

● PSF

Navy Dept.: Frank Knox 1939-41

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

December 15, 1939.

400 WEST MADISON STREET

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

My dear Mr. President:

I am sending this letter to you through the kindness of Mr. Paul Leach in order that it may evade the evident leaks which followed our last talk. I must say, wherever the information comes from, it is efficiently handled because the newspaper men were trying to reach me when I arrived at the station, having gone there directly from the White House. Of course, I consistently declined to give out any statement whatever save to acknowledge that I had been a visitor at the White House which they already knew.

I know you will believe me when I say that I have been giving very conscientious, indeed, almost prayerful, consideration to the matter we discussed. The temptation to undertake the task you suggested was almost irresistible. To have a direct hand in building up our sea defenses against whatever may come in the future has tremendous appeal. Like yourself, I feel intensely that our chief bulwark against aggression and for the promotion of future security must lie in sea power.

I am also keenly conscious of the great compliment you paid me in asking me to become a member of your official family, despite the fact that I have been one of the most active, and I fear sometimes cantankerous, critics of your domestic program. May I add that it is also even more a tribute to your broad gauged patriotism that you should seriously consider such action.

As I explained to you, the only things that give me pause are the absence at the moment on the part of the public of any deep sense of crisis which would justify completely forgetting and obliterating party lines, and the fact that the addition of only one Republican to the Cabinet would not make it, in the public view, a coalition cabinet into which a member of the opposition could go without encountering overwhelming criticism which would be destructive of any reputation one may have built through a whole lifetime of pretty consistent party loyalty. I was delighted to observe on Sunday your prompt recognition of the cogency of this argument.

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The first of these reasons----the lack of a public sense of crisis and imminent danger----current events may speedily change. The continuing success of the German submarine and mine Blockade against England is a threat to Allied success of which the country is becoming more and more conscious. The expulsion of Russia from the League of Nations and the chance that this will throw Russia into the arms of Germany as an active military ally, operates in the same direction. It may easily be that if Russia throws in with Germany in a military sense, the growth of the feeling of alarm over here might be very swift. The successful return of the Bremen to a home port also seriously shocked American confidence in the effectiveness of the British blockade. Even to me, this is an incomprehensible thing. All these contribute to the possibility of a renewed state of popular alarm that would justify the adoption by all good Americans of the principle of non-partisanship in defending the country against impending chaos in Europe.

As to the second objection, I feel, of course, a natural delicacy in even discussing it since it involves your taking more than one Republican into your Cabinet.

I have heard during the past month even more rumors of your taking my good friend, Colonel William J. Donovan, into your Cabinet as Secretary of War than I have heard of your thinking of me in connection with a cabinet post. I have no means of knowing whether you have even considered this just as I lacked any slightest confirmation of your having thought of me until our talk last Sunday.

I know Bill Donovan very well and he is a very dear friend. He not only made a magnificent record in the world war, but he has every decoration which the American government can bestow for bravery under fire. In addition, he is an outstanding member of his profession.

Frankly, if your proposal contemplated Donovan for the War Department and myself for the Navy, I think the appointments could be put solely upon the basis of a non-partisan, non-political measure of putting our national defense departments in such a state of preparedness as to protect the United States against any danger to our security that might come from the war in Europe or in Asia. In brief, if this rather radical idea which you have in mind and which you outlined to me so clearly in our talk, could be put upon an obvious and undeniable basis of all-American national defense, it would have a very different effect upon the country as a whole and would tend to subordinate, if it did not eliminate, partisan and political criticism. Incidentally, I suspect such a measure might have considerable effect in promoting a completely non-partisan support for the necessary appropriations for both services in the approaching session of Congress. As I said at the outset of this paragraph, I

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approach this phase of the discussion with a great sense of delicacy because I am very presumptuous in making the suggestion I have. I hope you accept it wholly as made in the spirit of seeking a way to do what you have in mind. As a matter of fact, such an approach, in my judgment, based wholly on the question of national defense, might possibly provoke such widespread approval because of its obvious elimination of politics as to drown out completely any criticism.

Of course, if you desire any further opportunity for personal conference on this matter, I am at your disposal at any time.

Yours sincerely,

*Frank Knox*



PRIVATE

PSF

Knox folder 3/1 - 40  
Navy

December 29, 1939.

Dear Frank:-

I have put off writing you because I wanted to go over the whole situation again in my mind. Your suggestion that the country as a whole does not yet have any deep sense of world crisis must I fear be admitted by me -- and, therefore, I must also admit that your coming into the Cabinet might be construed as a political move rather than as a patriotic move, which, as you know, was the only thing that actuated me.

You, of all the Republican leaders, have shown a truer understanding of the effect which the international situation will of necessity exert on our domestic future -- and while you probably regret many of the things you said - and wrote - in the 1936 campaign -- I can only tell you that because I, too, was inexperienced in national campaigns in 1920 and later regretted many of the things I said at that time!

Bill Donovan is also an old friend of mine -- we were in the law school together -- and, frankly, I should like to have him in the Cabinet, not only for his own ability, but also to repair in a sense the very grave injustice done him by President Hoover in the winter of 1929. Here again the question of motive must be considered, and I fear that to put two Republicans in charge of the armed forces might be misunderstood in both parties!

So let us let the whole matter stand as it is for a while. If things continue as they are today and there is a stalemate or what might be called a normal course of war in Europe, I take it that we shall have an old fashioned hot and bitter campaign this Summer and Autumn. Such campaigns -- viewing with alarm and pointing with pride -- are a little stupid and a little out of date, and their appeal to prejudice does little to encourage a more intelligent electorate. But I suppose we have not grown up very much since the campaign of 1920 between Harding and Coolidge on the one side and Cox and Roosevelt on the other. I might add that I am neither bitter nor cynical -- but I do wish there was less immaturity in political thinking.

On the other hand, if there should develop a real crisis such as you suggest -- a German-Russian victory -- it would be necessary to put aside in large part strictly old fashioned party government, and the people would understand such a situation. If this develops I want you to know that I would still want you as a part of such an Administration. Also, I hope much that you will run down to see me from time to time to talk over events as they occur. In this job I need every angle from every part of the country.

As ever yours,

Honorable Frank Knox,  
Chicago Daily News,  
Chicago,  
Illinois.

P.S. On January first I am putting Edison into the Navy Portfolio but he understands perfectly that I may make changes of many kinds if things get worse.

Strictly confidential - if I had been sued for \$250,000, I would have taken it as an enormous compliment to my wherewithal.

F. D. R.

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

January 17, 1940.

400 WEST MADISON STREET

RECEIVED  
JAN 19 9 21 AM '40  
THE WHITE HOUSE

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

My dear Mr. President:

I have just received your letter and hasten to acknowledge it. I particularly appreciate the kindness which characterizes it, and your evident complete understanding of my point of view.

I am delighted to learn that you, like myself, hold Bill Donovan in high esteem, and can readily understand the point you make concerning my suggestion in that direction.

*no enclosure*

I am considerably disappointed this morning at the evident reception of your note on Finland. You will observe from the enclosed editorial which I ran yesterday, that in this matter I was way out in front of you so far as the length to which I would go. I am not only for making them a loan, but for making a loan specifically so that they may buy military supplies.

It is a curious commentary on Congressional blindness that they cannot see readily that helping Finland now to stand off Russia is the best way in the world to insure against our later involvement in the war. Neither Germany nor Russia have any illusions about how we feel about them. They know we are unfriendly so that whatever we may do about Finland will have no effect whatever on their attitude towards us. On the other hand, if Russia is permitted to overwhelm Finland in the Spring as she will unless Finland gets help, there is every likelihood that both Germany and Russia will jump into Sweden and Norway and gobble them up, thus broadening the theatre of war and increasing the chances for an outright military alliance between Hitler and Stalin. If that really comes, the world will be confronted with a new crisis and we will be infinitely nearer to participation under such circumstances than we are now, or would be if Finland made a successful defense.

Naturally, I am flattered to have you still feel you want me in your Administration in the event that a new crisis comes,

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and I heartily reciprocate your wish that we keep in touch in the mean time.

I am going to Florida about February 1st, and am now planning to come to Washington for a couple of days on my way south. If it is convenient for you, I shall be happy to have a talk with you at that time, although I have nothing particular on my mind to talk about, so that it is not, in any sense, imperative. ||

I got a smile out of your allusion to the libel suit which Governor Horner initiated against me. I have duly registered in my mental note-book its flattering connotations. Incidentally, I do not take the suit very seriously. I think it was only a gesture and I have learned by the grapevine since that the Governor now regrets his action in the matter, especially his charge that I am a Republican intent on destroying the Democratic party in Illinois!

Yours sincerely,

Frank Knox

PSF:

Knox  
H  
Navy

Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
February 5, 1940.

Dear Frank:-

Many thanks for letting me see  
that mighty interesting letter from Steele.  
Since he wrote, the Japanese-Russian boundary  
discussion has ended with no agreement. I  
think time is still working in behalf of  
the Chinese.

As ever yours,

Hon. Frank Knox,  
The Chicago Daily News,  
Chicago,  
Illinois.



PSF Knox

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

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400 WEST MADISON STREET

January 23, 1940.

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

My dear Mr. President:

I have just received the enclosed letter from A. T. Steele, our Far Eastern correspondent who is now in Tokio, although he wrote from Peking.

Steele is one of the best observers in the Far East and this letter contains a lot of confidential information that I thought possibly might supplement that which you have.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Knox

I have mentioned to you on previous occasions that there are increasing evidences of a weakening in the Japanese position. The isolation of the Japanese and the many obstacles facing them have given strength to the moderately minded folks at home in their efforts to influence the army. The army is still top dog but it has already yielded a little to the pressure from Tokyo and from abroad. The tendency is a healthy one which will continue if Uncle Sam stays tough and the Chinese remain uncooperative. The only hope for a return to peace and sanity in the Far East is the continuance of this trend. During my stay here, I intend to write a series of articles on the general situation in the Far East in which I will go into Japan's relations with China and the western powers fully.

The announcement of Japanese intentions to lift restrictions to some extent on the lower Yangtze is a step in the right direction, but not a very big step. As near as I can figure out the situation, the move was the result of pressure brought by the government at Tokyo in collaboration with the Navy, which has been consistently more moderate than the army in its China policy. In a sense, it was a navy gesture which could be construed as precedent for the army to follow in further relaxing its grip on everything in China that was vital.

The course of Japanese-Russian relations is taking about the direction we had expected, with mounting distrust evident, especially on the Japanese side. It is advantageous to both sides, at the moment, to continue negotiations. It is possible that some headway will be made and certain issues solved. But I see no evidence, as yet, of any marked alleviation of the fundamental hostility between the two powers. I am still inclined to believe that if Japan aligns herself militarily with any or either side in this war it will not be the side with which Russia is associated.

Chian Kai-shek's so called "Winter offensive" seems to be a rather abortive business launched chiefly for propaganda purposes. Attacks have been launched against numerous Japanese positions, but usually by small forces which could not hope to do serious damage. Typical is the attack on the walled city of Kaifeng, in which only a few hundred men are reported to have been used. The Chinese attacked at night, dropped a flock of trench mortar shells into the city and withdrew before daybreak. Such attacks are of no military importance but have a certain moral value and also force the Japanese to maintain large garrisons throughout the occupied regions. The fact that the winter offensive was well advertised in advance from Chungking indicates that these were its main objectives. The only serious Chinese military action going on at present is the Chinese effort to cut off Nanning, which fell so easily to the Japanese last month.



