

839

Vienna, January 27, 1937.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Mr. Phillips:

I am sending you herewith a copy of my letter to the Acting Secretary, Judge Moore, of January 16, which I think you may find of interest.

The Italian Minister here, Mr. Salata, is showing himself very friendly and has on occasions been what seemed to me to be very frank with me with regard to matters on which his predecessor was most reserved. He seems to put himself out to be friendly. We have very good relations here with the Secretaries of the Italian Legation who are a very nice lot of young men. Miss Salata, who is about 22, or perhaps a little older, the daughter of the Minister and who acts as his hostess here, tells me she is going to Rome on February 6 to be there the rest of February. Her address there is Via Reno 14. I assume that she will leave cards on Mrs. Phillips and if you could show her some little courtesy on a convenient occasion I would appreciate it.

Everyone here in the Italian Legation is most enthusiastic concerning the new American Ambassador to Rome, his wife, and daughters. From what I gather here you have taken Rome by storm and while I am sure this adds a lot to your responsibilities, it certainly helps a lot in these difficult times too.

The Honorable  
William Phillips,  
American Ambassador,  
Rome, Italy.

For your confidential information I may tell you that we were told here that Goering while he was in Rome tried to get Mussolini to change his definite policy of support of Austrian independence and that he found there a very stiff and unchanging attitude. We are told in Government circles here that Mussolini has recently reassured the Government here that Italy is just as much interested as ever in the maintenance of Austrian independence and that "nothing can change that attitude". It would be very interesting for me to know if you have any information which would indicate that Goering did cover this in his Rome conversations and if there is any information that Mussolini has again repeated these assurances to Vienna. I am inclined to think he has.

My wife and I are planning to make at least a brief visit home, sailing from Hamburg on April 7, as my mother always expects me at this time of the year, is now 88, and is unfortunately slowly losing her sight. I shall take at least a brief leave at home at that time if the circumstances here will make my leaving the post feasible. I wish we could look forward to a visit from you and Mrs. Phillips and your daughters before we go home. Any time would suit us. I am not repeating this invitation to be importunate, but just to let you know what a pleasure it would give us to see you and that you may know that any time during February and March would suit us which would suit your convenience. Perhaps you may find it necessary to put off your visit until the early summer and I can assure you that that is a delightful time to be in Vienna. Perhaps the girls particularly would enjoy Vienna more in the warm weather than at this time of the year.

With cordial good wishes to you all,

Faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith.

Enclosure:

Copy of letter of Jan. 16, to  
Judge Moore.