

PSF

Spain

1939

CONFIDENTIAL

PINK 43

[1939]

FROM: PRESIDENTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE, WASHN. D.C.

TO : THE PRESIDENT

0027 FOR THE PRESIDENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY YOU HAVE OUTLINED WE ARE SENDING THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM TO BULLITT IN PARIS QUOTE PLEASE SEE QUINONES DE LEON AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY AND SPEAKING PURELY INFORMALLY TELL HIM THAT IN VIEW OF CHANGED CONDITIONS IN SPAIN THIS GOVERNMENT IS NATURALLY GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION OF THE INSURGENTS AS THE DE JURE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN; YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT PUBLIC OPINION IN THIS COUNTRY HAS FOLLOWED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SPANISH CONFLICT WITH INTEREST AND THAT BOTH THIS GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OPINION WOULD BE GRATIFIED AT RECEIVING INDICATIONS FROM THE FRANCO AUTHORITIES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO POLICY OF REPRISAL AGAINST THE¹⁸ OPPONENTS IN THE CIVIL STRIFE. AS A SECOND POINT THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD DESIRE TO RECEIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE INSURGENT AUTHORITIES ARE READY TO PROTECT AMERICAN NATIONALS AND THEIR PROPERTY IN SPAIN AND OTHERWISE TO PULFILL THE OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES INCUMBENT UPON A SOVEREIGN STATE UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES UNQUOTE THE DIFFICULTY OF DELAYING ORDERS TO BOWERS TO RETURN TO THIS COUNTRY FOR CONSULTATION UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE HIS APPOINTMENT TO A NEW POST IS THE TIME ELEMENT INVOLVED IN SELECTING A NEW POST, OBTAINING AGREEMENT, ETC. MAY I SUGGEST FOR YOUR APPROVAL ORDERING HIM HOME AND ANNOUNCING AT THE PROPER MOMENT THAT HE IS COMING FOR THE PURPOSE OF

President has original

COCA FOR THE PRESIDENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY AND HAVE

TO : THE PRESIDENT

FROM: PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE OFFICE WASHINGTON D.C.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PINK 42

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 2

PINK 43

CONSULTING WITH YOU AND ME ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN AS WELL
AS ON THE QUESTION OF A NEW DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT WHICH YOU
DESIRE TO TENDER HIM

SIGNED HULL 2145

*file
personal*

*PSE
Spain*

Thirty-two Liberty Street

New York

January 18, 1939.

Personal

Hon. Cordell Hull,
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the tragic war in Spain approaches another crisis, I have been giving a good deal of thought to our duties and possibilities in respect to it. I am coming to the conclusion that we should take decisive action and that by so doing this country may well be able to ward off serious consequences to the whole world which neither Great Britain nor France is apparently now in a position to do.

At present we stand in a position which is in every way an indefensible inversion of international law, not only unjustified by any grounds of expediency but directly leading to evil. Our government has recognized the Loyalist government as the legitimate government of Spain. So has France. So has Great Britain. As such a legitimate friendly government the Spanish Loyalist government has the right to buy from us and in the markets of the world at large whatever she needs for her defense at her time of sore trial. That is a principle of international practice which the American government has stood for from

the

the beginning of its history. We have always recognized it as one of those rules of international law in which we as a peaceful unarmed country were peculiarly interested. Mr. Hyde quotes Secretary Lansing on the subject as follows:

"Secretary Lansing declared that the United States had from the foundation of the republic advocated and practiced unrestricted trade in arms and military supplies, because it had never been the policy of the nation to maintain in time of peace a large military establishment or stores of arms and ammunition sufficient to repel invasion by a well equipped and powerful enemy and that in consequence the United States would in the event of attack by a foreign power, be seriously if not fatally embarrassed by the lack of arms and ammunition."

Hyde, "International Law Chiefly as Interpreted and Applied by the United States", Vol. 2, p. 752.

The present time happens to be one when the importance of the preservation of such a rule of international law is particularly clear, the peaceful unarmed nations being on the defensive as compared with the aggressive authoritarian nations. It is also the time when these authoritarian governments have developed a new technique whereby they provoke civil strife among their neighbors as a means of ultimate aggressive action against them. Thus there never was a time when it was more important for us to keep alive a right upon which our own safety may vitally depend.

