



Australian Government



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[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Bruce] Conversations USA 1939 [programme of Stanley Melbourne Bruce's 1939 visit to the United States and notes of conversations with the American President, the British Ambassador to Washington (Sir Ronald Lindsay), Cordell Hull, Norman Davis, Jimmy Dunn and Sumner Welles]

1939

Conversations 7(4)
M. J. A.

1939

For Am. Water

Ready for review

[CRS M104, Folders of annual correspondence,
? 1926-1964]

1939.

Lord Bruce's file.

Visit to the United States of America.
Programme and notes of conversations.

Programme for 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th May, 1939.

Notes of conversation:-

2nd May. Sir Ronald Lindsay, British Ambassador, Washington.
Mr. Cordell Hull.

3rd May. Mr. Norman Davis.
Mr. Jimmy Dunn.

4th May. President of the U.S.A.

6th May. Mr. Sumner Welles.

Thursday, May 4th:

- 11.00 a.m. - Call on Mr. Feis, State Department Adviser on Economic Affairs at State Department.
- 12.00 noon - Be received by President at White House.
- 1.05 p.m. - Small luncheon given by Mr. Pierrepont Moffat for you at Metropolitan Club.
- 8.00 p.m. - With Mrs. Bruce dine with Mr. Victor Mallet.

Friday, May 5th:

- 9.45 *see Wakeup in Post, Under Star, Kennedy.*
- 10.30 a.m. - See General Parran, Department of Health, Constitution Avenue.
- 11.30 a.m. - See Dr. Hornbeck, Adviser on Far Eastern Affairs at State Department.
- 6.00 p.m. - See Ambassador at Embassy.
- 8.30 p.m. - With Mrs. Bruce - small dinner at my house.

Saturday, May 6th:

- 10.00 a.m. - Call on Mr. Sumner Welles at State Department.
- 11.00 a.m. - Leave for Warrenton - Virginia Gold Cup Races.

Monday, May 7th:

- 10.00 a.m. - Call on Mr. Sayre, State Department.
- 12.00 noon - Depart Union Station

(Arrive New York 3.45 p.m. Standard Time -
" " 4.45 p.m. Daylight Saving Time)

(Daylight Saving Time) 6.30 p.m. - Dine with Mr. Macgregor at Terrace Club at World's Fair.

After our conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull, I went to the Embassy and the Ambassador sent all the cables that had been received from the Foreign Office since I left Australia to Officer's room for me to read. They were clearly mostly copies of the cables sent to the Dominions. Incidentally they made fairly depressing reading but there is no need to deal with them here.

A more interesting development was after I had lunched at the Embassy where the Ambassador showed me a note from Cadogan enclosing a memorandum Winston Churchill had sent to Halifax on the general situation particularly in its naval aspects.

The gist of the Memorandum was that the primary task of the British Navy was to clean up the Mediterranean situation - as to their capacity to do so he was distinctly optimistic - and then to endeavour to get a domination in the Baltic. He urged that these primary tasks had to be carried out before any part of the Battle fleet was despatched to the Pacific.

He argued at considerable length that while the Japanese could take Shanghai and Hong Kong and obtain a dominance in China that this did not involve a serious danger to Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. His argument was that these were major adventures that Japan would not think of undertaking while there was any fear of any part of the British Battle fleet coming into the Pacific. He was very confident of Singapore's power to resist any attack or blockade that was likely to be undertaken and showed no signs of any doubts as to Singapore being adequately *maintained* and victualled.

(I told the Ambassador of my experiences last year on this point and that I had no certainty to say that the position had been remedied but he suggested Winston had probably definite information on this point.)

Winston notwithstanding his confidence as to no major move by Japan suggested the desirability of getting assurances from America as to their co-operation in the event of Japan moving south of the equator.

