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Berlin, Germany  
May 16, 1938



Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I have your letter of April 21st regarding the conversations I had with you and Mr. Shaw last October in the Department about the assignment of a consul general to this post. Almost immediately thereafter your letter of April 29th arrived informing that the decision contemplated had not been made and that the Department might prefer to have the present arrangement continue longer. You suggested that I bring the contents of the second letter to the attention of the Ambassador, which I did. When you wrote to me on April 21st you also wrote to the Ambassador, and as soon as our letters were received the Ambassador mentioned the matter to me in a very kindly way and showed by his attitude that he was anxious to have me continue cooperating with him in Berlin in the future as in the past. We were so busy at the time with important matters that were pressing that we did not go into the question very carefully; and at that time I too had not had an opportunity of considering all phases of the contemplated change. When, however, your letter of April 29th arrived two days later and Mr. Wilson and I had another conversation certain aspects of a probable situation became clear to both of us, as it has become clear to you, and the Ambassador said that he would write to you at once. I presume his letter is going forth in the same pouch with this one.

However, before I go into the question, I would like to say that I deeply appreciate the frank and friendly way in which you have written. I know that you not only have the public interests and the interests of the Service deeply at heart but that my interests through long friendship lie also very close to you and that I can depend upon you in a very real way. I know that and I am very happy and willing to follow your lead and your wishes as I have ever in the past. If it seems wise and necessary to you to appoint a Consul General to Berlin you can well understand that I would not like to stand in the way of such a decision.

I have now been in Berlin over eight years and I have long thought the day would come when I would be transferred, and of course I am ready whenever the Department makes the decision. I would probably press for a transfer and rather modestly did so last summer when I thought there might be an opportunity of being associated with you again but the considerations you pointed out last October have persuaded me to continue the work where I believe I can best serve well. The long experience I have had in Berlin and the continual endurance of serious problems involving our interests and the interests of Americans

have given my work an importance which you all have been kind enough to recognize and which is the basis of the confidence which the Government continues to show in me. All this I deeply appreciate. From a personal point of view I could well wish an easier post; as there is never any real rest from the arduous duties which pour in day after day. Much of it is bearable on account of the consciousness that one is really serving and accomplishing something. Nobody appreciates this kind of satisfaction more than you who have always given vastly more than you have received and where sheer accomplishment has been the sole reward. Besides I have acquired a technic during these many years, much of which you taught me, which makes it quite easy for me to tackle very serious cases with a pretty sure prospect of success. I have, of course, learned the German mentality and the manner in which this Regime works and know where and when to **strike**, where and when to be aggressive and where and when to use more gentle methods. I know that the experience I have acquired is of value to our Government; and for this reason I have put my personal wishes in the background and have been content to go ahead and do the job which Destiny and the Department have assigned to me.

There has been, however, a rather marked change in the set-up of our Mission brought about by my appointment as First Secretary and the assignment to me of all protection work whether arising in the consular establishments in Germany or in the Embassy. For the first time the coordination of the Embassy and the Consular Establishments is complete and the Ambassador functions as the actual head of all of us. I advise with the Ambassador on all phases of our work and I am happy to say, as I wrote Mr. Shaw two weeks ago, that closer and better coordination could hardly be attained. There is no conflict in this arrangement; as I am able to function in my Consular capacity as I have done in the past and this is vastly important, as a great deal of the important work I do is still done as Consul and not as First Secretary. It provides that a perfect continuity be maintained, and gives me freedom of movement and scope which I have never experienced before. For instance, today, at the direction of the Ambassador I informed the Wirtschaftsministerium that I desired to obtain an interview with the expert in that ministry on a certain law which has recently been passed and the operation of which adversely affects American firms. After considerable difficulty in getting the matter under way I was told by the Wirtschaftsministerium that already the Embassy had taken the question up with the Foreign Office and no purpose would be served by having an interview in the Wirtschaftsministerium. I was able to inform them on the spot that the Embassy had not taken the matter up with the Foreign Office and that it was in agreement with the Ambassador that I desired to have the conversations in the Wirtschaftsministerium. The result was I got the interview at once and the information too, whereas a long delay would have ensued if we had first taken up the question at the Foreign Office.

The question naturally arises now is how would the appointment of a consul general affect the present set-up? During Mr. Jenkins term of office the protection work and practically all the conversations held in the ministries and with other officials were conducted by me. But my scope is now much extended and I work intimately with the Embassy on a much broader basis, function as a First Secretary, write despatches for the Ambassador's signature, send telegrams to the Department for him, etc. At the same time I carry on my duties as Consul and supervising officer to no less degree. Questions of policy are being discussed and decided on in conference with the Ambassador, Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Heath. On the basis of these decisions circular instructions are sent out to all the consular offices in Germany. Thus a very effective sort of coordination and cooperation is attained. This is a very important matter right now while American Jewish citizens all over Germany are demanding to know what they shall do about registering their property under the law against which our Government has just made a protest. The Consuls in Germany are naturally looking to Berlin for information and guidance. They have to be kept informed and directed as to what they can safely tell Americans. Many questions are now coming up which involve both the Embassy and our consular establishments. In view of the long experience I have in this country and the complete background of National Socialism the Ambassador and other members of the Embassy consult me regularly about a great many matters concerning which I naturally have knowledge and experience. It is not likely that a Consul General would find himself very comfortable if I were to continue to carry on the duties which I now perform and cooperate to the same degree with the Ambassador. At the same time it is doubtful if any useful purpose would be served by putting an end to my usefulness or even limiting it to the extent which might be necessary if I had to carry on as a subordinate officer under such conditions. Both the Ambassador and I after considering these phases were inclined to believe that such an arrangement would have very serious draw-backs. If I relinquished my consular functions and went entirely over to the Embassy the Government would lose the capacity for me in which I have been able in the past to perform the most effective work. The chances are that if I continued on here with a new Consul General that I would have to go ahead for a long time doing the work which I have performed almost uninterruptedly since your departure in 1934. This work would be performed in an atmosphere of divided allegiance, duty and obligations and I am afraid would give rise to misunderstandings, not to mention the loss of prestige which would be bound to affect my authority and standing with the German Government and make the work hard indeed.

I am just getting in to the Foreign Office and will soon be able to supplement my work in other departments of the Government by conversations there as the need arises; but the Ambassador is pleased not to have to go with everything to the Foreign Office if I can get results with the officials directly handling affairs. He is most interested in every phase of our work and takes a hand in everything; and, of course, I find his counsel and direction superb. It is something of the exhilaration and delight which we enjoyed together during those happy four years.

These considerations have undoubtedly occurred to you regarding the actual set-up in Berlin; and I believe that when you decide to make the change you will probably want to carry out the other original idea which was in your mind last October, namely of sending me to another post. I have thought this matter over and since you have been so good as to let me suggest what I would like to do and where I would like to go I might make the suggestion that I have often thought of the kind of work which Mr. Gilbert formerly did at Geneva as a possible field for my energies or at the legation in Berne, where I could continue to get experience on the diplomatic side where I have just made a beginning. I think when I leave Berlin I should not have another post in one of these totalitarian countries for a while, as one needs a long rest from this sort of thing. But I must confess that most posts will seem like havens of rest after the steady battles which I have been fighting here for the last four years. But I should be very happy some day to go to Switzerland. My next choice would be Paris or Brussels. I am still looking forward to the time when you will come abroad as an Ambassador and I hope that we can be together again.

With very warmest regards to you and to Mrs; Messersmith and thanking you a thousand times for your kind letter and your good friendship, believe me ever

Faithfully yours

