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Germany

Political Analysis Summer Internship at U.S. Consulate Munich

This summer, I interned for the U.S. Consulate General Munich, part of the U.S. Foreign Service. The Consulate is the United States' presence in Bavaria, Germany's largest province. It is split into several sections, including "Consular," which among other things adjudicates visas and provides passports, "Public Affairs," which follows the local press and promotes U.S. interests in the media, "Foreign Commercial Services," which caters to U.S. businesses operating in the province, and "Political/Economic," which reports on those areas and shapes foreign policy.

I applied to intern at the Department of State after aiding a fellow undergraduate with a research project in Germany last summer, when I helped interview volunteers who work with refugees. In my application to the Department, I discussed that experience, including when we witnessed an anti-PAG (police surveillance law) protest in Munich. Those experiences, combined with my knowledge of German, convinced the "Political/Economic" section of the Consulate to take me on as an intern. My initial goals for this internship were threefold. First, to experience Munich's history and the culture of Bavaria, its province. Second, to explore the current and historical U.S.-Bavarian relationship. Third, to learn about the State Department / Foreign Service and aid it in its mission. I also hoped to gain more experience in conversing with native speakers in German.

All three goals were successfully met. On the first count, I learned about Munich's checkered history—touring the grand Wittelsbach *Residenz* Palace and the *Pinakotheken*, but also visiting the Dachau concentration camp and learning about Adolf Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. In addition, I joined the "Munich Cricket Club" (though it's not the most traditionally German sport), playing several matches against visiting towns and even traveling to Tittmoning, a town on the Austrian border, for a game. On the second count, allow me an anecdote. Being over the summer, my internship included a "Fourth of July" celebration, when nearly 900 *Münchner* visited the consulate for a BBQ hosted by the post's Marines. This event, which included a speech by Bavarian State Minister Florian Herrmann, celebrated the enduring trans-Atlantic partnership between the two nations. On the third count, I learned much about the State Department / Foreign Service, both in its role in Washington and in its hundreds of posts across the world. The work which I completed is classified, but was extremely satisfying and productive.

The internship was a fascinating one—it told me that Germany is a nation at a crossroads, coming to the fore of world politics but still somewhat unsure of its own identity. It will be fascinating to watch how the country votes in the September 2019 regional elections, when the far-right *AfD* is expected to win major support in the former East German federal states, and how it transitions toward the post-Merkel era in 2021, or even sooner depending on election results.

There were also some unexpected highlights to the internship. First, I had the pleasure of meeting the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell, who visited our offices soon before I finished my time in Munich. Second, students from my high school—Marquette University High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—visited the Consulate, and afterward I visited them in the town of Ingolstadt, where they were

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celebrating the thirtieth year of an exchange program with Christoph-Scheiner-Gymnasium. I practiced my German at every opportunity with co-workers, flat-mates, the barber, and many others, and I even attended the BMW Open, a European tour (golf) event.

Based on this experience, furthermore, I have decided to attempt to embark upon a career with the Foreign Service and am taking its test in October. If I should pass, I hope I'll end up back in Munich someday. I also feel that my academic background, in Classics (Latin and Ancient Greek), will nicely complement the skills I acquired this summer, affording me the historical knowledge required to analyze and react to present-day situations.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the fellowship which supported me on this summer in Munich—the Class of 1960 John Heinz Government Service Fellowship. Its willingness to support internships in government allowed me to spend my summer at the Consulate, and I feel my summer and time at Yale would have been substantially the poorer without them. I am enormously grateful and look forward to a fantastic final year at Yale with this experience in my back pocket.

Many thanks,
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Yale College '20