

January 1950

SECRET

Draft Letter

Mr. Caccia

from

Sir I. Kirkpatrick



1/12.1

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

M. Schuman was a Frenchman from Alsace-Lorraine & would have abandoned Strasbourg

Thank you for your letter No.39 of the 19th December about your talk with the French High Commissioner.

I do not disagree with his remarks about the psychology of the Austrians, and I was interested to hear that Béthouart does not rate very high the immediate risks of a putsch after evacuation, or take an unduly pessimistic view of the effects of the Treaty on Austria's ability to survive.

When the French Ambassador called on the 4th January he told me that General Béthouart had been active in Paris advocating postponement of the Treaty, and that this had produced some impression. I took the opportunity, therefore, of pointing out that Béthouart's only prescription for Austrian independence seemed to be the admission of Austria to the Council of Europe, and the transfer of the Council from Strasbourg to Vienna. Massigli agreed that this was not a practical proposition. I then observed that in that event, since the only means of ensuring Austria's independence was not practical, we would have no alternative but to continue the Occupation in perpetuity. You will ~~since~~ have seen Schuman's satisfactory reply, which Massigli gave me on January 7, to the effect that, while recognising the risk of withdrawing the western forces from Austria, the French Government agree unreservedly that it is desirable to press for a Treaty.

We agree, of course, that Austria should come into the Council of Europe as soon as this can be arranged without embarrassment to the Western Powers or herself. But we are now

so/

so deeply committed to Strasbourg as the seat of the Council that I do not think there is any chance whatever of a move to Vienna.

I was glad to hear of your plans to draw up a tripartite appreciation of the dangers to Austria of the Treaty in its present form and look forward to having this in due course. As a matter of sad fact, what we may soon have to ask you to do is to consider what may be the effect on Austria of an indefinite postponement of the Treaty negotiations and to be thinking what measures we can and ought to take to restrain the Austrians from either offering themselves to the Soviet despoiler, or turning to Nazi or pan-German tempters.

JK
13.1.

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