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Mexico, D. F.,

December 26, 1945

AIR MAIL - MAXIMUM PRIORITY

No. 27,793

Subject: With Further Reference to Lombardo Toledano's Statement that "Imperialistic Firms in the United States are Smuggling Arms to Sinarquists in Mexico"

SECRET

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to this Embassy's despatch No. 27,785 of December 24, 1945, entitled "Lombardo Toledano's Accusation that Imperialistic Firms in the United States are Smuggling Arms to Mexican Sinarquistas", and to the series of despatches which I have been addressing to the Department with regard to this matter. With the despatch No. 27,785 of December 24, 1945, under specific reference there was transmitted to the Department a translation of the statement which Lombardo Toledano made and which appeared in the Mexico City press of December 22, 1945, and December 23, 1945. I quote for ready reference the first paragraph of this statement.

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"It is not true that I have thought of retiring from politics. The rumor published today is nothing more than the good intentions of my enemies. Furthermore, the repercussions of my speech of last Sunday I consider as one of the greatest personal successes I have achieved in my life, since the categorical declaration of the United States definitely puts an end to the propaganda made by Padilla in the sense that he counts upon the support of the United States Government in order to be elected President of Mexico."

After careful consideration of the above-mentioned statement by Lombardo Toledano, this Embassy is of the impression that in some respects it is more objectionable if not as serious as the statement which he previously made and concerning which I spoke to the Foreign Office under instructions of the Department. It will be noted that in this statement Lombardo says that he considers the repercussions of his speech as one of the greatest personal successes he has achieved in his life. This is characteristic of Lombardo Toledano's utter irresponsibility and unscrupulousness. He knows that the Mexican public knows that he has nothing on which to base the charge that imperialistic interests in the United States are furnishing arms to Mexican Sinarquists to foment revolution. He knows that there is no basis to the statement which he made that we are aiding the partisans of Licenciado Padilla in his campaign for the Presidency. Yet, openly and in the press, he vaunts himself that through what the Mexican knows to be an utterly unfounded statement and a deliberate unfounded statement he has achieved what he calls "one of the greatest personal successes" of his life. He says that he considers this such a personal success "since the categorical declaration of the United States definitely puts an end to the propaganda made by Padilla in the sense that he counts upon the support of the United States Government in order to be elected President of Mexico". There is, of course, no such statement of ours on which Lombardo could tie anything like the foregoing. It is another deliberate perversion.

After carefully considering this matter and realizing the difficult position in which the Mexican Government is because of the support which so many members of the government are giving to a candidate who is receiving the full support of Lombardo Toledano and in view of the fact that the political situation in Mexico is not presently a happy one, I thought it desirable to mention this further statement of Lombardo Toledano to the Foreign Minister in a purely personal and unofficial way.

I called on the Foreign Minister and found that he was still confined to his home with illness and I saw the Under Secretary, Dr. Tello. I said to Dr. Tello that I

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wished to refer to this second statement of Lombardo and particularly the first paragraph above-quoted in a purely personal and altogether unofficial and off-the-record manner. I said that I wished it to be fully understood that I was not speaking on behalf of my Government or for my Government but that I thought I would be lacking in that frankness and that collaboration which has characterized our relations with the Mexican Government and the Foreign Office if I did not convey to him and through him to the Minister certain purely personal observations which I thought would be of interest to him. The Under Secretary said that he fully understood and that I could talk unofficially and off the record.

I then went on to say that this second statement of Lombardo in some respects caused me as much concern as the first. I said that in some respects this second statement was even more irresponsible and more objectionable if not quite as serious as the first. In the first statement he had made a very grave charge which implied that our Government was permitting the movement clandestinely of arms from the United States to Mexico to foment revolution. I said that he was familiar with the inquiries which my Government had made through me with respect to that statement. We had been forced to do this by the altogether irresponsible action of Lombardo although we would much have preferred not to take any note of him and his statements.

I said that this second statement was even more irresponsible in that Lombardo knew that he had no basis for these charges with respect to arms shipments and he must know that the Mexican public knew that there was no basis. Yet he was vaunting himself in this second statement for having made an altogether unfounded statement because he said it had brought about a categorical declaration of our Government putting an end to the propaganda made by Padilla in the sense that he, Padilla, counted upon our support in the presidential election in Mexico. I said there was no statement which had been made by our Government in connection with Lombardo's arms statement or any other statement which would justify Lombardo claiming that anything that he had said or done had provoked a statement of our Government with respect to the electoral situation in Mexico. I said that I had been endeavoring to search my mind to find what possible basis there could have been for such a statement by Lombardo and I could find none. I said that Lombardo's statement was the purest sort of fabrication and invention.

I said that I realized that in all countries there were people who made irresponsible statements and that there were people who tried to speak for the government

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who had no authority to speak for it. I said that if Lombardo wanted to pretend to speak for the Mexican Government which from time to time he tried to do that was a matter for the Mexican Government to deal with. I said, however, that when Lombardo tried to speak for the Government of the United States as he was trying to do in this statement under reference he was doing something of which my Government might in the end have to take notice. I said that it was a pretension beyond measure for what he was endeavoring to say was that he had forced our Government, by a false statement of ~~his~~ ^{his} to make a statement which we have never made.

