

February 17, 1959

Mr. George S. Messersmith,
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Mexico 10, D.F.

Dear George:

I attended a small dinner at the Council on Foreign Relations about a week ago for Mayor Brandt. I met him at the Council also during his visit last year. He certainly is a courageous and determined man, and his wife seems to be pretty, smiling, attractive - all qualities which are important, helpful. "Cherchez la femme" is a slogan which has still a great value in France, and is an article d'exportation with increasing value and able to brave any inflation.

The meeting was interesting. Brandt reminded me that, when we met last year, he asked me to write to Dr. Strassmann, a friend of both of us, then one of the managers of the Bewag in Berlin. Brandt told me then of Strassmann's critical illness (cancer) of which he died a few weeks later.

Dulles is a real brave man. He made his last trip to London, Paris and Bonn, in order to make sure that no weakness among the Western Union was in sight. The fall of Germany would bring about that of the others.

Although without much similarity, I would like to recall how the Spaniards considered the choice of their capital. When Charles V abdicated in 1558 and retired to the St. Yuste Monastery in the Estramadure, he told his successor, Philip II: If you want to increase the Empire, choose Lisbon as capital, Barcelona if you wish to maintain it, and Madrid will mean its loss. Philip II did choose Madrid and lost the Empire. He was a mystic, the Escorial is a proof.

What are Eisenhower's intentions as to the State Department? Dillon is very ambitious, so is probably Herter, but the latter is not too well. I met him about forty years ago in Brussels; I believe he had a desk in the Sofina building.

I have so many souvenirs and had made many notes, but unfortunately these have been destroyed during the first and the second World War.

What are your intentions concerning your autobiography ? You are still very young and the task would not be too difficult for you to carry out, with the help of a good secretary. I presume that all of your notes are intact. You have much to tell. Your years as a school teacher are fascinating, to say nothing of all the rest!!! If Jimmy would go into the publishing business - and this seems to mature - he could become your publisher. But please hurry on, I would like to see and read the book. I will be 87 this year. Some people should better not write, as for instance my "friend" Swinton. At one of the last board meetings of Sofina, when the newest Cade concession was discussed, Swinton told the meeting that already in 1945 he advised me to sell the company. At the famous meeting of the Chade shareholders in Luxemburg in 1947 - two years later - he compared me with Churchill. It is important to keep one's mouth shut when certain remarks are not appropriate. I am sending you a copy of this 1947 speech. Would you kindly return it to me sometime. I am enclosing also an extract of Swinton's book. Such is life, with constant changes!

Fifty years ago, more or less, the diplomatic relations were very carefully handled. To-day Mr. Khrushchev may call the chief of another state names, without the immediate breaking off of diplomatic relations. Both sides know that war will be avoided for several years, and then they will probably find reasons for extensions. But peace cannot be eternal, that is an utopia.

I am for the time being intensely interested in the water question, a very very serious problem. Rain, snow, represent our water dividend, but a very large part is lost by evaporation or goes back to the ocean. And look at the loss of water at our bathroom taps! Otherwise rain and snow alone, drained into the water pipes, should be sufficient for our requirements. But we have also a water capital, which consists of underground reservoirs which existed for thousands of years. As our water dividends losses are so enormous we are obliged to consume some of our water capital. The water level in the big cities is constantly sinking, London about 50 meters. Many rivers and lakes are polluted. The autocleaning of rivers doesnot exist anymore on account of the increasing number of factories.

This is a great, great problem and there are many others : food, energy, teaching, learning.

I wanted to mail this letter when I received yours of Feb.13. Dulles' illness is a tragedy and certainly untimely. I suppose a new Secretary will be appointed and Dulles will remain as counsellor.

I am enclosing herewith a clipping of the Charlotte Observer of January 28, 59 referring to Dr. Churchill's Heineman Lecture. He says : Medicine is key weapon in checking Soviets, and the Reds know this.