After I had read the Memorandum I told the Ambassador that the subject was one with which I was closely in touch and outlined the recent developments including the doubts that had recently arisen in Australia as to the United Kingdom being in a position to implement her assurances as to sending part of the battle fleet into the Pacific in the event of war.

I told him that this was one of the matters I had to take up with the President and that possibly my doing so would be helpful to him. He said that was exactly what he had proposed asking me to do. I told him I would let him know the result after I had seen the President.

In my conversation with the Ambassador, I told him that in many respects I was glad that I had been away from England during the last four months as I would have felt some difficulty in deciding what line to take. I told him the alternatives as I saw them were (1) After Hitler's move into Czecho to take the line that had been taken, namely, that somewhere a halt had to be called and we had to show we were not prepared indefinitely to let Hitler obtain his objectives by threats of force or to admit the impossibility of rendering aid to the Eastern European countries and continue resolutely with our rearmament relying on our own strength and the invariability of the United States opinion increasingly recognising in face of the totalitarian states growing strength of the necessity of standing shoulder to shoulder with us.

With regard to the first there was the danger that by giving pledges to East Europe we might find ourselves forced into a war with weak and uncertain allies and we ourselves being able to do little that was effective.

With regard to the second the danger was that it might be impossible to hold United Kingdom opinion and that we might bring ourselves into such contempt that when the real crisis came we would find ourselves without a friend.

I indicated that in my view whichever course were adopted the United States in her own interests would be forced in on our side in face of the growing danger from the dominance of the Totalitarian States. In emphasising this I told him of my conversation with Walter Lipman with regard to his article on the overwhelming strength in the air of Germany as against the United Kingdom.

On the whole I indicated my view was we had probably taken the right course particularly having regard to the fact that if we were forced into a war in which we were at a disadvantage owing to the attitude of other countries particularly Russia in proportion as things went badly with us would there be a recognition in the United States of the necessity in their own interests of their intervening on our side.

I told the Ambassador that I was glad that I had not been in London when these difficult decisions had to be taken

J. M. R.

MR. CORDELL HULL. Tuesday May 2nd. 1939

Went with the Ambassador to see Mr. Hull. He was extremely cordial and spoke in most generous terms of the late Prime Minister.

The conversation which was mainly between Mr. Hull and myself, the Ambassador saying little, was very general in character and no points of any great importance emerged.

He clearly feels that there is nothing that can be done at the moment except to accelerate in any way possible the rearmament of the Democracies so as to convince the Totalitarian States that they cannot gain their ends by force.

He, however, said nothing specific as to United States attitude. It is clear, I think, that he recognises how vitally concerned United States is in the position.

He emphasised the probable great economic and industrial developments likely to follow any resolution of the present political situation. He clearly shares the views I expressed in Australia on this point.

He talked a good deal of the effect that the present uncertainty is having on trade and industry and asked of the position in Australia. I told him that it was good but emphasised that this was entirely due to the stimulating effect on efficiency in Australia that the financial and economic crisis had had.

Towards the end of the conversation I brought up the question of the trade negotiations - told him I had not been concerned with the details, but felt just as I had conveyed to the Australian Government the background atmosphere after my visit to Washington in December I felt I could usefully do the same thing with regard to the Australian atmosphere while I was in Washington this time.

We agreed it would be desirable that I should do so in my conversations with Sumner Wells and Sayre.

When I was leaving Mr. Cordell Hull made it clear he was aware of the work I was doing on the economic side and expressed his admiration of it.

MR. NORMAN DAVIS. May 3rd, 1939

Had a long talk to Norman Davis at the Red Cross Building. We discussed the Australian political position and I explained to him my attitude towards returning.

He expressed the view that it would be most inadvisable for me to return to Party Politics and was good enough to say he was glad I was returning to London as he thought my influence there with the United Kingdom Government would be invaluable.

We then discussed the European situation and we agreed that notwithstanding all the dangers involved there was no other course open to Britain than the one that had been taken. He expressed the view that the firmness of the United Kingdom attitude had had a great effect on American public opinion and was just as out-spoken as to the inevitability of the U.S.A. coming in on our side in the event of a crash as he was when I saw him in December.

We agreed that the only course now was to go on with rearmament as rapidly as possible so as to increase the deterrent against any outbreak by the Totalitarian Powers but at the same time to make it clear that while nothing will be given in face of force, or threats of force, if these are dropped there was a genuine will to meet and if possible remedy any legitimate grievances or iniquities.

In particular Norman Davis took the Polish position and after outlining the facts indicated that in his view the Polish attitude should be preparedness to discuss and endeavour to meet the German claims but only on the basis of an arrangement that would ensure a general genuine peace solution in eastern Europe but not on a basis which would deal with the Dantzig problem and leave it open to Germany to treat the concessions that had been obtained there as a jumping off ground for further aggression as had been done in the case of the Czechs.

I told him I had not anticipated, as he developed his argument, that he was going to suggest so wide a settlement as one embracing the general position but one which would have met the Polish position and safeguarded them against further aggression.

He then told me he had seen Orr the day before and had been most impressed by him. He again showed he had grasped the importance of the nutrition suggestions but struck me as being a little woolly as to what to do so as to make some progress of real value with regard to it. He told me that Parran was very enthusiastic and had approached him Davis as to utilising the Red Cross Organisation in a campaign to put the idea over.

I told him I thought such a campaign would be all to the good but that it only touched the fringe of the problem. Education might bring about a limited increase in the consumption of the protective foods by inducing those in a position to do so to purchase but that those in such a position probably did not represent 20% of the population.

If, however, the other 80% which was the population that really counted were to have their standard of nutrition improved, it would involve great changes and the reorientation of policies in which Governments would have to play a courageous part.

I then put it to him that Governments could not play that part and give a courageous lead except for some great objective which was clearly defined and understood by the general mass of the people.

At the present time that was not the case. All that was happening was that an increasing number of people were becoming impressed with the possibilities of nutrition through the preachings of enthusiasts such as Orr, McDougall & Co.

I told him in my view the practical step that had to be taken was to impress the President with the social and economic possibilities of nutrition and to get him to appoint a strong and independent Committee to examine and report to him on the question.

I suggested that the method of handling the question should be, having appointed the Committee, to tell them that the examination already carried out indicated great possibilities in the idea.

That their task was to examine all the available information and data on the following points.-

- a. The evidence of a low standard of health due to malnutrition.
- b. the effect on the health standard of improved nutrition and the provision of the necessary supplies of protective food stuffs.
- c. The economic effect on Agriculture and the problem of agricultural surpluses if agriculture were required to produce the necessary supplies of protective food stuffs required to raise the health standard.
- d. The economic effect upon Industry and Commerce resulting from Agriculture undertaking (c).

- e. The effect on national finance by relieving budgets of the present burden in respect of national health, agricultural subsidies etc.

I suggested to him on (a) ample information was already available and that it also should be relatively easy to draw the picture of the effects that would flow from an improved standard of nutrition.

With regard to (c), (d) and (e) I suggested research would be required but that the Committee would be in a position to determine what research was required and how and by whom it should be carried out.

I urged on Norman Davis that in this way a picture could be drawn which would show so great an objective as to warrant Governments pursuing both novel and courageous policies and as to enlist the enthusiasm and co-operation of the people.

Norman Davis said he entirely agreed and would put the whole question before the President when he got an opportunity for a long and quiet talk with him.

The conversation was I think most useful and I am hopeful may bear fruit.

Before I left Norman Davis raised the question of Lothian's recent speeches and said they had done harm and that it was essential for Lothian to say nothing until he comes to take up his post. He instanced that even Lothian's statement that he hoped he would be half as good as Kennedy had done harm as there were a lot of people in the U.S.A. to whom Kennedy was not a "persona gratia" Norman Davis said he would have liked to have telegraphed to him and suggest to him not to talk but felt it might be embarrassing if it every became known he had done so. I told Norman Davis I would get in touch with Lothian and without mentioning his name make the suggestion.