Until recently we, more than any other nation in

the

the world, have consistently supported this doctrine and have taken statutory and treaty action to preserve it. In the case of such civil strife as is now going on in Spain, we have not only vigilantly preserved the rights of friendly governments, against which such rebellions had broken out, to purchase their arms from us; but we have enacted domestic legislation giving our President power at the same time to prevent arms and ammunition going to the rebels against whom such friendly governments were struggling. As you of course know, such legislation was enacted in regard to civil strife in this hemisphere by the Joint Resolution of 1912 and was extended to countries with which we had capitulatory relations in 1922.

Furthermore we joined in 1928 and ratified in 1930 the convention promulgated by the sixth Pan American Conference between the American republics, providing for the rights and duties of states in the event of civil strife. This treaty made the previously existing rule of law a binding rule of treaty conduct among its signatories.

Now, however, by the Public Resolution of May 1, 1937, our government has chosen to reverse this peculiarly American doctrine of international law and to try a new experiment

experiment of an exactly opposite character. It has chosen to forbid the friendly Spanish government which we have recognized as the true government from exercising this time honored right for which we have so long stood as essential to world peace and stability. In other words, we have chosen the time, when it was most important in the light of our interest and safety for us to stand on our feet on the basis of established law, to try the entirely new experiment of standing on our head. Such an experiment at such a time is not sensible, is not conservative, is not American.

We have chosen the moment when two of the reckless dictator governments, Germany and Italy, have violated all rules of law and treaties to intervene by force in the civil strife in Spain and to furnish not only munitions but organized soldiery to the rebels; we have chosen that very moment ourselves to cut off from the lawful government of Spain the rights given to it by international law to defend itself against this new outrage.

Mr. Secretary, the mere statement of this situation seems to me to show what a perilous path we are treading by our new experiment in fresh water statesmanship. The cowardly advocates of the new neutrality could not have chosen a more conspicuously unfortunate time to demonstrate

the

the folly and danger of their emotional propositions. And the situation is being made doubly perilous by the weakness of the conduct of our sister democracies in Europe - France and Great Britain. The non-intervention program which was apparently engineered over there for the purpose of averting outside intrusion into the struggle in Spain is being permitted to produce just the opposite result and to allow Germany and Italy to carry through their intervention undisturbed, while at the same time the Loyalist government of Spain is prevented from buying from France or England or other neutral countries the means to fight off this intervention. In other words, on both sides of the Atlantic we have the spectacle of a reversal of time honored law and practice hammered out during the ages in the interest of stability and peace being broken down in order to facilitate one of the most ruthless and cruel interventions that history has ever seen. When this war broke out in Spain, I, in common I imagine with most Americans, had very little knowledge of or sympathy with either side to the strife. It seemed an outbreak into cruel and regrettable warfare with which the world at large was not concerned except with the hope to see it ended as quickly as possible on whatever terms could be arrived at. But as the war has proceeded I confess.

the

the picture has radically changed to my eyes. The Loyalist government, starting without any trained forces, has developed an army which from the very fact of its courageous and stubborn resistance to enemies much better equipped and organized shows that it has the confidence and the sentiment of the mass of the Spanish people; while on the other side the veil has been torn off the intervenors on the side of the rebels until we see clear beyond peradventure another attempt of fascism to shake our world.

As I said in the beginning, I have studied this thing rather carefully. I think the President has the power without the action of Congress to lift the embargo imposed under the resolution of May 1, 1937. I think he should do so. The change in the international situation will justify such a change of action by him. I think American public opinion is swinging now strongly to the Loyalist side and would support such action on the part of the President. And at the same time such an affirmation of faith in established law by this country and disregard of the threats of the law breakers would come like a breath of fresh air similar to the steps which Mr. Roosevelt's government has taken in other directions recently, similar to the drubbing which Sumner Welles

gave

gave to the German Ambassador some time ago in regard to Naziism, similar to the action which the Treasury took in authorizing recently the \$25,000,000 loan to China. Each of these actions has been a great stabilizing step showing that we not only have a faith in international law and morals but that we propose to live up to it. Such a step in Spain may well defeat the autocracies' attempts and make possible a righteous solution of the conflict.

I am sorry that I have written at such length but I feel very strongly. If you agree with me, would you be willing to show this letter to the President? I am very anxious to help in supporting your and his enunciation of a vital and successful international program at this direful moment.

As always,

Very faithfully yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON.

State Dept. copy
Published in

Foreign Relations of the United States

1939 Vol. II General, The British
Commonwealth, and Europe

pages 731-732.

