

16254

February 15, 1952



Personal and Confidential

Dear Ike:

Thanks very much for your good letter of the ninth.

I certainly hope that the Lisbon Conference can attain a concrete result which will let us go forward promptly with the program we have in mind.

I am more than happy to have your comments on the French attitude - I can understand the French fear of Germany. Since 1870, 1914, 1942 and 1943 they, of course, have grounds for fear of their northern neighbor but I am hoping that the program which we have in view will tend to alleviate that fear and that we can get Britain, France, Germany and all Western Europe in a position where we can attain a long time peaceful settlement of our present difficulties.

You are making a great contribution to this end and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

General of the Army
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Paris, France

DRAFT 2-14-52



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I certainly hope that the Lisbon Conference can attain a concrete result which will let us go forward promptly with the program we have in mind.

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Sincerely yours,

General of the Army
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Paris, France

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HSV



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Supreme Headquarters
Allied Powers Europe
9 February 1952



Dear Mr. President:

Your bewilderment as to the motivations of the French Government in some of its actions is certainly understandable. I have come to the conclusion that at the very bottom of all their "backing and filling," their seemingly contradictory statements and actions, is an instinctive, inbred fear of Germany and the Germans. With a growing realization of the severity of their economic crisis, occasioned partly, although not wholly, by the Indo-China war, they have to accept a slower rate of military preparation than originally planned. This, in turn, makes them fear that in any collective venture in Europe, be it political, economic, military, or all three, Germany would completely dominate. This fear seems to be shared less by the uniformed services than by political leaders and intellectuals. However, it is a very real thing and its influence, I am convinced, is very marked.

On our part, we can advance all of the obvious arguments in showing that even if the fear is not groundless, it is of far lesser importance at this moment in the world's history than is the certainty that the great Communist dictatorship is both aggressive and implacable. But, parts of France have been occupied three times in eighty years by the Germans--this fact is an important one in all their thinking and in all that they do.

This is not to say that many Frenchmen do not agree wholly with the contention that the free world must now produce collective security or France will be one of the earliest and surest victims of our neglect. The circle of Frenchmen who believe this is growing, and I sometimes think that the truth is more widely understood in the country than it is by the Government itself.

Averell is now here. He and Mr. Draper are preparing for the Lisbon meeting, and I do hope that some real accomplishments will there be realized. After all, we are on a job in which there is no acceptable alternative to success. More and more people are coming to realize this.



With every good wish,

Respectfully,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including "August 1945" and "Washington, D.C."