The Japanese army is infuriated at the elusiveness of the Chinese armies. Obviously, one of the prime objectives of the Japanese army in China is to disperse Chinese troop concentrations. But how can the Chinese armies be dispersed if they cannot be found. Characteristic of Japanese annoyance was the challenge issued a week or so ago by the Japanese commander in Nanning. He broadcast a message that the Chinese should either make peace or fight.

The Nips are spending a lot of money in south China in an attempt to buy off Chinese commanders in that area. They don't seem to be making much headway, although a few turnovers are to be expected. For several weeks the Japanese press was giving great publicity to the exploits of the "Peace army" under General Wang Teh-wei, which was organized in Swatow under Japanese auspices. General Wang was permitted to march with his forces into Fukien, where he suffered a severe reverse, according to Chinese reports. A part of his army was said to have gone over to the Chinese side. At least, Japanese publicity about General Wang's exploits has diminished noticeably. Only goes to show the difficulties the Japanese are up against in inducing Chinese to fight Chinese.

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PSF Knox

ARE JAPAN'S CARDS ACES OR DEUCES?

Excerpt from radio talk by Raymond Gram Swing  
Mutual Broadcasting System  
January 11, 1940.

I want to ask those of you who heard me last night to bear with me if I repeat that the approaching crisis in the relations of the United States and Japan is reaching the acute stage. The United States government is bringing the pressure of silence on Japan as the deadline of January 26th approaches, when the trade treaty expires. I want to go on with that analysis to include some factors for which I had no time last night. I want to mention the cards that Japan still has to play and to look at these cards closely. For they are going to look like aces.

The first is that if the United States isn't careful Japan will be forced into the arms of the Soviet Union. This is a card which the Japanese count on heavily to impress American opinion. The Japanese and the Russians have reached two minor agreements, one about fisheries, one about a frontier commission, and are to start discussing trade relations a few days before the expiration of the American treaty. Yesterday, Mr Shiratori, the Japanese diplomat who played a key part in trying to turn the pact with Germany and Italy, the anti-comintern pact, into a military alliance, suddenly switched his opinions. He came out with the recommendation that Japan make a military alliance with the Soviet Union, doing so, it was announced, after he had talked with the Italian ambassador in Tokyo.

CAN JAPAN AND RUSSIA WORK TOGETHER? The inference is that the one time anti-comintern pact would grow into a pact of all the totalitar-  
ian states. Against whom? Obviously the democracies. Such a card either is an ace or it's a two spot. Either Japan and the Soviet Union

can naturally work together or they can't. Either their interests can be harmonized or they are by their nature conflicting. One can argue that Germany and the Soviet Union did the unexpected and joined hands. But all that separated them was ideology. What separates Japan and the Soviet Union is basic policy. They both want to dominate eastern Asia. Well, why can't they divide it up? Let Japan have one sphere of influence, the Soviet Union another. Let Japan have northeast China, the Soviet Union northwest China. That possibility is being mentioned. But the so-called communists in China would not forgive Stalin if he made such a deal with Japan. For then Japan is the one great enemy. Japan must be driven out of China. They are the ones who forced the anti-Japanese pace in China. If Stalin compromised with Japan he would lose his hold over the left-wingers in China.

There is another difficulty in Japan making a pact with the Soviet Union. The Japanese people would be horrified. It may be possible for Stalin to get away with preaching anti-fascism one day and then embracing Hitler the next. But it wouldn't be possible for the Japanese government to become an ally of the Soviet Union after all the years of education on the dangers of communism and the fundamental antagonism between Japanese and Russian interest. A further consideration that makes a Soviet alliance unlikely, it would put Japan out of world markets, and Japan needs world trade. It would like world trade right away, would like to make some money while the war is on. Japan can't get from the Soviet Union the supplies it needs, nor can it sell the goods it makes. The danger, then of a Russo-Japanese alliance is really not to be taken seriously, it is a bogey to frighten American opinion.

CARD NUMBER The second card the Japanese have to play is that if the TWO United States doesn't accept the new order in China, and applies an embargo, Japan will be forced to do some colony grabbing,

starting with the Dutch East Indies and including the Philippines. In other words, Japan will go on the war path. Now this card looks like an ace too. But the Japanese aren't in a position to take on any new wars. Their resources are strained as it is. They have conquered the strategic positions in China, but they haven't begun to conquer China. They can't afford to extend their military commitments, and they haven't the money to pay for a naval war, particularly one that might last two or three years. The threat of Japan going to war is made largely because in Japan they have been taught that American public opinion is against war, and all that Japan has to do is to mention the possibility for the United States government to pipe down. If Japan really had to choose between changing its policy in China and a war with the United States it would change its policy in China. That is the opinion of some of the closest students of Japanese affairs. So the talk of a possible war must also be counted as a two spot and not an ace.

JAPAN'S PUPPET  
GOVERNMENT IN  
CHINA

The third card Japan has to play has to do with the new puppet government of Wang-Ching-Wei. It is probably going to be launched as an anti-communist government, so as to curry the favor of American opinion. Japan, Manchukuo and the puppet government of China will become a new anti-comintern pact. They are going to fight communism in China, and Americans are expected to endorse that objective.

But it needs to be understood that the communist movement in China, the one identified with the Eighth Route Army, has about as much to do with the orthodox communism as do the social Democrats of Finland, who are a large element of the Government now at war with the Soviet Union. In China they are called communists, but the programme of Mao-Tse-Tung, the Eighth Route leader, calls for only limited socialism. He wants state control of banks, transportation and mines. He wants democratic elections,

consumers and producers cooperatives, and encouragement to private enterprise. The correct label for such a program is right-wing social democracy, which is anathema to true communists, anywhere outside of China. The communist area in China, a region about as large as California and Oregon, has a population of thirty-five million, say a tenth of the country. Mao-Tse-Tung wants China to be ruled like a democracy with a two party system, the Kuointang as one party, the communists the other.

So here the Japanese are playing on the magic of a frightening name, whereas the reality is something quite different. I have already mentioned that Soviet influence over the Chinese communists would be lost if Stalin made a deal with Japan. The war in Finland already has reduced that influence. And the danger of the rise of the Moscow brand of Communism in China appears to be remote, to put it mildly.

One word more about the United States policy in China. Henry L Stimson, former Secretary of State, came out this morning for the embargo on the sale of war materials to Japan. Another proposal, made by Evans Carlson, who I have quoted before, is that Congress pass a law authorizing the President to apply an embargo. Mr Carlson believes that if Congress passes such a law, it won't have to be applied, the Japanese theory up to now being that the American people really don't mean what they say about the Far East. Mr Carlson thinks that if the authorization of an embargo is enacted, then the Japanese will see that this country is in earnest, and then fruitful negotiations can begin. Both Mr Stimson and Mr Carlson want the same thing, to get the Japanese army out of China, and both I gather are ready for generous treatment of Japan in all ways once the Japanese civilians get real command of the Japanese government.

6-22-40

BBB K...  
Navy

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

401 WEST MADISON STREET

*file  
Personal*

March 22, 1940

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

Thanks for the message which I received through Harold Ickes.

I didn't want to fulminate on an international question without being reasonably sure that I was not gumming up the game, hence my request to Harold to get in touch with you.

You may be interested in reading the resultant editorial and I am enclosing a clipping of it herewith.

I hope by the time this letter arrives that you will have recovered from that attack of "swamp fever." I am meanwhile wondering what kind of a swamp you meant when I read your definition of your ailment.

Yours sincerely,

*Frank Knox*



## Hitler's Peace Offensive Flattens Out.

You can put down as a COMPLETE WASHOUT the Hitler-Mussolini spring peace offensive.

Its only accomplishment was to bring out, in high light, British and French determination to press on relentlessly toward their objective—the smashing of the power of Hitler and his Nazis in Germany, and the termination of the reign of terror and intimidation in Europe for which Hitler and his associates are solely responsible.

Despite the chatter of professional pacifists and pro-Hitler propagandists, demanding that Britain and France define their war aims more specifically, there is little doubt in the mind of neutrals as to what these objectives are. They can be summarized about as follows:

1. The primary purpose of both Great Britain and France, in undertaking the war and pressing it to a conclusion, is SECURITY.

The march of events in Europe in the years that immediately preceded the outbreak of war revealed inexorably and unmistakably the purpose of the Nazis to remake the map of Europe more to their liking by methods of terrorization and intimidation, if possible, but by war if necessary.

It was Germany—not Britain or France—that started the war.

2. The war is NOT for the purpose of dismembering Germany. So far as British and French purpose can be appraised by neutrals, it contemplates no more than the military defeat of the minority that now holds the German people in thrall and has forced upon them a war they did not want. With that accomplished, the Allies appear willing to let the Germans choose what sort of government they prefer to live under.

3. Obviously, both British and French public opinion favors a general program of disarmament after peace is attained, if for no other reason than to prevent a fresh aggression in the future by hobbling the power of aggression. Disarmament, therefore, can be listed as a definite war purpose of the Allies.

4. It would appear that the economic objective of the British and the French, which can be achieved only by a military victory over the Nazis, is clearly foreshadowed by the measures of economic co-operation between the two nations already in effect. This indicates unmistakably, at the minimum, a customs union in Europe that will lower tariff barriers where it does not eliminate them, and promote in every possible way a freer exchange of goods and services throughout Europe. European reciprocity in trade can, therefore, be inventoried as the fourth war aim.

With none of these objectives of the Allies can there be any real disagreement on this side of the Atlantic. If we could poll American opinion we feel sure it would be registered as overwhelmingly favorable to Allied purposes as above defined.

Furthermore, the last official utterance on this subject by the man who officially represents the United States in its relations with other nations—the President—dealing with the problem of peace contains these pregnant lines:

"Today we seek a moral basis for peace. It cannot be a real peace if it fails to recognize brotherhood. It cannot be a lasting peace if the fruit of it is oppression, or starvation, or cruelty, or human life dominated by armed camps. It cannot be a sound peace if small nations must live in fear of powerful neighbors. It cannot be a moral peace if freedom from invasion is sold for tribute. It cannot be an intelligent peace if it denies free passage throughout the world to that knowledge of those ideals which permit men to find common ground. And lastly, it cannot be a righteous peace if worship of God is denied."

It was this forthright declaration from the American official spokesman that initiated the collapse of the carefully planned "peace" offensive of Adolf Hitler. It reflected American opposition to a German peace, dictated by the present masters of the German state.

We are not a participant in the war and do not expect to become one. Therefore, we expect to have no direct voice in the peace-making. But with the Allied war aims as defined here, there is and will be overwhelming American agreement and approval. Not only Great Britain and France but the whole world wants security. We have no desire to see Germany dismembered, and we would be glad to help it restore freedom and justice to its people. We want worldwide disarmament and the abandonment of military aggression. We want, and acutely need for our own future prosperity, a freer exchange of goods and services between the nations. And, last and most emphatically, we want no peace that will be dictated by Nazis under the fanatic leadership of a Hitler.

It is all to the good, therefore, that the Nazi peace offen-

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
AND REFER TO INITIALS  
AND NO.

*(Came to file Navy files 7/28/44)*

Serial 048012

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

*file  
confidential*

Memorandum for the President.

