

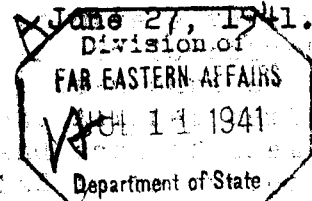
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THE UNITED STATES HIGH COMMISSIONER  
MANILA

Via airmail



My dear Mr. Secretary:

*3/11/6, 11/15/20*

With further reference to my letter to you of June 11, 1941, my radio No. 263 dated June 24, 1941, and your radio in reply No. 266 dated June 25, 1941, all concerning the question of providing for the welfare and protection of American civilians in Manila, I am enclosing herewith the proposed statement by the American Coordinating Committee which it was intended to release on June 27, 1941. In view of your radio No. 266, which I have just received, I shall see that the proposed statement is not given out until I receive further word from you.

For some time I have felt that the American Coordinating Committee ought to be taking more vigorous steps to look after the welfare of American civilians in the Philippines in case of emergency. In order to speed up the work of the Committee and to give direction to its efforts, I asked my Executive Assistant several weeks ago to meet regularly with the Committee and, with the further assistance of my military liaison officer, to achieve if possible more effective results.

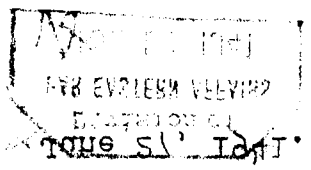
I have also felt it desirable that some expression be given of the viewpoint of the responsible authorities here on the question of civilian evacuation. As I informed you in my previous radio, the Americans in the Philippines look to the High Commissioner for advice and protection and expect him to take whatever action is necessary to protect their interests. This is true to so marked a degree that I feel a heavy personal responsibility in the matter. Also, Manila is at present rife with rumor, speculation and gossip concerning possible civilian evacuation. Many Americans persist in believing that, in the event of an emergency, they will be furnished free or inexpensive transportation to the United States. Although there are many who plan to return to the United States, should hostilities in this area appear imminent, I am informed that American President Line

ships

The Honorable  
Cordell Hull,  
Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

3/11/6, 11/15/20

GS/MF



AFB WILSON

MEMORANDUM

ships are not at present carrying as many passengers as they could handle. In view of the situation I have felt that a clarifying statement such as proposed would have a very wholesome effect. I therefore inspired the American Coordinating Committee to prepare a statement which has been phrased largely under my direction. General Grunert and Admiral Bemis have both carefully considered the statement and each of them has approved it. The object I have had in mind is to overcome the inertia of the American community and secure the taking of necessary protective measures without causing undue alarm.

As you will see in the enclosed statement the words contained in my radio No. 263 are taken from paragraph No. 1 of the statement. Balanced against these words is the rather reassuring statement of General Grunert contained in paragraph No. 2. I felt that the words quoted in paragraph 1 would not unduly excite people here in view of the words of General Grunert and yet, on the other hand, would help to bring home to the minds of Americans here sufficient realization of the danger to make them bestir themselves in preparing for a possible emergency.

My thought has been to issue as a press release at an early press conference both the letter of June 9, 1941 (perhaps in an abbreviated form) of General Grunert and the statement by the American Coordinating Committee, and to add to the statement of the American Coordinating Committee my own endorsement together with a caution to the press to avoid handling these so as unduly to excite the people of the Philippines.

I hope that if you have not already done so, you will let me know your desires at your earliest convenience so that we may push forward the work of the American Coordinating Committee with all vigor. I feel that no time should be lost.

Sincerely yours,

*Francis B. Sayre*

Enclosure:  
Proposed statement.