ROLE OF DIPLOMATIC & MILITARY MAIL: VERSAILLES PEACE TREATY

THE VERSAILLES PEACE TREATY: THE ROLE OF DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY MAIL

PRESENTED AT

WORLD WAR 1 & ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH
BLOUNT POSTAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM
SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

1 NOVEMBER 2018

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INTRODUCTION

I: Mail Delivery Methods

II. Pre-Armistice Treaty: 11 Nov. 1918

III. Armistice to Versailles Peace Conference

IV. Peace Treaty to League of Nations

The story begins with the diplomatic and military engagement of the USA with the Allied Powers to end World War 1 which led to Versailles Peace Conference in 1918. The Versailles Peace Treaty was signed on 28 June 1919 which led to the formation of the League of Nations. This presentation is based primarily on diplomatic and military mail received by President Wilson's special advisor, Col. Edward M. House.

President Wilson with his special advisor, Col. House (Of Houston, Texas)

Highlights of the two frame exhibit, "Versailles Peace Treaty: Role of Diplomatic & Military Mail" at the "World War 1 & Its Immediate Aftermath" symposium are presented here.

Special acknowledgements:

Col. House practice of pencil notations on incoming envelopes

Archives at Yale University Library

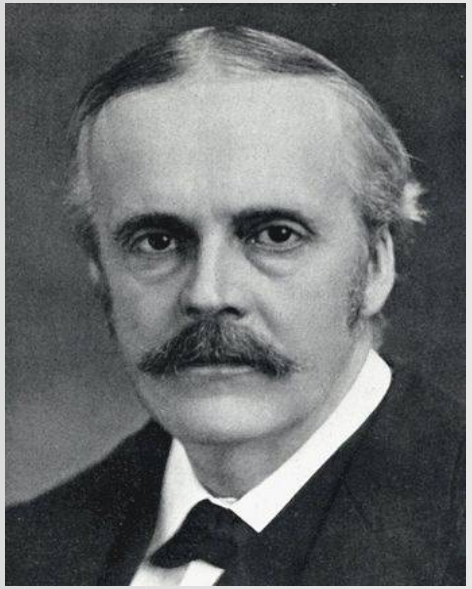
Library Researcher: Ms. April Link

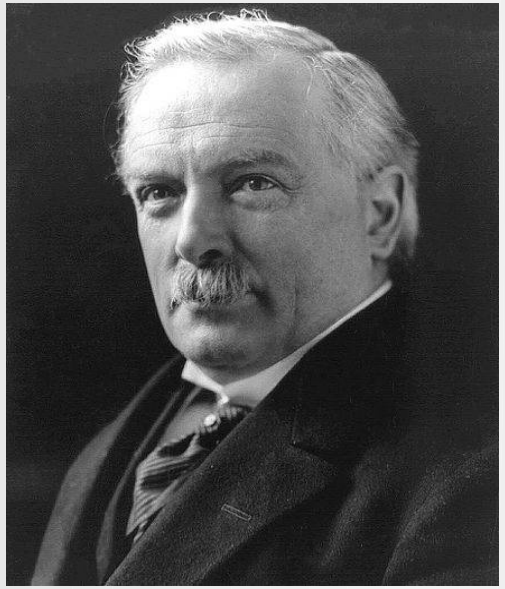
References: QR codes shown in exhibit.

28 June 1919: Versailles Peace Treaty Signing
First row, left to right: Col. House, President Wilson, French PM Clemenceau, British PM David Lloyd George.
Back center right: Maharaja of Bikaner, India, the only Indian delegate to sign the Peace Treaty.

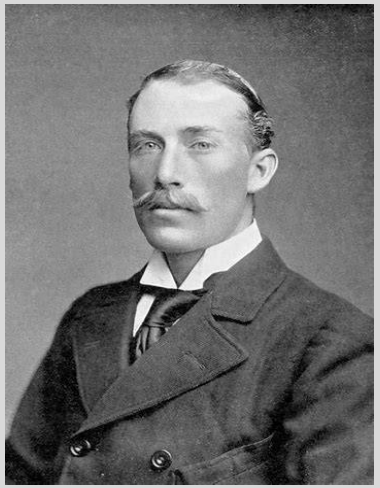
BRITAIN LED ALLIES AT PEACE CONFERENCE

Arthur J Balfour served as the Foreign Secretary from 10 December 1916 to 23 October 1919 in David Lloyd George's cabinet. He led British efforts to engage USA in World War 1 with Allied powers and liaised closely with US and French leaders in formulating the Versailles Peace Treaty. He especially forged a close relationship with Col. House.





David Lloyd George was the highly energetic Prime Minister of the Wartime Coalition Government from 1916 to 1922. He was a major player at the Peace Conference that reordered Europe after the defeat of the Central Powers.



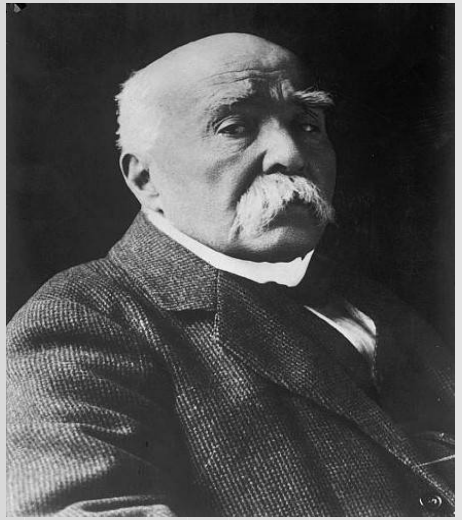
Sir William Wiseman of British Foreign Office/MI-5 worked in USA before and after US entered WW 1. He liaised between British Govt. and President Wilson via Col. House.

Lord Derby, after serving as the Secretary of War, became British ambassador to France in Paris. He was an important messenger between the French and American delegations.

Lord Robert Cecil was a British lawyer, politician and diplomat in the British Foreign Office. He was one of the architects and avid supporters of the League of Nations. His service to the organization saw him awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937.

FRANCE TOOK AN AGGRESSIVE POSITION AT PEACE CONFERENCE

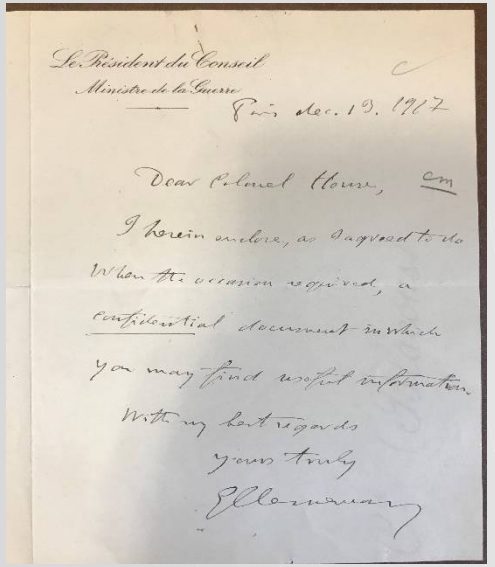
Raymond Poincare served as the President of France from 1913 to 1920 and advocated Allied control over the Rhineland. He lost out the Prime Ministership to Clemenceau, who led the French delegation.



Clemenceau was Prime Minister of France from 1917 to 1920. He favored a total victory over the German Empire and pushed for the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine to France. He was one of the principal architects of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Stephen Pichon was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1917 to 1920 and was close to Clemenceau but was overshadowed by the Prime Minister.

5 Dec.1918: French President Raymond Poincare sent a diplomatic invitation to Col. House via French postal service as a Free Frank.

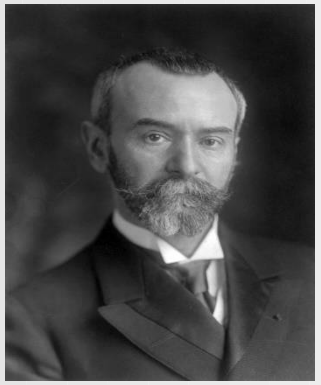


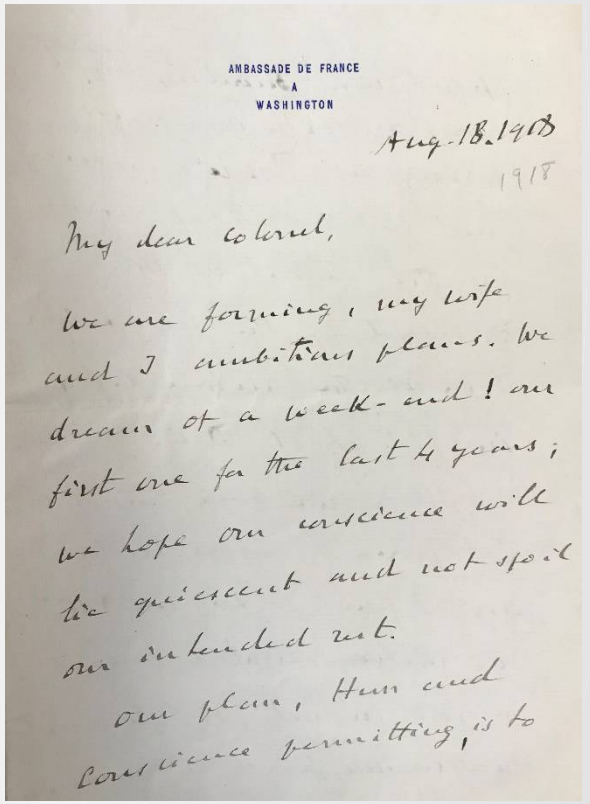
13 Dec. 1917: French Prime Minister sent confidential documents to Col. House per this letter.

19 Feb. 1919: Andre Tardieu, the Commissioner of Franco-American Cooperation sent an urgent message related to Red Cross business in this official mail.

MAIL DELIVERY METHODS: **US POSTAL SERVICE – SPECIAL DELIVERY**

Mail amongst US Government officials and leaders of Allied nations was handled in a variety of manners.





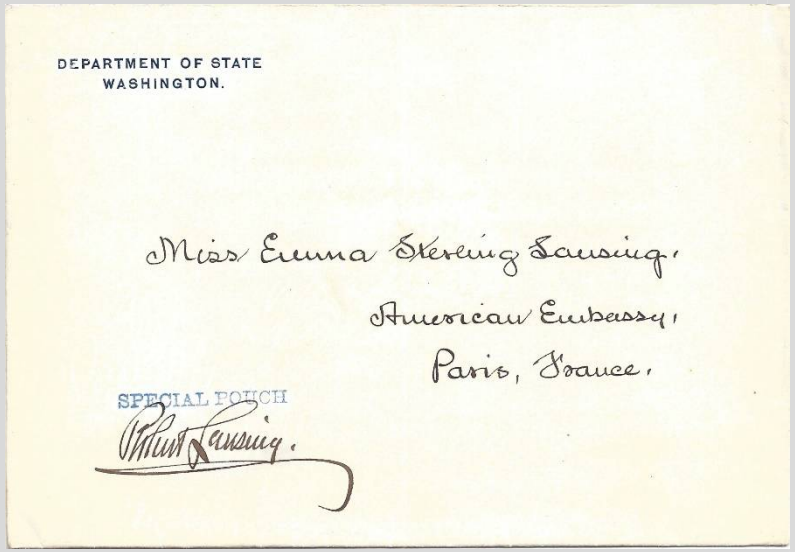
18 Aug. 18: French Ambassador Jassarend, Washington, DC, mailed a three-page hand written letter in this envelope with “AMBASSADE DE FRANCE, AUX ETATS-UNIS corner card to Col. House, Magnolia, Mass. Cover bears 3¢ Washington and 10¢ Special Delivery stamps that paid first class and special delivery postage. Back of cover bears the French Embassy red wax seal and registered receiving cancel of Magnolia, Mass.

Cover mailed 10 days after Battle of Amiens started which was the beginning of Allied Offensive leading to Allied Victory. Enclosed letter on French Embassy letterhead mentions he and his wife are planning a short vacation in Magnolia, Mass (their first one after 4 years of his posting in Washington, DC) and his proposal to visit Col. and Mrs. House while there.

MAIL DELIVERY METHODS:

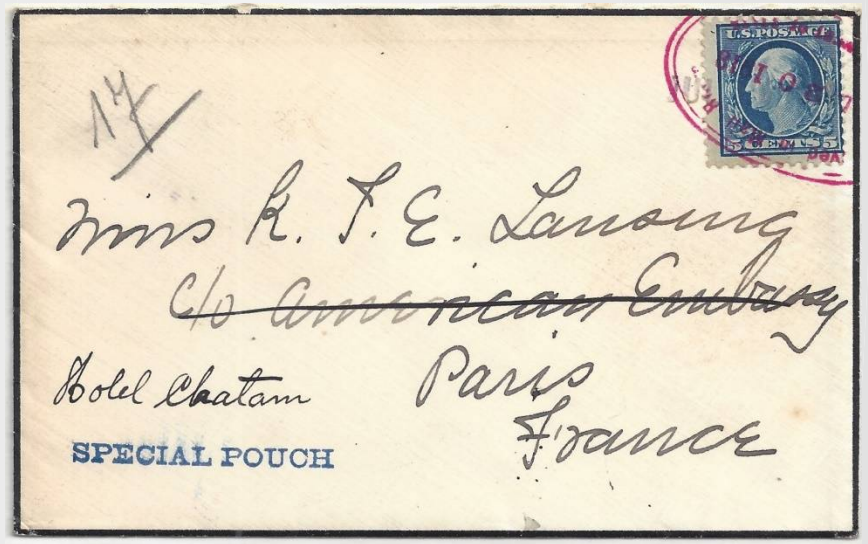
STATE DEPARTMENT POUCH MAIL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE: SPECIAL POUCH MAIL TO AMERICAN EMBASSY, PARIS FRANCE



Circa 1918-1919: Official free frank mail from Secretary of State Lansing with his signature under “SPECIAL POUCH” to his sister, Ms. Emma Lansing, at the American Embassy in Paris, France. The mail was sent in the State Department diplomatic mail bag outside of postal service to American Embassy directly.

Misses Emma and Katherine Lansing, sisters of Sec. of State Robert Lansing, were in France doing Red Cross work during WW 1. They established aid stations for the soldiers at the front among other charity services.



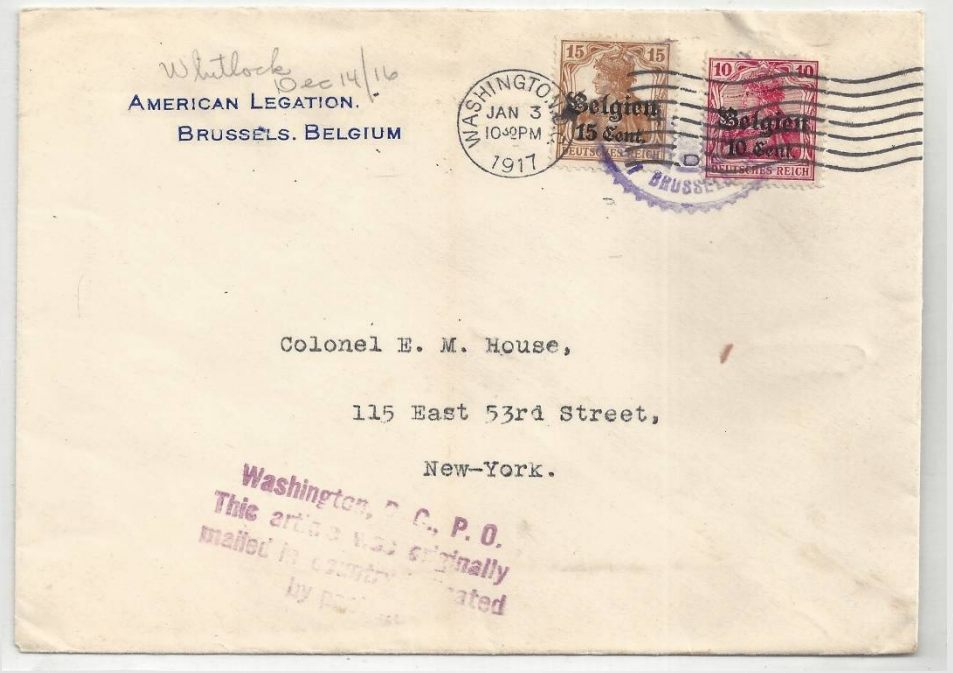
20 Dec. 1919: This private mourning cover to Ms. Katherine Lansing, bore US 5¢ Washington stamp, which paid the UPU rate to France as required. However, it was mailed through State Department post office which tied the stamp with red oval cancel, marked “SPECIAL POUCH” and sent it by State Department pouch mail service to the American Embassy in Paris, France who forwarded it to Hotel Chatam where she was staying.