The question of patrol of Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait has been considered by the Permanent Joint Board on Defense of Canada - United States. Joint plans are now in preparation which provide for patrols of the Labrador Coast and Hudson Strait during the open season, commencing about June. At the request of the Canadian Government this task will be undertaken by them, utilizing planes, corvettes, and smaller craft. These operations will, of course, be supported by United States Naval Forces in the western Atlantic.

This matter will continue to be kept in mind by the United States members of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense of Canada - United States, and you may be assured that your wishes will be carried out.

*Frank Knox*

*↑*



*file personal*

*PSF Knox  
Navy*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 28, 1940.

MR. EARLY:

Paul Leach called to say that Col. Knox has just telephoned the following cablegram received from their two London correspondents -- Wm. Stoneman and Helen Kirkpatrick. The cablegram reads as follows:

"Feel obliged to inform you that no messages reflecting on war will of Britain, or of certain politicians in this country, are now being allowed to pass. Consequently you must regard all messages bearing on this matter as meeting the official view. Please inform Lothian, Washington (Col. Knox says they apparently wish this to get to the White House but can't say so in cablegram) that political news from London is now being strictly censored. This does not mean that war will is weak but it does mean that we won't be able to say so if it is."

Col. Knox believes that a certain group of politicians in London are talking of possible negotiated peace because of worded cablegram.

Paris correspondent says "The French were in touch with King Leopold up to 8:00 last night at which time he gave no indication of what he was going to do. The first the French knew of the Belgian surrender was when the Germans walked in behind them."

Col. Knox wanted the President to get this.

P5 F  
Navy

May 29, 1940.

Dear Frank:-

I have not had a chance to thank you before this for yours of May eighteenth. The organization work is getting on well but it would take me an hour to explain it to you. I will tell you about it when I see you.

Ever so many thanks also for yours of May twenty-seventh. I am delighted that the conference went so well and the group which you have organized is going to be of tremendous value.

I hope you will like the set-up announced yesterday. It is intended that it work along the same general lines as the meeting you attended last Saturday, and the new Commission of the Council of National Defense will not only be a clearing house but will also be charged with seeing that the contracts and programs proceed according to schedule.

This is a better method than the one I operated under during the World War. Much has been heard in the papers of the Munitions Board being the whole thing from 1917 to 1920 but actually, and as a matter of practice, I had to take Navy matters to at least sixteen different offices members scattered all over Washington.

As ever yours,

Colonel Frank Knox,  
The Chicago Daily News,  
400 West Madison Street,  
Chicago, Illinois.

*file  
personal*

*P5F Knox*

**THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS**  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

Chicago, May 18, 1940

THE WHITE HOUSE  
400 WEST MADISON STREET  
MAY 20 9 45 AM '40  
RECEIVED

My Dear Mr. President:

You asked me to submit for your consideration some names of men who might be regarded as possible selections for that proposed group of three to coordinate activities in industrial production in the present crisis. My understanding is that you propose this group to become an official part of the executive department under your personal direction thus tying together all efforts for speeding up industrial output with official government efforts to the same end, thus avoiding the clashes and conflicts between the government, which has to constantly consider political reactions to any course, and industry which is disposed frequently to ignore such considerations. You tersely illustrated what you meant by an allusion to the tangle over labor into which the Baruch board speedily plunged itself.

In a study of this question it has seemed to me that there are some things which ought to be avoided. First off, although it may eliminate some very worth-while, first-class men I believe it would be wise to find these men outside the group of Morgan-controlled heavy industries. The sort of men you want can be found outside this group so why, to use a slang phrase "stick your neck out". There will be enough critics of such a board anyway because it will frequently have to act vigorously and arbitrarily. I also think it would be unwise to have them all come from the industrial production group.

The problem is not exclusively production - it involves many other matters, especially those of labor and raw material supply, trans-

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400 WEST MADISON STREET

portation, etc. Further, it would better the situation if the men could come from different sections and if they have had some political, as well as business experience, that would aid very much what I think you have in mind.

With all of these considerations in mind I submit as the three best men I can conscientiously recommend for the difficult and vital task you have in mind:

Lewis Douglas, Jr. of New York.  
General Robert Wood, of Chicago, and  
Edward Quesney, of St Louis.

I suggest Lew Douglas without knowing what your personal attitude toward him may be growing out of his resignation as director of the budget. If that does not present an insuperable difficulty, Lew has had a wide experience in business, <sup>and</sup> in politics which would equip him exceptionally. He is a very real patriot and would, I am certain, be glad to serve in this crisis, in any capacity. Politically, again if personal relations do not make his selection impossible, his selection would have a tremendously good effect, in my judgment.

Bob Wood, I feel reasonably sure, is already in your mind as one of such a group. His superb management of one of the greatest single businesses in the country, his experience in the quartermaster corps in the last war, and his skill in labor adjustments fit him outstandingly for such work. He is a great coordinator and would be of immense assistance to you in avoiding unnecessary frictions.

You may not know Quesney. He is the big shot in Monsanto Chemical, one of the very great industrial successes in the United States in recent years. He is young, under forty I think, he is imbued with

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

400 WEST MADISON STREET

modern production ideas and is a powerful driving executive who could hold his own with the most hard boiled industrialists, who might be trying to take too big a bite in war profits.

If for any reasons some, or all, of these suggestions do not in your judgment ~~meet~~ meet the requirements others who might be worthy of consideration are:

Colonel William J. Donovan, Colby Chester, of General Foods, Lewis E. Brown, of Johns-Manville Co., Wilson, or Reid, of General Electric, General Tom Hammond, of the Whiting Co. of Chicago; Dave Crawford, of the Pullman Co. Jim Bell, of General Mills, Minneapolis.

Since a big item in needed production is airplanes, perhaps it might be wise to get a top flight plane manufacturer. I do not happen to know any ~~other~~ <sup>others</sup> so can make no recommendation.

With a war on between A.F.ofL. and C.I.O. I think it might be wise to eliminate from so small a group any special representative of organized labor. Whoever you picked, you would probably be damned by as many unionists as approved your choice.

I did not let any grass grow under my feet in getting that project for Aviation Plattsburghs launched. After consulting with Generals Marshall and Arnold and Mr. Hinkley of CAA, and receiving their unanimous and enthusiastic approval, I have obtained a tentative acceptance from <sup>Gen.</sup> Frank McCoy to undertake the chairmanship of the Civilian's Committee to promote the camps. He will be in Washington on Monday to consult with Marshall, Arnold and Hinkley and then is coming on to Chicago to talk with me.

You never made a <sup>letter</sup> speech which seemed to meet a critical situation and to bear immediate fruits at home and abroad than your message

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400 WEST MADISON STREET

of last Thursday.

I hope you have a satisfactory talk with Landon on Wednesday. He is stopping off here to talk things over with me on Tuesday and I will try to emphasize if it should seem necessary how vital a united front is right now.

Yours as ever,

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

Frank Knox

*P.S. Written on my portable typewriter at home  
on Saturday night. So please excuse.  
FK*

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

May 27, 1940.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
MAY 28 10 01 AM '40  
RECEIVED  
1500 N. MICHIGAN STREET

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

My dear Mr. President:

The meeting on Saturday of the group organized to promote the proposed training camps for aviators made very satisfactory progress. Thanks to your intervention, General Malin Craig accepted the chairmanship of a committee which will represent this whole organization in Washington, and keep in closest possible coordination and cooperation with the CAA, the Army and the Navy departments.

Associated with General Craig will be General Frank R. McCoy, Colonel William J. Donovan and Lewis Douglas.

This committee is to hold conferences this week with the General Staff, the Air Corps, the Navy and the CAA, and formulate a general outline of the popular committees to be created to promote enlistments for the aviator training camps throughout the country. Just as soon as a report is received from this committee, plans will be laid for a swift expansion of the organization in each one of the 9 Corps Areas.

The meeting on Saturday was attended by General Fickel, representing General Arnold of the Air Corps, Colonel McClelland, representing General Marshall, Mr. Hinckley of the CAA., and among these men representing the various government departments, there was unanimous agreement that this organization could very helpfully function in promoting all kinds of activities relating to Army, Navy and Air Corps personnel enlistments. They, each of them, stressed the importance of civilian liaison to promote the results desired.

Mr. Winthrop Aldrich has accepted the treasurership of the committee, and privately contributed funds will be easily secured so that the activities of the committee will be no burden whatever on the government.

Mr. Hinckley of the CAA, brought to the

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS  
DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

400 WEST MADISON STREET

-2-

conference a very explicit outline of his plan to train pilots, and the committee gave it an enthusiastic endorsement and pledged its cooperation.

Personally, I should like to say that I was extremely gratified over the many evidences of the closest possible cooperation between the Army, the CAA, and the Navy in this essential matter of training flyers for the national defense.

Your speech last night will serve, I am confident, to bring home to the whole of the American people the tremendous gravity of the present situation. Our reports from Europe today are more ominous and pessimistic than ever. I am afraid that actual events will leave even those of us who thought we foresaw something of the great dangers ahead, subject to the charge of under-statement rather than that of exaggeration.

Yours as ever,

*Frank Knox*



file  
personal

PSF 12007

FRANK KNOX

Tuesday - May 21/40

My Dear Mr. President: I have just had a long and very thorough-going conference with Alf. Landon and we have reached a mutual conclusion which he will convey to you when he sees you.

In the light of events which almost hourly show graver implications for us and for the world our thinking was animated solely by our desire to promote national unity in the face of grave national peril.

With sincere regards

Frank Knox

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

PSE  
K. med.  
Navy

July 13, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Please take this up with  
Secretary Hull and try to  
straighten it out. Somebody's  
nose seems to be out of joint!

F. D. R.

Letter to the President dated  
July 12th from Under Secretary Welles  
enclosing cable from Ambassador  
Kennedy in re Colonel Donovan's  
mission abroad.

July 12, 1940.

My dear Mr. President:

Joe Kennedy has just called me on the telephone to ask me to lay before you personally the attached telegram. He feels very strongly that Colonel Donovan cannot possibly get any information except through our existing military and naval attachés and that his mission will simply result in creating confusion and misunderstanding on the part of the British. I told him that I would lay his message before you but that I understood your decision had already been made.

Would you let me know if you wish any message to be sent to Joe about this matter?

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Sumner Welles

Enc.  
Telegram 2113  
from London.

The President,  
The White House.

(Cross Ref. under Welles & Kennedy)

file  
personal.

PSF Knox Folder

1  
Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.  
WASHINGTON.

Friday - July 19, 1940

My Dear Mr. President:

You touched  
the very peak of greatness last  
night. I was certain you would  
strike the note of national unity -  
you did it magnificently.

I am very proud to be asso-  
ciated with you in this crucial  
struggle for all the things we  
Americans cherish. - In such  
times as these partisanship has  
no place. That speech last night  
was the greatest deliverance of  
your entire career.

With affectionate loyalty

Frank Knox

PSF Knot  
Navy

July 22, 1940

~~SECRETARY CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

This memorandum from Ben Cohen is worth reading. In view of the clause in the big authorization bill I signed last Saturday which is intended to be a complete prohibition of sale, I frankly doubt if Cohen's memorandum would stand up.

Also I fear Congress is in no mood at the present time to allow any form of sale.