(This I did in a telephone conversation to-day,
May 4th.)

Towards the end of the conversation I said to Norman Davis that when I saw the President I would have to refer to the Pacific position and the possibility of the Japanese becoming troublesome in the event of the Germans and Italians starting trouble as Australian opinion was very worked up on the subject and my Government had specifically asked me to take up the question with the President of the attitude of the U.S.A. in the event of the Japs moving south. I said I

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realised the President could not commit himself but I said to Norman Davis I presumed there was no doubt that the United States would regard any move say against the Dutch East Indies as of vital concern to her and would feel impelled to take action.

He was extremely reassuring on the subject and said that there was no possible doubt as to the United States attitude and that they certainly would intervene if Japan took any hostile attitude in the Pacific and started moving southward. He said that the President realised this and that while he could not make any statement that there was no doubt but that he would act should such a contingency arise.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. M. R.' with a horizontal line underneath.

JIMMY DUNN.

May 3rd 1939. 3.0 p.m.

Had a very long, useful and interesting conversation with Dunn. I gather he was in the Diplomatic Service but resigned. He is very well off having married a rich wife a Du Pont, I think, and very independent. He comes between Sumner Wells and Hornbeck and Pierpont Moffat is called Diplomatic Adviser and has, I gather, a great deal of influence.

We started by discussing the general world situation both European and Pacific, particularly from the point of view of the impossibility of America disinteresting herself.

I talked down the lines of its being obvious the Administration recognised the necessity for the United States to co-operate with the United Kingdom and France because of the fact that if they were defeated the United States would then be faced with the necessity of taking on the Totalitarian Powers by themselves. He in no way dissented from this and the conversation developed down the lines of taking this for an accepted fact and centered round the different view point of the Public towards Europe and the Pacific, namely, that while public opinion would readily accept intervention in the Pacific the isolationists would be strong in resisting physical action in regard to Europe.

We fully discussed the implications of this position and Dunn went further than anyone else I have talked with in tracing a distinction between armed intervention and other forms of support in Europe. He was very definite as to the general atmosphere that had progressively grown in the United States in face of Totalitarian aggressions and brutalities in favour of the United Kingdom and France.

He maintained that the overwhelming body of public opinion would be in favour of helping in any possible way e.g. munitions and supplies short of actual participation in hostilities. His mind was very much that this was probably the most useful form of help so long as Japan kept out as no naval assistance would be required in such circumstances and any expeditionary force would be limited owing to the United States complex on Japan. Conversely the whole tenor of his argument implied that with Japan in United States would be in too.

He also advanced the argument that the United States out kept Japan guessing and was likely to keep Japan out also. I did not strenuously resist his arguments because I thought there was a good deal in them but kept on reiterating the necessity for United States co-operation in whatever form was

most

most effective in the interests of the United States itself and the necessity for U.S. physical intervention if things were going badly with the United Kingdom and France.

We then moved on to consideration of the position if war did not come this year. I suggested that in that event the United Kingdom would have become so strong and United States opinion would have so greatly advanced in recognising the U.S. vital interest on the side of the United Kingdom that the Dictators would recognise the game was up and the fear of a general world war would disappear.

He agreed with this and did not dissent from my statement as to the probable trend of U.S. public opinion in favour of Britain.

I put it to him that if this were likely to be the position some hard thinking and preparatory work should be going on to meet the situation. I pointed out that if you removed the possibility of a general war it would probably be possible to bring about a halt in armaments. The economic consequences of such action had to be taken into account as if the only result was a world wide increase in unemployment the whole trouble would boil up again. He was extremely interested in this point and we had a long talk upon it. He asked me if I had anything in my mind. I told him Yes. I then put to him the point of the rehabilitation of China - emphasising that no love was lost between the Germans and the Japs - that the Germans were very angry over their loss of trade through Japanese action in China - that they were only holding on to Japan because of her usefulness in case of a world war and that they would throw them away like an old glove if the possibility of such a war disappeared.

