I believe that history as it will be written in the next years will recognize increasingly the important work which President Avila Camacho accomplished during his six-year term of office. Up until he became President there had been more or less turbulent times in the country. There was great division on many subjects in the country. The various revolutions had caused all kinds of feelings which slowly subsided. The policy of several administrations towards the church had caused great popular discontent, even though it did not show itself much on the surface. The solution of the agrarian problems in the form that it was made had created many local problems. Although the position of the federal government in Mexico City had become strengthened, the governors in the various states and local chieftains exercised a good deal of authority. It was during the presidency of General Avila Camacho that Mexican unity really became a fact. The army during his period of office became for the first time not the controlling element in the government, but was subject to civilian authority. This particular aspect of General Avila Camacho's work I will have to cover in a separate memorandum because of its importance. The fact is that in none of the large countries of Latin America is the army so under the civilian authorities of the government as it is in Mexico. This accomplishment could only have been carried through by a man who himself was a military man and who had such high prestige among his colleagues in the army.

Perhaps the most important thing in this respect that General Avila Camacho did was just before he took the oath of office or shortly thereafter. He made a public statement to the effect "I am a Catholic". Very few if any Mexican Presidents ever made such a courageous statement and one which had such a definite effect throughout the country. It was the beginning of the consolidation of real unity in Mexico. The significance of this statement has been disregarded very much in comment which has been made concerning President Avila Camacho and on developments in his presidency.

He made a similar courageous statement when, at the meeting of President Roosevelt and President Avila Camacho in Monterrey during the war, which meeting
will be covered in a separate memorandum, in his speech at the dinner which was given the evening of President Roosevelt’s arrival in Monterrey, he said that Mexico was looking into the future and not into the past. This was a very courageous statement for him to make because what he was in effect saying was that Mexico was not thinking of old rancors over all kinds of problems that had arisen between the United States and Mexico. She was not thinking of the wars that had been fought by the two countries. She was not thinking of the presence of American troops at times on Mexican soil. She was not thinking of the loss of valuable territories. He said that Mexico was looking into the future and not into the past, and what he meant to say was that to look into the future and to solve the problems between the two countries as they should be solved it was necessary not to look into the past. No one knew better than President Avila Camacho that it would be many decades before the Mexican people would forget certain feelings which they had with regard to the loss of territory, etc. What he wished to emphasize was that they were living in a new time and that it was necessary to forget the past and not let it influence what had to be done for the development of the country in the industrial, agricultural and social fields. He was indicating plainly that it was his policy that there should be close collaboration between Mexico and the United States in every possible field. He knew this statement would not be pleasing to many Mexicans, but he knew that it was a statement which should be made. He chose the most propitious and most important occasion to make this statement.

I repeat that as history will be written, it will show that during the period of President Avila Camacho’s presidency greater steps were taken towards unification of the country and conciliation of interests within the country than under any previous presidency. No President, I believe, since Juarez has had the courage to say that he was a Catholic.