PS F Spain

file
Confidential

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

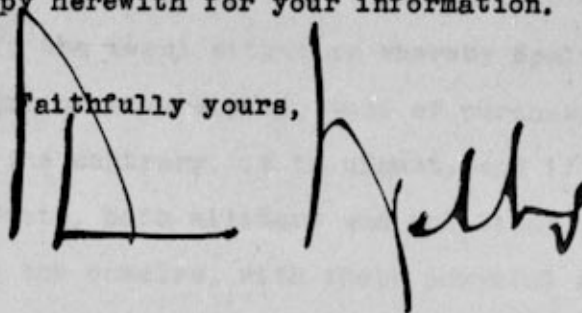
January 27, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

The Spanish Ambassador left with me yesterday, by instruction of his Government, a note of which I am enclosing a copy herewith for your information.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,

The White House.

[Translation]

PSF Spain

SPANISH EMBASSY

Washington, D. C., January 26, 1939.

No. 142/18

Mr. Secretary:

In the gravest hour of the struggle for the independence of Spain, invaded by Italy and Germany, I have the honor to state to Your Excellency, in the name of my Government, that the war, whatever may be the vicissitudes of the struggle, will continue without faltering until the foreigners are expelled from Spain. It is therefore not too late to modify the legal situation whereby Spain is deprived of a right of sovereignty, that of purchasing arms; rather, on the contrary, it is urgent, and if it were done its effects, both military and political, would be immediate. As the enemies, with their powerful means of propaganda, attempt to appear as if they had already achieved definitive victory, and do so for the purpose of paralyzing noble impulses of democratic countries which might lead the latter to revoke the historic injustice which has been committed on the Spanish Republic, the Spanish Government states that it is exclusively the
lack

His Excellency

Cordell Hull,

Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

lack of war matériel, which according to indisputable principles of international law, it ought to be able to acquire in countries with which it maintains normal relations, that renders difficult the struggle with the rebels and with the invading foreign armies provided with the most modern matériel in unlimited quantities.

My Government, therefore, has the moral duty of believing, in view of the most noble words spoken before the Congress on the fourth day of this month by the Illustrious President of the United States and the unequivocal manifestations of the public opinion of this country, that the Government of which Your Excellency forms a part will act with the greatest promptness possible and will raise the embargo on arms which weighs on the Government of the Spanish Republic, to the end that the coalition of aggressive forces which is acting against Spain with unheard-of violence may not de facto be strengthened and indirectly assisted by the country which has declared solemnly, by the Supreme Magistrate of the United States, that it adopts as the norm of its international course of action the just differentiation between aggressors and those against whom aggression is directed.

I avail myself of the opportunity, Mr. Secretary of State, to repeat to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

FERNANDO DE LOS RIOS

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
Confidential*

January 28, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

TO READ AND RETURN

F. D. R.

*Interesting
CH*

PSF: Spain

Hotel Miramar
Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France, January 13, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

Sometime ago I sent you a copy of a letter from one of the experts in the British Foreign Office. It may interest you to know that this man is the fellow who phrased the Chamberlain comment on your speech. It seems to have been urged on the P.M. by the F.O. and our friend, in the American section, was asked to submit a draft which was accepted. "Roosevelt's speech," he writes me, "was a grand tonic and greatly to be welcomed." He witnessed Chamberlain's departure from the Victoria Terminal on his recent journey and describes how "the unemployed had gone to bid the P.M. farewell on the first stage of his pilgrimage to Canossa".

He writes me: "It has been interesting during
these

The President,

The White House.

these months in London to see the rapid fading of the extravagant hopes aroused by Munich and the growing realization, even in Mayfair and Belgravia, that the Axis means something pretty menacing. This belated and slow awakening has even spread to Spain, for Franco has far fewer supporters even in society circles than before. But a full realization of what a puppet Nazi and Fascist Spain will mean to France and the United Kingdom has yet to come."

I really am writing this because of a reference to German plans that are known in the F.O. and probably, in consequence, have long since been transmitted to us through our Embassy in London or our Legation in Holland. However it has impressed me so much that I am sending the quotation on the bare chance that you have not heard of them:

"Everyone seems to think this is going to be a year of crisis and decisions.....that the Napoleonic period of the dictators is about to begin. But none can guess with any certainty which way the Beast is going to jump. The Dutch are not unreasonably nervous as it is known the German General Staff have worked out plans for the rapid invasion of Holland with motorized columns, while it is

ominous

ominous that at Aix material for airdomes are being
charted and stored."

