AIR MAIL COURIER

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URGENT - CONFIDENTIAL

México, D.F., June 8, 1943

Dear Sumner:

With reference to my letter of yesterday concerning the developments in the Argentine, I have to send you the following.

I had a conversation with Dr. Torres Bodet , the Under Secretary of Foreign Relations yesterday morning, during the course of which he was eager to learn my reactions to the Argentine developments. I told him that I had no information from my Government and knew nothing except what I had seen in the press, but that I was considerably disturbed over the turn which things had taken; it seemed to me that the present situation was no better than the former, and that the establishment of a purely military regime might set a very bad example for the armies in some of the other American Republics. Dr. Torres Bodet said to me equally unofficially and confidentially that he was very much disturbed over developments and that it looked to him as though the facade had been changed and nothing more, and that behind the facade, the situation was potentially even more difficult and undesirable than before the revolution. He expressed his grave concern that the taking over of the government by the Military might set a very bad example for some of the other American Republics and that the movement in the Argentine was a distinct step backward so far as the development of democratic institutions in the Americas was concerned. He called attention to the fact that the position of Mexico might be difficult so far as common action with the Americas was concerned in the way of recognition, in view of the Estrada Doctrine emitted by the Mexican Government in 1927. The Department is familiar with this doctrine, so I will not go into it here, but you know it implies that Mexico does not necessarily take any action toward recognizing or not recognizing new governments, but merely exercises its own prerogative of withdrawing its diplomatic representation or of not main-

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The Honorable
Sumner Welles,
Under Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

taining any near a government, if it happens not to like the government concerned.

Dr. Torres Bodet emphasized what was in his opinion the importance of very reserved action so far as the governments of other American Republics were concerned in the way of recognition, and he felt sure that the other American Governments would view the developments in the Argentine realistically.

I have just had an opportunity to have a talk with Dr. Padilla on other matters, and he raised this question of events in the Argentine. I could see that he was considerably concerned. He said all that has happened is a contradiction of the policy of our country and of the Mexican Government, and he felt sure that certain others of the American Governments in promoting the development of the Democratic form of Government. He said that the present situation in the Argentine with a purely military governmentwhich seemed to be entrenching itself definitely, was not only a definite step backward, but presented a very real danger. All the information seemed to indicate that the movement had been a purely military one, that the government would be a purely military dictatorship, and there was no indication that real elections would be held; there was no indication that any of the Democratic forms would be observed except as a facade. The example for some of the other American countries was an exceedingly bad one, and it was a considerable encouragement to military cliques in others of the American Republics to follow the Argentine example. Unless some very real and decided steps were taken, such a tendency would develop.

He said that he had sent a telegram yesterday to all the Secretaries of Stateof the other American Republics (and from this I gather that he telegraphed also to us), in which he had emphasized the concern of the Mexican Government with the developments in the Argentine, and I gathered that he had strongly recommended not only the desirability of great reserve and slowness in action with regard to recognition, but the possibility of withholding recognition, and withdrawing diplomatic representation from Buenos Aires. I gathered that he had emphasized in this telegram that although no conclusion could be drawn at the moment, it appeared to be a purely military revolt and a purely military and arbitrary government, and that while great reserve had to be shown until the policy and attitude of the new government was clear, it could easily result that the other American states acting in complete solidarity would have to withdraw their diplomatic represen-

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tation and refrain from recognizing the new government.

He indicated to me that he thought this might be the only way in which the situation in the Argentine could be corrected. He undoubtedly saw with grave apprehension, this military government consolidating itself in power, and in that case that it would be a menace to us in this hemisphere in a way that even the previous government had not been.

Padilla did not speak of the Estrada Doctrine as Torres Bodet had in the morning, and I gather from this that in spite of the Estrada Doctrine, which Mexico has followed since 1927, it is willing to act in a complete solidarity with the other American Republics in a common attitude toward the new government after due consultation with respect to that attitude.

I told Padilla that I would pass his views on to our Government and in order to save time, I conveyed the substance of the foregoing to Mr. McGurk, in theDepartment, by telephone this morning.

My own thought, as I stated in my letter of yesterday to you, is that we must proceed with the greatest reserve. I see the present situation in the Argentine as a very definite threat in many directions, and I think that we ourselves will lose prestige among our friends in the other American Republics if we urge anything like a precipitate or even final recognition of the present military government in the Argentine. It is a difficult situation, which will require the most careful deliberation by all the American states, but we have the most to lose by any precipitate action. Even in the Argentine itself I am inclined to think that a recognition of this new government by us or any action toward that end, will cause great disillusionment among those who are really our friends, and of the ideas in which we have a common interest.

Undoubtedly within the next days some very definite steps will be taken by this new military government to assure us of its good will, et cetera, and future intentions. This will be unquestionably a part of the game. The whole objective will be to get recognition from us. If we do give recognition and begin to furnish arms and equal treatment to the Argentine in certain matters, we will, I think, be delivering a body blow to ourselves in every one of the other American Republics where the situation will be viewed with absolute realism and where there

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will be a real fear of the Argentine.

This is just a hurried note, but I have wished to get this off by the air mail this morning.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GSM/aw G. S. MESSERSMITH