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S E C R E T.

W.P.(40)329.

22ND AUGUST, 1940.

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WAR CABINET.

UNITED STATES: SUPPLY OF DESTROYERS.

Note by the Secretary.

The attached Draft Telegrams are circulated by direction of the Prime Minister for consideration in connection with Item 4 of the Agenda for to-day's meeting of the War Cabinet.

(Signed) E.E. BRIDGES.

Richmond Terrace, S.W.1.

22ND AUGUST, 1940.

DRAFT TELEGRAM.

C Former Naval Person to President.

PERSONAL & SECRET.

I am most grateful for all you are doing on our behalf STOP I had not contemplated anything in the nature of a contract, bargain or sale between us STOP It is the fact that we had decided in Cabinet to offer you naval and air facilities off the Atlantic Coast quite independently of destroyers or any other aid STOP Our view is that we are two friends in danger helping each other as far as we can. STOP We should therefore like to give you the facilities mentioned without stipulating for any return and even if tomorrow you found it too difficult to transfer the destroyers etc. our offer still remains open because we think it is in the general good STOP

New Paragraph. I see that difficulties and even risks in the exchange of letters now suggested or in admitting in any way that the munitions which you send us are a payment for the facilities STOP Once this idea is accepted people will contrast on each side what is given and received STOP The money value of the armaments would be computed and set against the facilities and some would think one thing about it and some another STOP

New Paragraph. Moreover Mr. President as you well know each Island or location is a case by itself STOP Take Bermuda for instance STOP There is only one harbour STOP How is it to be divided and its advantages shared STOP We should like to make you an offer at Bermuda of what we think is best for both rather than to embark upon a close-cut argument as to what ought to be delivered in return for value received STOP The same sort of thing would occur at every other point with local modifications STOP

New Paragraph. What we want is that you shall feel safe on your Atlantic seaboard so far as any facilities in possessions of ours can make you safe and naturally if you put in money and make large developments you must have the effective security of a long lease STOP Therefore I would rather rest at this moment upon the general declaration made by me in the House of Commons yesterday STOP Then if you will set out in greater detail what you want we will at once tell you what we can do and thereafter the necessary arrangements technical and legal can be worked out by our experts STOP Meanwhile we are quite content to trust entirely to your judgment and sentiments of the people of the United States about any aid in munitions etc. you feel able to give us STOP But this would be entirely a separate spontaneous act on the part of the United States arising out of their view of the world struggle and how their own interests stand in relation to it and the causes it involves STOP

New Paragraph. Although the air attack has slackened in the last few days and our strength is growing in many ways

I do not think that bad man has yet struck his full blow
STOP We are having considerable losses in merchant ships
on the north western approaches now our only channel of
regular communication with the oceans and your fifty
destroyers if they came along at once would be a precious
help STOP

DRAFT TELEGRAM.

Prime Minister to Prime Minister of Canada.

SECRET & PERSONAL.

I am most grateful to you for your full and clear account of your conversation with the President STOP You will have read what I said in the House yesterday STOP I now send you a copy of my Secret and Personal Cable to the President which explains itself STOP It would be better to do without the destroyers sorely as we need them than to get drawn into a haggling match between the experts as to what we ought to give in return for the munitions STOP Immediately people would say how much are they worth in money and is not advantage being taken of our being hard-pressed STOP Any discussion of this kind would be injurious to the great movement of events STOP Each should give all he can without any invidious comparison STOP

New Paragraph. I am deeply interested in the arrangements you are making for Canadian and American mutual defence STOP Here again there may be two opinions on some of the points mentioned STOP Supposing Mr. Hitler cannot invade us and his Air Force begins to blench under the strain all these transactions will be judged in a mood different to that prevailing while the issue stills hangs in the balance STOP



