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August 7, 1945 -- Tuesday

Spent most of the day working with the President on his speech to report on the Berlin conference. He demonstrated to me that he had his own ideas on foreign matters and has a better grasp than some might think.

We witnessed the launching of an airplane from the Augusta.

Landed Newport News at around 6:00 -- the fastest crossing for a cruiser -- averaged $26\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour.

Returned to Washington at 11:00 p.m. after 8,000-mile trip.

Wednesday, August 8, 1945

Russia declares war on Japan. Buzz of activity at State Department. JFB holds spot news conference without consulting anyone.

Thursday, August 9, 1945

Working on details, space, etc. Turner came down and spent the night. He cannot join the State Department as Assistant Secretary. Japanese peace rumors buzz.

Truman delivers his report to the nation.

Friday, August 10, 1945

The army picked up last night an offer by Japan to accept Potsdam surrender terms provided that it was understood that the Emperor would continue to rule the state. It was decided not to awaken the President and JFB. JFB was called this morning, and he

[B-346]

rushed to the White House. Found Leahy there with the President, and they wanted to accept Jap proposal. Stimson came in, and he agreed it should be accepted. Snyder was going along in that direction.

JFB took different course. He pointed out that at Potsdam, the Big Three said "unconditional surrender." Then there was no atomic bomb and no Russia in the war.

"I cannot understand why now we should go further than we were willing to go at Potsdam when we had no atomic bomb, and Russia was not in the war," Byrnes said.

Truman asked to see statement. JFB cited page, paragraph and line of the Potsdam declaration. Forrestal spoke up for JFB's position. Truman swung over. JFB said no formal proposal before him and asked why the haste. He said he was going to prepare the replies to Japan and he wanted some time to think it over. All agreed.

JFB returned to his office, called in Dunn, Cohen, Grew and two or three others and prepared reply.

JFB had lunch with President and said that the two of them had to decide the question and there could not be so many "cooks." Truman agreed and JFB's message as written was sent.

Leahy had a message which agreed and accepted proposal to deal with present Japanese government to maintain order in Japan. This message would have ^{led} to crucifixion of President. When JFB returned today, he said the first thing that indicated he was irked with Leahy. He said that Leahy still thought he was Secretary of State, just as he was under Roosevelt, and he had to show him differently.

[B-347]

Messages sent to Moscow, London, Chungking, asking them to approve JFB's draft of reply to Japan.

After much discussion last night, JFB decided to confirm receipt of Japanese offer from "Legation De Suisse," Washington, D. C., and signed "Grassli." Byrnes talked to President before doing so, and they joked about Cabinet leak. The Swiss message had come in by telegram, and the approved document only arrived at around 6:00 p.m. Then Byrnes made his announcement.

Saturday, August 11, 1945

Last night around midnight, all the governments had replied. JFB decided to wait until morning to dispatch his message to Swiss. He was at the White House early and had President's approval before Leahy and Vandeman came over. They wanted to make changes, but JFB waved them aside. He rushed to the State Department, and dispatched communication to Swiss legation. McDermott had been given copies to mimeograph and I called him up to discuss release. Document reached Swiss Legation at 10:30, and we released it at 11:00 a.m.

At lunch, JFB told of his troubles at the White House with Leahy, and he began making plans to get McArthur named as Supreme Commander.

Russia at first objected to this provision in the communique without understanding, but later withdrew. However, this, along with Russian claims against China, contains many headaches.

[B-348]