MAIL DELIVERY METHODS:

US CONSULAR POUCH MAIL

US DIPLOMATIC POUCH MAIL: Under the 1903 UPU convention, US diplomats were allowed to send/receive mail via diplomatic pouch provided prevailing postage of the host country was affixed without sending it through that country's postal service.

Brad Whitlock, Head of US Legation in Brussels, worked closely with Mr. Hoover (subsequently President Hoover) and his Belgium Food Relief program which he headed from March 1917. This was the largest food relief program led by USA in collaboration with Britain and eventually served over 11 million people in Belgium and Southern France.

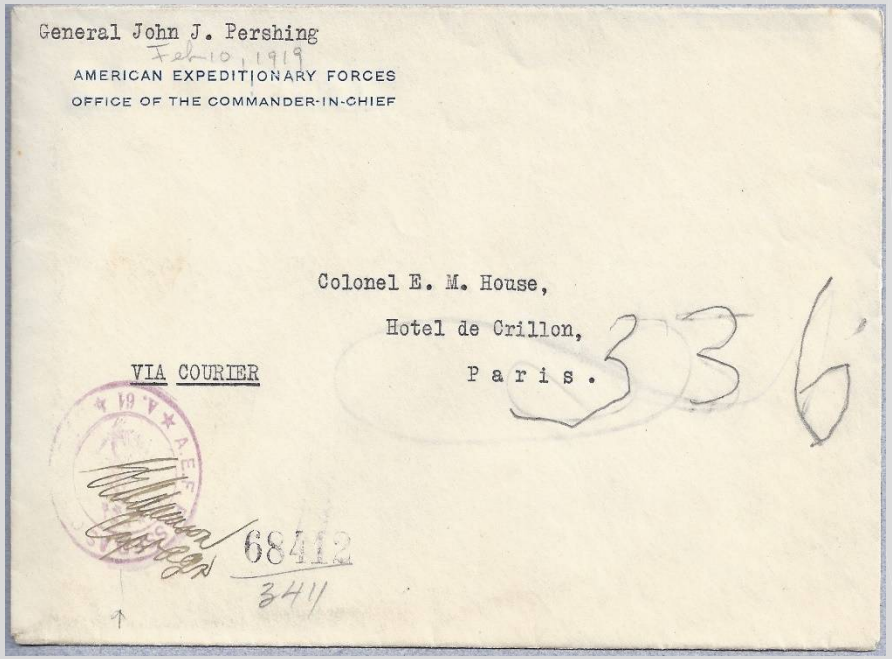


14/16 Dec. 1916: Mail from Brad Whitlock, Head of US Legation in Brussels, sent to Col. House via Diplomatic Pouch while Brussels was under German occupation. Whitlock applied two German occupied Belgian stamps totaling 25¢ cancelled by American Legation Brussels and then forwarded by Diplomatic pouch to Dept. of State in Washington, DC from where it entered the US Postal service on 3 Jan. 1918 as signified by the four-line PO hand stamp and Washington, DC post mark.

MAIL DELIVERY METHODS:

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES (AEF) MAIL SENT "FREE"

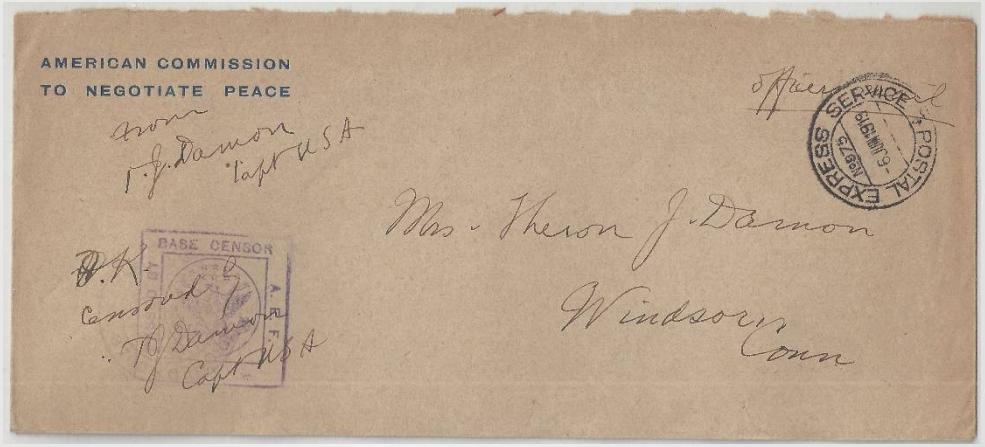
Shortly after the United States declared war on Germany, it became necessary to organize a postal system for the American troops overseas. On June 13, 1917, Postmaster General Albert Burnham authorized the establishment of mail agencies in France. Marcus Bunn, assistant superintendent of the Railway Mail Service, was appointed as Postal Agent in Charge. Soon after his arrival in Paris on June 30th, he began making arrangements for "The United States Mail Agency in France."



10 Feb. 1919: General John J. Pershing mail with typed "VIA COURIER" sent it via the US military courier to Col. House in Paris. Cover was censored as signified with Captain Williamson's signature and "A.E.F. PASSED CENSOR A. 61" circular cancel. Cover lacks both traditional "Officer's Mail" and AEF postal cancellation but bears rubber stamp, "68412" and pencil marking "3411." Hotel clerk added Col. House hotel room no. 336.

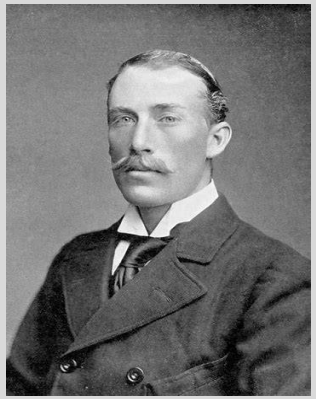
Gen. John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, AEF

OFFICIAL PHOTO: AMERICAN COMMISSION AT VERSAILLES

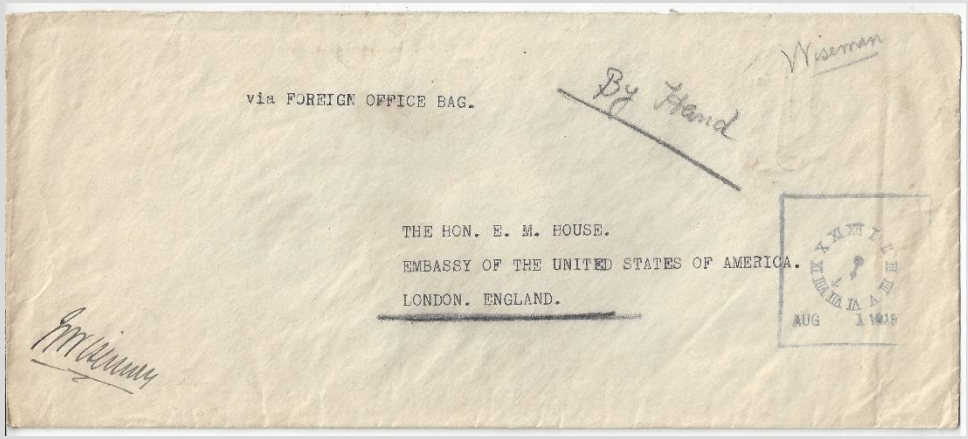


6 June 1919: "AMERICAN COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATE PEACE" corner card cover mailed by Capt. T J Damon to his wife in Windsor, Conn. USA. Marked Official Mail and self censored, it was sent via US Army Expeditionary PO, "POSTAL EXPRESS SERVICE / 6 June 1919" Also bears purple censor cancel.

MAIL DELIVERY METHODS:

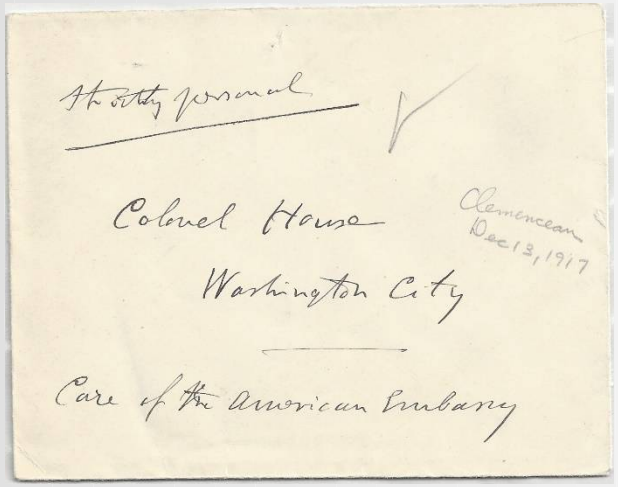


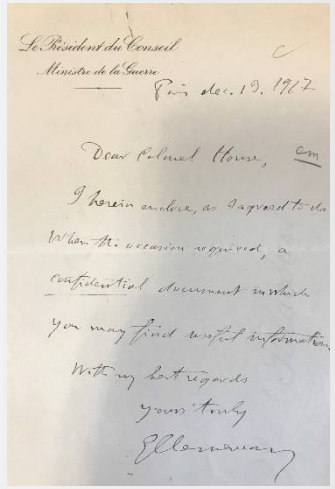
Sir William Wiseman, a successful banker was one of the early MI-5 officers first assigned to the British Embassy in USA where he cultivated close ties with President Wilson's close advisor, Col. House. He continued his role at the British foreign office in London during the Peace Conference.

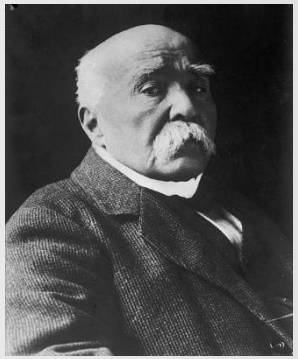


1 Aug. 19: Sir Wiseman sent this mail via Foreign Office Bag to Col. House, US Embassy in London. Wiseman liaised between British Govt. and President Wilson via Col. House. Wiseman signature on lower left of the envelope.

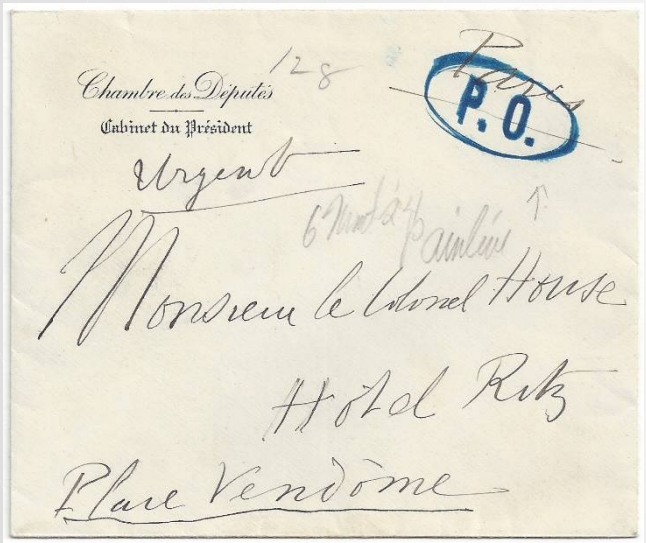
BRITISH & FRENCH MAIL VIA US EMBASSIES & COURIERS





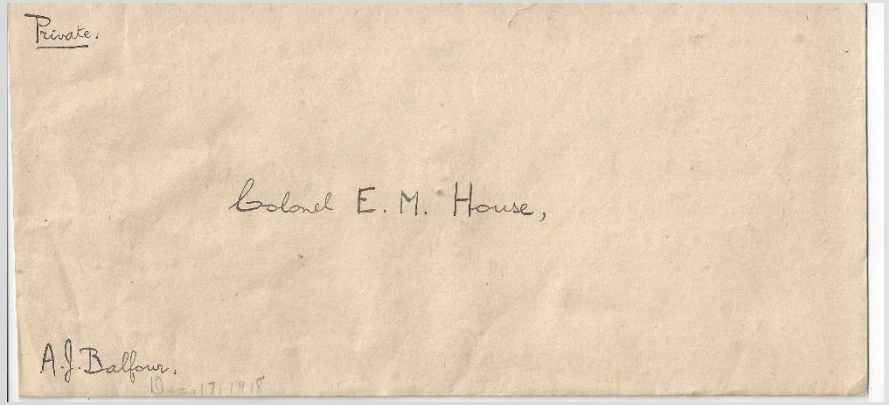


13 Dec.17: French Prime Minister Clemenceau (Top Right photo) letter in English mentions sending confidential document to Col. House as requested. It was sent via the American Embassy in Paris who forwarded it by Diplomatic pouch to State Dept. in Washington, DC who handed it over to Col. House.



Circa 1919: This mail with corner card with "Chamber du Deputies, Cabinet du President" and marked, "Urgent" from President of France, Raymond Poincare. It bears "P.O." oval cancel of French official mail service who delivered it to Col. House at Hotel Ritz, Paris.

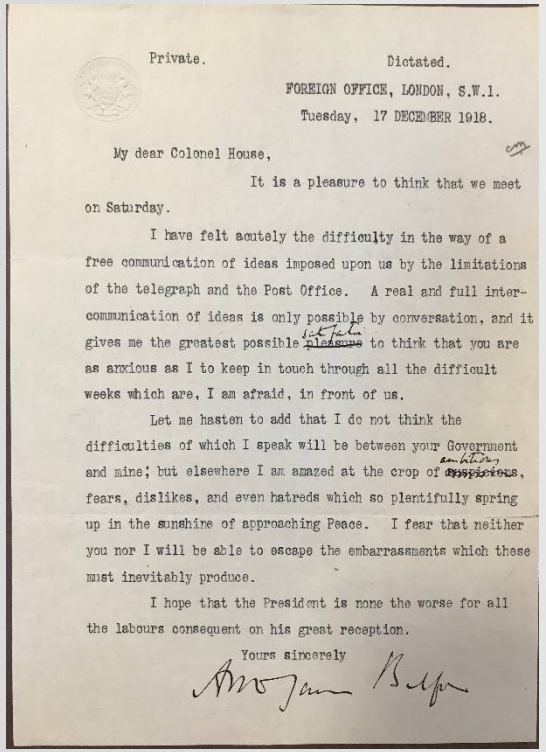
BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY ON INADEQUACY OF POSTAL & TELEGRAPH COMMUNICATIONS


Private.