I then elaborated the ideas contained in the letter I sent to Runciman just before I left.

I pointed out that this was only one of the factors and that much more would have to be done. For instance I saw the problem of Colonies and raw materials would have to be dealt with. I said we might all agree that Colonies were not an asset but a liability and might feel that there was no restriction in the purchase of raw materials provided the necessary credits were available. That, however, was not enough. Some gesture had to be made if political appeasement was to be achieved. Further Colonies and tropical countries generally would have to be developed to help the economic situation.

I said for my part it would be a good thing if the United Kingdom indicated its willingness, as a start, to declare for the open door in all Colonies not ripe for self-government, and added that I thought such an action would have a considerable appeal in the United States. Dunn agreed I then went on to outline the ideas for a new colonial regime put forward in my letter to the Prime Minister last February, including the suggestion for international finance and the possible solution of Japanese cheap goods by giving them an outlet in the poor purchasing power countries. Dunn was distinctly taken with the idea.

I then pointed out that the suggestions were not enough - something had to be done to expand the general world purchasing power. I told him the most promising idea to this end I had come across was better nutrition. I then explained to him the idea - its initiation and present position, emphasising that it had to be got on to a practical basis particularly by drawing the whole picture and shewing the results that would flow from success.

I suggested that if it could be shown also to be a valuable factor in bringing about a world economic improvement ways would be found to give effect to it. I also outlined to him the work we were trying to do at Geneva on the economic side.

My impression was he was distinctly interested. I stressed that a lead by the United States on getting down to the economic problems that will have to be faced upon any improvement in the political situation would be invaluable. Whether he will do anything in this direction is doubtful but the conversation I am sure will have *made him* more receptive to any lead from outside.

If nothing else was accomplished we have, I am certain, enlisted a new and valuable recruit for our nutrition campaign

J. W. P.

THE PRESIDENT. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. May 4th 1939

The President was most cordial and friendly and opened the conversation by saying that he had not expected to see me back but that I would have returned to Australia to be Prime Minister again.

I told him that for some days I had thought I would have to do so and that I had remained on the Pacific coast for a week not being sure from day to day whether I was going westward to Australia or eastward to England. I told him that I had reluctantly agreed to go back but had refused to resume the leadership of my old political party but had insisted, owing to the seriousness of the times, if I returned it must be without any political ties and with a free hand to form a Government of any sort I saw fit. He indicated he agreed with my attitude and added the shrewd observation that while the times were so grave I had to insist on only going back on my own terms, they were not so serious as to make Australia recognise the necessity of agreeing to them. We then had a few words about the New York and San Francisco Fairs, I telling the President my impressions of the latter. He again expressed his preference for the plans of the San Francisco Fair.

We then moved on to the world situation. He said that Hitler was clearly moving on the basis of steady but progressive moves that advanced him to his objective without war. That it was for Chamberlain and Daladier to determine when the time came that they must resist. He said to determine that time was difficult because there were not clearly defined issues. He instanced Dantzig - the corridor and pointed out it was obvious some arrangement must be arrived at.

He then digressed as instancing the possibilities of some arrangement into an idea which he said he had suggested in 1921 but which did not seem to me very practicable, that there should be an elevated way of the Corridor carrying presumably rail and road facilities which would not actually touch the earth of the corridor save as he admitted by the supports which carried the elevated way being on corridor soil.

He then went on to say that he had seen the Polish Ambassador the other day and had said to him that some agreement should be arrived at over Dantzig and the Corridor. He said that the Polish Ambassador had entirely agreed but had added it must be a freely negotiated settlement and not one arrived

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at under threats.

