



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

325

Bill d.
9-23-49.
AMERICAN EMBASSY

Paris, August 5, 1949.

Dear Mr. Connelly:

At the request of my Swiss colleague, Mr. Carl J. Burckhardt, I am enclosing a letter concerning M. de Weizacker, who was recently condemned at Nuremberg, which Mr. Burckhardt has requested be brought to the attention of the President. The Swiss Minister has addressed a similar communication to Mr. J. J. McCloy, United States High Commissioner for Germany.

Sincerely yours,

David Bruce
David Bruce *x2161*

Matthew J. Connelly, Esquire,
Secretary to the President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

x363

How Criminals
#

papers of
HARRY S. TRUMAN
OFFICIAL FILE

Zurich, July 30th 1949.

Mr. President,

We, the undersigned, having been informed of the sentence pronounced the 14th of April 1949 on M. de Weizsäcker by the American Military Court IV, take the liberty of approaching you with the following request :

As leading Members and former Presidents of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, we have had
* intensive and daily necessity to deal, throughout the second World War (1939/45), with the fate of war victims and especially of prisoners of war. During the first years of hostilities the activity of the International Committee has definitely benefitted the members of the Allied Forces fallen in German hands, and also helped them to a great extent during the following years.

The Honourable
Harry Truman
President of the United States of America
The White House
WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S.A.

One of our members, Carl J. Burckhardt, has also been at the head of the "Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix Rouge Internationale" whose duty it was to give assistance to certain categories of the civil population in Allied Countries occupied by the enemy.

Our activities and the result obtained have forced upon us the conviction that M. de Weizsäcker's personal character and genuine sympathy to humanitarian ends have been mainly responsible for any tolerant and generally comprehensive attitude shown us by the German authorities and in particular by the German Foreign Office. It is, of course, characteristic of the relations existing in war time between a belligerent Government and a private humanitarian Organisation that documentary evidence of any assistance given us by M. de Weizsäcker should be available only in a limited measure. One can nevertheless judge the doubtless importance of his personal activity in that he succeeded continually to struggle and prevail in his fight against adverse influences emanating from the national-socialist party. A member of our Committee, Carl J. Burckhardt, who, on our behalf and on behalf of the "Commission Mixte", had frequently to make personal contact with belligerent

Governments, and thus with the German Foreign Office, could form a first-hand opinion of M.de Weizsäcker's mental attitude, which he was in a position to judge even previously when he was High Commissioner for the League of Nations in Danzig.

We already expressed our views on the character and attitude of M.de Weizsäcker in the sworn testimony we sent to the Nurnberg Court. Yet we find it our bounden duty to reiterate our opinion as he was sentenced with such great severity by the Military Court.

Far from us it is to give vent to the least criticism upon that sentence. However, the major part of the prosecution was set aside by the Court and the rest was accepted only by two out of the three Judges. Moreover the sentence contains a number of considerations on the character and general attitude of M.de Weizsäcker, which it is difficult to reconcile with his personal responsibility in the points maintained in his condemnation. These facts embolden us to ask you, in the limit of your authority, to consider the possibility of revising the sentence either by its annulment - thereby wiping out the implied stain on his character - or at least by suspension of the penalty.

We believe that such a revision is justified by what M.de Weizsäcker has done, under personal danger, to make possible the activity of the International Committee in favour of the Allied Prisoners of War and of the population of occupied Countries, which activity was undertaken to a considerable extent on the wish of the American Government and of the Red Cross.

Respectfully yours,

Max Huber

Max Huber x

Member and Honorary President
of the International Red Cross
Committee

former Member and President of
the Permanent Court of Inter-
national Justice

Carl J. Burckhardt

Carl J. Burckhardt

Member and former President of
the International Red Cross
Committee

former High Commissioner of the
League of Nations in Danzig

actually Swiss Minister in France