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Mexico, D. F.,  
November 24, 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Carrigan:

You will recall that when I was in Washington I spoke to you about the suggestion made to me by General Arnold, the Commander of the Army Air Forces, that a demonstration unit of a number of planes of our Air Force visit Mexico City in the near future. The object of the demonstration would be two-fold. Included in it will be the types of planes which were used by us in the combat areas and, if possible, one or more B-29's, which are the planes which the Mexican squadron helped to protect. As the visit would follow immediately after the return of the Mexican squadron to Mexico City and the demonstrations held in connection therewith, there would be keen interest on the part of the President and high Mexican military officials, as well as of the public, in seeing a B-29 if possible, and others of the combat planes used by us and with which the Mexican squadron was associated. Even though the participation of the Mexican squadron in the war was relatively small from the military point of view, from the moral and political points of view, and as a factor in our relationships, it was most important and significant; and the demonstrations held in Mexico City on the return of the squadron and its reception by the population and the President have brought this out. Second, the visit of such a demonstration unit will give to the President and high military officials of Mexico the opportunity of seeing the types of planes used by our Army Air Force in combat during the war and create the desirable basis for collaboration of the Mexican Air Force with ours in the peace + something which from the

military/

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military and political point of view is most desirable in both countries.

I mentioned this matter to Mr. Braden and to Mr. Wright, who saw no objection to such a visit.

I left the matter with General Arnold in Washington that on my return to Mexico City I would immediately take up such a visit with the President of Mexico, as I felt that the approval of the President was necessary before such a visit should take place, although I had the full confidence that it would be highly welcomed by the President and the high military officials.

You will recall that I came to Mexico City with Colonel Deerwester, of the Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission, and with Colonel Gibson, of the Army Air Forces, who was designated by General Arnold to make the trip in order to see the field on which the display would be held and to determine the landing and display facilities available, and particularly to determine whether it is feasible to bring a B-29 to the Mexico City airport.

Immediately on my arrival on November 22, I called on the Minister of National Defense, General Urquiza, accompanied by Colonel Deerwester. I explained to him the purpose of my visit. General Guzmán Cárdenas, the Military Attaché at the Mexican Embassy at Washington, at my request was present during the conversation. I had mentioned this matter to General Guzmán Cárdenas in an informal and unofficial way in Washington. As soon as I raised the question of the visit of a demonstration unit and indicated that I should like to discuss it with the President, as well as with the Minister, the Minister stated that he and General Guzmán Cárdenas had been with the President the day before, and he had expressed great pleasure that such a visit of a demonstration unit was contemplated and had indicated that if on my return I raised this matter with him officially, his answer would be "yes". I explained to General Urquiza, the Minister, what we had in mind, and he said that the visit would be most acceptable. I said that under the circumstances I did not deem it necessary to take it up with the President, and the Minister said that now that I had taken up the matter officially he could already inform me

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that it would not be necessary to take up the matter further with the President, as the President had already indicated his agreement. The Minister said that he would see the President the following morning and state to him that the formal approach had been made and that the approval of the President and of the Mexican Government had been given. He said that I could convey this information to the Department and to General Arnold by telegram immediately.

I should like to add that the attitude of the Minister of National Defense and of General Guzmán Cárdenas was most receptive and, in fact, really enthusiastic. They said that this visit of a demonstration unit of our Air Force would be most acceptable and interesting following the demonstrations on the return of the Mexican squadron. I knew that such a visit would be acceptable, but I was somewhat surprised at the very real warmth and, I may say, even enthusiasm with which the suggestion was received. It is a very interesting and satisfying expression of the collaboration which exists between our two countries in the defense as well as in other fields.

Colonel Gibson, who is a very responsible officer of the Army Air Force and who had charge of some of the B-29 operations against Japan, and who is now stationed in the Pentagon, is now making appropriate investigations of the air field, particularly from the point of view of determining whether it will be safe and feasible for B-29's to land on the Mexico City airport. The B-29, as you know, is the heaviest of our military planes; and the question as to whether the facilities of the airport in Mexico City are adequate for the safe landing and departure of such a plane, has to be carefully investigated, as it would be very undesirable to have a mishap. Colonel Gibson is going into this and will make his report to General Arnold on his return to Washington on Monday, November 26. What his decision will be, I am not able to foresee. I have taken the liberty of saying that in my opinion, while it would be very fine to have some B-29's in the demonstration unit, as this was the type of ship that the Mexican squadron helped to protect, it would be better for B-29's not to come if there is any doubt as to the probability of their safe landings and departure. It would, of course, not be desirable to have any mishap. I am sure that the Army Air Force is keeping this fully in mind, and it is for this reason that

Colonel/

Colonel Gibson, who is expert in these matters, has been sent here to go into this matter.

The composition of the demonstration unit, that is the number of planes and types which will be included therein, will be determined on the return of Colonel Gibson to Washington. It is, of course, desirable that one or more of the various types of combat planes in which the Mexicans are particularly interested, should be included in the unit.

Appropriate publicity will have to be given some time before the arrival of the unit in Mexico City, and I assume that the Army Air Force will wish to give some publicity at home, if only for the purpose of assuring that there will be no misunderstanding of the visit of the demonstration unit. I shall endeavor to prepare something which could be used here by us and the Mexicans as the basis of the publicity for the visit, and I shall endeavor to give to Colonel Gibson and Colonel Deerwester before they leave a copy of such proposed publicity to be released in due course. This would of course have to be done some days before the actual arrival of the ships.

The ships are to remain here four days. They would arrive here on a Thursday, and that will give time for the ships to be appropriately disposed for display at the airport during the remainder of that day. On Friday, the President and the highest military officials and cabinet members would have the opportunity of visiting the ships. On Saturday a more considerable number of Army officers and Mexican officials could be given the opportunity to visit the ships. On Sunday the demonstration unit would be open to the public, and appropriate arrangements, of course, would be made through the stationing of Mexican military guards, etc. to control the visit. High Mexican officials, of course, could visit the interior of the ships. Others could only view them from the exterior, but appropriate arrangements would be made so that they would have a real view of the ships - in the case of some by building ramps over the wings so that they can see the inside from the ramp.

I think this visit will serve a very desirable purpose. I shall keep you informed of any details as they develop. Colonel Deerwester and Colonel Gibson will be able to give

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you any further details in which you may be interested when they return to Washington, which is planned for November 26.

I am sending you herewith a copy of the preliminary telegram which I have sent through the Department today for General Arnold.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and sincerely yours,

George S. Messersmith

Enclosure:  
Copy of telegram of  
November 24, 1945.

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In duplicate.