

February 1, 1962

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I find that because of my travels about the time Mr. George Lister left the U. S. Delegation to the International Conference on Laos, I have not recorded my appreciation of the work he did for us.

Mr. Lister acted as my interpreter when I saw Soviet Delegate Pushkin, and drafted the memoranda of conversation and messages to the Department. He did this work well. He was of particular assistance in interpreting Mr. Pushkin's comments, and gave me an unusually penetrating insight into the meaning of the conversations. I also gained a high regard for Lister's background understanding of Kremlin motivations. He was useful as well, because of his Polish experience, in keeping in touch with the Polish Delegation.

I had first met Mr. Lister when the President and the Secretary asked me to visit Rome in March as Ambassador -at-Large. In addition to the members of the Government with whom I had long conversations, I wanted to see the leaders of the various parties. George Lister was assigned as interpreter in the conversations I had with Mr. Saragat of the Socialist Party, and with Mr. LeMalfa of the Republican Party. Having followed political affairs in Italy rather closely since the end of the war, I have been concerned that in spite of the remarkable economic progress, the communists and Nenni Socialists were receiving slightly increased popular votes, as compared to 1948. I found Mr. Lister had been the officer of the Embassy charged with keeping in touch with the Left wing movement, and, therefore, asked him to come to see me in order to give me a clearer idea of his

observations

The Honorable

Tyler Thompson,

Director General of the Foreign Service,  
Department of State.

observations of the political developments. I found his analyses of particular interest since it indicated that more gains had been made against the communists than I had thought from bare analysis of the statistics. I considered the information he gave me the most valuable of any I received during my visit.

While I was in Geneva I was impressed with the fact that twice two of the members of the right wing of the Nenni Socialist Party came to see him. He showed me the letter he had written to Ambassador Reinhardt of these conversations. Again, these indicated that he was on a basis of confidence through which he obtained intimate information.

All in all, my impression of Mr. Lister is that he is a resourceful officer, intensely interested in his work, has a clear knowledge of communist techniques and an understanding of the manner in which we must attempt to offset them. I rate him high among the officers with whom I came in contact in the more than a dozen embassies I have visited over the past year.

I would appreciate this letter being made a part of Mr. Lister's official record.

Sincerely yours,

W. Averell Harriman

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