You might, however, think over the possibility at a little later date of trying to get Congressional action to allow the sale of these destroyers to Canada on condition that they be used solely in American Hemisphere defense i. e., from Greenland to British Guiana including Bermuda and the West Indies. It is obvious that this would be of great assistance as it would release other ships for other purposes and would relieve the United States of a part of the responsibility for maintaining our present patrol.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SUBJECT: "SALE OF DESTROYERS TO CANADA"

F. D. R. MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SUBJECT: "SALE OF DESTROYERS TO CANADA"

Enclosure  
Let to the President from Ben V. Cohen, Nat. Power Policy Com.,  
Interior Building, Wash, d. c. 7/19/40 enclosing memo he has pre-  
pared which he thinks shows that there really is no legal barrier  
(over)

by reason of our own statutes or the law of nations, which would stand in the way of the release of our old destroyers from our naval service and their sale to the British - if their release for such purpose would, as at least some naval authorities believe, strengthen rather than weaken the defense position of the U. S.

Memo entitled "Re: Sending effective Material Aid to Great Britain with Particular Reference to the Sending of Destroyers."

Destroyer  
The Secretary of the Navy  
Washington, D. C.  
Dear Sir:  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant regarding the proposed sale of our old destroyers to the British. It is gratifying to know that you are interested in the welfare of our fleet and the defense of our country. I am sure that the Navy Department will give your suggestions the most careful consideration.

Very truly yours,  
Secretary of the Navy

Enclosed for you are two copies of the report of the Board of Inspection and Survey on the proposed sale of our old destroyers to the British. I am sure that you will find this report of interest.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1941

PSF  
Knot

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 4, 1940.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

I am a little worried about the Norden Factory on LaFayette Street, New York City. Why not move it to the country where it can be put behind a barbed wire fence?

F. D. R.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

October 15, 1940

PS F Knox  
File  
Personal  
Knox

My dear Mr. President:

I have been rather hoping for an opportunity to tell you personally how greatly I admired your speech Saturday night. It is my considered opinion that in all of your career you have never surpassed the closing paragraphs of that speech. If I know the American people, they will not only invoke approval but they will help to build up in their hearts that fighting spirit without which a country like ours cannot endure.

I have just had a fine letter from Admiral Yarnell filled with sound advice. I should like to quote a sentence from that letter: "Always we must have, -No Appeasement, -No Defeatism, -No McClellanism. There must be a spirit of 'can do' instead of 'can't do'." That boils down into a very nut shell my own mental attitude.

Yours sincerely,

*Frank Knox*

The President  
The White House



COPY

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

756 10/23  
Knox

October 23, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

I am returning herewith Secretary Stimson's letter in which he makes certain suggestions about the use of the Fleet.

I have talked the matter over with Secretary Stimson and gathered the impression that he was satisfied that a demonstration in that quarter in less strength than he suggests would meet all the requirements.

Respectfully,

Signed-Frank Knox

The President  
The White House

For letter referred to from Stimson to FDR of Oct 12, 1940 re establishing the Fleet at Singapore for various reasons which he outlines and for the original of the above memo from Knox

See:Stimson folder-Drawer 1-1940

Office of the Secretary  
NE/EP13-43(400904)  
JAG:rld

Copy

*Navy PSF  
Frank K...*

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

*Nov. 16, 1940*

Sir:

As the Secretary of State is undoubtedly aware a Board of Army and Navy officers was appointed by the President to visit and report upon suitable sites for naval and air bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda, Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Antigua, and British Guiana. This Board was appointed and functioned pursuant to the provisions contained in the exchange of notes dated September 2, 1940, between the British Ambassador and the Secretary of State.

The reports of this Board have been received, reviewed by the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, and forwarded to the President for his action. It is understood that the reports of the Board in those cases which have received the President's approval have been forwarded by the President to the Secretary of State for further negotiations with the British Government in order to consummate the leasing of the bases by the British Government to the United States as contemplated in the exchange of notes dated September 2, 1940, above mentioned.

Among the first of the Board's reports was the one involving the lease to the United States of bases in Newfoundland and the development of the naval and air bases in Newfoundland has progressed to a greater extent than in any of the other localities involved. Surveys to fix the boundaries of the areas in Newfoundland are now progressing rapidly and the Navy Department is extremely anxious that everything necessary be consummated in order that the establishment and use of naval and air bases in Newfoundland, as well as in the other seven British colonies, may proceed with all possible expedition.

There is transmitted herewith as an enclosure a copy of a letter which was received by the Secretary of the Navy from the British Charge d Affaires in Washington, D.C., on November 12, 1940, relative to the establishment of the bases in Newfoundland. Attention is invited to paragraph 4 of this letter reading as follows:

"The Government of the United States shall forthwith take steps to agree with the Government of Newfoundland

*For original of this with attached letter from Merrill  
Butler re lease for area for Naval base in Newfoundland  
dated Nov. 11, 1940 - See: Navy folder - Drawer 1-1940 (Nov 16, 1940 letter)*

11-19 12-42 (400804) (M) the Secle  
JAG:rld

on a procedure to be adopted for the settlement and payment by the United States Government of claims of owners of private property for compensation for loss or damage which may be caused by expropriation."

In connection with the above quoted paragraph from the British Charge d Affaires I deem it pertinent to quote the following extracts from the exchange of notes dated September 2, 1940, as follows:

"His Majesty's Government will secure the grant to the Government of the United States, freely and without consideration, of the lease for immediate establishment and use of naval and air bases and facilities for entrance thereto and operation and protection thereof, on the Avalon Peninsula and on the southern coast of Newfoundland\*\*\*."

All the bases and facilities referred to in the preceding paragraph will be leased to the United States for a period of ninety-nine years, free from all rent and charges other than such compensation to be mutually agreed on to be paid by the United States in order to compensate the owners of private property for loss by expropriation or damage arising out of the establishment of the bases and facilities in question."

It appears to the Navy Department that the terms of the agreement set out above contemplate two things, namely: (1) That His British Majesty's Government will secure that grant to the Government of the United States of the naval and air bases contemplated in the exchange of notes; and (2) That the Government of the United States will pay to His Majesty's Government just compensation for the benefit of owners of private property for loss by expropriation or damage arising out of the establishment of the bases and facilities.

It will be noted in the quotation from the British Charge d Affaires letter that he attempts to impose upon the Government of the United States the task of coming to an agreement with the Government of Newfoundland on a procedure to be adopted for the settlement and payment by the United States Government of private claims for property expropriated. The Navy Department is strongly of the opinion that the United States Government would have no standing in any of the Colonial Courts in any proceedings to expropriate private property. It is considered that expropriation measures are and must remain a function of His Majesty's Government. Furthermore, the Navy Department is in possession of information received from the Board which has made the surveys of prospective bases that there is in effect certain emergency

war time legislation throughout the British Empire which would admit of expeditious expropriation proceedings so that even if the United States Government had any standing in such matters in the Colonial Courts it would be much more desirable in the interests of speed for the British Government to institute such proceedings.

In view of the fact that the conduct of all negotiations in connection with the acquisition of these naval and air bases has been and still is, as the Navy Department understands it, a function of the Department of State rather than that of the War and Navy Departments, it is suggested that the Department of State take this matter up with the British Embassy to the end that all further negotiations may be centralized and handled where they properly belong. Should the State Department desire any assistance or advice from the Navy Department, or the detail of a liaison officer to work with the State Department in this matter, the Navy Department will, of course, be glad to comply with the State Department's wishes in the matter.

The British Charge d Affaires has been informed of the reference of his letter to the Secretary of State.

Respectfully

Frank Knox

The Honorable,  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

CC-The President  
The Secretary of War

PSF: Knox

Navy

## The New Cabinet Appointments

*Johnson County Democrat / Olathe*  
Imbued with patriotism over politics, President Roosevelt has appointed Henry L. Stimson and Frank Knox to his cabinet as secretaries of War and Navy respectively. Upsetting all precedent, the President appointed two Republicans, first because of their wide experience as executives in a military way, and secondly to unite the people of this country as a single unit working toward a definite end in this time of World emergency.

The Democrat approves the appointments of the President, realizing that in times like these today, there is no time for politics and party differences, but that it is the duty of every American citizen to back the government as a unit for the common cause. After the World has again settled down, we know not when, then, and only then, can our two great National parties settle their differences.

Why did the President appoint two Republicans to his cabinet? This is a common question on the lips of many people in the country, and again we reiterate the President's stand of placing patriotism over politics.

No doubt the President through various diplomatic and governmental channels has information leading him to believe that the United States is in danger or might soon be in danger of invasion. The defeat of Great Britain, with its large and mighty fleet, would immediately put this country on the spot. Therefore the military and naval posts in the cabinet must be filled with men of wide experience, dynamic in character, men who can conduct with quick results the offices for the best interests of our national defense and security. Men who in case of emergency have the military ability to protect our country; who have the ability to execute the building for this country of a large and powerful army, navy and air force, second to none. When this program is completed, it will be the country's greatest safeguard for peace.

file  
personal

PSF: Knox Folder  
1-41

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday

Sec. Knox -

Asked me to

Give you following  
Names:

Justice Roberts

Admiral Reeves

Admiral Stanley

Also do you wish to talk  
further on this matter with  
Sec. Knox or Thurston  
E.M.M.



PSF King 3/2/41

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

7  
R

January 4, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

In connection with the Pratt-Roosevelt type of airplane carrier, I have been informed that at the ~~Langley~~ Yard on the Gulf the Maritime Commission has a ship nearing completion. It is expected that it will be completed by March 1st. This ship, while at the yard, could have a flight deck put on her. Our people estimate that it will take about three months to do this. It probably could be done more quickly on a ship now under construction than if it had to be completely remodeled for the purpose.

Lampa

There is another ship in the same category coming off the ways on June 1st. A change in the plans in this if ordered at once would, undoubtedly, give us a second of these experimental carriers in five months. The alternative to this use of these two vessels is a procurement of the two Danish vessels, the remodeling of which could be undertaken at once if some legal way to get them could be found.

The advantage of the Danish ships is that they both have Diesel engines, which is a decided advantage, in view of the purpose for which these ships are to be used.

I have given instructions to make some experiments at sea with one of our carriers using both autogyro and that small plane you described.

Frank Knox

*Kear Folder*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

*file  
personal*

January 11, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

You may have thought that I had forgotten that duty you charged me with, with respect to the suggested marine railway at the Isthmus.

As a matter of fact, the thing has been moving pretty slowly because it is, as you know, a radical departure. After considering the matter carefully, I have decided that Rear Admiral Frederic R. Harris, (CEC) U. S. Navy, Retired, head of a large engineering concern in New York, will be the best man to give us the confidential report on it.

He has advised me that he has sent a capable and reliable associate down there to make a quick survey, and he expects to have him back in New York sometime within the next ten days.

His letter indicates that the suggestion has some merit and could possibly be developed in a somewhat modified form. At the present time he suggests that the route could consist of about 130 miles of sea-level canal and only about 10 miles of marine railway.

Just as fast as I get any additional details, I will pass them along.

He makes a wild guess at the cost, ~~but~~ thinks it will be in excess of \$500,000,000.

*JH.*



*Knox Folder*

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
AND REFER TO INITIALS  
AND NO.

Serial No. 01113  
(SC)DD/EF13.

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

14 January 1941

~~Confidential~~

*file* ↑

My dear Mr. President:

Enclosed herewith, for your signature, is a reply to the note from the Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain dated January 9, 1941.