Colonel E. M. House,

A.J.Balfour.
10 Dec. 17, 1918

17 Dec. 1918: Mail marked “Private” and signed “A.J.Balfour” contained the letter shown on right, expressing limitations of telegraph and postal service to “real and full inter-communication of ideas” which is only possible by conversation requiring face-to-face meetings. Mr. Balfour also shares his concern toward emerging ambitions, fears, dislikes and even hatreds in abundance among Allied delegates as the “Sunshine of Peace” approaches. The letter ends with his hope that President (Wilson) is faring well and refers to great reception for his upcoming visit to London on the Boxing Day in 1918.


Private. Dictated.

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON, S.W.1.
Tuesday, 17 DECEMBER 1918.

My dear Colonel House,

It is a pleasure to think that we meet on Saturday.

I have felt acutely the difficulty in the way of a free communication of ideas imposed upon us by the limitations of the telegraph and the Post Office. A real and full inter-communication of ideas is only possible by conversation, and it gives me the greatest possible pleasure to think that you are as anxious as I to keep in touch through all the difficult weeks which are, I am afraid, in front of us.

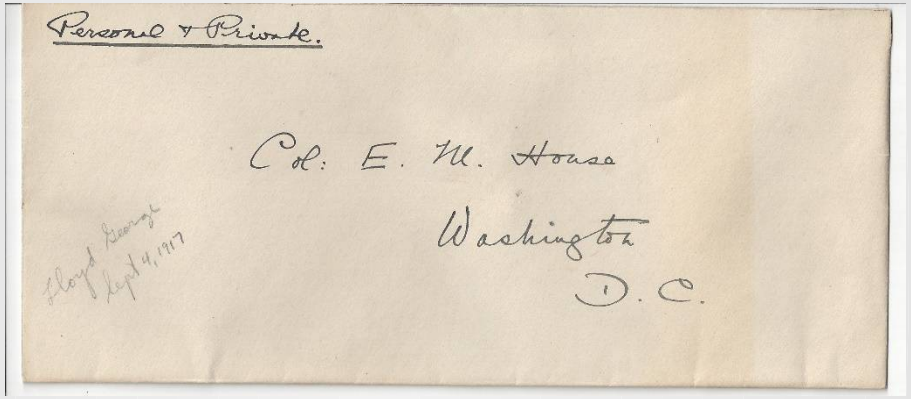
Let me hasten to add that I do not think the difficulties of which I speak will be between your Government and mine; but elsewhere I am amazed at the crop of ambitions, fears, dislikes, and even hatreds which so plentifully spring up in the sunshine of approaching Peace. I fear that neither you nor I will be able to escape the embarrassments which these must inevitably produce.

I hope that the President is none the worse for all the labours consequent on his great reception.

Yours sincerely

A J Balfour

BRITISH PM URGES COL. HOUSE TO ATTEND ALLIED MEETING IN LONDON

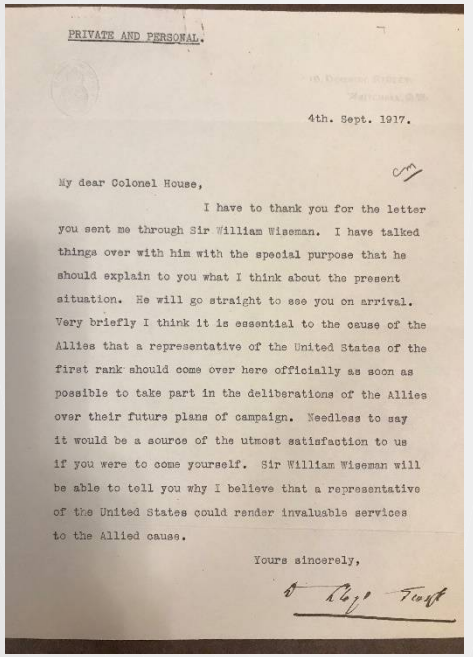

Personal & Private.

Col. E. M. House

Washington

D. C.

Lloyd George Sept 4, 1917


PRIVATE AND PERSONAL.

4th. Sept. 1917.

My dear Colonel House,

I have to thank you for the letter you sent me through Sir William Wiseman. I have talked things over with him with the special purpose that he should explain to you what I think about the present situation. He will go straight to see you on arrival. Very briefly I think it is essential to the cause of the Allies that a representative of the United States of the first rank should come over here officially as soon as possible to take part in the deliberations of the Allies over their future plans of campaign. Needless to say it would be a source of the utmost satisfaction to us if you were to come yourself. Sir William Wiseman will be able to tell you why I believe that a representative of the United States could render invaluable services to the Allied cause.

Yours sincerely,

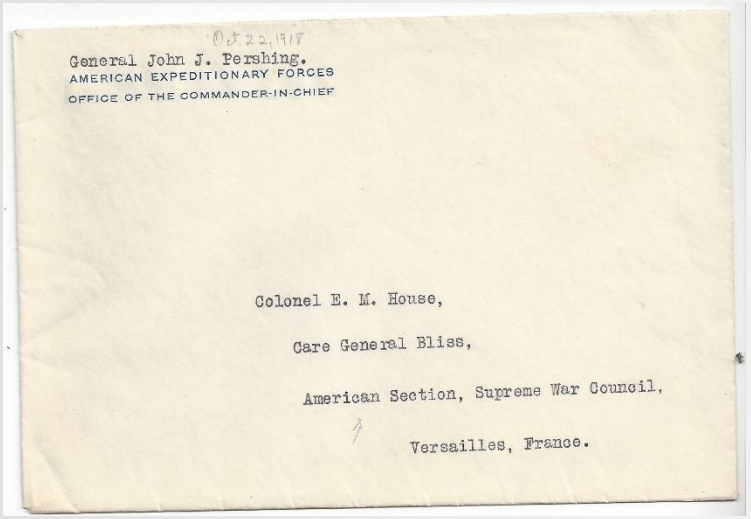
D Lloyd George

4 Sept. 1917: British Prime Minister Lloyd George responded to Col. House letter sent via British Intelligence Head, New York, Sir Wiseman. He stressed the urgency of Allied campaigns and for Col. House to represent the US at Allied deliberations (London) immediately. He impressed that Sir Wiseman will explain the reasons why it was important for Col. House to attend and render invaluable services.

PRE-ARMISTICE TREATY: STATE DEPARTMENT & MILITARY ROLES

Frank Polk was a key member of "The Inquiry" commission led by Col. House for President Wilson to study causes of World War 1 and strategies to prevent such world wars in the future. Subsequently, he was 'figure head" of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace for the Versailles Peace Treaty.

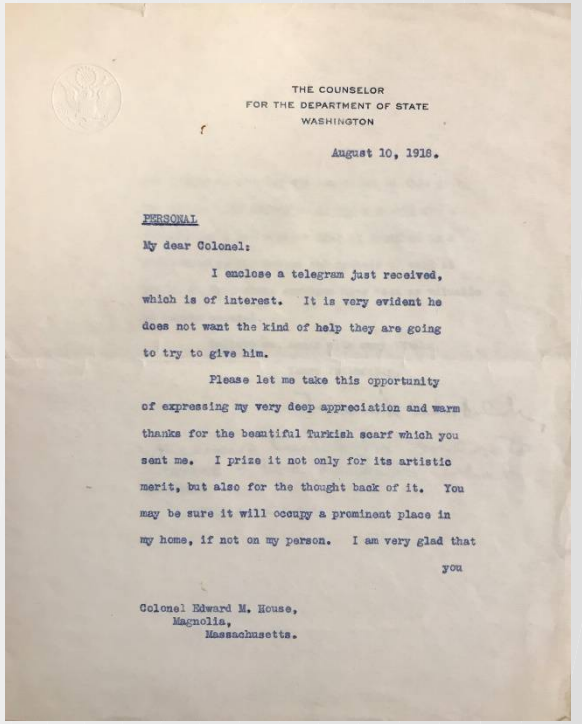
10 Aug.1918: Frank Polk, Under Secretary and Acting Secretary of State, sent this registered letter using the cover bearing his previous position, "THE COUNSELLOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE". Since free frank excluded both Personal and Registered mail, this cover bears 1¢+ 5x3¢ definitive stamps paying registered postage.



22 Oct. 1918: General Pershing invited Col. House for a briefing.

Gen. Pershing

Gen. Bliss

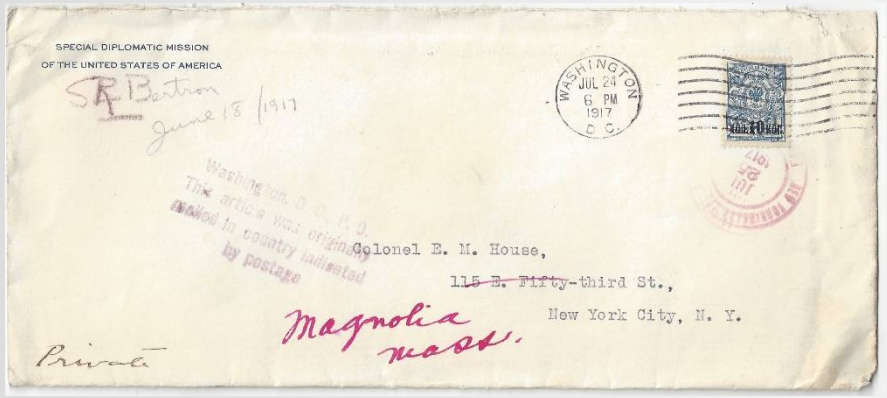


When Col. House arrived in Paris for the preparation of the Versailles Peace Conference, General Pershing recognized the importance of Col. House as the special advisor to President Wilson by inviting him and General Bliss to visit him for a full briefing about the US Army's progress at the war front.

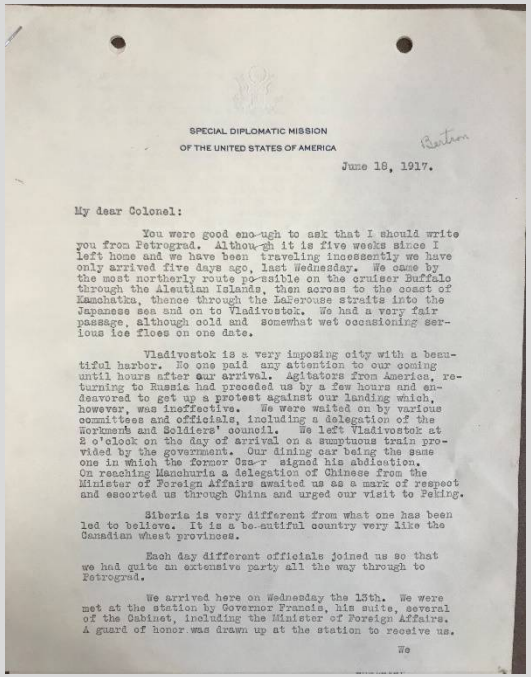
PRE-ARMISTICE: THE ROOT COMMISSION – KEEPING NEW RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIK COALITION GOVT. WITH ALLIED POWERS TO FIGHT GERMANY

President Wilson directed Sec. of State Lansing and Col. House to organize a special diplomatic mission to Russia under former Secretary of State Root. The mission intended to advocate democracy and avoid new Russian government making peace with Germany. Samuel R. Bertron, a NY Banker/Lawyer, and a friend of Col. House was the "Finance" expert in the commission.

US Embassy-Petrograd



Root Commission at the Marinsky Palace.



SPECIAL DIPLOMATIC MISSION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 18, 1917.

My dear Colonel:

You were good enough to ask that I should write you from Petrograd. Although it is five weeks since I left home and we have been traveling incessantly we have only arrived five days ago, last Wednesday. We came by the most northerly route possible on the cruiser Buffalo through the Aleutian Islands, then across to the coast of Kamchatka, thence through the LaPerouse straits into the Japanese sea and on to Vladivostok. We had a very fair passage, although cold and somewhat wet occasioning serious ice floes on one date.

Vladivostok is a very imposing city with a beautiful harbor. No one paid any attention to our coming until hours after our arrival. Agitators from America, returning to Russia had preceded us by a few hours and endeavored to get up a protest against our landing which, however, was ineffective. We were waited on by various committees and officials, including a delegation of the Workmen's and Soldiers' council. We left Vladivostok at 2 o'clock on the day of arrival on a sumptuous train provided by the government. Our dining car being the same one in which the former Czar signed his abdication. On reaching Manchuria a delegation of Chinese from the Minister of Foreign Affairs awaited us as a mark of respect and escorted us through China and urged our visit to Peking.

Siberia is very different from what one has been led to believe. It is a beautiful country very like the Canadian wheat provinces.

Each day different officials joined us so that we had quite an extensive party all the way through to Petrograd.

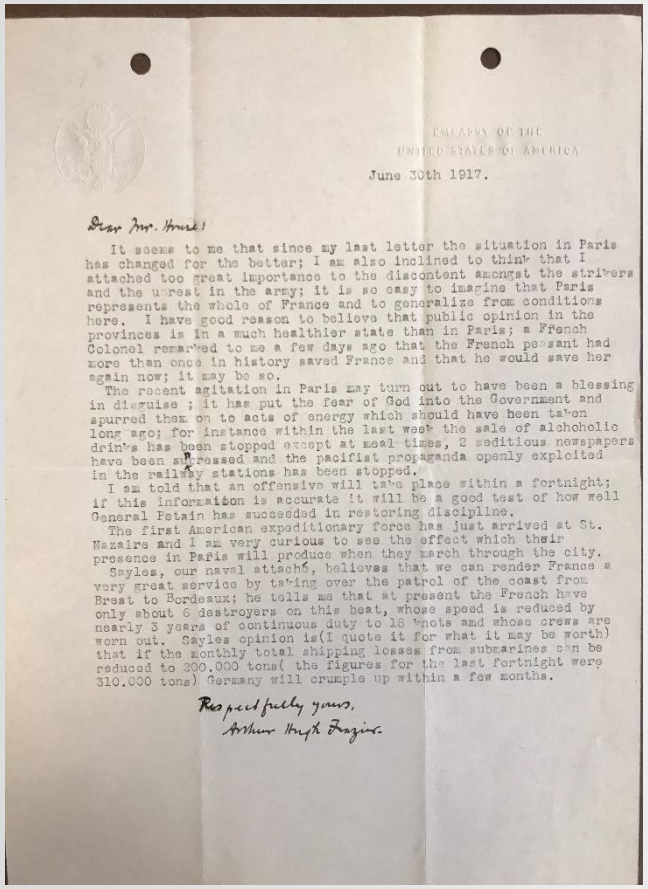
We arrived here on Wednesday the 13th. We were met at the station by Governor Francis, his suite, several of the Cabinet, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A guard of honor was drawn up at the station to receive us.

We

18 June 1917: Samuel Bertron, a Mission member, wrote a four-page letter to Col. House, three days after first Soviet Congress where Lenin proclaimed Bolsheviks were ready to take the power. Letter was written the day after violent street protests by Bolsheviks. Letter highlights: i) Long journey on Cruiser Buffalo to Vladivostok, China and Siberia by train helped commission become familiar with Russia; ii) Workmen representing 2% of population in real control by aligning with solders and peasants (80% of population) and pushing wages up to 500% higher; iii) Identified three key ministers in the cabinet and reviewed with Russian Finance Minister the dire economic conditions including factory shutdowns, rampant inflation-ruble devalued to $0.25; iv) Fear of government takeover by socialists, in absence of decisive measures by current coalition government, v) Afraid, Russia will make peace with Germany if the socialists take over the government. and vi) General consensus amongst Russians, French and English diplomats that President Wilson, is the most commanding figure carrying a potent voice in the world today.

