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Mexico, D. F., February 8, 1945.

Secret

Dear Avra:

With reference to the matter of El Salvador, I wish to give you the following. I will write this letter instead of making a record of the conversation with Cochran this afternoon.

Cochran called me this morning with reference to the consultation on the recognition of the Aguirre regime. With my letter of February 8 I sent you a copy of a memorandum covering the conversation which Cochran had with me this morning.

In view of the urgency of the matter, as put to me by Cochran for the Department, I broke in on Dr. Padilla today, although I knew his whole day was occupied with meetings with the Mexican experts on the February conference, and I send you herewith a copy of the memorandum of my conversation with him, which is self-explanatory.

I had just completed dictating this memorandum above referred to, on my return from the conversation with the Minister, and was about to put in a call for Cochran, to give him the substance thereof, when Cochran called me.

Cochran said that Mr. Rockefeller had just seen the Guatemalan Ambassador and the Guatemalan Government was prepared to come to the meeting, but was not prepared to recognize the Aguirre regime until March 1. The Ambassador had said to Mr. Rockefeller that it would, of course, be easier for Guatemala if the

recognition

The Honorable
Avra Warren,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

recognition did not come until March 1, but that Guatemala would be prepared to come to the meeting from the beginning, even though the Salvadorian regime was recognized before the meeting started.

At this point in the conversation, I conveyed to Cochran the substance of my conversation with Dr. Padilla. Cochran went on to say that he did not see how the question of recognition was involved with that of the meeting. I emphasized to him that Dr. Padilla was not confusing the two matters, but that he had to recognize that an even worse situation would be created by bringing El Salvador to the meeting and having Guatemala abstain, and perhaps Costa Rica, which was not showing itself happy. I said to Cochran that the Minister had been very definite that in view of his responsibilities in connection with the meeting, he could not risk taking any action which would mean Guatemala staying away from the meeting. I repeated that the Minister said that if we could give him assurances that Guatemala and Costa Rica would be at the meeting from the beginning thereof, that Mexico was prepared to go along with recognition. If there was recognition on a basis of majority action, without this assurance that Guatemala would be at the meeting, he could not invite the Salvadorian Government to come to the meeting.

Cochran indicated that he did not understand this attitude of the Minister and that it seemed to him that the Minister was mixing up two different matters. Without going into any further detail concerning the conversation I made it clear to Cochran that I was sure that Mexico could not and would not proceed in any other manner. At this point Cochran said he would interrupt the conversation and discuss the matter with you and with Mr. Rockefeller. He returned to the telephone after some moments and said that he had discussed the matter with you, and I think he said you had discussed it with Mr. Rockefeller, and that he was authorized to say to me that I could say to the Minister that "both Guatemala and Costa Rica would be at the meeting from the outset".

I said to Cochran that as this was the assurance which the Minister wanted, I would convey it to him and in view of my conversation with the Minister this afternoon, that on the basis of this assurance from us that both Guatemala and Costa Rica would be at the meeting

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from the outset, the Minister would be prepared to go ahead with recognition on February 15--that is, according to the Mexican procedure, having their Ambassador return and establish contact with the Aguirre regime.

I am hoping that we are right about this. My own feeling is that we are raising difficulties for ourselves. We have weakened our general position. We may be right so far as our recognition policy is concerned, but you can't explain the intricacies of recognition policy, etc., to even as intelligent a people as our own at home and it certainly can't be explained to a lot of people in others of the American Republics. We have opened ourselves to attack in the press, and I think, all around, and we have made ourselves vulnerable to certain people who would like to make us trouble in this meeting, and we have certainly weakened our case with respect to to the Argentine.

I have been a good soldier, and I have delivered the messages which I have been asked to convey, and it is seldom that I am not in accord with our policy, but I had to make it clear what my own thoughts were, as I believe it is the duty of a responsible Chief of Mission to do that.

to the Dept.

Just as a matter of interest, I told Cochran during the first part of our conversation this afternoon, that during my bi-weekly meeting with the American correspondents in Mexico today, some sixteen of them, they had asked me a lot of questions about El Salvador which of course I could not answer. I said it was interesting however that not one of these seemed to think that there was any possibility or even any thought of our recognizing the Aguirre regime. Their interest was directed as to whether, when the new President took office on March 1, El Salvador would be recognized and get into the meeting for the last days. I told Cochran that I thought this was probably characteristic of reactions which we would get in the press at home, which would not be helpful. Cochran said that the Department was aware of this situation.

In view of Cochran's statement over the telephone that we "would deliver both countries at the meeting" I can give Padilla the assurance that Guatemala and Costa Rica will be at the meeting from the outset, and in view of what he has already said to me, this

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means that Mexico will be ready to go along.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and sincerely yours,

GSM/eer

G.S. Messersmith

Enclosure as stated.

P.S. Please note that in the memorandum submitted with my letter to you of February 8, covering the conversation with Cochran at 9:00 a.m. that day, that the word "action" in the last paragraph on page one should be "caution".

GSM