I can scarcely restrain my enthusiasm over the ap-
pointment of Reynolds to the Foreign Relations Committee.
I see he wants peace at any price.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Bowles

American Ambassador

*am inclosing despatch with
Government and fascist comment on
your speech. That from the Belgraves
seems touching to me
our people, military attacks, reports are
overwhelming accession of artillery and
planes to houses from Germany and Italy.
Houses realize that a houses victory will
be most grave for us, and common sense*

*and the courage of a house would impell
us to send over such war material to the
people who are fighting us battle, but
I am not satisfied that this is being done.
Have been told it is; but yesterday Blum
begged Belgraves to open the frontier.
The of course may be a diplomatic dodge*

No. 1658

Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France, January 16, 1939

Subject: Loyalist and Rebel Views of the
President's Speech.

Memorandum for the Secretary and Under-Secretary.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In accordance with standing instructions to report on press comments on the President and his utterances, I have the honor herewith to submit two editorials, one from the loyalist El Diluvio of Barcelona, expressing the approval of the spirit of the President's speech opening Congress, and the other from Espana, a rebel paper, reflecting the general tone of the rebel press on the same speech.

These widely conflicting views as to the United States and the American Government cannot take the Department by surprise since I have reported for almost two years the fact that the Spanish Government is friendly to us and that the rebel Government, acting in compliance with Berlin and Rome,

2.

Rome, its allies, without whom it would long since have been crushed, is intensely hostile to the United States. While this is inherent in the conflicting political ideals of the two sides, the rebels refrained from any outward manifestation of their hate for the United States because it is a democracy until recently. Its press, completely under the thumb of the Burgos authorities, began its campaign of rather vulgar abuse just before, during, and immediately after the Lima conference.

Respectfully yours,

Claudio G. Bowers

Enclosures:

1. Article with translation from EL DILUVIO, Barcelona, January 12, 1939.
2. Article with translation from ESPANA, Tangier, January 11, 1939.

800, 800.1
CGB:DD

A true copy of
the signed original
inst

enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 1658 of January 16, 1939,
from the Embassy, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France.

(TRANSLATION)

From EL DILUVIO, Barcelona,
January 12, 1939.

MESSAGE OF ROOSEVELT: SONG OF EPIPHANY

Governments of nations are permanent, but governors succeed each other and change. The greatest glory to which a governor can aspire is to have known how to interpret at every moment the sentiments of the people over whom they are temporarily ruling. Nations, more perhaps by instinct than by reflection, almost always point out with certainty the road of their true destinies. Governors do not always succeed in interpreting and following them. Many nations have sunk in the shameful abyss of history because they did not follow their destiny with decision and valor. We live in the history we are writing day by day. All humanity is involved in the act of writing it. It is useless for some nations to wish to seem indifferent in order to create the illusion that they are not affected by what happens near or far outside their territorial frontiers. One day President Wilson said: "If the rest of the world is mad why should we not remain indifferent to what is happening in the rest of the world?" And a few months afterwards the same nation under that same President was entering and taking part in the great madness. These words pronounced a few moments before decreeing the mobilization of the American army are his: "We do not want war, but right is more precious than peace. We are going to fight for that which we love above everything... for democracy,

democracy, for a political regime in which everyone has the right to participation in Government, for the liberty of small nations, for the universal triumph of law, for the concert of free nations."

Many nations are threatened today who confided their lives to this concert of free nations which the strong Democracies guaranteed; men are persecuted for ancestral prejudices of race and religion; human life has no value in the world. We are going back to the most ominous periods of the Middle Ages. Again, as in 1914, grave crimes have been committed in the world against law and justice, against the social harmony which has at its foundation the concert of free nations. Some of these have been invaded, others have disappeared, victims of the greed of those who do not respect law and make a gala of their instincts of perversion. Once again law and force, civilization and barbarity are face to face to dispute for power. Can anyone remain neutral before the perspective which is opening up of the history of humanity?

Your illustrious relative, Theodore Roosevelt, defining the universal concept of civilization, once said:

"It is shameful to remain neutral between good and evil. Impartiality is not a synonym of neutrality. Impartial justice does not consist in being neutral between good and evil but in seeking where reason and right are, and when found putting yourself on their side against unreason and injustice."

Nations do not receive the consecration of history for purely material reasons. Not even the most glorious feats of arms stand for anything in the civilizing march of humanity if they are not the vehicle of one of the eternal and universal principles

principles of civilization. Among these material gains count only as a means. Rome was stronger but did less for civilization than little Greece. Greece is immortal, because she has a finer and more penetrating concept of spiritual values and lived for them.

These are also the words of your illustrious relative:

"Those people who content themselves with a purely material ideal do not realize that such an ideal is one of the most despicable and sordid in the world and that no society of the Middle Ages ever lived so low a life as those men for whom the words 'national honor, glory, valor and generosity' have lost their meaning. A truly worthy and just nation will face the disaster of war rather than accept a vile prosperity at the price of national honor."