PRE-ARMISTICE: US DIPLOMATS WERE IMPORTANT INFORMATION SOURCE

30 June 1918: Mail from Arthur Hugh Frazier, Consular staff at the US Embassy, Paris. He sent the letter to Col. House by Diplomatic Pouch to the State Department, Washington, DC who sent it as Official Mail using the State Department's penalty rubber stamp. Mail received Washington, DC cancel on 20 July 1917 and US Postal service forwarded it to Col. House then in Magnolia, Mass.



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 30th 1917.

Dear Mr. House:

It seems to me that since my last letter the situation in Paris has changed for the better; I am also inclined to think that I attached too great importance to the discontent amongst the strikers and the unrest in the army; it is so easy to imagine that Paris represents the whole of France and to generalize from conditions here. I have good reason to believe that public opinion in the provinces is in a much healthier state than in Paris; a French Colonel remarked to me a few days ago that the French peasant had more than once in history saved France and that he would save her again now; it may be so.

The recent agitation in Paris may turn out to have been a blessing in disguise ; it has put the fear of God into the Government and spurred them on to acts of energy which should have been taken long ago; for instance within the last week the sale of alcoholic drinks has been stopped except at meal times, 2 seditious newspapers have been suppressed and the pacifist propaganda openly exploited in the railway stations has been stopped.

I am told that an offensive will take place within a fortnight; if this information is accurate it will be a good test of how well General Petain has succeeded in restoring discipline.

The first American expeditionary force has just arrived at St. Nazaire and I am very curious to see the effect which their presence in Paris will produce when they march through the city.

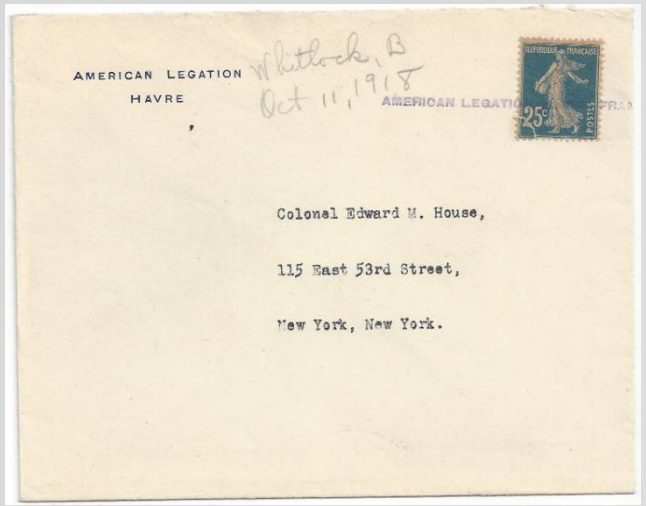
Sayles, our naval attaché, believes that we can render France a very great service by taking over the patrol of the coast from Brest to Bordeaux; he tells me that at present the French have only about 6 destroyers on this beat, whose speed is reduced by nearly 3 years of continuous duty to 18 knots and whose crews are worn out. Sayles opinion is(I quote it for what it may be worth) that if the monthly total shipping losses from submarines can be reduced to 300.000 tons(the figures for the last fortnight were 310.000 tons) Germany will crumple up within a few months.

Respectfully yours,
Arthur Hugh Frazier.

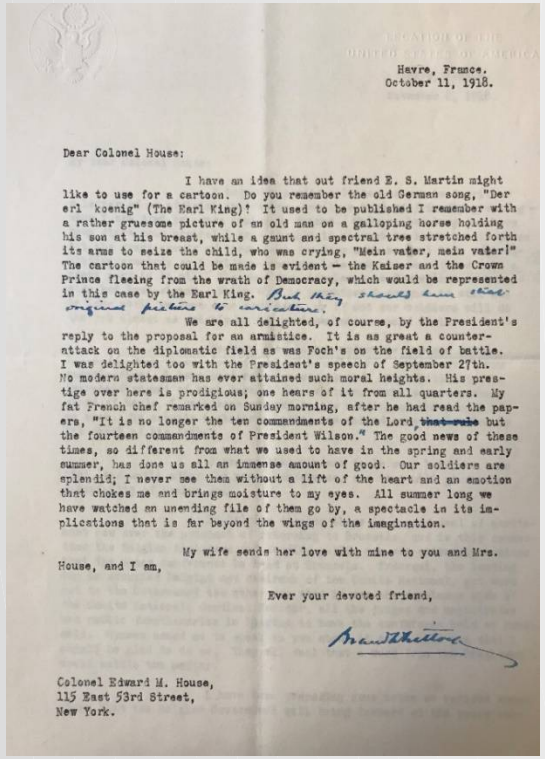
This detailed letter mentions the French government overcoming recent French Army setbacks, strikes and agitations in Paris and pacifist propaganda. Mentions the planned French army offensive in two weeks which will test General Petain. Also reports the arrival of the first American Expeditionary Force (WEF) at St. Nazaire and speculates as to how well they will be received when they march through the streets of Paris.

Letter ends with the mention that Sayles, the US Naval Attache advocates that the US Navy take over the patrol of the French coast from Brest to Bordeaux from the weak and inadequate French naval fleet.

PRE-ARMISTICE: US CONSUL TO BELGIUM, WHITLOCK EXILED IN FRANCE: HIGH PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT WILSON'S FIVE POINT SPEECH



11 Oct.1918: Mail from US Consul Brad Whitlock while at the American Legation in Havre bearing French Sawyer type 15¢, as required per UPU treaty and cancelled by American legation hand-stamp and then sent by Diplomatic pouch to Washington, DC who forwarded it to Col. House in New York.



Havre, France.
October 11, 1918.

Dear Colonel House:

I have an idea that out friend E. S. Martin might like to use for a cartoon. Do you remember the old German song, "Der erl koenig" (The Earl King)? It used to be published I remember with a rather gruesome picture of an old man on a galloping horse holding his son at his breast, while a gaunt and spectral tree stretched forth its arms to seize the child, who was crying, "Mein vater, mein vater!" The cartoon that could be made is evident — the Kaiser and the Crown Prince fleeing from the wrath of Democracy, which would be represented in this case by the Earl King. But they should have that original picture to caricature.

We are all delighted, of course, by the President's reply to the proposal for an armistice. It is as great a counter-attack on the diplomatic field as was Foch's on the field of battle. I was delighted too with the President's speech of September 27th. No modern statesman has ever attained such moral heights. His prestige over here is prodigious; one hears of it from all quarters. My fat French chef remarked on Sunday morning, after he had read the papers, "It is no longer the ten commandments of the Lord, ~~that rule~~ but the fourteen commandments of President Wilson." The good news of these times, so different from what we used to have in the spring and early summer, has done us all an immense amount of good. Our soldiers are splendid; I never see them without a lift of the heart and an emotion that chokes me and brings moisture to my eyes. All summer long we have watched an unending file of them go by, a spectacle in its implications that is far beyond the wings of the imagination.

My wife sends her love with mine to you and Mrs. House, and I am,

Ever your devoted friend,

Brand Whitlock

Colonel Edward M. House,
115 East 53rd Street,
New York.

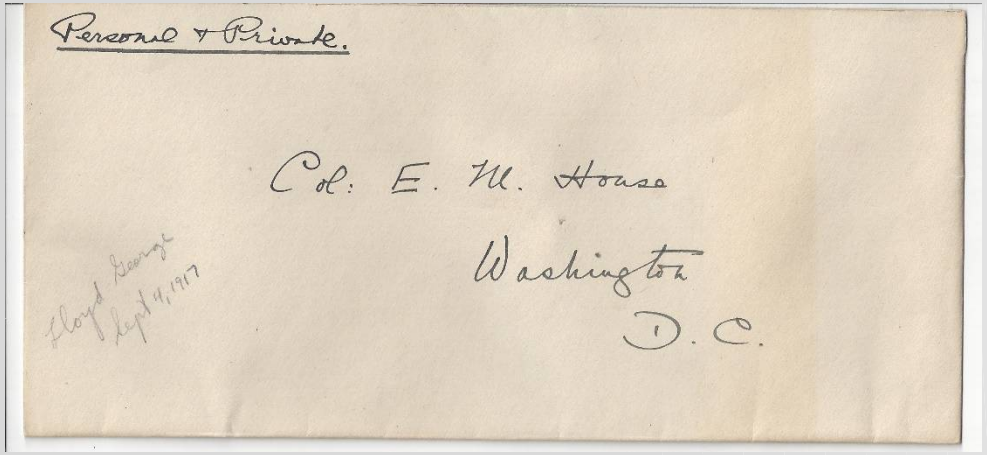
Above letter ends with very emotional praise of unending file of our soldiers marching by the streets and the kindness from their hearts.

11 OCT. 1918: A heart-warming letter from the US Consul Whitlock to Belgium while in Havre, France. Letter is jovial about a cartoon of "German Kaiser and his children on a galloping horse trying to escape the wrath of democracy" . He was delighted with President's response to heavy-handed Armistice proposal by French. Expresses high praise for President Wilson's "Five Points" speech of 27 Sept. 1918.

1. ***Impartial justice without discrimination amongst all nations.***
2. ***No separate interests or settlements by any nation that is inconsistent with interest of all.***
3. ***No special alliances or covenants among some in the family of League of Nations.***
4. ***No selfish economic combinations or boycotts or exclusions except for the power of economic penalty of world market exclusions vested in the League of Nations for discipline and control.***
5. ***All international treaties/agreements in full should be made known to the rest of the world.***

Adds, "*No modern statesman has ever attained such moral heights.*" Expresses prodigious prestige of Wilson by quoting his French Chef, "***It is no longer the ten commandments of the Lord, but the fourteen commandments of President Wilson.***"

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER URGES COL. HOUSE TO ATTEND THE ALLIED MEETING IN LONDON


Personal & Private.

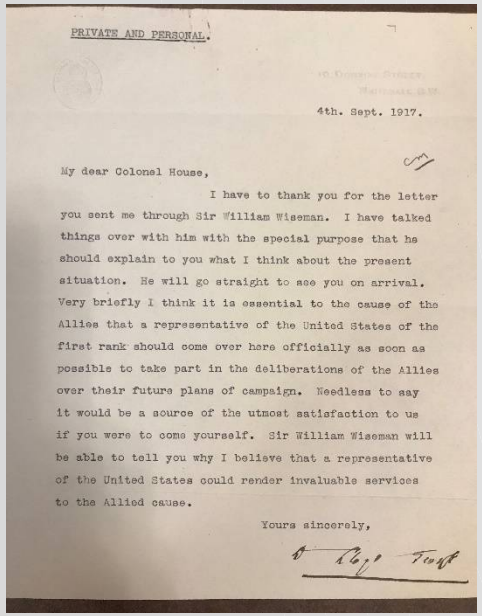
Col: E. M. House

Washington

D. C.

Lloyd George Sept 4, 1917

4 Sept.1917: British Prime Minister Lloyd George responded to Col. House letter sent via British Intelligence Head in New York, Sir Wiseman. He conveyed the urgency of Allied campaigns and urged Col. House to represent the USA at the Allies deliberations in London and to come over promptly. He impressed that Sir Wiseman would explain the reasons why it was important for Col. House to attend and render invaluable services.


PRIVATE AND PERSONAL.

4th. Sept. 1917.

My dear Colonel House,

I have to thank you for the letter you sent me through Sir William Wiseman. I have talked things over with him with the special purpose that he should explain to you what I think about the present situation. He will go straight to see you on arrival. Very briefly I think it is essential to the cause of the Allies that a representative of the United States of the first rank should come over here officially as soon as possible to take part in the deliberations of the Allies over their future plans of campaign. Needless to say it would be a source of the utmost satisfaction to us if you were to come yourself. Sir William Wiseman will be able to tell you why I believe that a representative of the United States could render invaluable services to the Allied cause.

Yours sincerely,

FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER NOMINATION TO INTER-ALLIED CONFERENCE

MINISTÈRE
des
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

V 152 P.O.

Monsieur

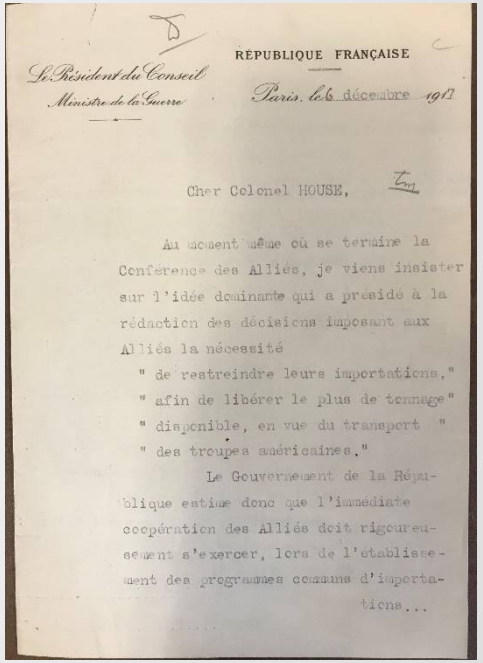
le Colonel House

Hôtel Crillon

Paris

Cover to Col. House at Hotel Crillon, Paris bearing Minister of Foreign Affairs (France) corner card and with “V”, “P.O.” and “152” manuscript markings.

6 Dec. 1917: Letter on French Foreign Ministry letterhead from Mr. Pichon nominating M. Clemental - Minister of Commerce & Maritime Transport and M. Loucheur – Minister of Armaments to the Inter-Allied Conference, the Section of Imports & Maritime Transport, to work with their counterparts from Britain, Italy and US. Letter asks Col. House who will be the US representative in this Section.


Le Président du Conseil
Ministre de la Guerre

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Paris, le 6 décembre 1917

Cher Colonel HOUSE,

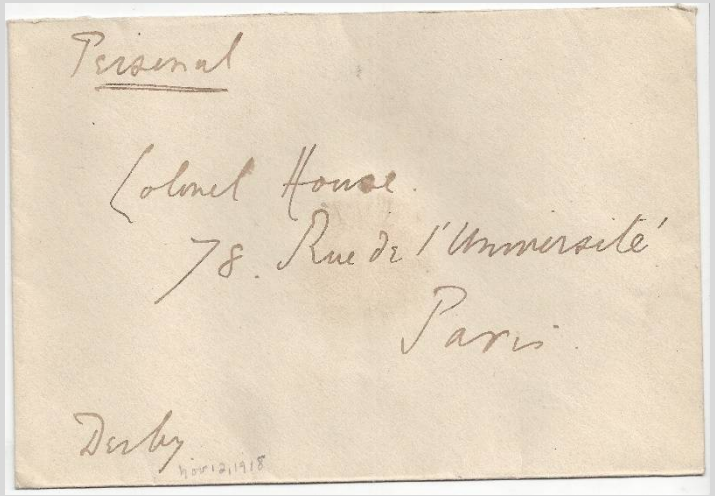
Au moment même où se termine la Conférence des Alliés, je viens insister sur l'idée dominante qui a présidé à la rédaction des décisions imposant aux Alliés la nécessité

" de restreindre leurs importations,"
" afin de libérer le plus de tonnage "
" disponible, en vue du transport "
" des troupes américaines."

Le Gouvernement de la République estime donc que l'immédiate coopération des Alliés doit rigoureusement s'exercer, lors de l'établissement des programmes communs d'importations...

