

Habana, Cuba, May 25, 1940.

Personal and Confidential.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

While I was home Sumner Welles discussed with me various matters in connection with alien controls which might become necessary and also the question of the transfer of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice. He took up these matters with me in view of my intimate connection with these problems during the three years I was in the Department and because for some time I had, at the President's request, and yours, coordinated the activities of the various Departments and agencies of our Government in espionage and sabotage controls.

I understand that the Congress is already acting rapidly on a transfer of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to the Department of Justice. I think this is absolutely necessary if we are to get proper administration of these matters even in ordinary times, and it is imperative in times like these. Sumner asked me to prepare a memorandum on the question of alien controls on the basis of my observations and experience with the situation which presents itself and of the machinery available. I prepared a memorandum which I sent him by air mail the other day with an accompanying letter dated May 22nd of which I send you herewith a copy.

I do not think that you will wish or find it necessary to read this long memorandum. I only wish to say here that I would like you to know that this memorandum represents my considered views on this

matter

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

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matter and that in spite of the fact that some of the recommendations made therein seem far-reaching I believe that it is imperative in the public interest that we proceed with these alien controls without delay and in a resolute and perhaps in some cases even a ruthless manner. I do hope, however, that you will have time to read the appended copy of a letter to Sumner dated May 22nd which I believe you will find of certain interest.

We are faced by very real problems, more real than even the most of our awakened population at home realize and there are in my opinion certain steps in the public interest which we must take without delay, for every day counts.

I appreciate very much the opportunity which I had of seeing you last week. I want to be of service in any way that I can and if there is anything I can do here I am sure you will let me know.

I will shortly be writing you with regard to certain developments here in relation to their connection with our problem in this hemisphere as a whole. In the meantime, with very good wishes to you and Mrs. Hull, in which my wife joins,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith.

Enclosure:

Copy of letter dated May 22,  
Copy of memorandum dated May 22.