I said that I thought most people who read the papers did not do so with discrimination and that such a statement by Lombardo published so widely in the Mexican press was bound to give misapprehension and wrong impressions as to what we had done or as to our attitudes.

I went on to say that we had been very careful to refrain from intervening in this internal electoral situation. I said that Lombardo was constantly charging that we were favoring Padilla which was entirely without basis and that as my Government had said nothing of the most indirect character in this sense. I said that on the contrary Lombardo was endeavoring to make it appear that we were against Padilla and favored Aleman which was just as objectionable to us as saying that we were favoring Padilla. I said that when the irresponsible activities of an individual went to the degree that those of Lombardo did the point might be reached when our Government would have to make a statement of a very definite character and which we would prefer not to make. I said that we were refraining from any intervention of the most indirect character in this Mexican electoral situation but that constantly Lombardo and certain others were endeavoring to draw us into this picture.

I said that in view of Lombardo's connections in other countries of the American Republics these irresponsible statements of his might have repercussions of which we would eventually have to take note. I said that I hoped that we would be able to continue to refrain from making any definite statement but that I thought it was only fair to him to let him know the lines along which I was thinking and the way I was appraising the situation as these thoughts would naturally form the basis of observations which I would make to my Government for its background.

I repeated to Dr. Tello that I was talking entirely on my own initiative, entirely in my personal capacity, and not in the name of my Government or of the Department. What I said was off the record and purely for his background and that of the Minister but that I had no objection to his passing on these personal observations to the Minister.

Dr. Tello

Dr. Tello listened with much interest to what I said and said that he appreciated my giving him this comment. He said that he realized the concern which such irresponsible statements must be to my Government. He said he was also speaking off the record. He said that he would tell what I had just communicated to him as my personal observations to the Minister.

In having the above purely personal conversation with the Under Secretary, Dr. Tello, I felt that I was doing him and the Minister a good service. The Mexican Government is in a very difficult position. A good part of the Mexican Government officials are supporting the candidacy of Licenciado Alemán. Lombardo Toledano is one of the principal supporters of Licenciado Alemán. The Government knows that the statements by Lombardo with respect to the United States and arms, et cetera, are without any foundation whatever but it is in a very difficult position in not saying as definitely what it would like to say and what it knows it should say.

The Department will appreciate that the statement made by the Mexican Government to us to the effect that it did not in any way associate itself with or support the statements made by Lombardo Toledano regarding arms shipments was already a very definite step, and a difficult one under the circumstances, for the Mexican Government to make. It continues to be very much embarrassed by these statements of Lombardo but at the same time not in the position to definitely repudiate him as it should. Lombardo is counting on this and considers his position so strong with Mexican Government officials that he can count upon their continuing to treat him with leniency.

I have wanted to bring these observations to the attention of the Department with reference to this second statement of Lombardo as I do consider it in some ways even more objectionable than his first statement. Lombardo has said that he has presented proofs to the Mexican Government concerning arms shipments. Of course, he has not presented any real proofs to the Mexican Government because he has none. One of the purposes of my informal conversation with the Under Secretary was to forestall any possibility of anything except a most categorical report by the Mexican Government that there is no foundation to such statements with respect to arms shipments. It is necessary under the circumstances that the Mexican Government make a very clear and categorical statement to the effect that it has no proof with regard to such shipments to which Lombardo referred, for no such proof exists.

I believe that such a categorical statement of the Mexican Government will be forthcoming. I would suggest that we refrain from any further comment until the Mexican Government has made its statement with regard to the investigation which it is carrying forward. When such

statement

statement is made, and I believe it will be made in satisfactory form, then I think we may consider making a statement of our own account in which we make some reference to such irresponsible statements as those made by Lombardo in his first and in his second statement. I do not think it will be necessary to name him in connection with such a statement which we make. While I think in our own interest and in the interest of the position in all of these American Republics as well as in the interest of the situation in Mexico, it may be desirable and in the near future to make a statement in which we make it clear that such arms shipments have not and cannot and will not take place of the character as has been charged to foment revolution, et cetera, and also a statement to the effect that when the United States has any statement to make with respect to policy it is made by the responsible officers of our Government in Washington and that no one in other countries is authorized to make any statements in our behalf or with respect to our attitudes. At that time too we may consider a brief statement to the effect that we do not intervene in elections in other countries but that we are interested just as all democratic countries are interested in seeing that the people, whenever elections are held under the laws of the country, have a right to express their will freely and without molestation and to see their will carried into effect.

This despatch is purely for background purposes and if I consider that a statement by our Government may be desirable I will not fail to appropriately inform the Department. I can see where the irresponsible activities of Lombardo may continue to such a measure that it may become necessary for us to make a statement such as we would prefer not to. The man is of such an irresponsible character that unless he is stopped in his tracks in the most definite manner he will take this as an invitation to further license and further irresponsibility. That the Mexican Government can be counted upon under present circumstances to exercise the full restraining influence on Lombardo Toledano that it should exercise, even though he is not an officer of the Government, is more than I believe can be expected in the present state of affairs in this country. This does not mean, I believe, that we can permit Lombardo to set himself up as a self-appointed spokesman for our Government and Department of State and for our people.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith

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To the Department in quintuplicate