BRITISH DIPLOMACY ENABLED PRESIDENT WILSON TO ATTEND PEACE CONFERENCE

BRITISH KING INVITES PRESIDENT WILSON TO VISIT THE UK

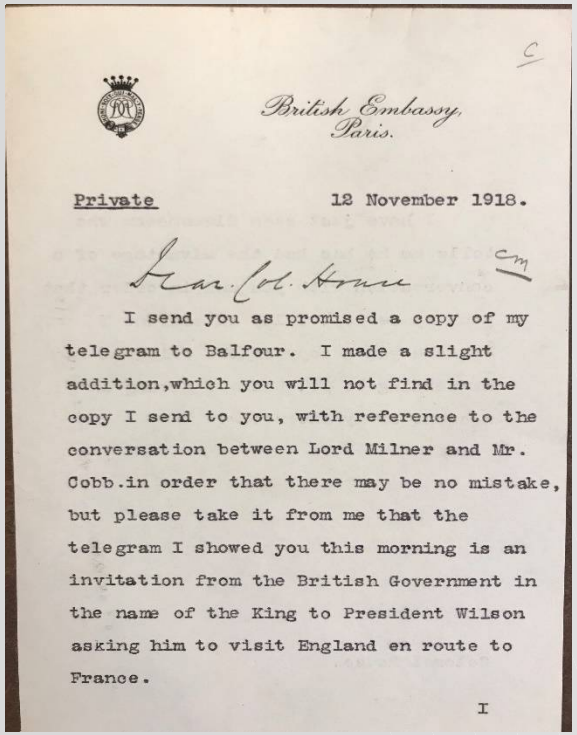


Personal

Colonel House.
78. Rue de l'Universite'
Paris.

Derby
Nov 12, 1918

12 Nov. 1918: Letter from Lord Derby, the British Ambassador to France, to Col. House conveyed the King's invitation to President Wilson to visit Britain upon his pending travel to France to attend the Peace Conference.



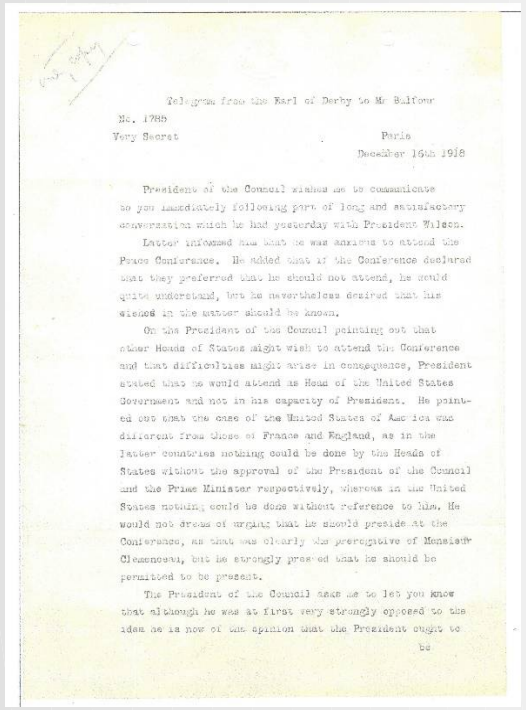
British Embassy,
Paris.

Private 12 November 1918.

Dear Col. House

I send you as promised a copy of my telegram to Balfour. I made a slight addition, which you will not find in the copy I send to you, with reference to the conversation between Lord Milner and Mr. Cobb. in order that there may be no mistake, but please take it from me that the telegram I showed you this morning is an invitation from the British Government in the name of the King to President Wilson asking him to visit England en route to France.

I



Telegram from the Earl of Derby to Mr Balfour

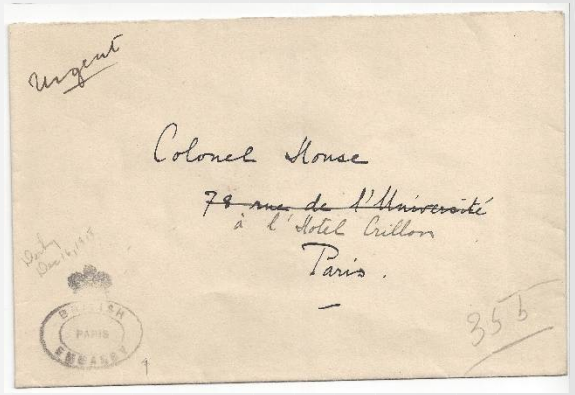
No. 1785
Very Secret Paris
December 16th 1918

President of the Council wishes me to communicate to you immediately following part of long and satisfactory conversation which he had yesterday with President Wilson.

Latter informed him that he was anxious to attend the Peace Conference. He added that if the Conference declared that they preferred that he should not attend, he would quite understand, but he nevertheless desired that his wishes in the matter should be known.

On the President of the Council pointing out that other Heads of States might wish to attend the Conference and that difficulties might arise in consequence, President stated that he would attend as Head of the United States Government and not in his capacity of President. He pointed out that the case of the United States of America was different from those of France and England, as in the latter countries nothing could be done by the Heads of States without the approval of the President of the Council and the Prime Minister respectively, whereas in the United States nothing could be done without reference to him. He would not dream of urging that he should preside at the Conference, as that was clearly the prerogative of Monsieur Clemenceau, but he strongly pressed that he should be permitted to be present.

The President of the Council asks me to let you know that although he was at first very strongly opposed to the idea he is now of the opinion that the President ought to be



Urgent

Colonel House
~~78 rue de l'Université~~
à l'Hôtel Crillon
Paris.

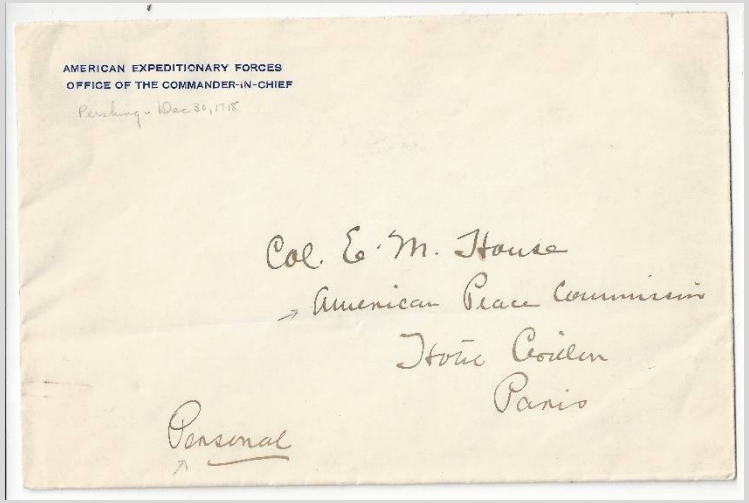
16 Dec. 1918: Copy of telegram from British Ambassador in France to the Foreign Secretary Mr. Balfour was sent to Col. House marked "URGENT" and was hand delivered. Telegram reported on meeting of the Council President and Prime Minister of France, Mr. Clemenceau, with President Wilson. He reported about President Wilson's strong desire to attend the inaugural of the Peace Conference (as the head of USA delegation). Clemenceau initially was strongly opposed but soon realized the huge popularity of President Wilson in Paris (when he arrived there on 13 December) and changed to strongly support President Wilson's request to attend the Conference.

US ARMY IN TRANSITION AFTER ARMISTICE TREATY

MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT US ARMY IN FRANCE

30 Dec.1918: General Pershing from Monte Carlo mentions his conversation with US Consul Frazier about confusion with the French Marshal Foch about the meaning of withdrawal of US Army from France after Armistice. He mentions that by law the US Army can't remain in France as an occupying force for more than four months after the Peace Treaty is signed. He meant to convey that the US Army would be withdrawn but would be replaced with Army volunteers. Letter ends with his request to Col. House to clarify this point with the French Prime Minister.

An important letter about the transition for US Army from WW1 to peace and recovery mission in post Peace Treaty period. General also getting well deserved rest at Monte Carlo during Xmas-New Year holidays.

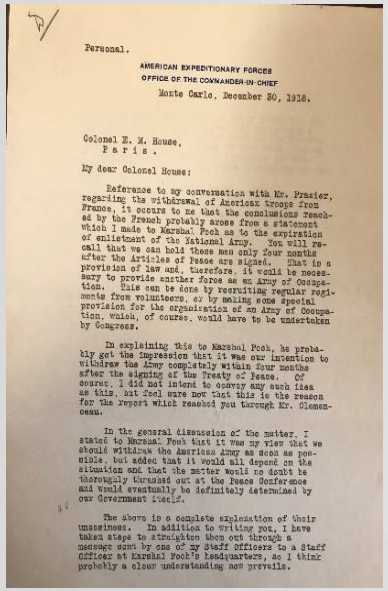


AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Pershing - Dec 30, 1918

Col. E. M. House
American Peace Commission
Hotel Crillon
Paris

Personal



Personal.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
Monte Carlo, December 30, 1918.

Colonel E. M. House,
Paris.

My dear Colonel House:

Reference to my conversation with Mr. Frazier, regarding the withdrawal of American troops from France, it occurs to me that the conclusions reached by the French probably arose from a statement which I made to Marshal Foch as to the expiration of enlistment of the National Army. You will recall that we can hold these men only four months after the Articles of Peace are signed. That is a provision of law and, therefore, it would be necessary to provide another force as an Army of Occupation. This can be done by recruiting regular regiments from volunteers, or by making some special provision for the organization of an Army of Occupation, which, of course, would have to be undertaken by Congress.

In explaining this to Marshal Foch, he probably got the impression that it was our intention to withdraw the Army completely within four months after the signing of the Treaty of Peace. Of course, I did not intend to convey any such idea as this, but feel sure now that this is the reason for the report which reached you through Mr. Clemenceau.

In the general discussion of the matter, I stated to Marshal Foch that it was my view that we should withdraw the American Army as soon as possible, but added that it would all depend on the situation and that the matter would no doubt be thoroughly threshed out at the Peace Conference and would eventually be definitely determined by our Government itself.

The above is a complete explanation of their unsoundness. In addition to writing you, I have taken steps to straighten them out through a message sent by one of my Staff Officers to a Staff Officer at Marshal Foch's Headquarters, as I think probably a clear understanding now prevails.

INTER-ALLIED GAMES HOSTED BY YMCA IN PARIS

A R Dorris, 2nd Lieut. US Army Athletics, mailed this commemorative card on the games opening day 22 June 1919 via US MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE which was censored and sent to Mrs. Borzec and Normal School in Monmouth, Oregon.

CARTE POSTALE

FACTS ABOUT INTER-ALLIED GAMES

Formal Opening : 22 June.
Closing ceremonies : 6 July.

Place : Pershing Stadium, on outskirts of Paris, in Bois de Vincennes near Joinville-le-Pont.

The Stadium : Erected especially for the Games by the Y.M.C.A. and presented to the A.E.F.; seating capacity 25,000; concrete structure completed by U.S. troops; field graded and track laid by French engineers. To be presented to France on completion of Games.

Competitions in the Stadium : Baseball, basketball, boxing, cricket, cross country race, fencing, soccer, Rugby football, hand grenade throwing, horse-riding, track and field sports, tug-of-war, wrestling.

Competitions not in the Stadium : Tennis, swimming, rifle and pistol shooting, rowing, and golf.

Nations Participating : America, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czecho-Slovakia, France, Guatemala, Hedjaz, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Roumania, Serbia.

Civilians and Soldiers of all Allied countries invited; no charge for tickets. Information-bureaus will be operated at all prominent points in Paris before and during Games.

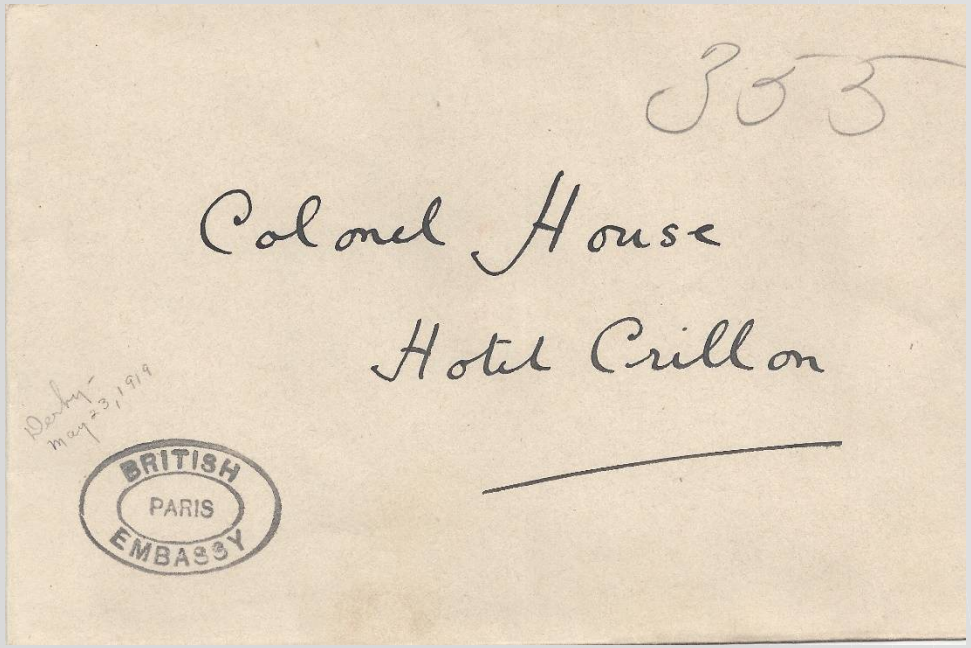
La correspondance au recto n'est pas acceptée par tous les pays étrangers

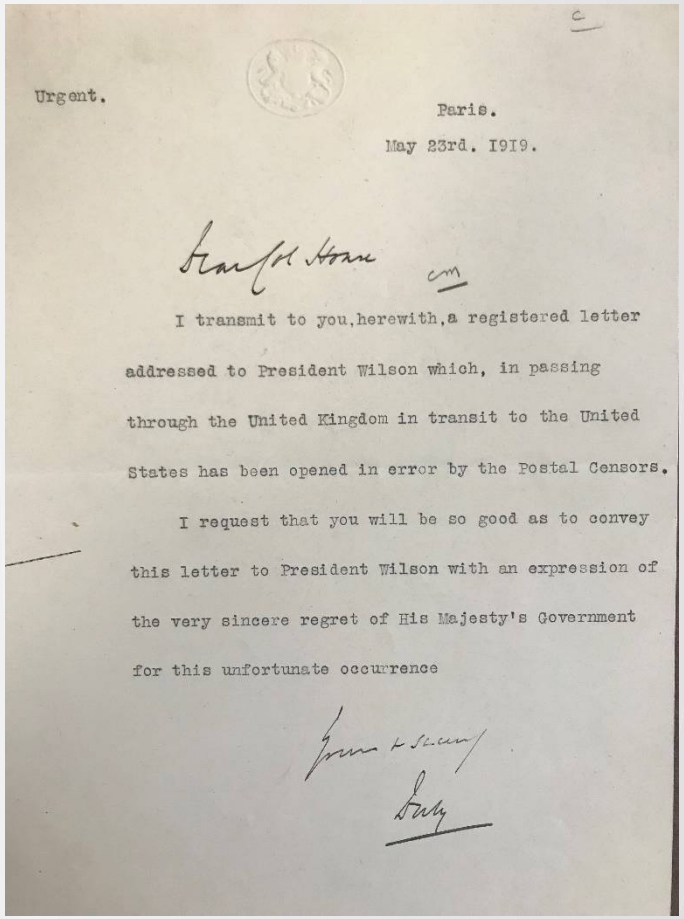
U.S. PRESS

Mrs Anna Borzec
Salem
Oregon
Monmouth
Normal School

General Pershing issued the first General Order (#241) relating to sports in the US Army on 29 Dec.1918. He issued this order about six months prior to the start of the Inter-Allied Games that were to be conducted in Paris between 22 June and July 1919. The purpose of the order was to direct attention of all concerned to the importance of encouraging the development of general and competitive athletics to keep up the morale, to foster and develop esprit de corps and to improve the physical fitness of the Army personnel. The order directed competition in the AEF leading to championships in track & field, baseball, football, basketball, tennis, boxing and wrestling. The publication of GO #241 established a cooperative arrangement between the US Army and the YMCA. The Inter-Allied Games conveyed to all the soldiers of the various armies of the allies that the Great War had ended with the beginning of a greater and more hopeful peace than the world had yet known.

BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE APOLOGIZING FOR CENSORING LETTER TO PRESIDENT WILSON





Urgent.

Paris.

May 23rd. 1919.

Colonel House

I transmit to you, herewith, a registered letter addressed to President Wilson which, in passing through the United Kingdom in transit to the United States has been opened in error by the Postal Censors.

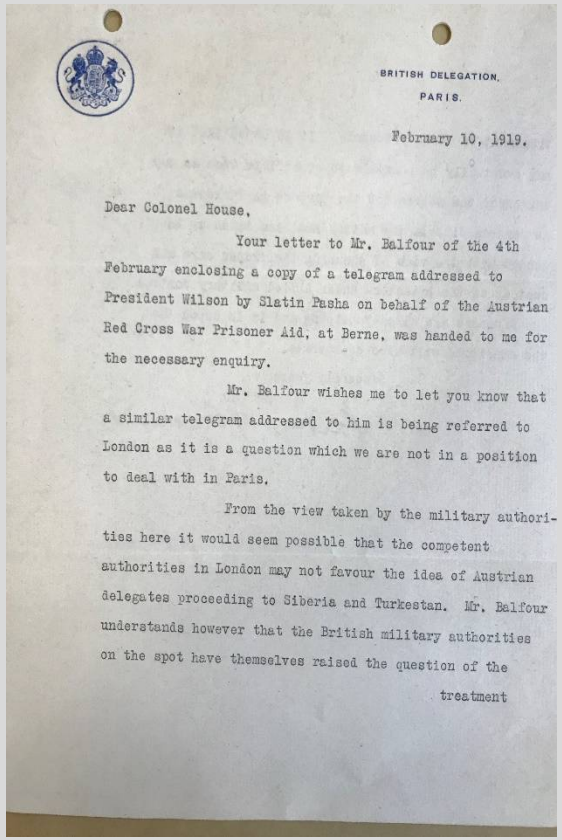
I request that you will be so good as to convey this letter to President Wilson with an expression of the very sincere regret of His Majesty's Government for this unfortunate occurrence

Yours sincerely,

Derby

23 May 1919: Lord Derby, British Ambassador to France, forwarded a Registered Letter addressed to President Wilson which, while passing through “United Kingdom,” was accidently opened by error by its Postal Censor. He requests Col. House to forward that letter to President Wilson and to convey sincere regret of His Majesty’s Government. One wonders where the letter to President Wilson originated from that was transmitted through the UK.

BRITISH-AMERTICAN COORDINATION REGARDING AUSTRIAN RED CROSS REQUEST FOR TURKISH POWS



BRITISH DELEGATION.
PARIS.

February 10, 1919.

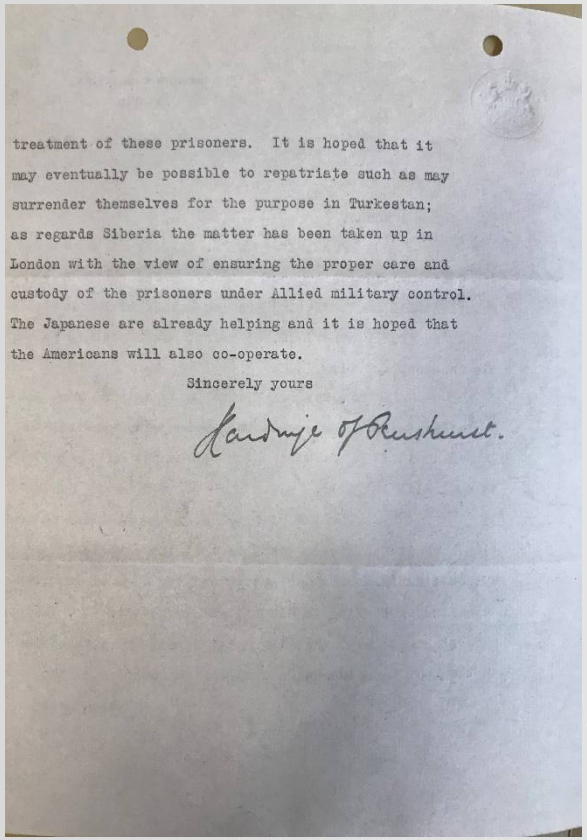
Dear Colonel House,

Your letter to Mr. Balfour of the 4th February enclosing a copy of a telegram addressed to President Wilson by Slatin Pasha on behalf of the Austrian Red Cross War Prisoner Aid, at Berne, was handed to me for the necessary enquiry.

Mr. Balfour wishes me to let you know that a similar telegram addressed to him is being referred to London as it is a question which we are not in a position to deal with in Paris.

From the view taken by the military authorities here it would seem possible that the competent authorities in London may not favour the idea of Austrian delegates proceeding to Siberia and Turkestan. Mr. Balfour understands however that the British military authorities on the spot have themselves raised the question of the

treatment



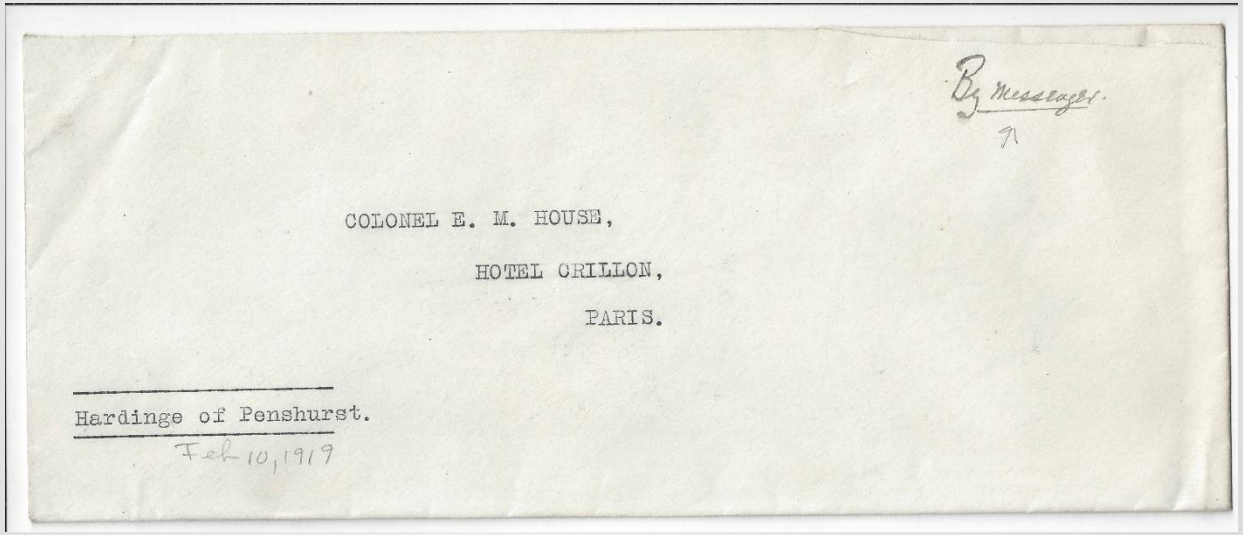
treatment of these prisoners. It is hoped that it may eventually be possible to repatriate such as may surrender themselves for the purpose in Turkestan; as regards Siberia the matter has been taken up in London with the view of ensuring the proper care and custody of the prisoners under Allied military control. The Japanese are already helping and it is hoped that the Americans will also co-operate.

Sincerely yours

Hardinge of Penshurst.

Lord Charles Hardinge Penhurst, former Viceroy of India, was appointed Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs in 1916. He was instrumental in gaining support of Indian nationalists in WW I and sent close to a million Indian soldiers to Europe to join their British counterparts.

10 Feb. 1918: Lord Penhurst, British Delegate, wrote about Austrian Red Cross telegrams to President Wilson and Prime Minister Balfour which dealt with the treatment and need to visit Turkish POWs in Siberia and Turkistan. Letter requests American cooperation for proper treatment of POWs in Siberia under Allied Control. Also mentions plans to allow return of POWs who surrender to British Military Authorities.



By Messenger.

COLONEL E. M. HOUSE,

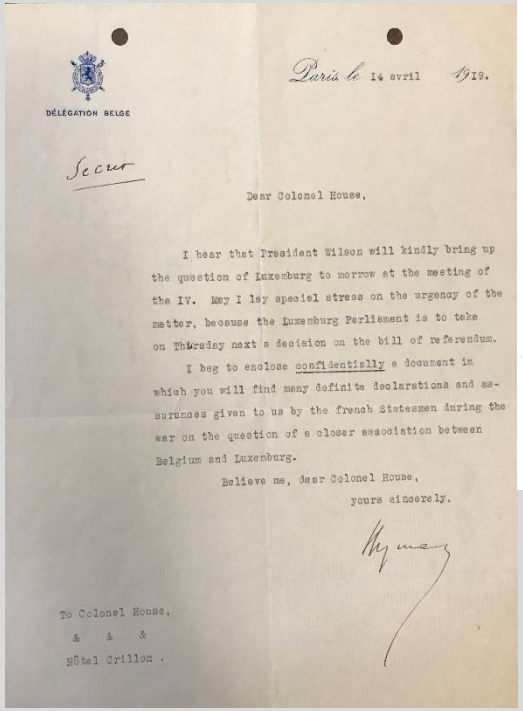
HOTEL CRILLON,

PARIS.

Hardinge of Penshurst.

Feb 10, 1919

BELGIUM SECURED REPARATIONS AND PROMOTED ROLE OF SMALL NATIONS



DÉLÉGATION BELGE

Paris le 14 avril 1919.

Secret

Dear Colonel House,

I hear that President Wilson will kindly bring up the question of Luxemburg to morrow at the meeting of the IV. May I lay special stress on the urgency of the matter, because the Luxemburg Parliament is to take on Thursday next a decision on the bill of referendum.

I beg to enclose confidentially a document in which you will find many definite declarations and assurances given to us by the french Statesmen during the war on the question of a closer association between Belgium and Luxemburg.

Believe me, dear Colonel House,

yours sincerely.

Hymans

To Colonel House,
& & &
Hôtel Crillon.

DÉLÉGATION BELGE

Pressing - Private

From Hymans -
April 14-1919

113

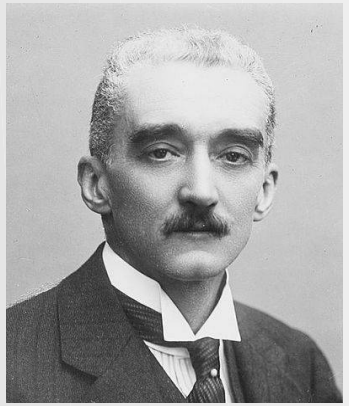
to Colonel House

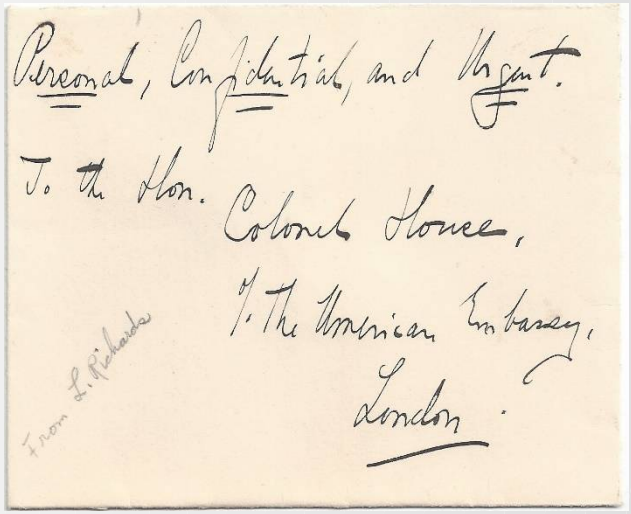
Hotel Crillon.

81

14 Apr. 1919: Hyman letter on official Belgian Delegation stationery sent in matching envelope with official red wax seal on the back. The letter marked “Secret” refers to President Wilson’s plan to bring up the issue of Luxembourg at the conference as the Luxembourg parliament was to vote on a referendum. He wanted to continue close association between Belgium and Luxembourg. He sought US support by enclosing a confidential document from France during the war of assurances for Belgium to retain its close relationship with Luxembourg.

Belgium's Foreign Secretary Hyman was the head of the Belgian delegation and sought reparations against the Central Powers and advocated the representation of small nations at the nascent League of Nations (without notable success). However, he was appointed to be its first President the same year, standing down as Belgian Foreign Secretary in 1920.





Personal, Confidential, and Urgent.

To the Hon. Colonel Howse,

c/o The American Embassy,

London.

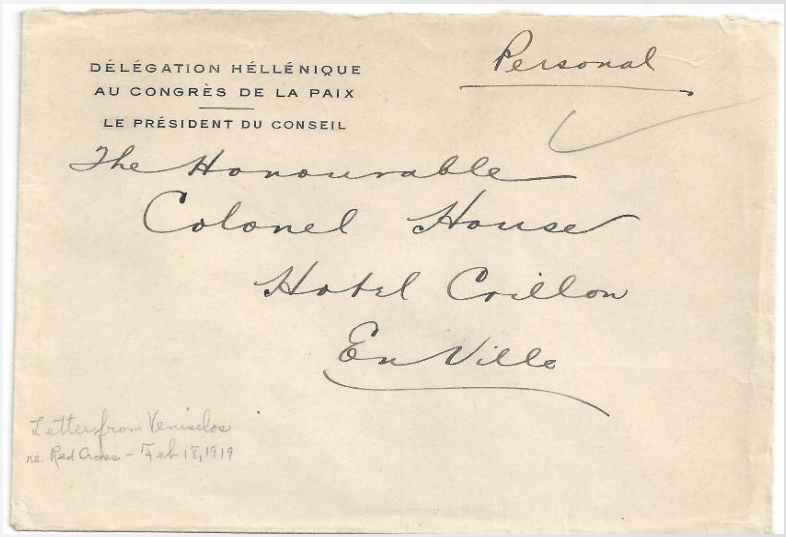
From L. Richards

From Lewis Richards
Secy for Belgium of the C.R.B.
c/o
PICCADILLY HOTEL,
LONDON, W.

Circa 1919: L. Richards was the Secretary to Belgium and Commission for Relief in Belgium. Richards played a significant role in CRB which fed over 11 million people in Benelux-French region during World War I.

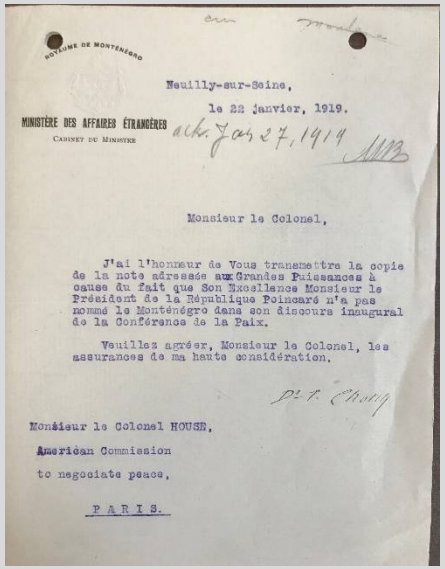
GREEK DELEGATION SECURED THRACE & SMYRNA TERRITORIES

Eleftherios Venizelos, former Prime Minister of Greece, was deposed by the Greek King when he invited Allied Forces to Salonika in 1915. Then in 1917, Allied Forces deposed the King and restored Venizelos to power. He led the Greek delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference.



