Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I appreciate very much your very kind letter giving me such a full picture of your situation in Cuba. The only unhappy version of the whole story is that Mrs. Messersmith still has trouble with her knee, and I earnestly hope that you will find, at last, a way to cure this trouble definitely. I know that the house that you have found and the life there in general will be agreeable to you both, and that your term of office in Cuba will be a delightful and pleasant one. At least you hardly need fear an invasion or the wiping out of the mission as has now so often been the case abroad.

I appreciate the suggestions you make with regard to foreign policy respecting Germany. I believe it would be folly and most disastrous for us to make the least move which would leave any doubts in Hitler's mind about our abhorrence and condemnation of these repeated aggressions. If my advice on major questions of policy were sought I would strongly oppose any move to send an Ambassador to Germany. I am telling them frankly here in the Department that a continuation of a policy of isolation will find us eventually face to face with a far-flung rule of the dictators over most of the three continents in the eastern hemisphere. I look back with great interest and satisfaction to the evening spent at your house when Mr. Farley was there, and when it was clearly emphasized that we should give the allies all the planes they wanted to buy from us and not allow our own Army's orders to hold up such shipments. I believe Farley did a great deal to facilitate the sale and shipment of planes to the Allies. But I fear that what we are doing is not enough and that the Germans are on the way to making good their threats with success. Nothing can convince me that the strategical position of England and France is advantageous enough to assure them any kind of success against the Nazi hordes. In the end, and the time is not far off, it will be shown to us that without our help the military position of the allies will become desperate. I am greatly worried; as I believe the Nazis will consolidate their positions in the countries in Scandinavia and in the Low countries, as well as in the Balkans. The positions they will have secured by the end of this year will be so strong that even our help, if it comes then, will be too late. I had no impression that the rape of Denmark and Norway made any striking impression in this country; people are beginning to regard Hitler's acts of aggression as a matter of course. The attitude is "what can we do about it?". I need not repeat how dangerous this is.

I am going ahead with my job very carefully and with the greatest amount of enthusiasm and interest. I took over the office on April 1st. Everything is going very well. In the first place there exists the most cordial relations between me and everybody in commerce and I feel that I am getting the finest cooperation. I have not carried over into my administration the suspicion and distrust that apparently
has existed in the past, and from which my predecessor probably had some difficulty in freeing himself. I am able to see the point of view of Commerce and try to meet their wishes and needs in a generous and cooperating spirit. I have the firm confidence that this will be productive of good results; and over this period, which is really a reconstructive one, I believe I shall be able to do a great deal to iron out all the difficulties arising. There is good will on both sides and no indication or trace of distrust or of the attitude "your trying to get the best of us".

The new schedules have been received from Commerce and these represent a rather heavy increase in the number of existing called for reports; but I am not making an issue of it. I shall first see what the reaction is in the field, and then if the burden of work placed on our establishments is too great something can be done about it; but I am not convinced that such will be the case. I am going easy also with the commercial attaches who are supposed to be "difficult" and who "might cause us trouble", as I think this situation can be handled also with a firm but also with a gentle hand.

I am to speak at the meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce at the Mayflower Hotel on the 20th of April, and during Foreign Trade week I shall speak at Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta and Charleston, probably also at Chicago.

Nothing is known in the Department about the talks that Mr. Welles had abroad. I have seen Moffat, but he has said nothing about the talks and I have not asked him any questions. I am sure that what Mr. Welles got in Berlin was no different from what we all know, and the general reaction was sufficient to disclose that the visit of Mr. Welles made no change whatever in the course of events. It is possible that he may have learned from the British and French that the situation might be grave if the Allies were unable to prevent the Germans from continuing their aggressions and consolidating their positions. If so the President is keeping his own counsel, it may be with the idea that after the election the administration may have a free hand to lead the American people to join the battle for civilization. It may then be too late.

I am inclined right now to predict that the Germans will not be put out of Norway, and that they will be able to consolidate and augment their position in the south of Norway in a very short time, rendering their hold on the whole Scandinavian peninsula definitive. They are able to strike and to carry out a long preconceived plan, just as burglars in all stillness are able to lay their secret plans for a robbery. They will hold the country by soldiers transported by airplane and they will police the country by huge air armadas, eventually destroying any resistance. If this succeeds, as I fear it will, the apprehensions which I have about the whole situation will be fully justified.

I am extraordinarily busy with my duties and work night and day not only on the problems of the job, but on speeches, getting ready for two days lecturing in the Foreign Service School etc., but I shall write you as often as I can and in the meantime I hope that you will let me hear from you making any suggestions.
which may occur to you. I am seeing many people both in official and in private circles and want to do all the good I can while I am here. I shall keep you posted as to my progress and the progress of carrying out the Reorganization Plan.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all your help and backing in respect to the position I now occupy and the promotion which is now a reality. Nobody did more for me in this than you, and you must know that I am deeply grateful. Your friendship means a great deal to me, not because it has brought these advantages; but because I know that we shall always work together for the same ideals and purposes and help to bring things to pass.

Lothrop Stoddard who came back from Germany is writing a book called "Into the Darkness", but it is a veiled defense of the Nazi regime. I have condemned the book as Nazi propaganda, much to his dismay and fear; and he is endeavoring to change it. I shall hear the rest of the chapters next Thursday night at his house, which form of entertainment is not much to my liking. He has begged me to listen to the manuscript and I have not concealed my dislike of the "objectiveness" which his book discloses.

With sincere affection and every good wish in which my sister joins me in this message to you and Mrs. Messersmith I am

Ever faithfully yours,

[Signature]