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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Letters to:
Chief Justice
Gov. Lehman
Archibald Macleish
Paul Sachs
N. B. S. Taylor
F. H. Taylor

DIVISION OF
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
JUN 24 1943
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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June 21. 1943

My dear Mr. President:

I refer to a letter addressed to you by the Honorable Harlan F. Stone, the Chief Justice of the United States, dated December 8, 1942, concerning the creation of an organization to function under the auspices of the Government for the protection and conservation of works of art and of artistic or historic monuments and records in Europe, and to aid in salvaging and returning to the lawful owners such objects as have been appropriated by the Axis powers or by individuals acting under their authority or consent. Besides the accomplishment of these worthy objectives, an important advantage to be gained immediately by such an organization is the proclamation to the world, friends and enemies, of our practical concern in protecting these symbols of civilization from injury and spoliation.

In your reply to the Chief Justice, dated December 28, 1942, you advised him of your interest in the formation of such an organization, and stated that his letter had been referred to the appropriate agencies of the Government in order that the proposals set forth might be studied in detail. In your subsequent letter to the Chief Justice, dated April 24, 1943, you advised him of progress which had been made in securing the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of Governor Lehman, and that inquiries are being made of the British and Soviet Governments through the American Embassies in London and Moscow, inquiring whether each Government would be prepared, in case the proposal meets with general approval to appoint a National Committee to cooperate with corresponding committees appointed by the other two nations concerned.

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The President
The White House.

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I now have to inform you that, under the auspices of the War Department, a special section has been formed in the School of Military Government, functioning at Charlottesville, Virginia, under General Wickersham, with the idea of training certain officers in the Specialist Branch of the service so that they could be attached to the staffs of our armies to advise the commanding officers of such troops as to the location of, and the care to be given to, the various artistic and historic objects in occupied territories. It is contemplated that after the occupied territory has passed from a military to a civilian government, this work would be turned over to the properly constituted civilian authorities representing the United Nations.

It would seem, therefore, that it would now be appropriate to appoint a commission to be known as the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe, such Commission to advise and to work with the School of Military Government at Charlottesville and subsequent organizations of civilian character which may take over control of occupied territories when it is possible to relinquish military control.

I would suggest for your consideration that Chief Justice Stone, who is Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution and also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, be requested to serve as Chairman of the Commission; that the Director of the National Gallery of Art, David E. Finley, be appointed Vice-Chairman; and that the other members of the Commission be as follows:

Governor Lehman, Chairman of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations

The Librarian of Congress (Hon. Archibald MacLeish)

The President of the Archeological Institute of America (Dr. William Bell Dinsmoor)

The Associate Director of the Fogg Museum of Fine Arts at Cambridge, representing American Universities (Dr. Paul Sachs)

The President of the Association of Art Museum Directors (Mr. Francis Henry Taylor)

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The Commission should be authorized to secure, on a volunteer basis, the services of a committee of experts composed of museum directors and other qualified persons to advise on the above project and to furnish information required for carrying it out. Some valuable preliminary work has already been done by individuals in compiling lists of artistic and historic monuments and works of art in both public and private collections in Europe and in compiling charts and maps showing the location of these objects. This material could be collected and made available to the Commission for the use of the armed forces.

The function of the Commission might be:

A. During the War:

i. To work with the appropriate branch of the United States Army, for the purpose of furnishing to the General Staff of the Army, museum officials and art historians, so that, so far as is consistent with military necessity, works of cultural value may be protected in countries occupied by armies of the United Nations. There are, at present, serving in the armed forces of this country, qualified museum officials and art historians who could, if desired, be attached to general headquarters of armies on active combat in the European theatre of operation.

ii. To compile, through the assistance of refugee historians of art and librarians, lists of property appropriated by the Axis invading forces, by representatives of Axis governments, and by private citizens of Axis countries.

B. At the time of the Armistice:

i. The American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments should urge that the Armistice terms include the restitution of public property appropriated by the Axis Powers. Where it is not possible to restore such property, either because it has been destroyed or cannot be found, restitution in kind should

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be made by the Axis Powers to the countries from which the property has been taken. In such cases, the Commission should recommend a list of equivalent works of art or historic documents which should be transferred to the invaded countries from Axis museums or from the private collections of Axis leaders.

11. The Commission should urge that restitution be made of private property appropriated by the Axis Nations.

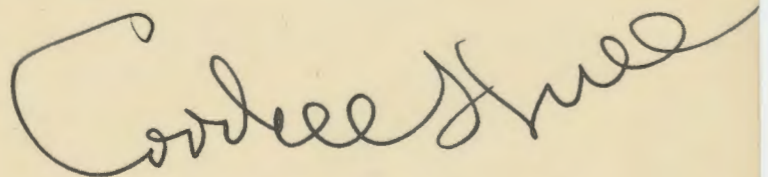
I would suggest that the offices of the Commission be in the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, in order that the Commission may function in close contact with the War Department and with the State Department and other civilian agencies which will later be concerned in the affairs of liberated or occupied territories. I am advised that office space is available in the National Gallery for that purpose.

It is not foreseen that expenses of such a Commission would be an item of importance as it is contemplated that the members would serve without compensation; but I would suggest that from some funds already available about \$25,000 be set aside for such clerical and other expense as may be necessary.

If this proposal meets with your approval, I shall be glad to approach the various officials suggested above to ascertain whether they would be willing to serve on such a Commission.

I have consulted with Secretary Stimson concerning this matter and he is in accord with these suggestions.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cordell Hull". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom right of the page, below the typed name "Faithfully yours,".