

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Stuttgart Germany
April 2, 1939

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Dearest Janie:

Your fine, newsy letter arrived Thursday, and I will heap coals of fire on your head by answering it at once. I was especially glad to hear about what all the kids are doing and what courses you are taking. You must be very busy indeed keeping up with all your work. I know how hectic and hopeless it seems; you never get finished, and the assignments keep on piling up. As funny as it seems to me to have all my friends getting married, it seems ever funnier to have yours hopping off the deep end too. It just shows what an old foggy I'm getting to be.

I hardly know what to say to your suggestion that you might like to come over this summer for a visit. It goes without saying that I should be tickled to death to have you, either now, next year, or both. And it's also true that I have no idea where I will be next summer. One of my friends from the Fletcher School who served his apprenticeship in Naples is now in Tokyo, Japan. But of course he asked to be sent to the Far East, which I do not expect to do. The only thing that worries me is the international situation. It is absolutely unpredictable. However, ^{ONE} only has to listen to the news broadcasts from the various countries to realize how charged the atmosphere is. Nightly they pour forth viles to wrath and scorn on each other, and the British, usually so moderate, really seem to be anxious about the situation. It is my personal belief that the present government of Germany is thoroughly irresponsible, and that it is absolutely useless to try to figure out by the rules of logic, the dictates of necessity, or the experience of past history what they will do next. For instance, there were many people who thought last September that the Germans were only bluffing, and that if the other countries held firm, there would be no war. I am quite convinced in my own mind that such was not the case. I think they would have attacked by force if the Czechs had not given in, in the expectation that they would be able to conquer the Czechs before the other countries were able to make any progress in the West. I fear that if any bluffs are called, it is not going to be the German's.

Another evil omen is the terrific armament race. Don't be deceived by the boastful pronouncements of the German leaders. They are putting Germany practically on a wartime basis in peace in order to carry the load of arms production. It is almost impossible now to get anything new here in the line of building materials and so forth. L'Heureux wanted to get a new toilet for his house. An inspector came out, looked at the old one,

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and said he could not give permission to purchase a new one, as it was still possible to repair the old one. They are having a big garden show in Stuttgart this spring, and lots of streets are being torn up. But there are not being resurfaced - only the old cobbles scraped off and laid back smoothly in place. My landlady was only able to get coffee enough for about three days last week; the rest of the time I had cocoa for breakfast. It is my personal opinion that the seizure of Czechoslovakia was caused primarily by economic desperation; - the absolute necessity of finding new sources of raw materials inside the scope of the German currency restrictions.

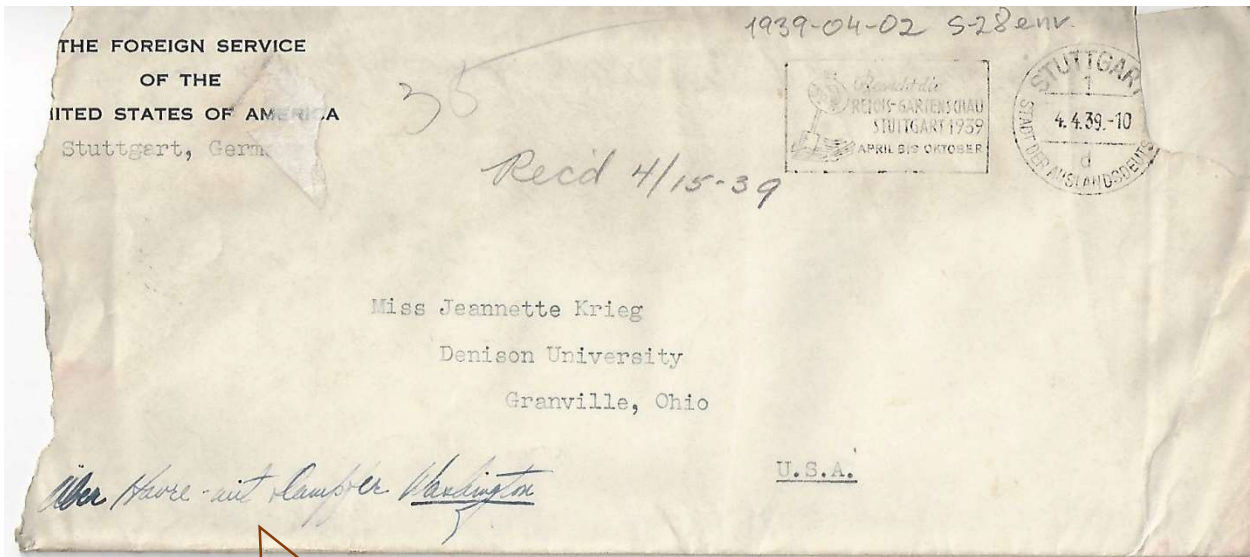
The point is this: if the German economic situation should fail to improve; if the Germans should feel that the other countries, awake at last, were on the point of overcoming the German superiority in arms; if Hitler is simply mad from lust for power; something may happen to set the whole world in flames, and traveling might not be very pleasant. Therefore, I would suggest that you look over travel literature, time tables, maps, etc., decide where you want to go, and when, but not make any definite plans before the end of May. Then perhaps we will be able to tell whether anything is going to pop. Personally, I do not expect that it will, and I am afraid that things will continue just as they are now - tense, hateful - without any decision being reached and without the atmosphere's being cleared. In that event, of course, it would be just as hard to decide then about your trip as now; but at least, we can wait and see.

I have just made the pleasant discovery we are going to have three days vacation at Easter - Friday, Saturday, and Monday. I am already revolving plans for a little trip to Switzerland. Anything to get out of Germany for a while. I will probably go to Zurich again, but possibly a little farther - perhaps up to some little place in the mountains. I will try to meet King Hamilton, who is now in Clark's place in Zurich, and Highley, whom I visited last September in Geneva. I'm sorry I didn't hear about the holiday sooner, as I haven't much time left to establish connections.

Things are going a little better at the office now. The excitement has pretty well died down and we are getting back somewhat to normal. I haven't done any night work for quite a long time now, and I have had a clerk assigned to me as my assistant, whom I am supposed to teach everything I know. I don't know how long we are going to be able to have so large an office force at our disposal, as I understand the inspector who was here recommended a reduction in the number of clerks. Unless something unusual comes up we could get along very nicely without so many.

It is now Monday morning, and I will try to get this in the mail on my way to the office. Let me hear from you, and tell me what all the kids are doing. I haven't hear you say anything about Mary Shinn for some time. Is she still at Denison? Be sure to tell Daddy that you have heard from me, as I will not write again till next week.

With all my love, *William*



Über Havre mit Dampfer Washington

Abs[ender]. W.L.Krieg
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