

DEERWESTER, Col. Chas. H.

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Pawley  
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Buenos Aires, April 2, 1947

My dear Colonel Deerwester:

Your letter of March 17 with its enclosure from the Congressional Record has just reached me. I am deeply interested in the information which you give me.

I think you know that Pawley, our Ambassador to Brazil, sees these hemisphere problems very clearly and has as full an understanding as any Chief of Mission in the field. He is a very sound and considered man. I understand that he is in Washington but will shortly be returning to Rio. I do not know what the purpose of his trip is; but one thing can be taken for granted, and that is that he will express his views always frankly and soundly as it is the duty of a Chief of Mission to do.

In view of the developments in the world situation which have gone so fast, and even faster than some thought, the question of hemisphere defense has become more imperative now, although it has always been important. Any hemisphere defense arrangements without the Argentine would be incomplete and inadequate even if all the other countries of the hemisphere were included. The Argentine simply has to be in if our defense in this hemisphere is to be secure and if the support of the American republics and their common action was ever important to us, it has become imperative now. Our Joint Chiefs of Staff have seen this for a long time, and some of us in the diplomatic end have seen it. It is incredible to me that there should be any opposition to the defense pact, for there is every reason for it and I cannot find any one valid reason against it. The reasons which have been advanced by certain people will not stand up under any scrutiny. I note with interest that Senator Vandenberg is taking a personal interest in the Cooperation Act as well as investigating the reasons why the opposition have

taken the

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taken the stand they have. I think it will develop some very weak reasons and attitudes on the part of these opposed to the pact and they would have some difficulty in explaining their position.

So far as the Argentine is concerned, she has really done all that is necessary and more in the matter of enemy property and in the matter of schools and institutions. She has really done more in this respect than any other country of the hemisphere except ourselves and Canada. So far as aliens are concerned, with what she has done and is in process of doing, she will have done a more effective job than any of the other American republics.

The time will soon come when we have to reach a decision for a point of frustration has been reached on the part of the Argentines as well as in the other American republics who simply cannot understand the situation. I do not think that anything can be done or will be done until Secretary Marshall comes back, and I have every confidence that he is not only fully understanding of the importance of hemisphere collaboration, of the Rio meeting, and of the defense pact, but also that he will have a very realistic understanding of what the Argentine has done in the way of compliance and realize that it is adequate when he examines the facts.

There will be those who will endeavor to raise other questions now but this cannot be done for it would be interfering in the internal affairs of another country and that we cannot do. Those opposed, however, to the composition of the situation with the Argentine will, I believe, not stop at anything. They have no constructive policy or objective and do not seem to realize that if we do not come to a composition of the situation, hemisphere collaboration will go to pot.

There is much in this connection that I would like to write you, but I think you are very well informed.

The one thing that gives me concern is that recently some very undesirable and unnecessary steps here have been taken to annoy La Prensa, which in a measure has taken a provocative attitude. Certain posters were put up by an information service of the Government attacking La Prensa. There were two of them. Then followed one from the Peronista Party which was equally ill advised.

The President

The President, himself, in an improvised speech before some labor people made a statement that the way to deal with opposition newspapers which were improperly criticizing the Government was not with violence but by not buying them or advertising in them. No one understands better than he the importance of the freedom of the press, and I am sure that he will see that it is maintained as it has been up to now, but these posters and his ill-advised statement made in the heat of an extemporaneous speech have caused an unhappy impression abroad and particularly at home and have given an opportunity to certain people to state that there is not freedom of the press which is not the case for the press here is absolutely free.

An AP dispatch sent on March 16 with regard to action taken by the news venders' union with respect to La Prensa caused our papers at home to carry headlines that President Perón and the Government were endeavoring to destroy La Prensa. The dispatch of the AP was entirely incorrect and they know it, but so far as I know they have done nothing to change it. It is too bad that it is not realized at home that the press here is entirely free. That there should be these feelings with regard to certain parts of the press is quite natural in Latin countries where passions run higher than they do at home, but they have not affected the freedom of the press. This is one factor that has to be made clear at home for if there is one thing that would stand in the way of a composition of the situation with the Argentine, it would be if it were true that the Argentine Government was controlling the press. I have presented the real situation to the Department of State.

I have read with much interest what you say concerning Mr. Schindler, and I am glad you told him that when he comes here he is to come to see me before he does anything. The banker with whom he is traveling is probably Rudolf Hecht, formerly the president of the Hibernia Bank. I make this assumption because I understand Hecht is coming on that boat.

