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Belgium — Lindbergh

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We were thrilled when we got the news in Antwerp that Lindberg had crossed the ocean and landed safely in Paris. We had of course no idea of seeing him in Belgium. The Ambassador was away on a holiday and Jimmy Dunn was Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels. Shortly after his landing in Paris we learned that he was planning to fly to Brussels and from there to London and would return to London with his plane by ship to the United States. Jimmy Dunn called me by telephone and informed me that the newspaper reports were correct and that Ambassador Herrick had informed him from Paris that Lindberg was coming to Brussels, where he would spend I believe three days. He asked me to come over during Lindberg's stay in Brussels and to help out with the arrangements and to accompany Lindberg on a good number of his visits. I shall have to determine from my papers the exact day that Lindberg arrived in Brussels, but it was close to Memorial Day. On arriving in Brussels I told Dunn that we were having the usual memorial celebration at the cemetery at Waereghen in Flanders where some three or four hundred American soldiers were buried who had been killed during the last days of the war. I said that I was going to make the speech there as usual, and that there would be a very considerable gathering of Americans from all over Belgium there. I thought it would be a nice thing if Lindberg, as he was flying back on Memorial Day, or rather I think it was on a Sunday following Memorial Day, that we had the celebration, if Lindberg would stop or rather fly low over the cemetery and drop a wreath. Dunn thought it was a good idea which we could suggest to Lindberg.

The few days that Lindberg was in Brussels were extremely occupied. A very full schedule was arranged with the Belgian authorities. He was of course received by the king. This was a very simple ceremony and I did not accompany them on this visit. There were any number of visits to all kinds of places and a big dinner, as I recall.

We found Lindberg a very modest and unassuming young man. He seemed to be bewildered by all the attention which he was getting and yet at the same time

resentful at having to go through all of these ceremonies. He carried himself very well, everyplace that one of these meetings was arranged there were great numbers of people in the streets. He was always glad when these ceremonies were over. He was shy and engaged in very little conversation with either the important people who came to greet him at all of these ceremonies. He gave the impression of being a bit surly. I have always felt that he was just shy and really overcome by all of the attentions which were being paid him.

On the arrival of Lindberg at the Embassy in Brussels we had to go over the arrangements which had been planned with him. Most of these had been planned really by the Belgian government. I recall that there were thousands of telegrams which had been received, all addressed to Lindberg. Dunn and I went over these telegrams and sorted out the ones which we thought he should see. We then separated from those he should see the ones which we felt should have an answer. Lindberg showed no interest in this mass of telegrams and it was with a good deal of difficulty that we could get him to read the telegrams which we had separated. The number was not considerable. Among them was a telegram from a member of the Belgian nobility who was very close to the royal family. She was a very distinguished old lady and was very much interested in the anti-alcoholic campaigns in Belgium. In this telegram, which was very nicely worded, she congratulated him on being a non-drinker and spoke of it being a wonderful example for the youth of the world and asked him for a telegram which could be published. It was one of the telegrams which had to be answered because it came from one of the most important people connected with the court, and as a pure matter of courtesy it had to be acknowledged. He refused completely to say anything about his being a non-drinker and the only thing that he would agree to was that there should be an acknowledgement of the telegram. I recall his saying that/he was a non-drinker was nobody's business and was of interest to no one.

We discussed with him the question of his flight to London and we told him

about the ceremony at Waereghen and it was the one thing which he agreed to do with complete graciousness. He wanted to know the times of the program at Waereghen and said that he would arrange his departure from Brussels so as to be flying over the cemetery at Waereghen when the memorial ceremony was in progress. This was done, and in the middle of the ceremony at Waereghen Lindberg flew low over the field, circled several times over the field and when he was quite low to the ground dropped a wreath.

I have never seen Lindberg since that time. In another memorandum I shall speak of his visit to Germany before the war and the unfortunate results of that visit. It is sufficient to say here that he was completely overwhelmed by what he saw in Germany. He completely misjudged in many respects what was taking place. He was so overwhelmed by what the Germans were doing in the way of developing air power that he became almost a pacifist. The reports which he made to the War Department in Washington on his return appalled I think a good many of the high officers of our armed forces. While I am sure that Lindberg had no real sympathy with the Nazi regime, he certainly did not realize the objectives of the Nazi government. He saw what the Germans were doing in the youth movement and there were many things about what the Nazi regime was doing in the country that appealed to him. He did not have the political experience or the historical background in order to form any real appreciation of what was going on and what the dangers of the Nazi regime were. What he said on the basis of what he thought he saw had a very unfortunate effect in many ways, including for him. Many thought that he was a Nazi sympathizer. This I do not believe was correct. That he did completely misinterpret the developments in Germany and what they meant for us and for the world is quite correct. Mrs. Dwight Morrow, his mother-in-law, became a very close friend of ours after I came to Mexico as Ambassador. It was while Mr. Morrow was Ambassador in Mexico that he established a home in Cuernavaca for week-end stays. Cuernavaca at that time had become a relatively small and unimportant

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town. The first capital of Cortez in Mexico had become a rather shabby, run down place. Many people in Mexico are grateful to Morrow and Mrs. Morrow, and certainly the people of Cuernavaca are grateful to them having so to speak put Cuernavaca back on the map. The fact that the American Ambassador established a house there and spent a good deal of time there when he possibly could from his duties in Mexico City, interested many people in the town and from that time on Mexicans, Americans and other foreigners in Mexico City again became aware of the attractions of Cuernavaca, the climate, its lower altitude and its proximity to the city. In many ways the beginning of the development of Cuernavaca into the beautiful and visited place it is today is due to the initiative of Morrow.

Mrs. Morrow came to Mexico City after her husband's death almost every year to spend anywhere from a few weeks to a month in her Cuernavaca home. She invariably brought with her George Rubel~~y~~ and his wife, formerly a member of the firm of Covington and Rube~~ly~~ in Washington, and a number of old friends varying from ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ year to year. She usually came to lunch or dinner with us in Mexico City while she was on one of these visits and later when my wife and I had a house in Cuernavaca always came to see us with her house party for lunch or dinner. Mrs. Morrow was a charming and great lady. We shall always recall with great pleasure the opportunity we had for knowing her well and enjoying her friendship. She was deeply interested always in what was going on in Mexico and on every visit which she made from the beginning of my stay in Mexico in 1942 she always engaged me in long conversations about personalities and additions and developments in Mexico in which she had really a very deep interest. The Mexican people appreciated her interest in their country and in the developments in the country. Up to her death early in 1955 she retained her memory and her interest in everything, including her friends and Mexico.