This view the President made clear he agreed with and that what he had meant was that an arrangement should not be difficult but that the Germans must be prepared to negotiate as between equals and cease threatening.

The President also showed that he recognised the danger of giving way because the immediate cause hardly justified war as this was merely encouraging Hitler to continue the tactics he had pursued with regard to the Czechs.

This view was really the basis for the remark he made earlier that it was for Chamberlain and Deladier to determine when the time came at which Hitler's demands had to be resisted.

Emphasising his point that agreements can only be entered into between equals and not under the compulsion of threats he instanced the position between France and Italy. He said he knew from Deladier that he was quite prepared to discuss with the Italians, Jibuti - Suez Canal directorate even the position of Italians in Tunis and he added you cant expect a nation to be prepared to discuss anything with a pistol at its head. He added France would not do so and made it clear he agreed with them.

He then made a digression to ask me to speak to Halifax about the possibility of the United Kingdom making available a strip of country running from the Indian Ocean. He suggested that there were possibilities by carrying out certain engineering works for it to carry a population of 15 million.

He said he did not want me to convey it as a suggestion from him but as a proposal that had been put to him for dealing with surplus populations. I asked him if he meant refugees and he said No, he meant from any where and he added even some of their people from the dust bowl might go. I said I would but added I had no idea as to the possibilities of the country and whether the suggested carrying capacity was in the realm of possibilities nor of the attitude of the United Kingdom Government.

I then raised the question of Japan and the Pacific and reminded the President that I had talked to him about it when I saw him in December. I told him that I had been very struck by the anxiety I had found in Australia not only in the Government but among the people wherever I had been as to the possibility of any action by Japan against Australia. I told him that everywhere I had been asked as to the attitude of the United States towards any move Southward by Japan.

The President said that when he had seen me before he had told me of his putting this question to his Cabinet.

/He

He then repeated to me what he had previously told me that he had put to his Cabinet the question what would the United States attitude be to any attack on Canada and that after discussing it there was general agreement that any attack on Canada would constitute a menace to the United States and they would have to intervene.

He said he then put to them what about an attack by Japan on Australia, and that after some hesitation the *Attorney* General replied, voicing as the President put it the general view of the Cabinet, "Well Australia is a hell of a way off."

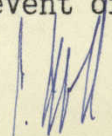
I put it to the President that that episode had occurred 5 years or so ago which he agreed and I asked him whether recent events had not been of such a character as to get over the difficulty of Australia's distance.

I told him I had been very struck by the greater interest the American people took and the greater anxiety they felt with regard to the Pacific than to Europe and I said it seemed to me that American public opinion would be greatly aroused by any move of Japan's which looked like taking her South of the equator. The president agreed and said the United States would be vitally concerned in any such move.

He then again told me of his declaration re Canada. He said he had gone to Toronto to receive a degree and in the course of his speech he made his statement with regard to the United States attitude towards the integrity of Canada. He said when the United States public first read it they were startled and it gave them a considerable shock. At first they were doubtful of it but on thinking it over they came to the conclusion that he was right and they had completely accepted it. He said, however, they would not have taken the same view with regard to a similar statement as to Australia. His whole attitude was just the same as when I saw him before, that he recognises that in the event of trouble in the Pacific that attitude of the United States would have to be very similar to their attitude towards any menace to Canada but that public opinion was not yet educated to the point of approving any commitments in this direction. He urged most strongly that it was imperative to cultivate the closest relations between the American and Australian people. He stressed it very strongly and repeated it again as I was leaving not merely Trade but cultural and personal, and he urged special steamers making tours to Australia.

This would make public opinion receptive of the idea that the United States would have to intervene if Australia was menaced.

(Sent Prime Minister a cable on May 8th - giving the substance of my conversation with the President and my general impressions of attitude of U.S. in event of action in the Pacific by Japan.)



SUMNER WELLES. MAY 6th 1939.

