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State Department 1941-42

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C. F.

State
World War II

August 15, 1942

Dear Cordell:

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x4708

Are negotiations under way for the repatriation of further enemy aliens, particularly Germans, who are not members of the Diplomatic Corps?

I believe that we should be very careful in repatriating any enemy aliens to Germany other than the Diplomatic Corps. My reason for saying this is that all German aliens in America are potential, if not actual, spies and the Americans in Germany are not. While I think it is tough on the Americans who must remain in Germany throughout the war, I nevertheless think that Germany gets the best of the exchange.

Very sincerely yours,

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Honorable
The Secretary of State. x20

x C. F. State

x198

x1661

x67

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 15, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE HONORABLE J. EDGAR HOOVER:

X10-7b

FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

F.D.R.

copy of letter to Secy of State
8/15-42 - re: Repatriation of
enemy aliens not members of
Diplomatic corps.

B. F.
State
World War II

C.F.
OIC
JDR
8/28/42

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August 27, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

Responding to your note of August 15 about repatriation of further enemy aliens, particularly Germans, I may say that there are no negotiations under way except as hangovers from the original agreement. The original agreement was terminated by us after two shiploads had been exchanged. It was very apparent that the persons we were receiving were not such as to benefit our war effort. Consequently, the arrangement was terminated. Germany had broken the agreement by refusing safe conduct for the vessel to run between New York and Lisbon and we denounced the agreement on that basis.

However, we are still under obligation to return some persons to Germany. When the Gripsholm was chartered, Germany agreed to allow us to bring American citizens to the United States in return for the privilege of taking
back

The President,

The White House.

x133
x198
x B. F. State

back to Germany German citizens on the last return of the Gripsholm. We brought as many Americans as we could obtain and we are under obligation to permit Germans to sail on the Gripsholm when she finally returns to Sweden. However, we may choose those Germans and send those we desire to send.

Moreover, there are in the United States a number of Germans (537 of them), many of whom were received from the other American Republics on condition that they be repatriated to Germany. They were aliens whom the Latin American Governments desired to be rid of. The governments concerned were Mexico, each of the Central American Governments, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the five northwestern countries of South America - Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Of these countries, those as far south as the Canal have declared war against Germany. They find themselves in a status somewhat different from those on the continent of South America which have not declared war on Germany. Each of these countries has a number of citizens in enemy territory. In order to protect them they have placed conditions upon the use of the aliens which were delivered to us and they have insisted that those aliens be repatriated. Many of these are still in the United States and those Governments

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are still insisting that they be returned to Germany. The exchange of some of them has been objected to by other agencies of the Government and such have been withheld from repatriation. We are still in negotiation with various of these American Republics for the purpose of adjusting some of these difficulties.

We have been very much concerned about the presence of additional Germans in these countries to the south of us. Their continued presence there raises very serious questions relating to our continental safety. The Germans have inter-married with native families and many of them are in positions of influence. Others of them are scattered throughout the length and breadth of a number of these countries where they have access to communication facilities, to mines which are engaged in producing essential materials, to storage houses, to public utility power plants, and to wharves and harbor facilities used by our shipping in the transportation of defense materials. Altogether, it is a dangerous situation. The answer would seem to be that the aliens be interned. However, and without intending any criticism of the sincerity and thoroughness of the war purpose of our neighbors to the south of us, they are neither psychologically nor politically

politically organized for the strict control of these persons concerned. Many of them are unable to intern these aliens owing to the political influence many of them exert through the inter-marriage of members of their families with officers of the Governments concerned. The result is that there is very little confinement or control over those remaining there, and as long as they continue in those countries they remain as a potential source of danger to the United States and its war effort.

Fortunately, in cooperation with those Governments, we were able to remove from there upwards of 3,000 of the most dangerous Germans, Italians, and some of the Japanese. But it required the dispatch to the four northwestern countries of South America a special representative of the Department and constant contact and supervision of the expulsion movement in order to have it succeed.

Not including Mexico, there are about 1,200 Germans and 122 Italians still in those countries whom those countries desire removed for their own safety, and whom we would like to remove from those countries for our own safety but who cannot be removed without the consent of those Governments unless as a condition precedent to removal from those countries we agree that they be repatriated to Germany by the United States.

We have considered their removal from one or more of the South American ports direct to Lisbon on a Spanish or Portuguese flag vessel in exchange for the American Republics nationals still remaining in Germany and Italy, (in which there are respectively 350 and 100), some of them important citizens of these Republics, but passage of such vessels through the Canal and practical difficulties of selection, supervision and actual control have rendered that plan inoperative.

