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February 21, 1939.

Personal and confidential

Dear Jack:

I was very glad to get your letter of February 8 but regret to hear that your trip home is being delayed. I can quite understand that, in view of your Spanish interests, you want to be on the ground but, if your trip home is dependent on developments in Spain, I cannot be very optimistic about seeing you here in the near future. I do not wish to play the role of a prophet but I see the Spanish situation being one that will cause us concern for some time to come. The complete collapse of the Loyalist Government may bring the whole European situation to a crisis. I do not believe that Mussolini has any intention of withdrawing his troops for the present and even in case of a complete Franco victory. Even though Mr. Franco should be able to succeed in getting for the time-being a certain control over all of Spain, I think there is a good deal of reason to believe that, even if this does not lead to general complications in Europe, it will not in any event mean peace in Spain. I think that he will be in a very difficult position in Spain and that in some respects the real trouble there may only start when he is normally in control.

I am surprised to hear you say that you do not know of any Frenchman or any American living in France who believes that France will be involved in a war this year. I think your impression that the Italian demands are going to simmer down to "a few economic questions such as a free port of Djibouti" is one without real foundation. The situation of Italy is such that I do not believe her position will be met by a few such minor solutions. By the time this letter reaches you the situation will be a

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lot clearer, but I am very much afraid that it will not be in the direction that you seem to have in mind.

What particularly surprises me is that you say that you do not know any Frenchman or American living in France who believes that France will be involved in a war this year. I think this involves the premise of continued and unlimited surrender by France, which I do not believe possible. I realize that what has happened in the last six months is not very encouraging in some respects but the situation is becoming far more serious and continued concessions by France and England, even on a large scale, will not satisfy either Germany or Italy. I think the position is being much better understood in both England and France and, just because it is, I do not look for major concessions and that may bring the crisis. Anyone who knows what the Germans have in mind realizes that they do not have any intention of stopping in their program. As a matter of fact, they cannot stop without a collapse of their regime and, before they will risk a complete collapse, they will risk a war, which perhaps they know they will lose. It is useless to think that either Germany or Italy will be satisfied with any minor concessions and it is just because this is so that one cannot take any optimistic outlook if one is in any sense realistic.

I note that, in the opinion of Americans living in Paris who have recently been in this country, the American press does not give a true picture of the European situation but is painting it darkly. I cannot agree with this. The difference I think is that in this country we have a really free press and I think that our Government and our public opinion are perhaps the best informed in the world today. In France, and to a certain degree in England, the press is not properly informing the public. This situation is improving much more in England than it is in France. I wonder whether the French public is being informed as to how many Italian troops are being moved down into Libya and I wonder what French public opinion would be if it were realized how many are already there. I wonder whether French public opinion is being informed with respect to the number of Germans who are going to Libya. I wonder whether the English and the French have been informed that the Germans recently tried to place an order for 10,000 trucks in Belgium.

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Is French public opinion being told that there are six motorized divisions in Germany near the Dutch frontier? In this country our papers are publishing the facts and I think we in this Department know what the facts are and I cannot recall anything of importance which has appeared in the press in this country recently which has not correctly covered the situation.

I am rather surprised that anyone should put any credence into such statements which are being made that our press is controlled by the Jews. You certainly are not being misled by anything of that kind. The most important paper in this country, of course, is the TIMES which is owned by a Jew, but there is no paper in the world today which is more correct and objective in its reporting and in its editorial policy than is the TIMES. Just because it is owned by a Jew, Mr. Sulzburger is most meticulous in seeing that the TIMES is objective. In Washington the leading newspaper is owned by a Jew, but it is in many respects one of the best newspapers in the country and certainly completely objective. 95 percent of the newspapers of this country are owned by non-Jews and edited by non-Jews. It is really incredible to what extent this anti-Semitic propaganda can influence people. The American press, I can assure you, is giving a true picture of the situation and I am glad that it is, for it is well that we here should know what the facts are. I think you can appreciate what the situation here is by the fact that when our defense bill was before the House recently and came to a vote only 15 members voted against it. That in this country is most significant.

I can't go into the situation in this letter because I am leading a very busy and in many respects difficult life and personal correspondence is almost out of the question. I am, however, rather disturbed by your letter and I hope that you will be coming home soon. I think it will be a good thing for you to plan to spend a few months here and to get the feel of the situation. We here feel distinctly that the situation today is far more critical than it was even in September of last year. If there is another surrender to Germany and to Italy, I think we would soon see England in the same position with respect to Germany that France now is with respect to England. That indeed would be disastrous and would be a matter of great concern to us in this country.

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I know Marion will be glad to hear from you and will regret, as I do, that your visit home will be delayed.

With all good wishes,

Cordially yours,