18 Feb. and 30 March 1919: Two covers from Greek Leader Eleftherios Venizelos, one about the Red Cross. At the Peace Conference, the Ottoman empire was ready to be carved out. He successfully negotiated with Allied nations to secure Western Thrace in the Treaty of Neuilly in November 1919, and Eastern Thrace and a zone around Smyrna in western Anatolia in the Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920.

MONTENEGRO CIVIL WAR & LIMITED ROLE AT PEACE CONFERENCE



ROYAUME DE MONTENEGRO

Neuilly-sur-Seine,
le 22 janvier, 1919.

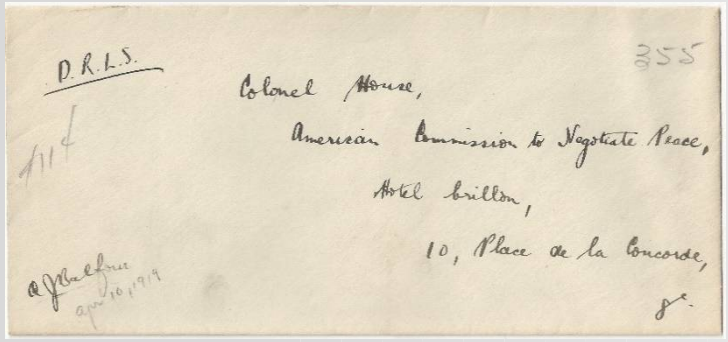
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
CABINET DU MINISTRE

Monsieur le Colonel,

J'ai l'honneur de Vous transmettre la copie de la note adressée aux Grandes Puissances à cause du fait que Son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République Poincaré n'a pas nommé le Monténégro dans son discours inaugural de la Conférence de la Paix.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Colonel, les assurances de ma haute considération.

Monsieur le Colonel HOUSE,
American Commission
to negociate peace,
PARIS.



D.R.I.S.

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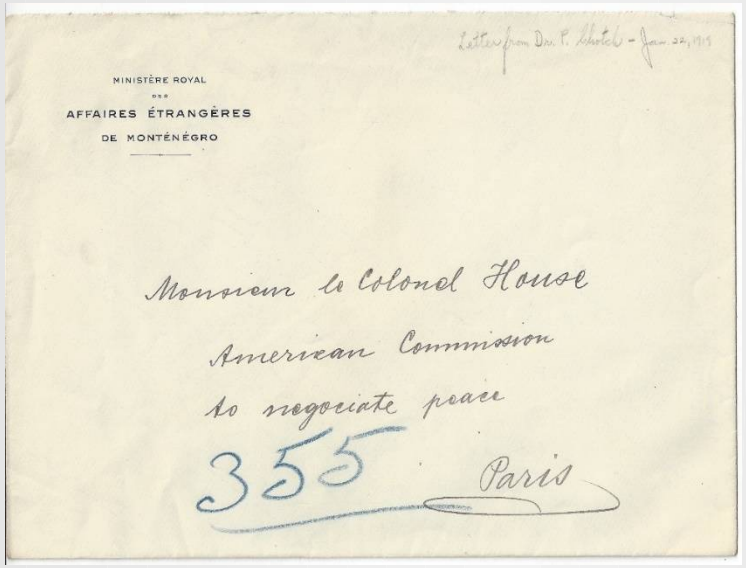
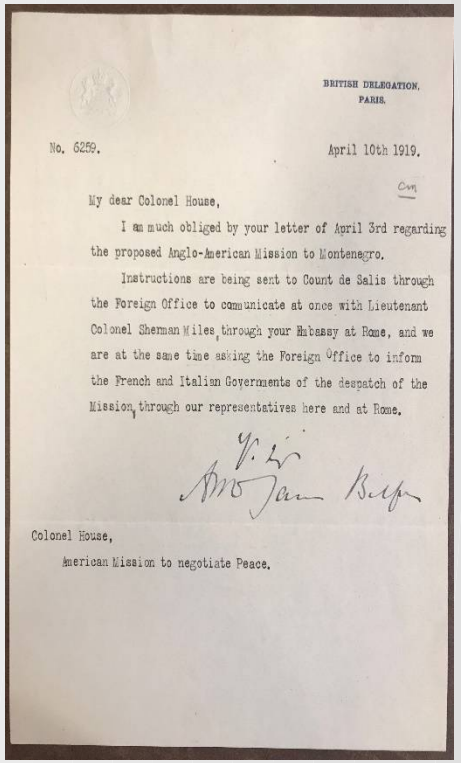
Colonel House,
American Commission to Negotiate Peace,
Hotel Crillon,
10, Place de la Concorde,
8e.



MINISTÈRE ROYAL
DES
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
DE MONTÉNÉGRO

Monsieur le Colonel House
American Commission
to negociate peace
355
Paris



BRITISH DELEGATION,
PARIS.

No. 6259. April 10th 1919.

My dear Colonel House,

I am much obliged by your letter of April 3rd regarding the proposed Anglo-American Mission to Montenegro.

Instructions are being sent to Count de Salis through the Foreign Office to communicate at once with Lieutenant Colonel Sherman Miles, through your Embassy at Rome, and we are at the same time asking the Foreign Office to inform the French and Italian Governments of the despatch of the Mission, through our representatives here and at Rome.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

Colonel House,
American Mission to negotiate Peace.

10 April 1919: British Foreign Secretary Balfour wrote to Col. House regarding the proposed visit of the Anglo-American mission to Montenegro. Letter details coordination between Count de Salis, former British Minister to Montenegro, and British Colonel Miles in Rome and relevant government officials of France and Italy to plan for the proposed visit by the joint delegation.

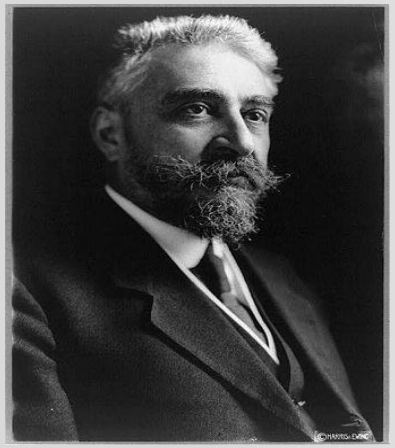
This mission was promoted by Balfour after US declined British-Franco request in March 1919 to send its troops to Montenegro to quell civil war about whether Montenegro should join the new confederation of Jugo-Slav. There were concerns about illegal arms supplies to Bolsheviks and factions supported by Italians behind the civil war.

22 Jan. 1919: Mail from the acting Foreign Minister Dr. P. Chotch sharing a note to "*Great Powers*" complaining that Mr. Poincare, President of the French Republic, did not name Montenegro at his inaugural speech at the opening of the Versailles Peace Conference on 18 Jan. 1919.

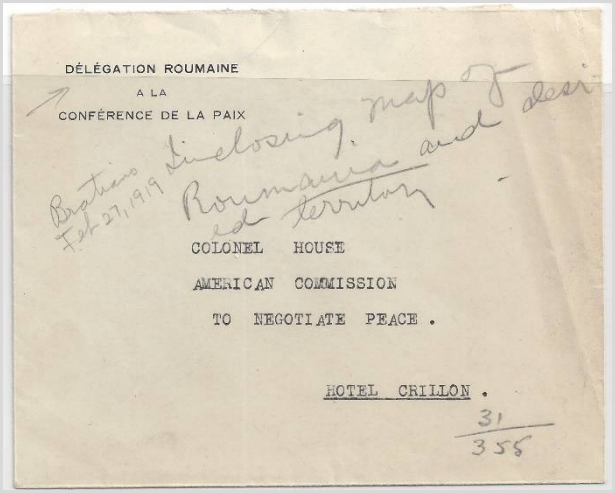
On 28 Jan. 1919, Dr. P. Chotch also wrote a lengthy letter to General Bliss that strongly protested against Serbian government which claimed merger of Montenegro in Serbia in its representations to the Allies at the Versailles Peace Conference.

ROMANIA: AMERICAN SUPPLIES BLOCKED WHILE ROMANIAN ARMY SOUGHT TO RECLAIM HUNGARIAN TERRITORIES

Romanian Prime Minister, I. Brătianu led its delegation to the Peace Conference.



30 Apr.1919: Letter in French from Romanian Prime Minister Brătianu advising of interruption of American supplies to Romania (by French Colonel Vix) and requesting Col. House to urgently seek a solution. Also mentions that he has yet to respond to the letter from Mr. Hoover (who led the food and emergency relief supplies to Europe). Finally, letter mentions contacting Mr. Davis to facilitate "This Agreement."



DÉLÉGATION ROUMAINE
A LA
CONFÉRENCE DE LA PAIX

Bratiano Feb 27, 1919 Enclosing map of Roumania and desired territory

COLONEL HOUSE
AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE.

HOTEL CRILLON.

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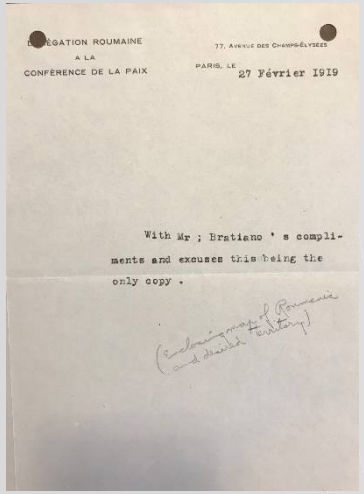


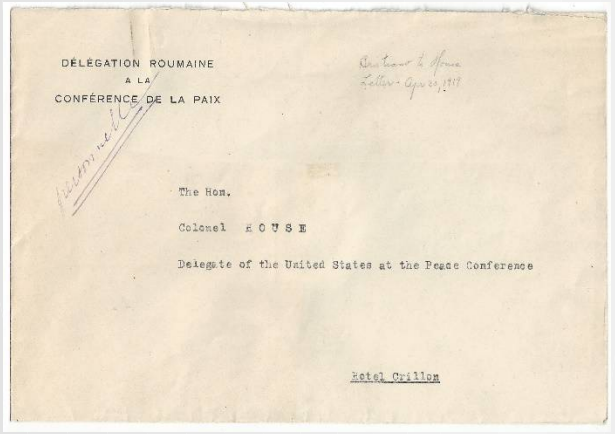
DÉLÉGATION ROUMAINE
A LA
CONFÉRENCE DE LA PAIX

77, AVENUE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
PARIS, LE 27 Février 1919

With Mr ; Bratiano ' s compliments and excuses this being the only copy.

(Enclosing map of Roumania and desired territory)

27 Feb. 1919: Letter from Prime Minister of Romania presenting a new map of Romania showing desired territory sought.

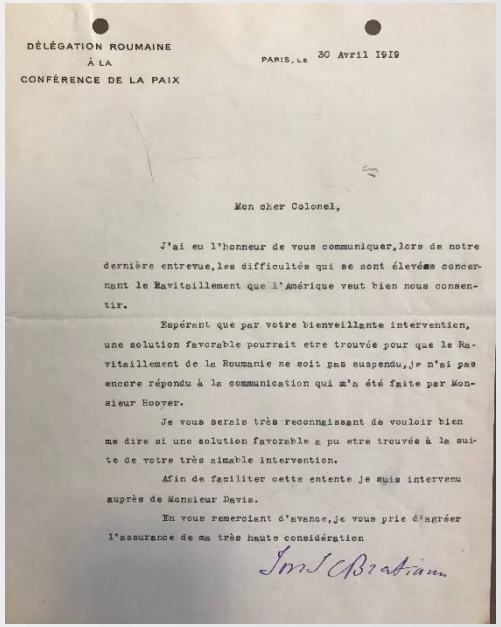


DÉLÉGATION ROUMAINE
A LA
CONFÉRENCE DE LA PAIX

Bratiano to House
Letter - Apr 30, 1919

The Hon.
Colonel HOUSE
Delegate of the United States at the Peace Conference

Hotel Crillon



DÉLÉGATION ROUMAINE
À LA
CONFÉRENCE DE LA PAIX

PARIS, LE 30 Avril 1919

Mon cher Colonel,

J'ai eu l'honneur de vous communiquer, lors de notre dernière entrevue, les difficultés qui se sont élevées concernant le Ravitaillement que l'Amérique veut bien nous consentir.

Espérant que par votre bienveillante intervention, une solution favorable pourrait etre trouvée pour que le Ravitaillement de la Roumanie ne soit pas suspendu, je n'ai pas encore répondu à la communication qui m'a été faite par Monsieur Hoover.

Je vous serais très reconnaissant de vouloir bien me dire si une solution favorable a pu etre trouvée à la suite de votre très aimable intervention.

Afin de faciliter cette entente je suis intervenu auprès de Monsieur Davis.

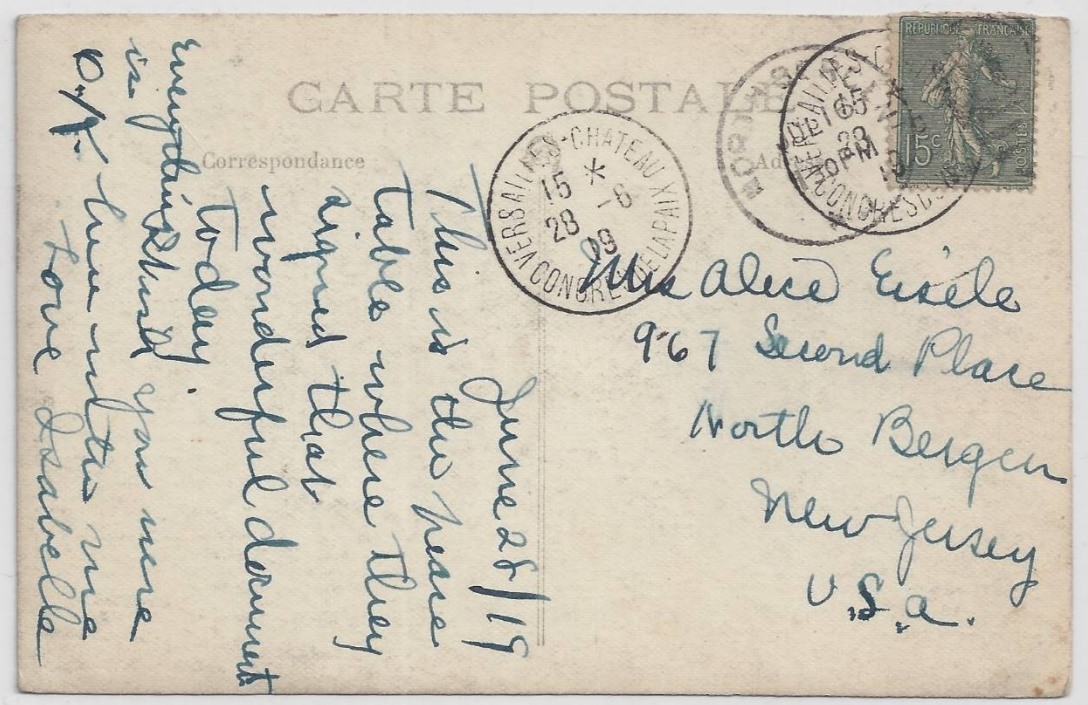
En vous remerciant d'avance, je vous prie d'agréer l'assurance de ma très haute considération

Ion I C Bratianu

Earlier in April 1919 Romanian army advanced in Hungarian-held territories without explicit approval of the Allied Powers. On 30 April French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon summoned Prime Minister I. Brătianu, Romania was told to cease its advance at the Tisza River and retreat to the first demarcation line imposed by the Allied council.

