

● PSF

Safe: Belgium

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 13, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

To read and return. I
do not think this requires any
action at the present time.

F. D. R.

Thurs -
CH

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

*From
King Leopold*

530 am Oct 8 1939

The following is a paraphrased code cablegram received at the State Department:

Brussels, Oct 7, 1939, 5:00 p.m. from Mr. Davies.

For the President and Mr. Hull

Here the fear is great that either one or the other of the belligerents may possibly undertake imminently some action that will harden the situation, as it now stands, into a bitter, irrevocable, horrible and really long war. The possibility of an immediate assault by Germany on the Western front is not the only cause of this anxiety, but there is also the fear that the other side might destroy by some precipitous action, the trembling bridge of peace which might yet be afforded by delay. Here people continue to cling desperately to the hope that time, together with the development of some possibly unforeseen events, might cause the catastrophe to be averted before it is definitely and finally established.

I have been requested, in this, their darkest hour, by a high source to state that the President of the United States is the only person in the world who can possibly avert the holocaust. I have likewise been asked to say that they hope that somehow he might find a way of making again an effort of some sort similar to those noble ones which he has made in previous crises and which have so evoked the admiration of all the lovers of liberty throughout the world. A special messenger bearing a dispatch in regard to this is following on the clipper.

(from the Secretary of State's office)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

From: *Brussels*

Number: *152* Dated: *10-7-58*

Code: *"C"*

Caption: *For the Pres.*

See 3 State

This telegram has been distributed to:

*S
W*

Please advise the Division of Communications and Records if further distribution should be made.

*C, A-B, Pa/D, Eu, SA Pasvolsky
A-M, Pa/M,*

VRH

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

Brussels

Dated October 7, 1939

Rec'd. 6:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

152, October 7, 5 p.m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

There is great fear here that there is possibly imminent some action of either one or the other of the belligerents which will harden the present situation into an irrevocable, bitter, real, long and horrible war. It is directed not only to the possibility of an immediate German assault on the western front but to the fact that the other side might precipitately do something that would destroy the trembling "bridge of peace" which delay might yet afford. They still cling desperately to the hope that time and development of some possibly unforeseen events might avert the catastrophe before it is hardened into finality. In this, their darkest hour, I have been requested by a high source to say that the only person in the world who can possibly avert the holocaust is the President of the United States and to express their hope that he might find

SOME

-2- 152, October 7, 5 p.m. from Brussels
some means of again making some effort similar to
the noble ones which commanded the admiration of the
liberty loving world in previous crises. Despatch
following by special messenger on Clipper.

DAVIES

WWC

PSF

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TELEGRAM SENT

HSM

NOVEMBER 11, 1939

A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C & Special Gray).

8 p. m.

Amembassy,

Brussels, (Belgium).

77.

~~UNOFFICIAL~~ CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY.

The President desires you to convey, either directly or through such discreet channels as you deem best, the following personal (underline personal) and unofficial message to the King. He appreciates that under existing conditions it might prove embarrassing to His Majesty if this message were to become known; it is therefore being treated here as highly confidential. Should developing circumstances seem to warrant publicity, this will be a matter for later consideration and discussion. Meanwhile in order to limit the number of persons who have knowledge of the message I suggest that His Majesty may want to send his reply through you. (BEGIN SPECIAL GRAY)

QUOTE To His Majesty King Leopold.

In the event of a new invasion of Belgium, and because of our long-time friendship, I hope you will feel free to

send

hsm -2- No. 77, November 11, 8 p. m., to Brussels

send your children and any other members of the family to the United States during the danger period. You can rest assured that Mrs. Roosevelt and I would gladly look after their safety and well-being and that we would regard them as members of our own family. As a matter of precaution it would probably be best for them to go by train and motor to Bilbao or Lisbon and I would gladly send a cruiser there to bring them to Washington or to our country place at Hyde Park.

I am thinking much of you in these grave hours.

Signed FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT UNQUOTE.(END SPECIAL GRAY)

HULL
(PM)

Eu:PM

Pres

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HSM

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C).

Brussels

Dated November 13, 1939

Rec'd 7:30 a. m., 14th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

183, November 13, 10 p. m.

~~ULTRA CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE
SECRETARY OF STATE.

Immediately upon the receipt of the corrected full text of your telegram No. 77, I personally gave it to the King this afternoon at the Palace. He was visibly affected and expressed himself as most deeply touched and grateful to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt.

I regret the delay in communicating this message but it was due to a garbling of the text which I am utterly unable to understand. The message as first received here on the afternoon of November 12th was dated November 11, 9 p. m., and numbered 76. It was obviously unintelligible because it appeared to be a request that King Leopold should send the text of the message to Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina which message was addressed and directed entirely to her. I cabled for confirmation and received the corrected text this afternoon which inserted the message to the King and omitted any reference to the Queen.

CSB

DAVIES

Pres

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DDM

A portion of this message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (G)

Brussels

Dated November 15, 1939

Rec'd. 10:43 a.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

187, November 15, noon.

~~ULTRA CONFIDENTIAL~~. FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE ONLY.

With reference to the Department's ultra confidential telegram to me, 77, November 11, His Majesty King Leopold has handed to me the following message for President Roosevelt replying to the communication from the President:

(BEGIN SPECIAL GRAY) "I am deeply touched by your offer and thank you for it cordially.

For the time being, the situation appears to be improved.

If, in case the danger should be renewed and I should be unable to keep my children in a safe place in Europe, it is with gratitude that I would accept the generous offer of you and Mrs. Roosevelt.

I find in your offer a new and infinitely precious proof of your tactful interest. It is a great comfort for us.
(Signed) Leopold."

His Majesty's message was written in French and the above translation is my own.

DAVIES

DDM