peut-être irréparables, des dictateurs.

Or, à cet égard, un auxiliaire puissant existe, aussi bien en Allemagne qu'en Italie : c'est l'opinion publique. Il n'est pas douteux (la crise de septembre l'a prouvé) que les masses allemandes comme les masses italiennes craignent la guerre et freinent, plutôt qu'elles ne les excitent, leurs dirigeants. Ceux-ci le sentent et le savent. La tactique consiste donc à s'appuyer indirectement sur ces opinions qui existent sans pouvoir se manifester, en gênant, par rapport à elles, l'action propre des dictateurs.

Je me demande alors si, pour atteindre ces divers objectifs (qui d'ailleurs n'en font qu'un) le meilleur procédé ne serait pas de suggérer au Président Roosevelt de prendre l'initiative de convoquer le plus tôt possible à WASHINGTON, sous sa présidence personnelle, une conférence ^{multi}~~unilatérale~~, à laquelle seraient conviés les principaux états européens, conférence ayant pour but d'étudier les moyens de lier une limitation des armements à des accords économiques (grands travaux "internationaux" etc)?

C'est entendu. Il y a fort peu de chance pour que l'on arrive à un résultat concret quelconque. Mais on gagnerait ainsi quelques mois -(véritable but à atteindre)- et il semble qu'il serait plus difficile aux dictateurs de provoquer brusquement une

crise grave en Europe pendant que leurs représentants se trouveraient en discussion à Washington en contact direct avec le Président des Etats-Unis.

Cela les placerait, en outre, dans une position extrêmement délicate vis à vis des américains et cela ne serait pas l'un des moindres avantages de la combinaison....

On objectera que Hitler comme Mussolini éventureront tout de suite la mèche et déclineront poliment l'invitation.

Tout dépendrait, à cet égard, de la façon avec laquelle cette invitation serait présentée et lancée.....

Il faudrait que la proposition du Président Roosevelt -adressée en termes identiques à tous les Etats - fût conçue en termes si larges, si généreux, en un mot si humains, qu'elle créât un véritable choc psychologique dans les masses et il faudrait qu'elle fût orchestrée ici et là par un tel concours de publicité, de radiodiffusion etc. - que son appel fût en quelque sorte irrésistible.....

Il ne serait sans doute pas impossible de la faire appuyer solennellement par le Pape.

Les dictateurs hésiteraient sans doute, dans ces conditions, à se dérober. Même s'ils se dérobaient, il faudrait que le Président Roosevelt insistât. Et même si devant cette insistance les dictateurs, sous un prétexte ou sous un autre, repoussaient la suggestion, leur situation personnelle en sortirait affaiblie dans leur pays, car ils auraient ainsi fait la preuve, de-

vant leur propre opinion publique, de leur mauvaise volonté et trahi, par conséquent, leurs mauvais desseins.

Mais il faudrait agir très vite auprès de M. Roosevelt.

Wladimir d'Ormesson

23, Janvier 1939.

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[translation]

[Excerpt from a letter to Henri L. Claudel
to his son, Henri L. Claudel, contained
in a letter from the latter to President
Roosevelt.]

March 3, 1941

Dear Mr. Claudel:

The President has asked me to thank
you for your letter of February tenth. He was
very glad to receive it and particularly glad
to have the excerpt which you enclosed from the
letter which you received from your distinguished
father.

Very sincerely yours,

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

Mr. Henri L. Claudel, *
30 East 72nd Street,
New York, N. Y.

WDH:mb

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x463-lp

his side, all France is behind him."

TR:AVA

Henri L. Claudel
30 EAST 72ND STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y.

February 10, 1941

The President Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to quote herein excerpt from a letter, dated January 12, 1941, which I have just received from my father, formerly Ambassador of France to the United States:

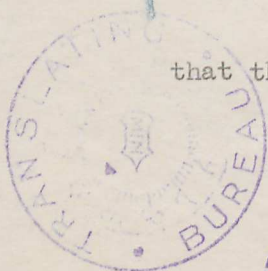
"L'Amérique est à l'ordre du jour en ce moment, c'est elle et l'Angleterre héroïque qui sauveront le monde. Depuis Novembre les choses ont commencé à prendre tournure et nous sommes remplis d'espoir. Les victoires grecques en ont été le premier coup de claxon, qui a fait tressaillir toute l'Europe asservie. Le temps des guerres Médiques est revenu! Mais ce serait insulter les Perses que de les comparer à ce peuple de ruffions et de chacals... les termes me manquent pour qualifier ce peuple aussi grotesque qu'odieux! Chaque soir à la radio nous nous payons le bonheur d'écouter les commentaires italiens expliquant d'un ton douloureux, encourageant et consolatoire la défaite quotidienne.

Espérons qu'on n'a pas fini de taper sur ces immondes canailles, ces dagos qui découragent le mépris! Le tour de leurs camarades viendra ensuite.

L'Amérique s'est réveillée et nous espérons tous que la Bochie infâme va s'effondrer sous un déluge de fer et de feu! Pétain a repris du cran et maintenant qu'il a renvoyé le canaille qui était à son côté toute la France se range derrière lui."

I thought it would be of interest to your Government to know what a prominent Frenchman feels and thinks of the present situation in France.

Reliable information permits me to state that the above is the true expression of what most Frenchmen



30 EAST 72ND STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y.

feel in the occupied as well as in the unoccupied zones.
My father is presently living in his country-place in un-
occupied France, together with his family.

Believe me, Mr. President,

Yours very respectfully and devotedly,

Henri L. Claudel

Henri L. Claudel

STATE, The Secretary of
Jan. 28, 1937

The President referred for draft reply, a letter of Jan. 9th from Ambassador Paul Claudel, Paris, France, re a plan for the constitution of Great International companies entrusted with the Development and Coordination of the Exchanges of the Principal Raw Materials. Translation attached. Attaches memoranda by Emanuel Monick entitled "The Urgent Need of an Appeal for Peace". Translation attached. - On Feb. 13, Sec. Hull replied submitting reply, which the President sent M. Claudel on Feb. 17, saying he was very happy to receive his letter and has referred tht two memos to the Dept. of State for the consideration of the financial and economic experts of that Dept.

SEE - 203-A (Official File)

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