804

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Rome, December 18, 1936.

My dear Messersmith,

Your letters of December 2nd and 14th have been duly received and studied with a great deal of care. I am particularly glad to have your views of Berger-Waldenegg, who, by the way, with his wife dined with me last night. I have not yet come in touch with the younger Grazzis though his older brother, who, as you say, is in the Ministry of Press and Propaganda, dined with me a few nights ago. I told Berger-Waldenegg that I would like to have a quiet talk with him on Central European affairs and he at once offered to come and see me and said he would propose a time in the near future, and this is an added reason why I am glad to have your comments with regard to his intelligence and right-mindedness.

I am glad for your sake as well as for mine that the Christmas holidays will soon be here for we too have been leading a much too active existence. The evening work has been especially heavy and hours here are frightfully late.

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

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It was good of you to think of asking us to Vienna during the Christmas holidays. We could not have gone anyway because after the official family gathering here on Christmas Day we are going to Amalfi for a four days rest, returning to Rome on the second of January for the annual Court function.

Thank you for giving me news of Leland and Nancy Harrison. I had not heard that they were returning home.

As you can well imagine, it is exceedingly difficult here to get authentic political news. There are no underlings in the Foreign Office or in any of the Government departments who will give one tips or information of any value whatsoever, not because they are not well disposed but because they have not the slightest idea what tomorrow's developments will be, and while Ciano is exceedingly friendly, he is also exceedingly busy and I cannot go to him unless I have something of importance to take up with him officially. Gayda, the so-called official spokesman, gives us a cue now and then but he is by no means always reliable. I find it, therefore, very difficult to respond to your very generous efforts to keep me advised of political developments in your bailiwick, but I trust you will understand that my corres-

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804

ponding intentions are good although so far somewhat ineffective.

With best wishes for a happy Christmas to you both,

Sincerely yours,

William Phillips