With respect to the consideration being given to whether this is an opportune time for our Ambassador, who was called home on consultation, to return to Berlin, I have the following to offer. I wish to say at the outset that ever since the Ambassador returned there has not been a day that I have not given thought to the question as to when he might opportunely return. The views, therefore, I am expressing below are well considered.

I believe that it is definitely inadvisable for the Ambassador to return at this time and that for him to be instructed to return to his post at this time would be undesirable both from the point of view of internal and foreign policy. Without entering into a full discussion, the following are some of the principal considerations which lead me to this conclusion.

The return of the Ambassador at this time would be misconstrued and misrepresented by the German Government. It would be considered by the German Government, in view of recent developments, as a distinct retreat by the President and
and this Department and as a change in our policy. It would be widely exploited in Germany by the German Government and would have a bad effect both within the German Government and among the German people. Whatever progress we have made in recent months would be lost. I think it must be emphasized that the German Government would not only exploit the return of the Ambassador now as a retreat, but in a large measure would believe it to be such. The effect would be to counteract any advances we have made in getting at least the beginnings of consideration of some of the matters in question.

The effect of the return of the Ambassador at this time in most countries of Europe would be unsettling and it would be considered as a retreat by our Government and at least a partial change in policy and attitude. At this juncture, when it is unquestionable that our attitude has placed a restraining influence on both Italy and Germany and has had a heartening influence on other countries, such action by us has in it the possibilities of incalculable damage.

From the point of view of the effect which it would have within Germany and in other parts of the world, I consider that there are few things which this Government could do at this time which would have a more negative and destructive effect than the return of our Ambassador to Berlin.
From the point of view of internal policy, it would, I believe, be a decided step backward and cause disillusionment and concern among the great majority of our people. The return of the Ambassador would not be disassociated from recent events and our people would largely construe the action as a retreat and change in policy. The very great majority of our people, irrespective of what their views may be on matters of internal policy, have confidence in our foreign policy as directed by the President and the Secretary. This confidence is a very real thing. I do not believe I am misjudging the situation when I say that the return of the Ambassador to Berlin at this time would cause real concern not only among thoughtful people but among the great mass of our population. Here as abroad it would be considered as a retreat from our policy and position which would be deplored for we have an increasing number of our people who realize the effect of public sentiment in this country and our policy on developments outside of the country. The return of the Ambassador, therefore, to Berlin at this time would be demoralizing and disorienting to opinion in this country which has crystallized along such sound lines. The influence and prestige of the President and of the Department in the development and maintenance of a foreign policy and in the maintenance of peace and of our interests would be definitely and adversely affected.
Our interests in Berlin are being well taken care of by the Chargé d'Affaires and our staff. We are not losing anything by the Ambassador not being there and this does not imply anything derogatory to the person of the Ambassador. As a matter of fact, what slight steps forward we have made in the problems at issue with the German Government have been made since the return of the Ambassador. We will not only be prejudicing the slight ground gained but run the risk of not making further progress if the Ambassador returns under existing conditions. We must keep in mind the mentality of those comprising the German Government and, keeping this in mind, we will realize that it is not only that the return of the Ambassador would be widely exploited within and without Germany but that these men will actually believe that they have forced the President and this Department and this country to a line of action favorable to them and into a position of retreat by their campaign of vilification. This alone, I think, is sufficient to determine that the time is not opportune for the Ambassador's return.

I for one in the Department have been keeping before me constantly the thought as to when it might be advisable for the President and the Department to instruct the Ambassador to return to his post. I think we must continue to keep this before us so that at the appropriate moment recommendations can be made. I wish, however, to go on
on record in as definite as possible a form that it is my considered opinion that I know of no step which we could conceivably take at this time which would have a more demoralizing effect with respect to our foreign policy and the general situation abroad than to have the Ambassador return to Berlin at this time.

G. S. Messersmith.