Sincerely yours,

*Frank Knox*

Encl.

The President,  
The White House.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

DECLASSIFIED

DDO DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- 8-5-66

Signature- *Carl L. Spicer*

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 9th 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein the  
text of a message from the Prime Minister  
which I have been instructed by telegram  
to convey to you.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

*Neville Butler*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,  
Washington, D.C.

"I believe you know we have not yet been able to bring many of your destroyers into action. As I have seen it stated this is due to our inability to man them I should like to tell you that this is not the case. Indeed we could man another 30 destroyers from America from April next onwards besides your first 50. The main reason of the delay has been the necessity for carrying out considerable dockyard work to fit them for service in arduous conditions in North Western approaches. Extensive re-conditioning is of course inevitable in case of ships laid up for long periods and the Admiralty is giving your Naval Attache here details of the work found necessary as it may be valuable for you to have them in case you want to work up any of the destroyers lying in your yards."

*Knox folder  
1-41*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 10, 1941

*B*

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY *x18*

For preparation of reply.

F. D. R./tmb

**Enclosures**

Letter from Nevile Butler, British Embassy,  
Washington, D. C., 1/9/40 to the President  
with attached text of a message from the  
Prime Minister in re destroyers.

*x18*

PSF Knox Folder

Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

January 25, 1941

JP

THE WHITE HOUSE  
JAN 27 1 57 PM '41  
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

With respect to that proposed training area in North Carolina for the use of the Marines, I have issued instructions today to select a competent negotiator, preferably a man from the South if possible, who will contact the owners of the land in North Carolina and see what can be done about procuring the land at the lowest possible price.

I have instructed General Holcomb to give me several alternative areas so that the North Carolina people will understand that no decision has been made in the matter and that they must compete with other regions if they want this camp to go to their state. I think in this way we can get the cost of the land at least cut in half and for possibly less than that.

Before we do anything about it at all and after I have received a report from this negotiator, I will take it up with you again.

J.K.

PSF Knox Folder  
Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

January 27, 1941

*Boonji*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
JAN 28 11 01 AM '41  
RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Recently I had a request from you to provide you with the data on the German population of Brazil. I am enclosing the desired information herewith.

*J.K.*

Enc.

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to No.

Op-16-F

January 27, 1941

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: German Nationals and Citizens of German Descent  
in Brazil.

1. The following figures were compiled on September 11, 1940, as a result of a study of data and information from various reliable sources:

Total Population	43,246,931 <sup>(1)</sup>
✓ German Nationals	40,000 to 50,000 <sup>(2)</sup>
✓ Citizens of German Descent	1,500,000 to <sup>(3)</sup> 2,000,000

Notes:

- (1) World Almanac, 1940
- (2) Embassy, Rio de Janeiro No. 3276 of July 12, 1940. Other estimates, O.N.I. from Immigration figures, 100,000; Am. Consul, Sao Paulo, 1,000,000.
- (3) Embassy, Rio de Janeiro No. 3276.

2. The following is from Naval Attache, Rio de Janeiro, Report No. 186, dated November 26, 1940:

German Nationals	150,000 - Estimate made by the Director of Immigration, Brazil.
German Nationals	231,519 - Figures compiled by Naval Attache from various statistical reports.

J.F.

*Knox folder*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

February 4, 1941

*FB*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
FEB 5 3 40 PM '41  
RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Recently at a Cabinet meeting you asked me to inquire as to how much business the Navy Department was giving the Keuffel and Esser Company, makers of optical equipment. I find that we are giving them a very considerable volume of business and they are discharging their function in a very satisfactory way.

*J.K.*



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 19, 1941

*File  
Personal  
Confidential*

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT:

I give you herewith copies of certain confidential and personal communications including a memorandum to me from the Secretary of the Navy; a memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy by John J. McCloy of the War Department and copy of rough notes made by McCloy after his conversations with Langdon Thorne.

*S.E.*  
S.T.E.

*PS: The originals have been  
returned to Secretary Knox*

*S.E.*

C  
O  
P  
Y

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1941

*Knox folder*  
*PSF*  
*Navy*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR STEPHEN EARLY:

I am sure you will find the enclosed memorandum from John J. McCloy interesting and possibly the President would also like to read it.

It shows how easily a misunderstanding can occur over nothing. It is just too bad that Willkie did not get his message straight, but I can understand, that with all of the things he was trying to pick up in a short space of time, how he might fail to understand exactly what was meant; especially in relation to Naval matters with which he is utterly unfamiliar.

After you have read this and shown it to the President, please send it back for my files.

/s/ Frank Knox

Enc.

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DDO DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/08)

Date- 4-8-70

Signature- *JWR*

DECLASSIFIED

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

COPY

PERSONAL AND  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

February 12, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL KNOX, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

From my talk with Langdon Thorne, who, as you know, accompanied W. W. abroad, I did not gather that the British were asking for more destroyers from our fleet. He emphasized that they were short on destroyers and that the shortage arose largely as a result of the congestion in the British ports. It was a matter of reconditioning 5 - 10 destroyers per month, rather than supplying them with 5 - 10 destroyers per month. I was particularly inquisitive about this and Thorne, who is an excellent man and who sat in on the admiralty conferences, emphasized several times that it was a matter of reconditioning 5 - 10 destroyers per month, thus relieving congestion in the British ports.

Thorne also carried the message that the British wanted us to install the equipment for magnetizing the ships against mines; this would greatly relieve their port congestion, and it was a simple job. He also brought a cry for (1) more PBV boats, particularly for this spring; and (2) 3,000,000 tons of shipping in 1942.

No doubt you have heard all about this from other sources, but I wanted to get it to you promptly, as I think it is particularly important to get this matter of their request for destroyers cleared up. Forgive me for barging into naval matters.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

/s/ JJ

JOHN J. McCLOY

Date- 4-8-70

Signature- *JJ*

P. S. I am enclosing some rough notes I made of my talk with Thorne.

JJ

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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DDO DIR. 5200394 (9/27/58)

JJMCC

C  
O  
P  
Y

Date- 4-9-70

February 11, 1941

Signature- *JR*

MEMORANDUM OF TALK WITH L.K.T. [Thorn]

On February 10 the Secretary asked me to have a chat with T. regarding his experiences and reports arising out of his recent trip to London with W. W. He had seen all the leading figures in England and had had many conferences with military, naval, and air authorities. In some cases he quoted Mr. Churchill directly; in others, his remarks were really a composite of his conferences. He had summarized in somewhat brief form the impressions he had gained, and it was largely from these notes that he talked to me.

T. said the greatest needs were help in shipping, the necessary assistance in the heavy bombing program, PBV boats and multiple engine bombers, assistance with ground crews, pilot training, if possible, and volunteer crews to relieve the delays connected with converting English pilots to American ships. Another very important item is small arms ammunition, air ordnance items and supplies. They look to America for 3,000,000 tons of American shipping. Anything that can be done to speed this program must be done. The shipping situation is summarized substantially as follows:

Great Britain had prior to the war 55,000,000 - 60,000,000 tons of shipping of imports per year. They need 40,000,000 tons per year to maintain the food supply requirements and the desirable munitions supply. They will now have only 35,000,000 tons per year. This figure is based upon the best judgment and past experience with sinkings. Unless Germany is able to land and maintain forces in the country in 1941, they feel that they can get through the winter of 1941-1942 without starvation. Of the 40,000,000 tons of imports per year it is necessary to use 24,000,000 on munitions and 16,000,000 on food. Of the latter, one-third is necessary for animal foods and fertilizers and two-thirds for human food. Thus far they have not drawn on any of their stocks of beef on the hoof. They have about one year's supply, if they should draw on this source. Of course, as they cut into that, there will be some shrinkage in the supplies required for animal food, but when that source is gone it will be gone for good. They have available a tonnage of approximately 18,000,000 - 20,000,000. Up to May and June, it looks as if they will have a surplus tonnage above what they can use, but if sinkings increase, as they probably will, it is imperative that they have an

immediate increase in the number of ships. They are looking to 240,000 tons of impounded shipping here, and, also, an additional amount in South America. And, above all, they look to our building from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 tons of shipping by 1942. They are in great need of more destroyers, but would prefer to have 5 - 10 destroyers fully reconditioned per month in our ports, and that minor repairs on commercial ships be done in this country, than to have a large number of destroyers given to them which they would have to maintain from their own ports. Another thing that they would like to have done here is the installation of equipment against magnetic mines, which could easily be done in our yards.

They are in great need of night fighters and anti-aircraft guns and the radio direction stuff that goes with them. They make a special plea for .303 ammunition. They say it must be manufactured here in greater quantities, and they stress the fact that the armies simply cannot function properly without uniformity in this type of rifle and ammunition. They point out that the manufacture of .303 ammunition, as distinguished from .30 ammunition, is no difficulty; it is largely a matter of jigs. They urge that we get these jigs and help them with their flow of this ammunition which, after all, is the chief arm of the first-line fighting forces. They are short on ammunition for their tank guns, and all small arms and ammunition. They place great emphasis on the excellence of the light Bofors gun, and particular emphasis on the desirability of getting into production on it just as it is, without modification. It stands up beautifully under combat conditions and has been thoroughly tested. Take it as it is, and get a lot of them. They also urge hurry-up methods on the .37 mm and 90 mm guns, which they say are most effective but must be made in quantity. "For God's sake, hurry the anti-aircraft program."

Production experts with whom T. talked warn from their own experience in England and from what they know of American production that we should be on guard against shortages in (1) aluminum, (2) electrolytic zinc, (3) brass, (4) alloyed steel, (5) gun forgings, and probably (6) drop forgings.

They would need \$250,000,000 of machine tools in 1941. T. was asked to emphasize strongly the necessity for developing and dilating our entire tool and machine industry; for the manufacturers to subcontract and pass on to other manufacturers the older designs and their experience, while the established firms took up new jobs.

JJMCC Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
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~~SECRET~~

Date- 4-8-70

Signature- JRM

PSF Knox folder  
1-41  
Navy File  
Personal  
Confidential

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I talked this morning with Admiral Robinson about the greatest possible expedition in producing Sub-Chasers, both 110 and 165 footers. The bottleneck, of course, is going to be engines, but happily we placed an order some time ago for a large number of these diesel engines and we expect to get delivery of the engines about as fast as we can build the boats. The contracts for 400 of these craft will be made this week I am told by Admiral Robinson and just as soon as the contracts are let, we will put all manner of pressure on the builders to get them out as fast as possible.

In the meantime, I suggest the immediate transfer of the Motor Torpedo Boats now in commission and those coming into commission in the immediate future to the British. We can get along without these and they will be of inestimable value to the British. While I was on my last inspection trip, I visited the plant of the Higgins Boat Company in New Orleans and found that they are manufacturing a very successful 80 foot Motor Torpedo Boat. Seven of them are already with the English Navy. I think we could slow down on the production of landing boats by these people and get them into the production of Motor Torpedo Boats to the greatest possible extent with a view to delivering them as fast as they are turned out to the British. The same should be done in my judgment with the Elco people at Bayonne.

