

AIR MAIL

1582

SECRET

México, D.F., México,
February 25, 1944.

Dear Larry:

I have to refer to my secret letter of February 17 in which I covered my conversations in Washington, and here with the President and Foreign Minister, with regard to Mexican participation at the combat front and with particular reference to the possibility of an air squadron participating at the combat front. I also have to refer to your strictly confidential telegram of February 19th stating that you would like me to telegraph you the outcome of my conversations which I may have had with the authorities here on this matter. I also have to refer to my letter of February 19 in acknowledgment of this telegram and stating that I had given you all pertinent information on this matter up to the moment in my secret letter of February 17.

This morning the Military Attaché, General Harris came in to see me and showed me a secret telegram which he had received from General Arnold, which was a message from General Arnold to me. In this telegram, General Arnold, through General Vandenberg, inquired regarding the status of my conversations as ~~was~~ no information had been received.

I asked the Military Attaché to send a secret telegram to General Vandenberg, who is the Executive Officer for General Arnold, & that he could say to General Arnold that I have discussed the matter of a squadron with the President and the Foreign Minister, but that up to this time I have not had any reply from them and that I will keep General Arnold informed of any developments. I asked the Military Attaché to say in the same telegram that in the meantime we would have to await word from the President here before making any plans.

As I

Laurence Duggan, Esquire,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

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As I have said in my letters under reference, there is no way in which we can hurry this matter concerning the desires of the President of Mexico and the Foreign Minister, and concerning the attitude of many of the Generals in the Army there is no doubt whatever. I indicated that unquestionably President Avila Camacho would have to consult with General Cardenas before he would give an answer, first, because General Cardenas is Minister of National Defense, and second, because the attitude of General Cardenas has not been favorable to such participation up to now and the President would have to win him over, even to such limited participation as a squadron.

Although I have seen the President a number of times since my conversation reported in my secret letter of February 17, and have seen Dr. Padilla almost daily, they have made no reference to this matter, which is an indication that the President has not yet had an opportunity to discuss the matter with General Cardenas. General Cardenas is out of the city somewhere in the north of Mexico on an inspection trip of Mexican armed forces.

As I have tried to make clear in my letters, there is no use, and it would be inopportune and improper for us to make any pressures with respect to this matter, as we must leave it entirely to the Mexicans so far as the next step is concerned. You may be sure, and so inform General Arnold, that I have this matter in my mind every day and that I shall do all the necessary that I properly can at the opportune moment, but that the circumstances are such that I cannot press this matter.

If you have not furnished a copy of my long secret letter of February 17 to General Arnold, I think it advisable that he be furnished a copy.

I shall not fail to keep you and General Arnold informed of any developments in this matter.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH