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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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At the press conference at the Department of State today, in answer to the following question put to him by a correspondent: "Mr. Secretary, would you care to elaborate on what the President said about American interests trading with belligerents at their own risk?", Secretary Hull made the following remarks:

"As I said to you gentlemen heretofore, the language of the President's statement has thoroughly well-defined meaning and every person should be able to grasp its meaning and its implications. Technically, of course, there is no legal prohibition--apart from the proclamation governing the export of arms,--against our people entering into transactions with the belligerents or either of them. The warning given by the President in his proclamation concerning travel on belligerent ships and his general warning that during the war any of our people who voluntarily engage in transactions of any character with either of the belligerents do so at their own risk were based upon the policy and purpose of keeping this country out of war,--keeping it from being drawn into war. It certainly was not intended to encourage transactions with the belligerents.

"Our people might well realize that the universal state of business uncertainty and suspense on account of the war is seriously handicapping business between all countries, and that the sooner the war is terminated the sooner the restoration and stabilization of business in all parts of the world, which is infinitely more important than trade with the belligerents, will be brought about.

"This speedy restoration of more full and stable trade conditions and relationships among the nations is by far the most profitable objective for our people to visualize, in contrast with such risky and temporary trade as they might maintain with belligerent nations.

"I repeat that our objective is to keep this country out of war".

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