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April 22, 1940. Acknowledged. The Ambassador.



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Paris, February 8, 1940.

*Personal*

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I am enclosing a copy of an editorial which appeared in the Paris NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE yesterday and which may interest you, if you do not already have it. It pays you a well merited tribute and some of the other comment is interesting.

You will have seen the Ambassador by this time. We are having plenty of work in his absence. There is an increasing tendency here to sacrifice treaty, convention and mandate commitment obligations to what is always termed "military necessity", and I foresee that the Embassy here will not have smooth sailing from now on. I say this with no critical feeling toward the French, as they know that they are fighting a grim battle for their particular type of civilization and their own skins and are convinced that in order to win they must in some directions adopt totalitarian tactics and a minor ruthlessness.

The

The Honorable  
George S. Messersmith,  
Assistant Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

Fullerton, Hugh S.

The sober truth is that French Government opinion is arriving at the conviction that we will not come into the war in the predictable future, that the revision of the Neutrality Act represents about all that can be expected from us, except good wishes. The closer economic and financial ties between France and Great Britain are, of course, playing an import part here in reducing or obliterating certain types of standard American imports. Since the French feel that our Trade Agreement is on the shelf for the duration of the war, our protests based upon this document are considered merely platonic.

By going to the bat personally, with his tremendous vigor and insistence, the Ambassador can obtain satisfaction for our demands in important instances, but he can hardly be expected to use the same tone and gestures in championing the minor as well as the major complaints. With the Ambassador away, our position is, of course, twice as difficult.

We are beginning to live over again our period of neutrality in the last war and, while our difficulties with the British always obtain more publicity, the much more intimate association of the British and the French in all aspects of cooperation toward the waging of this war is bringing about a certain identity of viewpoint and action upon the part of the two countries which

affects us considerably.

The Department no doubt realizes our growing difficulties here and that they are more or less inevitable. It probably appreciates, also, that while we put up just as resolute a fight for American rights, we are unable to obtain the satisfaction that we could generally count upon a few months ago.

This is not much of a letter, but carries with it cordial wishes to Mrs. Messersmith and to you. We learned with considerable selfish satisfaction that you were going to stay at the helm in Washington until the appropriations and many other important matters have been entirely cleared up. I know that Mrs. Messersmith, however, is looking forward to getting you to Cuba as quickly as she can.

Sincerely yours,



P.S. Your letter of  
Jan 2. has just  
come in by post. I was  
much pleased to hear it.