There is no reason why the Argentine Government should not have a press service of its own. We have our information service, and there is no reason why they should not have theirs. We have ours for the definite purpose of presenting our point of view. The Argentine Government has just as much right to have its own point of view presented. There is must as much distortion in the United States in a certain

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part of the press, and unfortunately in a good part of it, of what happens in the Argentine as there is distortion by the Soviet press and radio of our attitude and of the situation in the United States.

I do not believe, however, that the time is opportune for the Argentine Government to engage in such a campaign because it would be misunderstood at this time, and in spite of all that appears in the press at home, I do not believe it is presently necessary. I do not believe that the Argentine Government is presently interested in doing this. The idea has been presented to them on several occasions by people from home, and they have been understanding enough themselves to realize that while it would be useful for them to do something it might be misunderstood at this time.

So far as Mr. Schindler is concerned, I will be glad to see him and to give him the best counsel I can. Even though the Argentine Government realizes the importance of its point of view being properly presented, I do not believe that they will wish to go forward at this time with such a proposal no matter how sound Mr. Schindler's ideas may be.

There is so much that I would like to write you. I am feeling very much better so far as my stomach, et cetera, is concerned, but I had a fall at the country home of a friend last Saturday. I fell down about ten steps and came near to breaking my head, and I did twist myself in such a way that some of the cartilage and covering of several ribs was ruptured and I am all bound up and for three or four days could not speak without great pain. I am feeling much better, but even dictating is still an effort, but in a few more days, I think the worst of it will be over.

I know how deep and abiding and sound your interest has been in this important matter of hemisphere defense in which the Argentine situation plays so important a part, and I am confident that the overwhelming majority of our people at home are understanding of the importance of this situation in spite of the stuff that they have been fed in part of the press. I simply was astounded the other day when I saw that this new group which Mrs. Roosevelt and Leon Henderson and Wyatt are organizing, in their pronouncement spoke of combating "Peronism and Communism". It just shows how little some of these

well-meaning

well-meaning people know and how they are misled, for the essence of Peronism is to fight Communism and the very things in the social field and in the way of social justice that these people are standing for are the things which the present Government of the Argentine is trying to carry through and is carrying through. The world is screwy and cock-eyed these days, and there are some of us who have to keep our heads and keep up the struggle. As to the final outcome, I have no doubt; but at times it seems pretty discouraging to have to struggle against such unnecessary things.

I appreciate more than I can say your keeping me informed, and I hope you will send me what you can for it is helpful here. Please consider this letter as personal; for in view of all that has been said of my writing to all kinds of people by various columnists, I am refraining from writing letters which I would like to write and really should write.

With all good wishes to you and Mrs. Deerwester in which my wife joins,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith

P.S. I do not know whether you are familiar with the article by Richard Pattee which appeared in the Reviewer Politics issued by Notre Dame University entitled "The Argentine Question, the War Stage". This is a very unusual document and on the whole very correct. It is seldom that one finds a document of this kind which is throughout so factually correct. I think that it should receive wide circulation throughout the United States and particularly to newspaper editors because it would give them the background that they need on the Argentine situation up to 1944. I hope Pattee will write another bringing it up to date as he is qualified to do it.

The only misstatements which I find in the whole of this pamphlet are the following. On the last page in

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line 7, I would find objection to the use of the word "possible". Pattee's statement is that Argentina found it possible between the years 1939 and 1943 to curtail substantially her imports of manufactured products and he uses certain statements which he quotes in this report to prove that Argentina made great strides in self-sufficiency during the war. The word that he should have used was "necessary" and not "possible". The fact that Argentine imports of iron products dropped from 693,000 to 76,000 tons and that imports of rubber goods dropped from 14,000 to 1,000 tons does not mean that Argentina did not and does not need much greater imports of iron and rubber but it simply means that it was all that she was able to get in 1943. It is certainly true that Argentine industrial activity became much more important during the war and that Argentina did a surprisingly good job of getting along without a great many imports but it is not true that the Argentine is as self-sufficient now as Pattee's statement would indicate and she, I think, is not striving for self-sufficiency, for nobody knows better how unwise that is than President Perón, but she does want to produce more of the things she needs which is entirely proper and desirable.

The second comment which I would make on Pattee's article is that during the first part he deals in some detail with the acts of the Argentine Government during the early period of the war, and I think he stresses some of the things a little bit too much. I think it would have been better to keep to an entirely factual presentation of what the Argentine did and not go quite so far in defending the Castillo government.

These, however, are secondary things, for the pamphlet as a whole is really an extraordinarily helpful document and the wider circulation it gets in the United States, the better it would be. It would be particularly important to give it to every newspaper editor, and I wish that it could be done in some way. If you have not seen the pamphlet of Pattee, you will wish to get it, and I am sure that you and some of your associates will be tremendously interested in it and see the use which could be made of it most effectively.

G. S. M.