

584

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 30, 1935

My dear Mr. Messersmith:

I have received your letter of September 13th and have read with great interest your comments on the representation by the foreign press and particularly the American papers in Vienna. It is certainly very helpful to have the picture of this press representation in evaluating the news as printed by the various papers and services here.

I am glad to hear that you are keeping in touch with the Watch Tower situation, and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Koerber said before leaving here that he had in mind going to Vienna to see you before he went to Berlin. I only hope that he did, as I feel sure that your guidance to him would be exceedingly valuable in the present circumstances, particularly as he has a great respect and gratitude for your interest and advice. He feels that you talk to him in the most frank and helpful manner and I was glad to hear him say that he wanted above all things to see you before proceeding to Berlin.

I am glad to hear that you understand some of our difficulties with regard to the recent neutrality resolution, as pointed out by the President in his statement to the press on the subject at the time of signing the resolution.

The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
American Minister,
Vienna.

Everyone here in the Department are putting their minds ~~and~~ every hour of the day and part of the night to the problem of how to prevent the United States from becoming involved in any possible future war. The word "neutrality" is of course not a cloak which can be used to prevent any injury to this country nor which can be used to prevent us from being involved. The question of whether this country is or is not involved in a war is not primarily a matter for us to decide. Our involvement would result from acts performed by other nations and that is where our real problem lies. The Secretary and all of us here are at the same time making every effort to assist and support the sincere endeavors of the important nations of Europe in their attempt to preserve the peace and find some method of peaceable solution of the Italo-Ethiopian controversy. We cannot, and that is definite, join nor participate in sanctions of any kind against any nation. There may be, however, other ways in which we can assist the cause of peace or at least in which we can refrain from obstructing measures put into effect by those nations who are sincerely trying to keep the peace. That is another series of problems for us and we are applying ourselves in every way we know to a study of all of these phases of the present situation.

I am particularly glad to learn from your letter that the situation in Austria is calm at the present time. What a pity that this Italo-Ethiopian dispute is liable to be the cause of a disturbance which will prevent the progressive restoration of economic affairs in Austria and Central Europe to a sounder and more substantial basis! This is the moment when peace is most needed particularly for Central and Southeastern Europe and if this calm period is disturbed no one knows how long it will take for

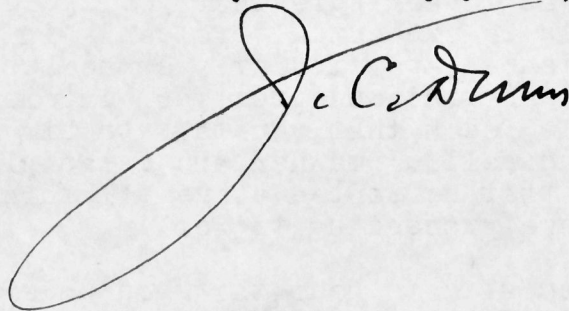
- 3 -

the working out of their economic problems to come to some satisfactory solution.

We are very grateful to you for all these pictures you give us and I must say that for myself I am also particularly grateful for your calling attention to specific articles in the London TIMES, sending as you do the clippings thereof, as, although we have the clippings from the London Embassy, it is particularly interesting to have certain items called to our attention in the light of their touching upon situations in other countries.

Hoping that you are very well indeed,

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. C. Drum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop that starts under the "J", goes around the "C", and then loops back under the "D".