I also took up with the Ordnance Bureau the prompt delivery of the 5 inch 38 calibre guns for British D Cruisers. We are going to take these guns from the Pacific coast where we planned to install them on some tankers. They will be put aboard railroad cars and brought east at once. Admiral Blandy insists that they will be ready for installation just as soon as the ships can get here and be prepared for their installation. I have taken the matter up as you directed with Mr. Arthur D. Purvis, Chairman of the British Supply Council in North America, and every possible collaboration is being carried on to speed the delivery of these guns to the British. Our people are extremely glad to have the guns tested out under actual war conditions in this way and it will serve a highly useful purpose to us.

Frank Knox

COPY

35 Knopf files  
1-41

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

Apr. 10, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

It has become expedient, in the interest of national defense, to permit qualified pilots of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States to operate, for certain specific purposes, United States Navy aircraft.

It has been found desirable that, during such operation, the aircraft concerned should be in the custody of the country represented by the pilot.

It is requested, therefore, that I be authorized to lend or lease, depending upon the circumstances, United States Navy aircraft to those countries whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States. The Chief of Naval Operations will then, at his discretion, approve specific requests for each flight, or series of flights.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) FRANK KNOX

The President

The White House.

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DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- 2-27-59

Signature- *Carl F. Sprick*

"F.K.  
O.K.  
F.D.R."

*Original of this letter returned to  
Secy. Navy. 5/11/41  
hm*

PSE Knox Folder  
1-41

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 21, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

FRANK KNOX

I think this is grand but I suggest cutting out the parts I have marked at the bottom of Page #5, top of Page #6, bottom of Page #6, middle of Page #7, top of Page #10, bottom of Page #10, and top of Page #11.

The last is a little premature because we cannot yet "insure the delivery". As you and I know, we are going to help the safe delivery.

F. D. R.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.  
WASHINGTON.

PSF Kuyf  
Saturday, Apr. 19/41

My Dear Mr. President: I am making  
a speech on Thursday night in N. Y.  
to the banquet of the Publisher's  
Assoc. of the U. S. I take pretty  
strong advanced ground and I would  
like you to see what I have  
written before delivery so I can  
make any changes you desire.

Will you let me know if possible  
by Monday as I am under promise  
to furnish advanced copy by Apr. 21.

Yours as ever,  
J.K.

In reply refer to Initials  
and No.

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Confidential*

*Navy folder  
2-41*

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON 25 April 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

On checking up today with Commander Forrest Sherman, who along with Captain Hill constitute the Navy's membership on the LaGuardia Committee, I ran into the attached memo.

Sherman tells me that everything is provided for in this connection and that the Canadians have obligated themselves to watch the area in question, and as a matter of fact they rather resent any suggestion on our part that we start any patrol of what they regard as strictly their own inshore waters. This was made very evident to our people in the last meeting.

I have told Sherman about the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company, controlled by the Morgan interests, and that he should tell the Canadians I felt reasonably certain any facilities which that Company had would be available to Canada to assist them in patrolling Hudson Bay waters.

You will be interested to know that through the Joint Board and on a rush order as suggested by your conversation to me the other day, we have made complete arrangements with the Canadians for the use of either Shelburne or Halifax or both. Depth of water in Shelburne is only about five fathoms so we will use it as far as we can for everything except battleships. The Canadians would prefer this because of the heavy load of shipping now in Halifax.

*Betty.*

Serial 048012

COPY

Memorandum for the President.

The question of patrol of Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait has been considered by the Permanent Joint Board on Defense of Canada - United States. Joint plans are now in preparation which provide for patrols of the Labrador Coast and Hudson Strait during the open season, commencing about June. At the request of the Canadian Government this task will be undertaken by them, utilizing planes, corvettes, and smaller craft. These operations will, of course, be supported by United States Naval Forces in the western Atlantic.

This matter will continue to be kept in mind by the United States members of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense of Canada - United States, and you may be assured that your wishes will be carried out.

Harry Folger  
2-41

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

May 9, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

I approve this increase but I am still concerned over the widespread scattering of the Marines into small groups and in hundreds of places. I think Tommy Holcomb ought to make a No. 1 priority effort from now on to build up his Expeditionary Force. As you and I know, this actually may be the next step we take.

F. D. R.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

May 7, 1941

THE WHITE HOUSE  
May 8 7 55 AM '41  
RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

On the day I took that delightful automobile ride with you, I secured your verbal OK to an increase of the Marine Corps to 75,000 men in the fiscal year 1942. I now learn that I shall have to have a written OK in order to get by the Bureau of the Budget.

Will you be good enough to OK the enclosed and send it back to me?

*HC.*

Enclosure

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DDO DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

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Date- 3-3-59

Signature- *Carl S. Spear*  
APR 7 1941

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(SC)PI6-1/KK  
Serial-035912

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1st ENDORSEMENT

From: The Chief of Naval Operations. *orig to Com. Halcomb*  
To: The Secretary of the Navy. *(NA) by Lt. Col. Smedberg to*  
Subject: Strength of the Marine Corps.  
Enclosure: (A) Restricted Table of Navy and Marine Corps Personnel, dated 20 March 1941.

1. In the basic letter the Major General Commandant outlines anticipated Marine Personnel requirements and recommends approval, for budgetary purposes, of revised personnel estimates as contained in Enclosure (A). These revised estimates provide for 4,213 officers, 544 warrant officers and 75,000 enlisted for the fiscal year 1942.

2. It is believed that the above strengths are fully warranted by the requirements of the present situation and the duties which the Marine Corps has been directed to perform. It is therefore recommended that the Marine Corps personnel estimates for the fiscal year 1942, as indicated in Enclosure (A), be approved for purposes of budgetary planning.

H. R. STARK

*ap 12* *VED*

Copy to: BuNav *meal*  
Budget Office *cas*  
Op-38 *EB*

NAVY DEPARTMENT

Approved APR 18 1941

Frank Knox

Secretary of the Navy

SENT - DIVISION COPY RETURNED

*Jk EB*  
O.K.

F. D. R.

(SC)PI6-1/KK

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1-41

*file  
journal*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

May 15, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I should like to have you take time to read the enclosed letter from John Whitaker the correspondent of the Chicago Daily News at Lisbon.

Whitaker is a seasoned observer, his latest experience being that of the Daily News correspondent in Italy from which he was ejected by the Mussolini Gang about a month ago. Since then he has been covering Lisbon.

He has expressed several points of view in this confidential letter in which I think you will be interested.

FRANK KNOX

Enclosure

Lisbon, Portugal,  
May 9, 1941.

Dear Colonel:

I have just received your letter of March 24 and I am glad you weren't upset by my expulsion from Italy. As long as that was my assignment-- accepted under protest-- I tried to hang on and I did want to be able to stick on until the end. But they hated my guts and I hated theirs and it's a wonder I wasn't booted sooner. I have always felt that it was futile trying to cover Rome but apparently the series on Italy proved me wrong. George Backer is here and he says that our series lifted the circulation of the "New York Post" more than 30,000. That delighted me because I tried once in the past to "sell" him the idea of the service and got a razz.

As my subsequent series indicates I'm convinced that without a miracle or some counter-stroke such as our own entry into the war both France and Spain will fold up for Hitler. They have neither the will nor the means to resist. Morale in both places stinks. A Major in Vichy whom I have known intimately for ten years said, "Don't feed us even though I have two children. A people that isn't willing to die doesn't deserve to live." But he is unique. The rest are playing ostrich and they will sell out to the Germans. Spaniards are the same way because they too feel that we are not willing to come into the war and beat Hitler to the punch. If we went into the Azores and knocked off the African bases both countries would have a radical change of heart but apparently our home opinion is playing ostrich too.

Sitting in Lisbon I am surprised how many Americans are turned against the British by the officious attitude of the British officials in Bermuda. Clipper crews, newspapermen, army and navy officers all rail out bitterly. I think they are wrong but I think something ought to be done to smooth out unnecessary causes of friction. Why don't you set up in Washington and in London two boards to study such problems as well as general relations between the two countries. If we have got to work together to win the war and then to reconstruct the world there ought to be some serious and conscious effort to sell one country to the other and to avoid friction. You people in the two governments are too busy but the problem is so important, it seems to me, that somebody ought to be working at it. I'm not exaggerating either because these pin-pricks are taking many peoples' eyes off the main thing.

Captain Kinkaid is something special but the quality of our naval attaches is splendid and ought to be a source of gratification and pride to you. Commander Ben Wyatt is the best man in the Madrid Embassy and the Lisbon Legation. He has got the Spaniards taped and he is in a position of unusual prestige in Madrid. I am sorry as hell that he is to be recalled and replaced just as the situation moves to full crisis. A new man simply can't get the contacts. Our people in both towns are sick at his going away but he will miss his captaincy chance if he doesn't do sea duty. I wish there were some way to keep him on through the next months anyway.



The Portugese intend to offer two hours token resistance and nothing more, I understand. The government will flee either to the Azores or Cape Verde. Much propoganda is made against us by the Germans who say that we want to take this that or the next thing. The Portugese are anti-German but they feel that they can't resist unless the Anglo-Saxons are able to come in ahead of the Germans.

Many thanks again for finding time to write me your last letter. I enjoyed the "Life" article and pictures-- especially of your various laughs.

Cordially yours,

John T. Whitaker.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,  
WASHINGTON.

[May 2, 1941]

My Dear Mr. President:

I read with intense satisfaction that sixth draft of Tuesday's speech last night. It is splendid - again you meet courageously a supremely difficult crisis. My admiration for your courage becomes greater each time events call for a fresh display of that quality. I have understood and sympathized with you in the hard choices that these times demand but I knew you would meet them head on - and you have magnificently.

It is the finest thing that life has brought me - to help and serve you in this momentous crisis.

With a full emergency decree  
we can do those things that  
need to be done to bring a  
victory to the right.

God bless you—

Frank Knox

P. S. Do you think that posture  
you assumed on the critical  
question of unwarranted strikes  
could be put affirmatively?  
FK

--

Seems to refer  
to the  
Unlimited National  
Emergency speech of  
5-27-41.

*Knox Folder*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

I understand that John Hancock and Bryan are a bit disappointed because the Navy Department told them they would proceed with only one of the 1,500 ton "little ships". I thought you were going ahead with building the first "little ship" in Texas, to be completed in 60 days, on the ground that she could be built there faster than in any other place -- but, at the same time, the Navy would proceed with the immediate ordering of steel, etc., for ten or twelve other units at a yard on the Great Lakes so that these ten or twelve could be got out into the ocean before ice.

Such a procedure would mean that we could start the trials of the first unit by mid-August, still have time to make minor alterations on the first batch of Great Lakes' ships before November 15th, and, if the first unit is a success, build much larger numbers during the Winter, ready to go to sea about April 1st, when the ice breaks up.

F.D.R.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANKLIN CARTER:

For your information.

F.D.R.

JOHN FRANKLIN CARTER

(Jay Franklin)

1210 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

"We, the People"  
"The Week in Washington"

Metropolitan 4112  
Metropolitan 4113

June 12, 1941.

MEMORANDUM ON "LITTLE SHIPS" CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

Commander Bryan has completed trials on the pilot-~~unit~~ unit of the "little ships" program and is today submitting his report to the Secretary of the Navy. The trials, which occurred in high wind and rough seas off Montauk, were eminently satisfactory.

Bryan is disturbed by his present instructions which contemplate constructing only one unit of two thousand tons in a coastal ship-yard near Beaumont, Texas, without utilizing any of the research and plans (other than hull-design) already developed for this type of vessel.

