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México, D.F.,  
November 23, 1944.

No. 21,560

SUBJECT: Transmitting Copy of Secret Letter Left with  
the Minister of Foreign Relations, Dr. Padilla,  
Setting Forth the Latest Attitude of our  
Government on the Argentine Situation.

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

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of November 18, 10 p.m., setting forth the latest position of our Government with respect to the Argentine situation and instructing me to bring the considerations in this telegram to the attention of the Foreign Minister at the earliest possible moment. In view of the fact that the Minister, Dr. Padilla, is absent in the north of Mexico on official business for some days, and in view of the importance of this matter, and the desirability of this information getting to him in the most complete form possible, I decided to write a letter to the Minister, incorporating the substance of the Department's attitude so that the Under Secretary, Dr. Tello, could transmit it to the Minister.

I therefore prepared a secret letter dated November 20, to the Minister, of which a copy is enclosed herewith (Enclosure No. 1) and which I left with the Under Secretary, Dr. Tello, that evening with the request that it be forwarded by such means as he had to the Minister. After reading the letter Dr. Tello said that he thought it most important and interesting and he would take the appropriate measures to get this letter, which I had so thoughtfully prepared, into the hands of the Minister at the earliest possible moment.

Although my instructions were on the basis of the telegram under reference to make an oral presentation to the Minister, I deemed it desirable in view of the temporary absence of the Minister, and in view of the importance of the substance of the telegram, and the necessity, in my opinion, of the substance thereof getting to the Minister in the clearest and most definite form, to write this letter to him so that there would be no question that the attitude of our Government in every respect, as it had been set forth, would be known to him.

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In a secret letter I addressed to Mr. Armour, dated November 21, I have already brought to his attention the foregoing action which I took with respect to the Department's telegram of November 18, 10 p.m. I may reiterate in this despatch what I said in my secret letter of November 21 to Mr. Armour, that I consider the Department's telegram under reference a most helpful one. It will be most effective to have this clear, unequivocal and, in my opinion, entirely sound and desirable presentation of our views made to our Chiefs of Mission and to the Foreign Ministers of the other American Republics. It will undoubtedly also get to the Argentine regime through indiscretions which we know are taking place and cannot avoid on the part of at least one or more foreign offices to the south. As I have already indicated to the Department, however, while such indiscretions are undesirable and often dangerous, in this case I think it will serve a useful purpose for the Argentine regime to know in what unequivocal, clear and strong terms we have made known our attitude.

In view of the fact that I have not seen the Minister himself, I cannot give any indication up to the present of his reaction.

I should say that when Dr. Tello, the Under Secretary, read this letter, hereto appended, he called my attention to the third paragraph on page 2, in which it is stated that the Mexican Government has further emphasized in its memoranda that the situation in the Argentine with which we are confronted has been created by those men who are actually in power in that country. Dr. Tello called my attention to the fact that the Mexican Government had not said that the men presently in the Argentine had created this situation. He said that they had used the word "actores" - that is, actors. Dr. Tello said it was in a way a secondary matter for while these men now in power in the Argentine had not created the situation with which we were confronted in the Argentine, as it had been created by previous regimes, they were very definitely the present "actors" in this tragedy and were responsible for pressing forward this situation to its present extremely serious degree.

I am mentioning this matter because I think I may be responsible for the use by the Department in its telegram of November 18, 10 p.m. of the language which has been used and which is to the effect that the men in the present Argentine regime have "created" the problems with which we have to deal. As a matter of fact, the word used by the Mexican Foreign Minister in his memorandum is "actores" - that is, those who are playing the role in the present government, which is carrying forward these ideas but not necessarily those who created the situation.

I wish to make this clarifying statement in view of the remarks which Dr. Tello made to me when I delivered this letter to him.

Respectfully yours,

G. S. Messersmith

Enclosure:

As stated

To Department in quintuplicate

GSM:NA