1077

November 14, 1938.

Personal

Dear Raymond:

Your personal and confidential note of October 21 has just reached me and I read it last evening and again this morning with interest. I am not going to try to answer it now as there are various things in it which I wish to take up with you.

The one thing I wish to take up with you now is the question you raise concerning the political reporting from Vienna. I talked with Flack in the European Division about this and he says that there had been a distinct letup in the political reporting from Vienna and also that the office there did not seem to be following channels. I gathered that they were sending their reports in here rather than writing directly to the Embassy or in sending immediately a copy of any despatches they sent to the Department to the Embassy also. Flack tells me that he has written to Morgan a personal note with regard to the situation some two or three weeks ago. He has told Morgan that the Department is interested in information from Vienna, as he is sure the Embassy in Berlin is interested. The reporting has naturally not the same importance as it had before. I think Flack also pointed out to Morgan the necessity for following channels and has indicated that if any political reports are made in despatches to the Department a copy should be forwarded at the same time to the Embassy. Flack thinks that the matter will arrange itself now. I am not so sure for I am not altogether sure of Morgan's good judgment about some things. He is a rather peculiar person and I am afraid is one of those who has gone somewhat diplomatic, et cetera. He is a man of a good deal of capacity in some ways, but I am not so sure of his judgment and I do not think he has any administrative ability. I think, however, if he is told what he has to do, he will do it.

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Raymond H. Geist, Esquire,
American Consul,
Berlin, Germany.

1077

I note that you have given some indications to Morris as to the procedure to be followed. While I do not think that consular officers in cities outside of the capital should be prohibited from sending political despatches addressed to the Department, it certainly is desirable in most cases for them not to do it in the form of despatches but in the form of letters to the Embassy. If it is done in the form of despatches to the Department, a copy of the despatch should be sent to the Embassy or mission at the same time. If it is done in the form of letters to the Embassy, a copy of the letter should be sent at the same time to the Department. You know the reasons for this procedure in either case.

It is, of course, a mistake to think that the political reporting from Vienna is no longer important or desirable. It is certainly not necessary in the same volume as before. It seems to me that the purpose could be best met by having an officer, preferably the chief of the establishment at Vienna, write a letter to the Ambassador wonce a week giving a review of the developments in his district. This seems to me the reasonable procedure to follow and certainly such a weekly letter from Vienna would be most helpful. I know that the office there is pressed with all kinds of work, but there isn't the slightest excuse in the world for their not having the time or being prepared to write such a weekly letter to the Embassy. Any worthwhile officer in Vienna and who is worth his salt has enough interest and initiative to follow the situation and to be able to write such a letter to the Embassy once a week.

I am glad you wrote me about this and when I am writing to Morris I will mention it to him briefly without any reference, direct or indirect, to what you or Flack have told me. I think that Morris will straighten it out if it has not already been done. I hope to be able to write you shortly with regard to other questions raised in your letter.

With very good wishes,

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:
To Vienna.

P.S. If this reporting situation at Vienna does not straighten itself out, please let me know.

G.S.M.

A-M:GSM:VNG