

MOST SECRET.*Sir G. Campbell.*Meeting between the President and
the Prime Minister.*Major*

The attached letter from ~~Mr.~~ George Fielding Eliot, which Mr. Childs has just shown me, ought to be considered in view of the writer's great importance and influence in the United States.

The letter was written on January 7th before it was sufficiently appreciated that Lord Halifax would have the double character of Ambassador and member of the War Cabinet. I should not myself have thought therefore that any business as between His Majesty's Government and the United States Administration would be greatly facilitated by a meeting between the Prime Minister and the President, since the Ambassador in his ministerial capacity can take a view of the situation and tender advice in a way which would hardly be open to an ~~Ambassador~~ de carrière appointed in the ordinary way. On the other hand, there is no denying that the psychological impact of a meeting between the President and the Prime Minister upon the world at large, and upon our enemies in particular, would be formidable. If the President were accompanied as he would be by the Ambassador, and one or two Republican members of the Administration, together with a Labour representative, and the Prime Minister ^{were} accompanied by one or two Ministers, the Axis would be likely to be put in a ferment. Unless the difficulties should prove insuperable it is perhaps worth considering on this ground alone.

There is no doubt that The practical difficulties in the way of such a meeting are *considerable* ~~insurmountable~~. I would exclude Reykjavik as being quite impracticable from the President's point of view. Newfoundland would seem to offer the only possible venue and this would, I take it, involve a flight of approximately 12 hours for the Prime Minister in a flying-boat flying very high and involving use of oxygen. There is furthermore the question of whether the Prime Minister would feel in any circumstances that he could be so far away from the United Kingdom at the present time. Secrecy would be a vital element in any such meeting and we should have to be certain that it would be preserved beyond any doubt until the Prime Minister returned.

But in spite of all these objections the Ambassador might think it worth while to turn the question over in his mind and perhaps before proceeding any further have an informal word with the President and get his reaction to it. If the President were attracted then he would perhaps himself wish to put the proposal to the Prime Minister.

Charles Drake
30/1.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.