According to third-hand reports, which I have not yet verified, John Hancock returned to New York rather disappointed by being told that the Navy Department considers it unwise to proceed with this program until a second pilot-unit has been built. He does not consider himself justified in leaving his present work with Lehmann Brothers, except to undertake the initial construction of ten or twelve of these units, as the first step in an extensive program.

J.F.C.  
J.F.C.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1941

*file*  
*press mail*  
*RR*  
*Knox Folder*  
*Navy*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

My dear Mr. President:

I have just returned from one of the saddest duties I have had to perform as Secretary of the Navy -- participation in the ceremonies at sea over the victims of the O-9 disaster. I do not know when anything has pulled so hard at my heartstrings.

Since I left here Friday, the Russian-German war has begun and I feel very deeply that I ought to say to you that, in my judgment, this provides us with an opportunity to strike and strike effectively at Germany.

Hitler has violated his own resolution not to engage in two wars at once on two separate fronts. The best opinion I can get is that it will take anywhere from six weeks to two months for Hitler to clean up on Russia. It seems to me that we must not let that three months go by without striking hard - the sooner the better.

Yours sincerely,

*Frank Knox*



F3F Knox Folder

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

I am glad to have your memorandum about the Charon ships.

A little bit of history. The Navy has always hated heavy duty gasoline engines. In 1917, when I was trying to get out the 110 foot sub-chasers, I had to overrule the Bureau of Steam Engineering which insisted on either little steam-driven engines or little Diesels. To have used them then would have meant (April, 1917) delivery sometime in the Spring of 1918. The heavy duty gasoline engines were of a commercial type and we could get deliveries of the first batch in thirty days. The first sub-chaser contracts were let about the middle of April, and the first ships were delivered the end of May. We built, as I remember it, over 300 of them. Their engines functioned, on the whole, extremely well -- three to a ship. Half a dozen of them burned

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

-2-

up because the personnel did not keep the bilges clean -- gas and oil ran down into the bilges and the accidents resulted. No accidents resulted where the bilges were kept clean.

It is perfectly true that some other type of propulsion, i.e., a small Diesel, would be better for a ship that is intended to last for many years. But the delay makes a shift impossible.

You are right that these ships are too good to be broken up for scrap after one voyage to England. They should keep on running as long as their repair costs and delays are not too heavy.

F. D. R.

No papers accompanied the original of this memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy.

175F Knov

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

June 19, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

This will serve as a reply to your memoranda of May 31st and June 13th, dealing with the so-called Charon ships.

As I told you when I was with you yesterday, the real and only point of doubt left is the propulsion machinery. Bryan is a very optimistic man and feels very sure the tests will prove the propulsion machinery successful, but I can find no one else who has any such degree of confidence in that direction.

We have the Chrysler people hard at work setting up a full-sized propulsion unit and rushing tests on it. We ought to have a determinative answer on this phase by July 15th. Until we do know that the machinery proposed will successfully propel the ship, it would seem to me extremely hazardous to build a large number of them, because this proposed propulsion unit is a very important feature of the entire idea. However, I have placed an order with a shipyard on the Gulf for the first full-sized unit, and this is now under construction, with the promise that it will be delivered within two months from the time the order was given, which will mean it should be ready about August 1st. By that time, the propulsion unit doubt will be cleared up.

My plan is then to place an order for at least a dozen or fifteen of these ships with a concern which will build them near their steel plant on the Ohio River below Pittsburgh. It is not necessary to construct a shipyard in order to do this. The advantage of building them on the Ohio and Mississippi is, that they can be gotten out the whole year around.

Incidentally, I am sure you will be interested in the assurance I now have that if the ships are a success they can be used without difficulty as tankers for transport of oil as well as general cargo. It seems to me probable, however, that the cost of the ships is going to be too high

to permit their use for just one trip to England and then break them up for scrap. Present indications are they will cost somewhere between \$150,000 and \$200,000. However, they are proving so much more seaworthy in the tests made than expected that they can readily be used continuously and thus bring down the cargo-carrying cost to a reasonable figure.

Admiral Stark is now very enthusiastic about this plan.

*Frank Knox*

PSE Knox Folder  
Navy

July 9, 1941.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I wish that you or appropriate representatives designated by you would join with the Secretary of War and his representatives in exploring at once the over-all production requirements required to defeat our potential enemies.

I realize that this report involves the making of appropriate assumptions as to our probable friends and enemies and to the conceivable theatres of operation which will be required.

I wish you would explore the munitions and mechanical equipment of all types which in your opinion would be required to exceed by an appropriate amount that available to our potential enemies. From your report we should be able to establish a munitions objective indicating the industrial capacity which this nation will require.

I am not suggesting a detailed report but one that, while general in scope, would cover the most critical items in our defense and which could then be related by the OPM into practical realities of production facilities. It seems to me we need to know now our program in its entirety, even though at a later date it may be amended.

I believe that the confidential report which I am asking you to make to me would be of great assistance, not only in the efficient utilization of our productive facilities but would afford an adequate

- 2 -

opportunity for planning for the greatly increased speed of delivery which our defense program requires.

I am asking Mr. Hopkins to join with you in these conferences. I would appreciate it if the Secretary of War could take the initiative in these conferences.

Very sincerely yours,

The Honorable  
The Secretary of the Navy.

*all personal*

*PSF Knox Folder*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

July 10, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Immediately upon receipt of your letter of July 9 directing a survey of over-all production requirements, I got in touch by 'phone with Secretary of War Stimson and Mr. Hopkins. As a result of the conference with Secretary Stimson, in both the War and Navy Departments, a study is being made by the War Plans Board along the lines outlined in your letter. As soon as these studies are completed, the Secretary of War, Mr. Hopkins and myself will go over this material and submit a joint report to you.

*Frank Knox*

THIS CAN BE FILED.

H.L.H.



PSF Knopf

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 12, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR

HARRY HOPKINS:

TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION.

F.D.R.

(SC)Q51  
Serial 037338

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON

PSF Knox Folder  
Navy

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

JUL 10 1941

My dear Mr. President:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of 1 July 1941, with enclosed copy of a telegram from Mr. Grady of the American President Lines, in which you request information regarding the use of vessels recently withdrawn from commercial services and whether or not these vessels are being used to the best advantage for national defense requirements and for over all commercial carryings.

On the assumption that the Secretary of War will respond to the above communication in so far as the seven vessels recently allocated to that Department are concerned, justification of the Navy's employment of recently acquired ships narrows to the following: 5 transports (AP), 12 cargo vessels (AK) and 2 provision storeships (AF). Of these, 1 transport (ex-America), 9 cargo ships, and 2 provision storeships, were obtained in preparation for a specific situation in the Atlantic and to augment for that purpose vessels already available in the Navy plus certain others from the Army. The four transports acquired, but not included in this expedition, were obtained to replace similar Navy units withdrawn from the Pacific. These four, among which are three former President Line vessels presumably referred to by Mr. Grady, are or will be undergoing conversion to combat loading until about 1 November 1941. None of these vessels has been operated by the Navy prior to acceptance at the conversion yards. Of the three cargo vessels to be accounted for, two are being used to replace similar units already available in the Navy which were assigned to the Special Atlantic mission, and one, when acquired about mid-July, will be used to augment the urgent need for additional transportation requirements to Pacific Island Bases under development. There is, therefore, no surplusage of recently acquired auxiliary tonnage for the Navy which can be considered as paralleling the commercial routes from which these were withdrawn.

Although not included within the group of 26 vessels which you authorized for the War and Navy Departments in your letter of 26 May 1941 to the Chairman of the Maritime Commission, may I mention as a matter of interest that in operating the four high speed tankers lately acquired from commercial sources, the Navy is giving every consideration to helping out the Petroleum Industry with cargo lifts when and as opportunity permits. During

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the current month two cargoes will be delivered for the Standard Oil Company on the Atlantic Seaboard, and in August it is anticipated two more voyages will be made for such oil company as the Maritime Commission may designate.

Sincerely yours,

*Frank Knox*

The President,  
The White House.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

DECLASSIFIED

DOD DI 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- 9-27-59

Signature- *Carl L. Spicer*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

July 23, 1941

PSE Knox Folder  
1-41  
File  
Personal

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT:

I have followed up the subject matter of your memorandum of July 19 concerning aid to the Russians.

Growing out of a discussion with Admiral Reeves and also with the War Department, I learned that there is as yet no list of items which the Russians desire. I am advised that such a list is now being prepared which will be submitted to you in a day or two.

As soon as we know what they would like and can learn what part of the material should be handled by the Navy, I will go right into action.

Frank Knox

PSF: Knox Folder

8-10-41

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing Parts I and II of Mr. Hopkins' report of his trip to Moscow. They include certain hitherto undisclosed military information.

I wish this report to be carefully restricted.

Very sincerely yours,

YRK

Enclosure.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of the Navy.

Identical letter also sent  
to Secy. of War & State

HLH/lmb  
8/20/41

PBF 12/10/17

file  
personal

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.  
WASHINGTON.

Tuesday - Aug. 26/17

My Dear Mr. President:

If you have not chanced to do so, do read Bill White's piece "The Road to Peace" in this morning's (Tuesday) Post.

It has to do with your "Eight Points" and it says very beautifully what is in the heart of every right-thinking, patriotic American to say to you. In perception, dignity and praise it is what I tried to say the other night in North Carolina.

Yours faithfully

J.K.

PBF Knox Folder

*file  
personal*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

August 26, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I am attaching herewith a postscript which is part of a letter from one of my correspondents in London, Helen Kirkpatrick. Helen is a first class newspaper woman with exceptional sources of information. Her work in London during the war has been outstanding and the contents of her despatches have been thoroughly dependable.

The enclosed postscript was written after she had made a careful survey of the situation in Ireland and the situation referred to throughout is the Irish situation. I think her comments have enough substance to them to encourage some kind of an effort to tentatively acquire some bases in Ireland. You will note she suggested we do it on our own and not in cooperation with Britain.

Others have confirmed to me what Helen says about the situation next winter in Ireland. It is going to be pretty bad. There is also at last a recognition pretty generally in Ireland of what a Hitler victory might mean for them. On the whole, maybe it might be worthwhile to make a new pass in that direction.

*Frank Knox*

Enclosure

PSF Know

Postscript

August 9th, 1941

From several conversations, it seems pretty clear that our friends are now ready to talk business, but the greatest possible tact will be necessary, and the least possible apparent collaboration with their historical enemies. Something along the lines that Bob Murphy's contract calls for is suggested as the best introduction to better business.

The countryside is lovely now, but the winter will be a difficult one. Wheat and coal are going to be extremely short, and there is a real possibility of widespread unemployment, hunger, and probably riots. Therefore anything that can be done along these lines would be helpful.



Know Folder

late  
apparent

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

August 28, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I had dinner the night before last with Bill Bullitt and he told me something of your talk with him about getting a Speakers Bureau functioning in a vigorous way. I thoroughly share your concern that this thing be pressed. I think it is highly important, however, and after the Cabinet Meeting in which you urged all of us to do what we could in getting something started that would present the Administration side to the public since no one else was doing it, I started something down here and brought into the picture the War Department through McCloy and several organizations such as the Fight For Freedom and the Aid to the Allies groups, and at this meeting, former Governor Robert Bass, who was present, was delegated to contact Mayor LaGuardia and offer our cooperation in any way we could to promote an activity which he thought belonged very properly in his department.

