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From: McCormack, Sean I (PACE)  
Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2008 10:28 AM  
To: 'British Studies, U. Texas'  
Cc: Dean, Teresa L; Susser, Marc J  
Subject: RE: Historical Advisory Committee

Professor Louis --

First, Let me thank you for your service. It is unfortunate that you have chosen to take this action, but the decision is your own. I had intended to use our meeting to sort through the various (and serious) assertions that you have made and to find a way to separate out the personal from the substantive. I am afraid that without your participation my task will be more difficult, but, nonetheless, I will persevere in the effort because I am committed to ensuring the FRUS maintains a standard of quality that all expect from it.

I note from your letter, as well as other discussions that I have had concerning this matter, that your dispute with Dr. Susser has become intensely personal, and I regret that fact. I have yet to see, however, a list of specific examples in the FRUS (current or in production) where you and/or the committee cite sub-standard scholarship. In fact, the historian you cite as most key to production of the volumes has overseen current volumes and those now in production. We are now holding a public search to find his replacement. Of course, we would welcome any nominees you think appropriate to fill this important position.

I had hoped at the meeting scheduled for this week to discuss with you and Dr. Susser a proposal to find objective third-parties to referee assertions of sub-standard scholarship in the FRUS. Please pass along to other members of the Committee my intention to take this step and, further, please invite any who might wish to attend the meeting to discuss with me the issues at hand.

As for resources dedicated to the FRUS, I understand that under Dr. Susser's management the resources dedicated to the FRUS have increased significantly. I have maintained a funding and personnel level during my tenure consistent with my predecessors. In fact, I understand that the FRUS is now on track to meet the 30-year publishing requirement set out by the law, something that has never before been achieved in the history of the series.

On the matter of personnel, while I respect the role of the Committee with regard to the 30-year timeline and the integrity of the series, I must note that issues related to personnel are the sole prerogative of the Department of State. The protections afforded employees of the Historian's Office are no less than those accorded other federal government employees. The protections also do not exceed those given by law and regulation to other federal employees. I know that you have been briefed on this fact. I regret any misunderstanding.

Please note that I also intend to put in the public record this communication, as well as the comments from the Historian's Office back to the Committee on its

latest report. I note that some of the comments were accepted, while others were not -- as is the prerogative of the Committee.

I feel also compelled to offer my own editorial comment regarding your decision to resign, which I accept at face value as a matter of principal, and which I only learned via your e-mail with no courtesy of prior communication. By taking these actions, I feel you are obscuring the very thing you hope to accomplish: to raise questions about the quality of the FRUS. I do not believe you can dispute the fact that disagreements with the Historian's Office have become entangled with personal issues that have nothing to do with the quality of scholarship. While you have decided to walk away from the FRUS, I will continue in my efforts to ensure its continuing timeliness and quality.

Best Regards,

Sean McCormack

-----Original Message-----

From: British Studies, U. Texas [mailto:britishstudies@mail.utexas.edu]  
Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2008 9:26 AM  
To: McCormack, Sean I (PACE)  
Subject: Historical Advisory Committee

Dear Mr. McCormack,

Both Bob McMahon and I agreed to meet with you and other at twelve noon on Wednesday (tomorrow), but on reflection we are not sure that this is a wise thing to do, especially since Marc Susser will be at the meeting.

Let me write candidly about two developments that have taken place within the last week as a result of discussion within the committee. At the meeting on Wednesday afternoon I will read my letter to the Secretary of State, thus making it a public document. I will then resign from the committee, stating that I think my duty to explain publicly the way I see the Foreign Relations series reaching a state of crisis.

I want you to know of the decision about the letter because it represents a collective decision by the committee. My decision to resign is my own, but it is now irrevocable.

Having said all that I want you to know that we genuinely would be glad to talk to you about issues of the series, the importance of competent and committed editors, the critical part to be played by the next general editor, and significance of the series itself.

Bob McMahon and I would not want to get into another discussion about the management issues, to which we feel we need to draw your attention, as we have in the letter, but at this point we would like to try as much as possible to detach these concerns from personalities.

We know that there are bound to be different views and, believe me, I am very sorry that it has come to this.

We leave it to you about the meeting, but I did want to make clear that from Wednesday afternoon the letter will be a public letter and I will have resigned from the committee. Since these events have already been set in train, you may well have other ideas about whether it would be beneficial to meet.

I would like to send you my best wishes in sorting all this out. I know it will not be easy.

Roger Louis