

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. RHG:HP



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Berlin, Germany, January 31, 1938.

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

Strictly Confidential

You will remember that about the 27th of December I transmitted to you a copy of a communication from a friend of ours here in Berlin relating to a possible Putsch in Austria which was to take place between the visit of the Yugoslav Premier and the 30th of January. I imagine that you had an opportunity to follow the various rumors and reports which began to be circulated more generally after the middle of January, and you probably read the subsequent comment of the German press which characterized the whole proposition as a lie and attributed the source to Communist circles. The enclosed clipping from the "Manchester Guardian" of January 28 reports arrests made by the Austrian Government and the detention of leading Nazis in Austria. A despatch of the London Times of Saturday confirms the same information, namely that evidence has been found among the papers seized that a serious attempt was to be made about this time to force Schuschnigg out of the Austrian Government.

I am of the opinion that the Reichstag would have been summoned for the 30th of January if the plans had succeeded, but I am now convinced that the information which went to you originally was substantially correct and that the Austrian Government

was

The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

was warned in time of the plot and took the necessary action in order to prevent the threatened onslaught. One of course will never know the real truth of what went on, but the recent arrests in Austria have proved that there was something very serious being planned. The information which went to you in December was from a very trustworthy source.

Faithfully yours,

Frederick Lister

P.S.

News items appearing in the English Press show that the plot was very serious and that the Germany army was to hold demonstrations on the frontier, and that the Austrian Chancellor was to be forced out.