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THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

June 26, 1942

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ATTORNEY GENERAL
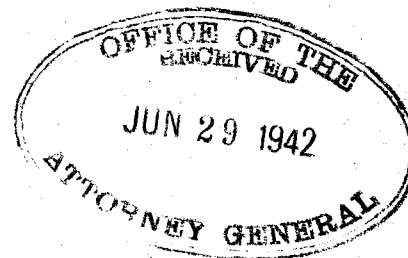
My dear Francis:

Immediately upon my return to the office yesterday after my talk with you concerning the Johnston case, I instigated an inquiry as to how much either the Army or Navy knew of Johnston's record, now revealed by the files of the British Intelligence, when they cleared his name for service as a correspondence.  I have just received the following from Admiral Hepburn:

"Mr. Johnston's name was submitted for clearance to O.N.I. of the Navy Department and G-2 of the War Department. The investigation by the War Department included an investigation by the F.B.I.  His name was returned as approved for war correspondent with the United States armed forces. Nothing derogatory was reported from any source."

I learned that the only reason the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, through his Public Relations Department, did not require of Johnston a signed pledge which is now required of correspondents before going aboard an American combatant vessel was that the directive requiring such a signature had not then been received by the Pacific Fleet.  Johnston, however, was informed orally of his responsibilities and furnished with a memorandum for correspondents, a copy of which is attached.  In addition to that, Admiral Sherman, who commanded the LEXINGTON has been queried and has informed us that he personally had spoken to Mr. Johnston of his responsibility to submit anything he wrote for publication to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet or to a representative designated by him.  I also enclose a memorandum from the Fleet dealing with this case which may be of value to you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Knox

The Honorable Francis Biddle
The Attorney General
Washington, D. C.

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