

1084
November 30, 1938

Personal and strictly confidential

Dear Raymond:

I have your letter of November 7 which I appreciate very much and I am writing you separately today on the question of the purchase of the furnishings, et cetera, for the new quarters. As I understand the pouch has left, I am giving this letter to Avra Warren to deliver to you in Berlin. I need not tell you that, in view of the great pressure on people in this country, both on account of their feeling over what has happened in Germany and because of the pressure from the outside, there is much discussion of what should be done to relieve the situation of the unfortunate people in Germany and elsewhere. I still think that we can keep down the pressure for changes in the immigration law. Warren will tell you about all of these things when he sees you, but one of the things that concerns us most is that some of the officers in Europe and elsewhere are being too lax in granting visitor's visas and, of course, once people are in this country on visitor's visas, we can hardly throw them out if they have no place to go except where they may be further persecuted. My own feeling is that, irrespective of what our feelings may be and what the situation may be, we must carry through the law as it stands for that is doing the best service all around. We decided to send Warren abroad on a brief inspection trip as he can give you and others some first-hand background which it is difficult to convey otherwise. I think you can take it for granted that we do not intend in any way to change our immigration laws in this country.

I wish that we could have an opportunity for a real chat as there are some things which I think I should tell you. You have had a very understanding attitude of our policy and I think a very correct understanding, but I cannot say this of all of our officers. I need not tell you that any good ambassador or minister or foreign service officer is one who faithfully and with courage and tact

represents

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represents the point of view of our Government and people irrespective of what his own personal views may be. Some of our officers have allowed their own views and feelings to color what they do in their representative capacity and this applies to officers all the way from ambassador down. I sometimes think that some of our ambassadors and those of several other countries have done a great deal of harm during the last few years because they have not correctly interpreted the situation in the country where they are to their own Government and have not correctly interpreted our own attitude to the Government to which they are accredited. This has led to infinite harm.

Now so far as we are concerned, there should be no doubt as to our attitude. We stand on the principles which the President and the Secretary have enunciated. These principles to which we are dedicated we may have in the end to fight for. If it comes to that, we are prepared to do it. There is going to be no Munich for us. We brought back Wilson so as to let the Germans know where we stand. We thought it was the least we could do. We have no intention of breaking off diplomatic relations. If they are eventually broken off, it will be because of what the Germans do and not because of us. Wilson has just come back to Washington after having seen the President at Warm Springs so I am not exactly sure yet as to the nature of his report. One thing, however, I feel sure of and that is that he has given the picture of a stronger regime in Germany than I believe is actually the case. I believe that Germany is in exactly the same position today as Russia. She could not make a long war or one of any duration because I do not believe her people would stand behind the present Government. Neither do I believe that Germany is as strong as she seems to be nor are England and France as weak as they seem to be. I am convinced that if it had come to war several months ago instead of to a Munich, it would have been a short war and that the consequences would have been disastrous to this regime. I am writing you all this because I gather that you may not be entirely in accord with that thought. I think you have interpreted the German situation better than anyone we have had in Germany these last years. I wonder sometimes whether you do not over-estimate the power of the German regime and underestimate some of the weaknesses of the regime. Germany has had her way so much and she makes such a display of her power that it is difficult for one who stays in the country to realize all in its perspective. The German power can crumble even more rapidly than it has been built up and my own feeling is that as a result of the last events there is reason to believe that the German power -- that is to say the power of the present regime -- has

reached

reached its peak and that we may come now to the beginning of the decline. They are bound to have to go forward and their power to go forward is lessened rather than strengthened. I realize that the outward signs will continue to point the other way, but one must read deeper than that. There will undoubtedly be further action by the Germans, but I think they are weakening themselves by this action rather than strengthening themselves.

Basically, the reason behind the present action against the Jews is, of course, economic, and I do not believe they will be able to stop. I think they will have to go further with confiscation in order to get the money they need. We here in this country are proceeding rapidly with rearmament. We are going to put ourselves into a position of meeting any problem which may come to us. There will be no change in our policy. I do not believe Wilson will be returning for some time. There is a very thorough understanding in this country of the situation in Europe and the country is practically a unit. There never was a time when the press of the country was more unanimous--not even when we went into the World War. This is the thought I want to leave with you so that you may know that we are not putting up any bluff, but that there is a very real determination here in this country to meet all of the problems we have wherever we may find them.

This has to be a very brief note and a very unsatisfactory one, as I want to get it written so as to give it to Warren who is sailing today and we apparently have no pouch.

For your strictly confidential information, you can take it that Truman Smith and his assistant will shortly be coming home. Do not let this out in any way. He has done enough harm and his assistant is as stupid as Smith is perverted in his views.

Faithfully yours,