Had a long talk which in many respects was the most interesting one I had in Washington. I like him and think he is extremely competent.

We started on the general position after he had received me extremely cordially.

He said that the position was extremely hard to gauge and instanced that in the last two days they had received 7 cables with regard to Litvinoff's alleged resignation. He said four of them were emphatic that it indicated no change in Soviet policy away from the Democratic States while the other three took the opposite view and considered it pointed towards a more isolationist policy. His own view appeared to me that he did not consider it need cause any serious alarm. I then told him I had had a long talk with Hornbeck and had been most interested in what he told me of the difficulties the Japanese were encountering. He confirmed what Hornbeck had said but added a considerable amount.

He said that within the last few days the Japanese had definitely decided against a military alliance with Germany and Italy. That this decision was due to the Navy. That the Germans had been pressing very hard for a military alliance, their main reason being that by this means they hoped to obtain the assistance of the Japanese Navy in the Mediterranean in a short and decisive war. That the Army in Japan had been definitely for such an alliance and had been doing everything in their power to bring it about despite the opposition of the politicians.

That the balance had been held by the Navy who, for some time were hesitating which side to support. Sumner Welles told me that the State Department had heard from Grew in the last few days that the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs had assured him in the last few days that the Navy had now decided against the Alliance and that there was no fear of its going through. I told Sumner Welles that this was a new angle to me and that it certainly seemed to me wise on the part of the Navy as they would be in a hopeless position -

- (a) If they suffered any losses in the Mediterranean
- (b) If the U.S.A. came in with her Navy available to take on the Japanese.

From this opening I led up to the question of the United States attitude in the event of the Japanese becoming troublesome. I added that I had been very much impressed by the different attitude of public opinion to United States intervention in Europe and the Pacific.

I ventured the view that the public were so concerned about the Japanese that they would insist on the United States taking a hand. He said he agreed and gave the interesting reason for the difference in the public attitude between Europe and the Pacific as being that in the case of Europe intervention was interpreted as meaning an expeditionary force and this roused the antagonism of every mother of eligible sons.

In the case of Japan an Expeditionary Force was never contemplated, action being by means of the Navy in the Pacific. For this reason the intense hostility of the Mothers so marked in regard to Europe did not exist in regard to Japan and the Pacific.

I then made the point as to the difficult position Japan would find herself in if war was avoided this year down the lines that by that time the British Empire would be sufficiently strong to exercise a strong deterrent and United States opinion was, in my view, increasingly realising the necessity of supporting Britain and France so as not to be left to take on the Japanese by themselves as they would have to in the event of the United Kingdom and France being defeated. He offered no dissent as to this view of the trend of United States opinion.

My very distinct impression is that he is quite sound on the necessity of the United States taking an active part in helping the United Kingdom and France in Europe although as long as Japan did not move it would probably be by arms and munitions and not active intervention. In the event of Japan taking any action I am *convinced* he would support immediate active intervention.

In the conversation he said that while the active hostility which had existed towards the United Kingdom just after the war had to a great extent disappeared it had to be remembered that there was a strong underlying current of it fostered to a great extent by the Roman Catholic Church of which many Members of the hierarchy were Irish with a bitter hatred of Britain. He instanced several whom I cannot recall

Despite this he stressed that owing to the brutalities and general behaviour of the Germans the overwhelming feeling in the United States was with Britain and France.

I raised the point of the war debt and told him I had come across the point a number of times, The universal reaction I had found was that it was a tremendous pity it has not be arranged on the basis of a token payment as the feeling which existed in America was not directed so much to the non-payment as the manner in which the decision to cease payment had been given effect to.

Sumner Welles was very insistent on this point also and in the discussion the point emerged as to the pity that Neville with all the great qualities he has shown in the last few months so lacked imagination.

The interview was of the most cordial character and he has promised to let me know if he carries out his present intention of coming to London this summer.



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PSR 83/3081

PC 83/260