At first, the Little Flower was a bit excited but Bass got him back to earth and convinced him that we were not horning in but were only anxious to be of help. Since then, I have called on the Mayor personally at his office and emphasized this assurance. Apparently, now the thing is getting underway and, as the Mayor suggested, I have sent him Barry Bingham of Louisville as a sort of liaison man for him in this activity. Barry is now hard at work on the job. I have also asked Adlai Stevenson to keep in touch and provide additional propulsion.

The trouble with the distinguished Mayor of New York is that he has so much to do that the days are not long enough to get things done. His heart is all right, his purposes are beyond reproach, and his skill and ability, when employed, superb. The simple truth, I think, is he is trying to do too much, and one of the things that has suffered has been this matter of a speaking campaign. I think we have the thing now sufficiently under motion to insure that it goes ahead.

Frank Knox

*file  
personal*

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

August 28, 1941

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT:

I have been advised that Tommy Corcoran is being considered for appointment as Solicitor General, and the same friend of Tommy's who told me this told me that there was a possibility of some misunderstanding concerning Corcoran's activities on behalf of Mr. Havenstrite who had a proposal for the exploration for oil in Alaska.

Havenstrite came to see me in connection with this and brought Corcoran with him. He had previously talked with Secretary Ickes who has immediate control of the matter. The purpose of his call on me was to inquire as to the possibility of getting an oil contract with the Navy. Nothing came of the matter, because, of course, I could not make a contract with him until he had some oil to sell. He was also an applicant for a loan from RFC, and because of his failure to have any tangible assets or any contract relations of a substantial sort with the Government, Secretary Jones declined to make the loan.

I am perfectly satisfied that Corcoran's connection with this matter was entirely lacking in any impropriety or that it offered any room for criticism of a legitimate sort. When I explained to Havenstrite that a speculative contract would not be made, that ended the matter without any attempted pressure of any sort.

I am sending this memorandum because I know how easily things get distorted here in Washington, and I felt it a matter of real justice to make this record relating to Corcoran's activities completely clear and to indicate that what he did, in my judgment, was above legitimate criticism.

*Frank Knox*

PSE Knox Folder  
1-41

August 30, 1941

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:**

I am enclosing herewith, for your information and guidance, a copy of a memorandum just sent to the Secretary of War.

Will you please cooperate with the War Department in preparing the recommendations called for.

F. D. R.

PS F Knox

August 30, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

As you know, I recently sent Mr. Harry Hopkins to Moscow, to inquire into Russian needs for munitions that might be obtained from American production, and to inform the U.S.S.R. that this Government is willing to help with such supplies to the extent of its ability.

As a result of that visit, and Mr. Hopkins' report to Mr. Churchill and myself, a suggestion was sent to the U.S.S.R. that a conference be held in Russia in the near future, to be attended by representatives of Russia, Great Britain and this country, to have as its objective the formulation of definite munitions aid programs, to assist Russia in its war efforts, and which might be supplied by Great Britain and the United States.

Russia has accepted that suggestion, and the representatives of the various countries are to meet in Russia by October 1, 1941.

I deem it to be of paramount importance for the safety and security of America that all reasonable munitions help be provided for Russia, not only immediately but as long as she continues to fight the Axis powers effectively. I am convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments of such character must be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the proposed conference.

It is obvious that early help must be given primarily from production already provided for. I desire that your Department working in cooperation with the Navy Department, submit to me by September 10

next your recommendations of distribution of expected United States production of munitions of war, as between the United States, Great Britain, Russia and the other countries to be aided -- by important items, quantity time schedules and approximate values, for the period from the present time until June 30, 1942.

I also desire your general conclusions as to the over-all production effort of important items needed for victory, on the general assumption that the reservoir of munitions power available to the United States and her friends is sufficiently superior to that available to the Axis powers, to insure defeat of the latter.

The distribution of production from existing production after June 30, 1942, and the distribution of the Victory Production Objective will obviously have to be decided at a later date, in the light of the then existing circumstances.

After the above reports and recommendations are submitted, I propose to arrange with the Prime Minister of England for a conference of high military officials, for the purpose of discussing the above two recommendations, as well as the aid to be provided by England to Russia. In view of the date on which the conference is to be held in Russia, it is important that the recommendations resulting from this British conference reach me not later than September 20 next.

With the knowledge of these recommendations, and after further consultation with the Prime Minister of Great Britain, I will be able to instruct the mission going to Russia as to the aid which will be supplied by this country. Should adjustments to this program of assistance be necessary, they will be recommended to me by the mission to Russia,

Page 3

after due consultation with the Russians and the British on the spot.



PSF Knopf

Navy Folder  
2-41

September 18, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL STARK:

In regard to the enclosed questions and answers, I have the following suggestions for you to consider. I will be back probably on Monday morning.

Question 1. In your proposed answer, I would add that the GREER incident took place in an area directly in the path of communications between American ports and Iceland.

Question 4. In the answer I would add something like this. It is, in fairness, necessary to couple with the above statement a definite notation of the fact that the plane left the area at 10:52 A.M. and did not return and that the GREER fired no gun torpedo or depth charge until 12:56 A.M., which was 8 minutes after the submarine fired a torpedo at the GREER -- or, in other words, two hours after the British plane had left the scene.

Question 7. In your answer, second part, I would leave in the first sentence and shorten the sentence beginning "If we assume" -- to read -- no person can predict what the submarine's course would have been. The answer, therefore, might be yes or it might be no.

Question 9. In your answer, I would add that all these depth charges were dropped after the first torpedo had been fired.

In other words, I think it is essential that in the testimony, this testimony (a) be kept as brief as possible, (b) that two facts be made to stand out so clearly that they cannot be separated by any hostile press -- first, that two hours elapsed between the bombing of the submarine by the British plane and the firing of the first torpedo by the submarine; and second, that no weapon was fired by the GREER until after the torpedo attack began.

F.D.R.

FDR/dj

Enclosures returned

PSF - Navy, Knox

The Secretary of the Navy (Knox) to President Roosevelt,  
Washington, November 29, 1941

Encloses draft of material he sent to the State Dept for  
use in drafting FDR's message to Congress

SEE: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941, Vol. IV,  
The Far East, page 698.

RLJ

12/5/56



[Nov. ? ]

1941

MR. HOPKINS HAS READ THIS AND IT CAN  
BE FILED.

L. BERNEY

*file  
Confidential*

Mr. J. M. Patterson,  
President,  
Daily News,  
220 East 42nd Street,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Joe:

I have read, and I am considerably disturbed by, the editorial appearing in the Daily News of October 29, 1941, under the caption "More About The U.S.S. Greer".

In that editorial reference is made to an open letter to the President by Mr. Amos Pinchot which has recently been released and, after quoting an excerpt from the President's radio address of September 11 and comparing it with Admiral Stark's report to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, the President is accused, in effect, of deliberately distorting the truth.

In the light of the sequence of events regarding the Greer incident and especially in the light of the manner and the order in which information of the whole affair was received in Washington, I feel it incumbent upon me to inform you concerning these matters in the hope that the impression given in the editorial of October 29, 1941, may be corrected and the serious charge reflecting on the veracity of the President of the United States withdrawn.

The Greer incident occurred on September 4, 1941, while the Greer, in company with no other vessel, was enroute to Iceland carrying mail for our forces there; the President's address referred to in the editorial was made on September 11, 1941; Admiral Stark's report to the Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee was made on Septem-

RF  
Knox Folder  
Navy  
[Nov. 1941]

ber 20; complete and detailed information concerning the Greer incident was not received in the Navy Department until September 15, 1941.

At the President's request for his use in the preparation of his radio address of September 11 the Navy Department, under date of September 9, 1941, furnished the President with a memorandum concerning the incident which I quote below:

"1. The recent attack on a United States naval vessel by a foreign submarine, admittedly German, is a clear indication of Nazi aggression against the United States.

2. The United States Destroyer GREER was enroute from this country to Iceland with mail for the United States Garrison. When in a position latitude 62°-43'N longitude 27°-22'W, 175 miles from her destination, a torpedo was fired at the GREER by a submerged submarine from very close aboard. There is no question as to the facts in the case. Through her instruments, the GREER had picked up the submarine in advance of the attack, had detected a sudden change of course of the submarine to get into a firing position, saw the large bubble within a few yards of her bridge caused when the torpedo was fired, and also saw the swirl made by the propellers of the aggressor.

3. The GREER went to top speed, reversed her course, headed for the position of the submarine, and then saw approaching her the wake of a second torpedo, which she avoided. Then, twelve minutes after the first submarine torpedo was fired, and six minutes after the second submarine torpedo was fired, the GREER dropped her first depth charges in a counter attack.

4. The United States Destroyer GREER continued to search the vicinity with her instruments, rediscovered the submarine about one hour and fifteen minutes later, and again counter attacked with depth charges. The GREER proceeded on her way to Iceland after an additional ineffective search of about four and one-half hours."

The memorandum above quoted was a true and factual statement of the incident at the time, although, admittedly, certain details then



It is inconceivable that the President would have approved and released Admiral Stark's answers to the Committee's questionnaire if there had been the slightest thought in his mind that he had been guilty of deliberately deceiving the American people on the occasion of his radio address of September 11, 1941.

The plain facts are that the statement made by the President to the American people on September 11, 1941, was in exact accord with the information furnished him by the Navy Department just prior to that time; that that statement was factually true in every respect but omitted certain details either for reasons of the security of military information or because they were not known to the Navy Department and the President then; and that the detailed report made to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on September 20, 1941, was in elaboration of and in complete harmony with the President's statement of September 11, 1941.

I hope what I have said above will clear this matter up in your mind and that you may see your way clear to withdraw the serious charge of deliberate untruthfulness made against the President <sup>of the United States</sup> in the editorial columns of the Daily News under date of October 29, 1941.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Knox

*BF Knox Folder*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 17, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

What should be done about  
this? Please return enclosure.

F. D. R.

Copy of  
Memo handed to Secy. Hull by the  
Netherlands Minister. 12/16/41

Lib  
Journal

PSE Knox Folder

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,  
WASHINGTON.

Friday, Dec. 19/41

My Dear Mr. President: I was  
so overwhelmed by your too  
generous praise at the Cabinet  
meeting today to make any  
response save a "thank you".

I don't want to let it go at  
that - I want to tell you that  
it is the finest decoration I could  
ask for, or have. I shall cherish  
what you said today as long  
as I live.

May I say again what I have  
said to you before - that it is  
a tremendous inspiration to serve  
under a Commander-in-Chief

whose courage, resolution and  
foresight is so outstanding and  
exceptional. It is a source  
of immense satisfaction to me  
to have a small part in  
aiding you to bear the  
fearful load of responsibility  
which is yours.

Gratefully and affectionately,

Frank Knox

The President

The White House

Washington, DC.



*PSF Navy:*

*Knox Folder*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~██████████~~

December 23, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

I am inclined to favor the recommendation of the three members rather than the recommendation of Oswald Ryan. Please let me have your confidential slant.

F. D. R.

Secret report to the President from the three members of the Civil Aeronautics Board, dated December 17th, re inauguration of air transportation service between the United States and Foynes (Irish Free State.)

DECLASSIFIED

By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.

By W. J. Stewart Date \_\_\_\_\_