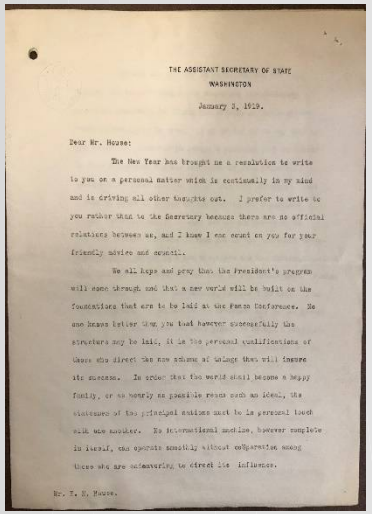
VERSAILLES PEACE TREATY SIGNED ON 28 JUNE 1919

Signing of the Peace Treaty in the Palace Conference Hall



28 June 1919: Postcard depicting Versailles Peace Treaty table bearing French 15¢ Sawyer stamp cancelled “VERSAILLES-CHETEAU CONGRES DE LA PAIX / 15* / 28-6-19”, mailed by Isabelle (Most likely an American nurse) to North Bergen, NJ, USA. Card bears North Bergen receiving cancel. Message reads: “This is the table where they signed that wonderful document today. Wish you were here with me. Everything is OK.”

US DIPLOMAT SOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT DURING PEACE CONFERENCE



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

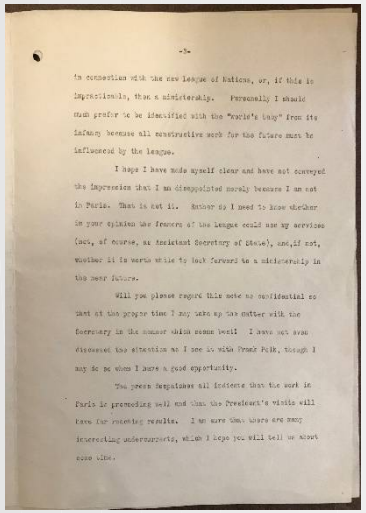
January 3, 1919.

Dear Mr. House:

The New Year has brought me a resolution to write to you on a personal matter which is continually in my mind and is driving all other thoughts out. I prefer to write to you rather than to the Secretary because there are no official relations between us, and I know I can count on you for your friendly advice and counsel.

We all hope and pray that the President's progress will come through and that a new world will be built on the foundations that are to be laid at the Paris Conference. No one knows better than you that however successfully the structure may be laid, it is the personal qualifications of those who direct the new scheme of things that will insure its success. In order that the world shall become a happy family, or as nearly as possible reach such an ideal, the statesmen of the principal nations must be in personal touch with one another. No international machine, however complete in itself, can operate sensibly without collaboration among those who are endeavoring to direct its influence.

Mr. E. M. House.



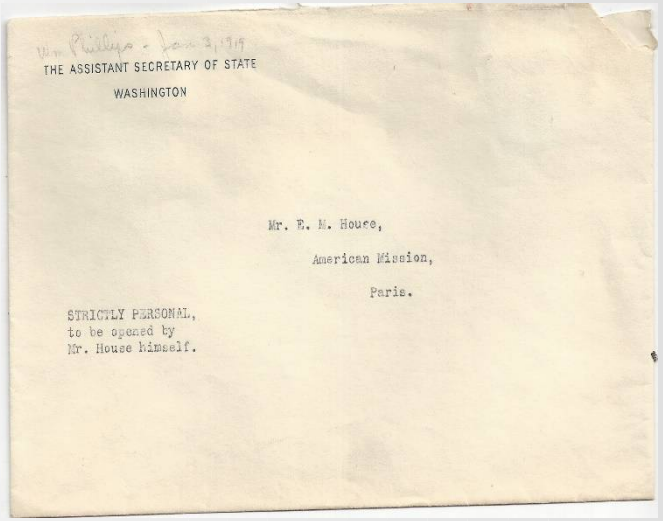
-2-

in connection with the new League of Nations, or, if this is impracticable, that a ministership. Personally I should much prefer to be identified with the "World's Baby" from its infancy because all constructive work for the future must be influenced by the League.

I hope I have made myself clear and have not conveyed the impression that I am disappointed merely because I am not in Paris. That is not it. Rather do I need to know whether in your opinion the framers of the League could use my services (not, of course, as Assistant Secretary of State), and, if not, whether it is worth while to look forward to a ministership in the near future.

Will you please regard this note as confidential so that at the proper time I may take up the matter with the Secretary in the manner which seems best? I have not even discussed the situation as I see it with Frank Polk, though I may do so when I have a good opportunity.

The press despatches all indicate that the work in Paris is proceeding well and that the President's visits will have far reaching results. I am sure there are many interesting undercurrents, which I hope you will tell me about some time.



Wm. Phillips - Jan 3, 1919

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Mr. E. M. House,
American Mission,
Paris.

STRICTLY PERSONAL,
to be opened by
Mr. House himself.

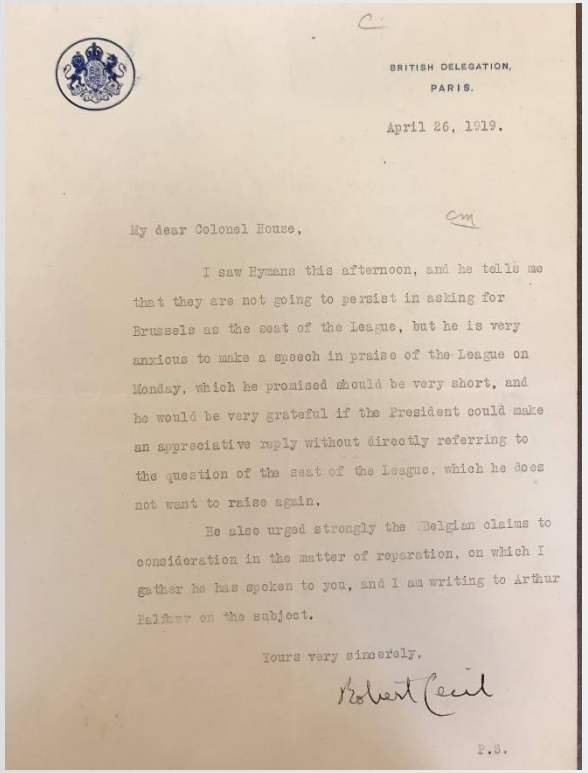
Wm G. Phillips served as Assistant Secretary of State from 1917 to1920 but played no role in the Versailles Peace Conference.

3 Jan. 1919: Wm. G. Phillips' four-page letter to Col. House expressing high hopes for President Wilson's proposed League of Nations as the "World's Baby" for family of nations and admiration for Col. House; conveys dis-satisfaction with his current role and seeks a suitable position in the new world organization, the League of Nations.

Since the US Congress never ratified the League of Nations, the US never became a member. However, several subsequent Presidents did support many initiatives of the League of Nations.

BELGIUM GAVE UP BRUSSELLS AS LEAGUE OF NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

Sir R. Cecil of the British Foreign Office co-wrote the charter of the League of Nations and worked closely with Col. House and President Wilson.



BRITISH DELEGATION,
PARIS.

April 26, 1919.

My dear Colonel House,

I saw Hymans this afternoon, and he tells me that they are not going to persist in asking for Brussels as the seat of the League, but he is very anxious to make a speech in praise of the League on Monday, which he promised should be very short, and he would be very grateful if the President could make an appreciative reply without directly referring to the question of the seat of the League, which he does not want to raise again.

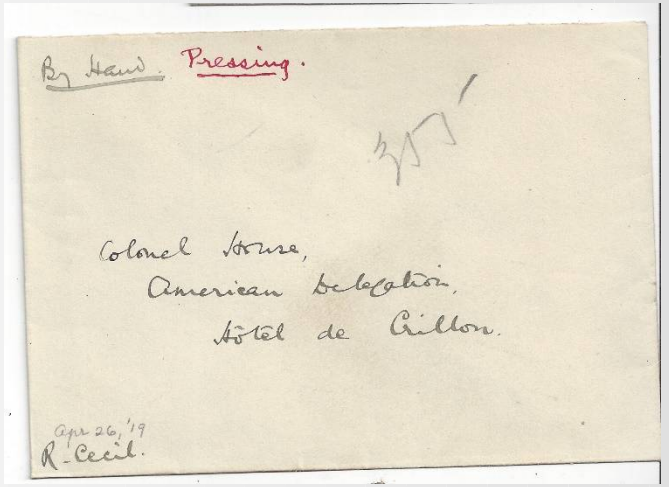
He also urged strongly the Belgian claims to consideration in the matter of reparation, on which I gather he has spoken to you, and I am writing to Arthur Balfour on the subject.

Yours very sincerely,

Robert Cecil

P.S.

Sir R. Cecil informed in this letter that Hyman of the Belgian delegation will not insist on Brussels as the seat of the League of Nations, will praise the League and requested President Wilson's support for Belgium's reparations requests which Cecil conveyed to British Foreign Secretary Balfour.



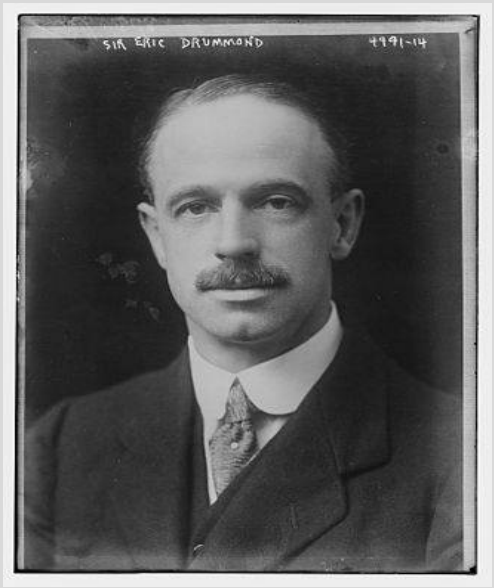
By Hand. Pressing.

Colonel House,
American Delegation,
Hôtel de Crillon.

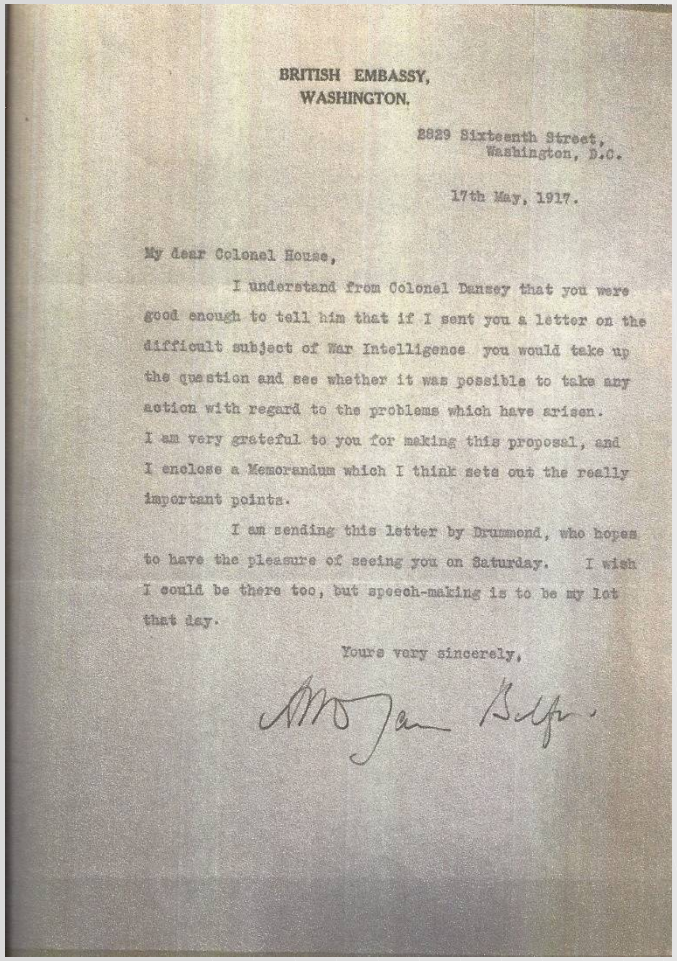
Apr 26/'19
R. Cecil.

26 April 1919: Mail sent in a handwritten envelope from Sir R. Cecil (Member of British Delegation at the Peace Conference) to Col. House at Hotel Carillion with "By Hand" and "Pressing" markings indicating letter was urgently hand delivered.

FIRST SECRETARY GENERAL OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS: SIR ERIC DRUMMOND



Sir Eric Drummond was part of a British Delegation both to USA and at the Peace Conference in 1918-1919 and led drafting of League of Nations Charter. He was chosen to be the first Secretary General when the League of Nations convened first time on 20 January 1920 in Geneva, Switzerland.



BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON.

2829 Sixteenth Street,
Washington, D.C.

17th May, 1917.

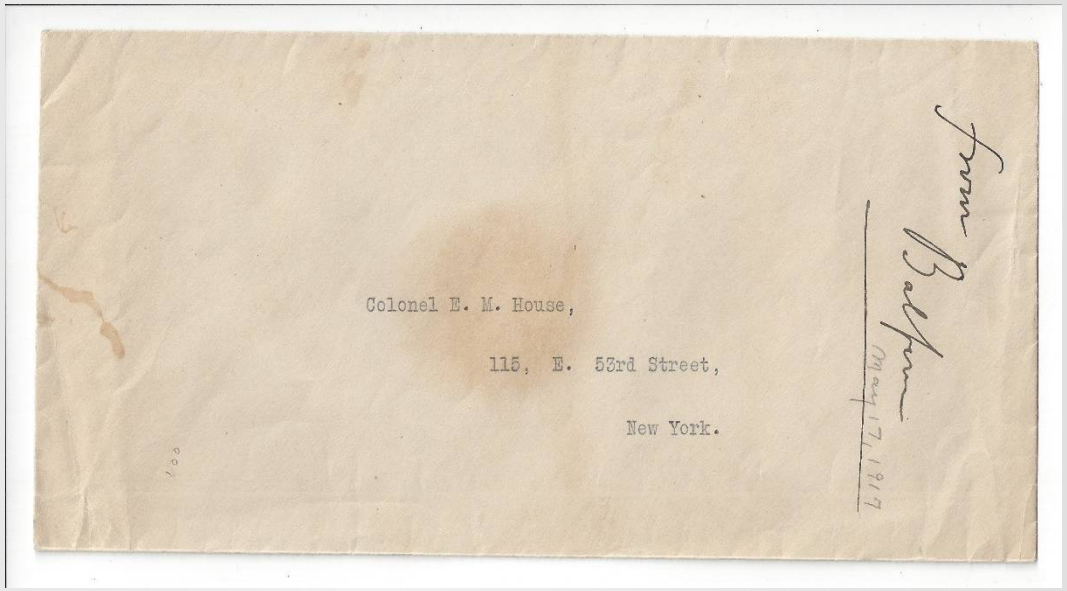
My dear Colonel House,

I understand from Colonel Dansey that you were good enough to tell him that if I sent you a letter on the difficult subject of War Intelligence you would take up the question and see whether it was possible to take any action with regard to the problems which have arisen. I am very grateful to you for making this proposal, and I enclose a Memorandum which I think sets out the really important points.

I am sending this letter by Drummond, who hopes to have the pleasure of seeing you on Saturday. I wish I could be there too, but speech-making is to be my lot that day.

Yours very sincerely,

A. J. Balfour.



Colonel E. M. House,

115, E. 53rd Street,

New York.

From Balfour May 17 1917

17 May 1917: Letter from Foreign Secretary Balfour sent via Sir Eric Drummond who was part of “BALFOUR Mission” to Washington DC, to promote greater cooperation between USA and UK after US declared war on 6 Apr. 1917.