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March 28, 1951

Memorandum for: W. Averell Harriman
Special Assistant to the President

From: Rose A. Conway

By direction of the President, I am returning your letter from General Eisenhower together with copy of the President's reply.

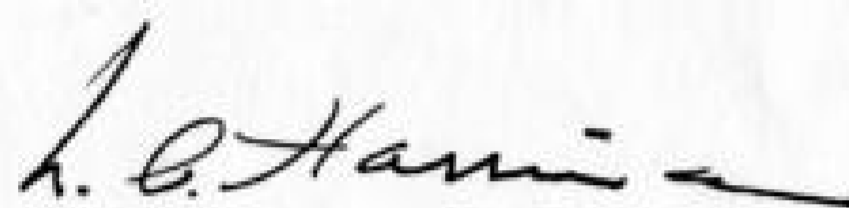


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 29, 1951

MEMORANDUM for Miss Rose A. Conway:

Thank you very much for the copy of the President's letter to General Eisenhower, and the General's letter to me of the 11th, which you enclosed in your memorandum of March 28th.



W. A. Harriman



March 26, 1951

Dear Ike:

I just read your letter of the fourteenth to Averell and I know you are making great progress in spite of the obstacles which you have to overcome.

The Malta affair was entirely unnecessary. It seems that Admiral Carney gave out a press interview that he was going to Malta to meet the British Commander and Chief of the Eastern Mediterranean. It seems to me that that meeting could have been held in London by having the Britisher come there or Admiral Carney could have gone to the Mediterranean and seen the Britisher at his headquarters without creating the disturbance. Those things happen, as you know - they happened to you while you were Commander-in-Chief before. I do everything I possibly can to prevent things of that sort from happening but when a fellow gets three stars on his shoulder he has to let people know that he wears them.

Keep at it and I know you will be successful in getting the job done.

My best to Mrs. Eisenhower.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower —
Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
APO 55, c/o Postmaster
New York, New York



*Original letter handed to Col Mara
who will turn it over to Col Beukler to
send to pouch 2024 3/28/57*

~~SECRET~~

DDE

14 March 1951



DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12065, Sec. 3.402
DOD Directive 5100.30, June 18, 1979

By NLT-NC NARS, Date 1-17-83

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Dear Averell:

Won't you please tell the President that I most deeply appreciate the letter he wrote to me from Key West. I am especially glad that he so clearly understands some of the oddities of the position I now occupy. While I should, of course, much prefer to regard my role as strictly military, I am more and more impressed with the fact that you earlier called the turn when you said, "For a long time, your job will be far more civil than it is military, and will involve every conceivable kind of international interest."

One of the most noticeable characteristics of this headquarters is that it is sort of a "floating island," not firmly attached to anything by traditional chains of responsibility, authority, and interest. By becoming a servant of twelve governments, I am personally, of course, disassociated from the normal American channels that apply to duties of soldiers in the field. While it is true that I am still an American public servant, merely loaned to a rather nebulous organization which we call NATO, in a larger sense I have become a modern Ishmael. At the same time, the prescribed NATO channels of direction and control, extending through the Standing Group, then the Military Committee, then the Council of Deputies, and then the Council of Ministers, grow more and more nebulous when one realizes that it is well nigh useless to put up any critical problem before a joint international body until after that proposition has been thoroughly discussed and cleared with each of the national staffs that may be affected. This we have to do daily.

All this is confusing, but, fortunately for us, we are avoiding the development of a "squirrel in the cage" feeling because of the fact that every responsible American official in Europe, to say nothing of the several European staffs with which we deal, all seem anxious either to consult with us concerning their own particular problems or even to secure our help in channeling and pushing these questions to decisions.

In any event, the whole system, since it makes my direct connection with American staffs so nebulous, emphasizes our previous conclusion that I, purely as an American citizen, should keep you as well informed as I possibly can.

Naturally, as I told the President, all strictly military questions are channeled through the Standing Group, and, if any such type of question affects the United States alone, it will, of course, go to the Defense Department.

I notice recurring indications of a feeling in Europe that local manufacturing facilities and available labor pools are not being used to the maximum in helping to meet the needs of NATO. I hope soon to arrange for a meeting with Herrod, Katz, and one or two others in order to get a clear comprehension of what is behind this type of thing. I suspect that it is directed toward a hope of having the United States step in and increase money or material allocations to the country concerned, in return for such production. It would appear that, if these nations are deadly serious about defending Europe, inter-governmental arrangements could be made for manufacture and exchange, if only on a basis resembling barter. I am going to try to run this thing down because possibly both Herrod and Katz may point out some direction in which I can be of some help.

A different type of thing occurred recently. In the last few days, there have been copies of cable messages shown to me that touch upon the unhappiness of the French because they were not included in the so-called Malta conferences between Naval representatives of the United States and Great Britain. In this particular case, I have no doubt that the purposes of the meeting could have been defeated by inclusion of a third party; but, in handling this kind of thing, we have to show a very considerable amount of skill if we are, as a group of twelve nations, to build up among ourselves that feeling of confidence and union, without which such an effort as this cannot succeed.

To create, unnecessarily, a feeling on the part of any government that it has been callously excluded from participation in some discussion in which it believes it has a reasonable interest, is well nigh inexcusable. That kind of thing, far from supplementing and supporting the efforts that a headquarters like this makes to develop mutual confidence, will go a long way toward defeating it.

It is, of course, clear that occasionally there are subjects of bilateral interest that cannot be discussed with representatives of any third nation. Moreover, it seems logical that this type of thing will occur more often between the United States and Britain than between almost any other two countries in NATO. The point is, when need arises for this kind of conference, it should not normally be advertised. Such meetings should be conducted informally, as a matter of routine business, and should not appear to the public as decisive, conclusive affairs, particularly when accompanied by a suspicion that the agenda of such a conference will include subjects that are at least of some interest to third parties.

I request that you do not take any specific action in this particular case, or even admit that you know of its occurrence; but possibly you could, in future conversations with British and appropriate American officials, advance some of your own observations along this line. Certainly, this type of thing could eventually cause a great deal of embarrassment and could damage an effort on which the United States is spending a tremendous amount of money and effort. By being on the alert, a person is sometimes able to help prevent the occurrence of errors.

Such incidents illustrate again the wide range of subject in which this unique headquarters is forced to take an interest.

My best wishes and respects to the President. Warm regard to your good self.

Cordially,

/s/ Ike E.

Mr. Averell Harriman
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

U. S. Naval Station,
Key West, Florida,
March 15, 1951

Dear Averell:

I am enclosing the
latest of Ike's letters which
I forgot to return to you be-
fore you left.

It was a pleasure to
have you with us, and I hope
you enjoyed it as much as we
did.

Sincerely,

Harry S. Truman

Honorable Averell Harriman,
Executive Offices,
State-War-Navy Building,
Washington, D. C.

*air mailed from
KW*

