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June 10, 1965

FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Conversation, Ambassador Alphan

I am sure you will be interested in various comments made to me within the past several days on his own initiative by the Ambassador of France, who has just returned from a visit to Paris.

1. Alphan says the "poor relations between France and America are a figment of the journalists in both Washington and Paris." He says that among the people, outside Government, he finds no anti-American sentiment in France and little other than pro-France sentiment among Americans. "All of this," he says, "is salon talk among a limited number of people in or on the fringes of our Governments."

2. Alphan says, "Whatever is said in Paris, France will always be with you when we are needed. The average Frenchman knows this, just as the average American knows it. Your President is being misrepresented by his press, so is my President -- except that my President has more trouble with cartoonists in both countries than your President has in either country. The journalists want to keep alive the fight that was started before your President became President -- and President DeGaulle knows that President Johnson has discouraged the people in your Government from keeping that fight alive."

3. Alphan says, "Mr. Martin made a speech that has been badly reported in this country. If you will read it carefully, he is only saying that the Western countries should look at the international monetary situation and its problems and do some things about that which have not been done all through these post-war years. What Mr. Martin says -- if you forget his remarks about 1929 -- is only the same thing that General DeGaulle and Mr. Reuff have been saying too. When General DeGaulle talks about gold standards, he doesn't have a Council of Economic Advisors guiding him on what he says -- he just has Mr. Reuff. The General does not know much about gold or international monetary matters. What he has asked for, I believe, is not a return to the Gold Standard as much as he has asked the allies

to look for a better standard than what we have now. I think many people in your Government feel the same way, although they would not follow the same way that General DeGaulle suggests. President Johnson has a fine opportunity to take leadership in this field that has been neglected by too many people in my Capital and your Capital, too."

Comment: I am not sufficiently informed to make judgments about this, but some of the Ambassador's observations, made on and at his own initiative, seem to be in the nature of an overture. Perhaps others could explore this more usefully and more intelligently than I.

Herace Busby

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