

Cordell Hull and the Neutrals

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Their example should never be forgotten and if there is anything this government can do to express not only its regret for the Schaffhausen bombing but its appreciation of the part Switzerland has played, it should do it. It should take the risks of giving the Swiss the benefit of the doubt as between the judgment of some official here and their honest representations. We shall be amply repaid if we come out of this war with the confidence and friendship of the Swiss nation.

Let us not forget the indispensable part which Switzerland has to play in the healing of the nations. By long historical tradition Switzerland is the seat, so to speak the capital, of mankind's works of charity and of mercy. We shall need Switzerland when the war is over. It will stand there, firm and free, in a sea of misery and hatred. We shall need the Swiss because they alone perhaps will be able to go everywhere, feared by none and trusted by all.

Realizing all that, we shall be wise if, jolted by this terrible mishap, we go beyond the obvious regrets and indemnities, to larger actions which express our moral solidarity with this people.

CORDELL HULL AND THE NEUTRALS.

Mr. Cordell Hull's recent broadcast speech, the greater part of which was addressed to the neutral countries, did not give the Swiss people the impression that the criticisms and the suggestions offered by the American Secretary of State was intended for them. Our neutrality is a very rigorous principle, which cannot be interpreted, according to the flux and reflux of current events - it is valid for all times.

Just what distinguishes our neutrality from that of so many other lands? Our neutrality is no middle term between absolute neutrality and non-belligerency. Our neutrality is not occasional. It is permanent. It does not lend itself in any way nor in any sense to arrangements and shades of application and practice. Swiss neutrality is absolute, total. This is what makes its strength. Applied with perfect loyalty, it does not authorize anyone to suspect a lack of good will and determination to persevere to the end.

The Basler National Zeitung says: "We do not feel hit by these remarks. Switzerland is neutral without any kind of reservations. And we have made of our neutrality a permanent principle and as such it is recognized by the world. Moreover, it has been confirmed by the great powers in times of war. We would compromise ourselves, were we to begin listening to messages to neutrals collectively. We haven't listened to these messages, when the time came for German proclamations, when national socialist propaganda bothered itself about our conception of neutrality. We then followed calmly the path of international law, and we shall never leave this path. Law, as Germany once interpreted it, was not in Germany's favor. Neither is law, as some other power might be tempted to interpret it, when taking into account certain pressing interests, necessarily what it is claimed to be. Law is based on factors of common utility. It is created in times of certain reflection. Therefore, it must never be sacrificed to passing wartime passions. The state principle of lasting neutrality can only be established through strict fidelity to accepted obligations. Only in this way can it be kept pure. Any turning aside from this fundamental concept would bring an eternal blemish on the faith of Swiss neutrality."

With these clear principles in mind, we shall ever defend our neutrality in the face of all difficulties. In the future as in the past we shall defend it against all attacks, and unreasonable demands. The belligerents, on the other hand, will not have any occasion to regret their respect for our neutrality. Once the war shall be over, it can be seen whether it has paid to do violence to neutrality of any state. Mr. Cordell Hull tells the neutrals that their future depends upon the victory of the Allies and that, therefore, their neutrality is no longer justified. We would be more prudent and say that the future of the small states depends upon the respect of the victors towards certain principles. Whoever wants our confidence does well to make it sure by respecting the prevailing law."