So while the agreement to continue the exchange between the United States and Germany has been terminated, and while we are not in negotiation for a new or additional exchange, we still are faced with a part of the problem as indicated by

(a) There are 537 Germans and 20 Italians whom we have in the United States and who were received from countries to the south of us, many of them with the express stipulation that they be returned to Germany, and

(b) The problem of what to do with 1,200 dangerous Germans and 128 Italians roaming more or less at liberty throughout areas in which they can do serious damage and from which they can send information detrimental to our cause.

So far I have spoken only of the Germans and Italians - principally of the Germans. There remains the Japanese situation.

There are in China 3,300 American citizens who desire to return to the United States. Many of them are substantial persons who have represented important American business and commercial interests and a large number of missionaries. They are scattered all through that part of China occupied by the Japanese. Some of them are at liberty, some of them are in concentration camps, and some of them have limited liberty, but all of them subject to momentary cruel and harsh treatment by their oppressors. Under our agreement with Japan, which is still operating, we will be able to remove these people. It will take two more trips of the Gripsholm to do so. In exchange for them we will have to send out Japanese in the same quantity. If that agreement should be carried through, all the Americans except prisoners of war would be removed from the continent of Asia under control of the Japanese, but there would remain many thousands of Japanese in the United States.

In addition, there are 3,000 non-resident American citizens in the Philippines. We have no agreement for
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their exchange but it has been intimated that Japan might consider an exchange of them. It would be very gratifying if we could obtain these people from Japanese control and return them to the United States. But to do so we would have to exchange Japanese for them. That would take two more round trips of the Gripsholm.

Still, in addition, there are 700 civilians interned in Japan proper captured at Guam and Wake. It is probable that we might arrange for their return. But in order to obtain them we would have to release Japanese.

I regret the length of this letter and the imposition it may make upon your time, but your letter of the 15th raises the whole question and presents as a matter of high policy the future conduct of this Government and its relationship to its citizens under enemy control.

I am quite in agreement and my associates in the Department have been in thorough accord with the proposal to prevent the return to Germany of persons who would be helpful to the German cause, but the unfortunate part of it has been that we could not obtain the release of our own citizens from enemy control unless we exchanged their citizens for them, and amongst those citizens the enemy powers will naturally insist, just as we have insisted, that persons of certain qualities and desirability be exchanged.

We are further hindered in the freedom of our activity by the limitations imposed upon us by the Governments of the countries whence we have received enemy aliens in order that they be taken out of the local situations where they could be most helpful to the enemy. Many of these persons were sent by enemy powers to the American Republics to the south of us because of their familiarity with the people, the customs, and the economic and political activities of those countries. They are more dangerous there than they would be in Germany. Even if they are all qualified to bear arms they would not be more than a regiment in the German Army but each one of them might have the value of a company or of a regiment in the country of his residence. It has seemed wise to remove them from the American Republics. More of them would have been removed to the United States had it been possible to obtain a vessel. I am of the opinion that it would be to our national interest to remove all of the 1,200 Germans, 122 Italians, and 2,500 Japanese from the northwestern part of South America and from the remaining countries in Central America but we are presently unable to do so for the reasons I have indicated above.

With

With the foregoing as a predicate, I propose the following course of action:

Germany and Italy

1. Keep the agreement made with Germany to return to Germany on the last sailing of the Gripsholm enemy aliens (selected by the United States for that purpose).
2. Continue our efforts to remove from South and Central America all the dangerous Germans and Italians still there, together with their families;
 - (a) Direct to Germany by neutral vessel, if practicable, in exchange for citizens of those American Republics;
 - (b) To the United States for internment if (a) is impracticable or only partially achieved;
 - (c) Via the United States to Germany if no other way remains of removing them from those countries.

Japan

3. Continue our exchange agreement with the Japanese until the Americans are out of China, Japan, and the Philippines - so far as possible.
4. Continue our efforts to remove all the Japanese from

from these American Republics countries for
internment in the United States.

All Enemies

5. Failing all of these, to renew our efforts to
the end that each of the governments concerned
securely and effectively intern these enemy
aliens - which is the least promising of complete
success.

It should be borne in mind that any removal from
South America will require the use of a vessel for several
voyages between the west coast and New Orleans.

I should be glad to receive an indication of your
desires.

Faithfully yours,

Gordell Hull
x10