The Spanish republicans, Mr. Roosevelt, have never forgotten that a victory of the spirit is worth more than all the material treasures of the universe.

Don Quixote is genuinely Spanish. We fight for the ideal and for the ideal we give our blood. If our material prosperity is to be gained at the price of a vile submission to those who dare to profane the sacred soil of our country we renounce that prosperity. We wish to continue to be free; we cannot conceive of human life without liberty; we renounce for it whatever material good they can offer us. Spaniards will not be slaves; free beggars rather than enslaved and rich; proud in our poverty and pain, but maintaining the freedom of our country.

Until now the rulers of other countries who say that they also love liberty have maintained silence or worse than
silence

silence before the crime that is committed against us. In spite of that we maintain our position with enthusiasm. We are satisfied to do our duty and to give lessons to the world, as so many times in the course of history.

Silence of the rulers of strong democratic countries has been broken. It is your voice that has been heard. You directed a message to your parliament and all the nations of the world heard you; you had in your mind while speaking to the representatives of the United States this piece of Spanish earth where we fight for the independence of our country, for that for which every man must be willing to fight and if necessary die fighting.

Your words have given us the certainty that the eclipse of moral values from which we are suffering is neither total nor lasting; there are still men and nations which discern between barbarity and civilization, between force and law, between the aggressor and the victim, and also show themselves disposed to teach the world how to treat those who in order to serve their ambition are willing to let loose upon humanity the most frightful catastrophe.

Your voice has awakened hope in our hearts. Justice begins to be done us. A powerful nation by the voice of its highest representative publishes to the whole world the justice of the cause which we defend, placing us on the side of law and right. We hoped that some day this justice would be done us. All the sorrows of the war seem small to us beside that of seeing the justice of our cause and our dignity of defending it unrecognized.

Thank you for that, Mr. President. Your message has
reached

5.

reached the hearts of Spaniards like a song of Epiphany.

José Ballester Gazalbo.

Enclosure No. 2 to Despatch No. 1658 of January 16, 1939,
from the Embassy, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France.

(TRANSLATION)

From the rebel Fascist paper ESPANA,
January 11, 1939.

ROOSEVELT.

The message of President Roosevelt has encouraged the French and English imperialists, as well as the democrats of both nations, who in that strange mixture of imperialism and democracy are of the same piece. All the power of great European States who hold half of the world of remote lands and foreign races, their will to power and domination have been justified by the speech in the name of democracy and anti-fascism. Like his effort to subjugate the South American republics to Yankee finance and commerce, presented itself in masquerading in defence of democracy against totalitarians.

It pains us as Europeans, of the old continent burdened with experience and history, that the simple slogans made for a people of simple and primitive psychology, and capable of being frightened to the point of panic at learning on the radio news of a Martian invasion, should have here an effect, when one should have given them no more importance than to one of those appeals of advertising art which obliges the simple Yankees to buy a new pair of shoes when they already have four or five pairs, also bought in mechanical obedience to advertising. With the new slogan they are trying to withdraw the attention of the North American people from internal politics, the economic crisis, the failure of the New Deal, to the distant and extrovert, directing their gaze far away

from

from their own country, from their own reality, and the same time that rearmament may pull North American industry out of its paralysis. 28 Jan 1939 PSF Spam

But nevertheless one must be sure that the reality is strong and lamentable enough so that North Americans cannot turn their eyes away from it. Roosevelt himself has had to recognize that in the last part of his message dedicated to the social question, to the relations between capital and labor, to unemployment. Roosevelt has had to confess that while in the United States there are 14,000,000 unemployed, in the totalitarian States there are none. The central problem of our century, that of capital and labor, that of the right to work has failed in the very liberal democratic America. Beneath the sonorous words of liberty and democracy are hidden all the interests of capitalistic plutocracy which now too is hoping that from the anti-fascist rearmament program they will make great profits which will be translated into the greatest deficit of the budget, and which in the end be paid by the American people. Roosevelt has abandoned his policy of balancing the budget. Senator Vanderberg said that the Roosevelt of 1937 betrayed the Roosevelt of 1933, and Congressman Knutson that "the message means prosperity only to the manufacturers of arms and munitions".

General Johnson has described the message as a useless threat and many congressmen and senators, including members of the majority, have presented many projects to prevent the unexpected attack of belligerency of the President from involving the country in an armed conflict. The same destiny is probably reserved for Roosevelt as for Wilson who also, applauded in Europe, was retired by paralysis and the senators to a sanitorium.