My dear Mr. Secretary:

I have received your letter of May 10th in reply to mine of April 24th. I have addressed the State Department on this subject on March 5, 27 and April 24, not only because it is the Department of the Government which is concerned with these questions, but because in 1914 it was the activities of the Department which opened the door of life to these millions of people under precisely the same circumstances.

Not only am I deeply shocked at the present attitude of our Government, but I know tens of millions of Americans would also be shocked. History will never justify the Government of the United States siding with the starvation of these millions.

What you have said in effect is that the American Government accepts the views of Britain in this matter; that you will not even attempt to moderate those policies so as to save the lives of literally millions of women and children in these small democracies. Yet these countries have sacrificed their all for Britain and in the cause against aggression which you properly state is also an American cause.

I regret that the contents of my previous letters have not been taken into consideration because in your reply you have not offered one single argument to show that the proposals I have made for the salvation of these peoples are outside our Government's responsibilities; that if accepted in the form I proposed they are no impediment to the winning of this war; and that it is vital to the interest of the whole democratic world that these peoples be encouraged and saved.

You will recollect that in this correspondence I urged an experiment for 2,000,000 Belgian children and 1,000,000 unemployed adults to demonstrate the practicability of the proposals. The German Government had agreed to our conditions. The acceptance of this experiment was urged upon the British Government by the exiled Belgian Government. It was supported by the Government of Holland. It was urged upon the American Government by the Belgian Government. I send you a report...
upon the situation in Belgium by your former Ambassador, John Cudahy, from which you will see that these people are right now dying from starvation in thousands. And he supports our entire project.

Lest there be any misunderstanding I shall answer your statements specifically:

(a) You say, "the American people are sympathetic with distress and suffering but I am not convinced that this sympathy extends to a point where they would favor replacement of foodstuffs removed by the conquering power." The answer to this is that in every proposal I have made and in the agreement we actually made with Germany in respect to Belgium we specifically provided for a contribution of breadstuffs that will equal and exceed the amount of food taken and further provides against any such requisitions in the future.

(b) You say, "The moral responsibility and the clear duty to supply relief rest with the occupying authorities." That certainly is true. The hard answer is that the Germans will not do it so far as the British blockade prevents them from doing it. But when in Christianity or morals has the idea appeared that because person A fails in his moral responsibility to person B that his friends C and D no longer have such moral responsibilities? When has this idea appeared in international relationship or international justice? The British themselves admit that a 40 per cent fat deficiency exists in German-occupied Europe. And that hits Belgium today to the extent of 90 per cent.

(c) You say, "Another element that must be considered in connection with any plan would be its relation to war measures now being enforced by the British Government." You have not pointed out a single item in the plan proposed which injures the British war measures, including the blockade. It does not prolong this war a single day.

(d) You continue, "which is defending itself and its citizens, men, women and children, against forces seeking by every means not only to overwhelm but to starve them by ruthlessly sinking all supply ships carrying goods and food to the British Isles." I am as much opposed to this action by Germany as anyone in America. But are the peoples of these occupied democracies sinking ships or trying to starve British women and children? Are the women and children of
Belgium and the other democracies to die because the British also suffer? What capacity have these help-
less peoples to prevent or even lessen this calamity of the British? Is not the reverse the case, when the
British refuse to allow neutral ships to go to the assistance of these women and children, although the
death of these peoples will not lessen the sufferings of the British? Belgium has always had to import 60
per cent from overseas. With the exhaustion of their own supplies and the blockade, the Belgian ration to-
day is one-third that of the British. Is not America helping the women and children of Britain? Why should
she be prevented from helping the women and children of other democracies?

(e) You say, "To insist upon the fulfillment of a program which is at variance with the aims and
objectives of the British Government, etc." In other words, our Government adopts the policy of starvation
and death to these democratic peoples because it is British policy. Therefore the American Government -
no matter what the cost is to our own standards of humanity, to our own interests, to the destruction of these peoples -
is blindly following the policies of another government with no voice of its own. The United States Government
has in the past resolutely expressed American views in matters of less moment than this. This refusal to aid the Belgians
contrasts with the vigorous and effective action of our Government in 1914 by which we saved 10,000,000 lives in Belgium
and Northern France. And that intervention was at a time when we were furnishing no aid to Britain and had no voice
in her conduct of the war.

I will not here discuss the situation that has grown up in France through failure to undertake the food
policies which I recommended and the methods which were employed. It would serve as an illustration of all that
I have said.

The peoples within these democracies have from the day of their invasions looked to America for leadership in humanitarian effort. Our Government throughout its long history has given confidence to such prayers from the
stricken. We now apparently abandon these peoples to their fate, and that without consideration of the sacrifice they have made against aggression or the importance of preserving among them confidence in the ideals of democracy itself.
The fundamental question to be answered by our Government is not whether the Germans are primarily responsible or the British blockade is responsible, but whether our Government refuses to secure from these governments the remedy which it has the duty to urge and thus avert disaster from these peoples and their millions of children.

Yours faithfully,

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

Enclosure