

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 5, 1943.

My dear Mr. Stalin:-

I am sending this personal note to you by the hands of my old friend, Joseph E. Davies. It relates solely to one subject which I think it is easier for us to talk over through a mutual friend. Mr. Litvinov is the only other person with whom I have talked about it.

I want to get away from the difficulties of large Staff conferences or the red tape of diplomatic conversations. Therefore, the simplest and most practical method that I can think of would be an informal and completely simple visit for a few days between you and me.

I fully appreciate the desirability for you to stay in daily touch with your military operations; I also find it inadvisable to be away from Washington more than a short time. There are two sides to the problem. The first relates to timing. There is always the possibility that the historic Russian defense, followed by taking the offensive, may cause a crack-up in Germany next Winter. In such a case we must be prepared for the many next steps. We are none of us prepared today. Therefore, it is my belief that you and I ought to meet this Summer.

The second problem is where to meet. Africa is almost out of the question in

Summer and Khartum is British territory. Iceland I do not like because for both you and me it involves rather difficult flights and, in addition, would make it, quite frankly, difficult not to invite Prime Minister Churchill at the same time.

Therefore, I suggest that we could meet either on your side or my side of Bering Straits. Such a point would be about three days from Washington and I think about two days from Moscow if the weather is good. That means that you could always get back to Moscow in two days in an emergency.

It is my thought that neither of us would want to bring any Staff. I would be accompanied by Harry Hopkins, an interpreter and a stenographer -- and that you and I would talk very informally and get what we call "a meeting of the minds". I do not believe that any official agreements or declarations are in the least bit necessary.

You and I would, of course, talk over the military and naval situation, but I think we can both do that without Staffs being present.

Mr. Davies has no knowledge of our military affairs nor of the post-war plans of this Government, and I am sending him to you for the sole purpose of talking over our meeting.

I greatly hope that our forces will be in complete control of Tunisia by the end of May, and Churchill and I next week will be working on the second phase of the offensive.

96-06

Our estimates of the situation are that Germany will deliver an all-out attack on you this Summer, and my Staff people think it will be directed against the middle of your line.

You are doing a grand job. Good luck!

Always sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Frank B. Rowland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.