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Buenos Aires, Argentina
April 25, 1947

Dear Dean:

I am supplementing my secret letters to you of April 3 and 11 and 18 and my telegram No. 412 of April 15, 11:00 A.M., all with reference to the Department's secret telegram No. 252 of April 2, 6:00 P.M. informing me of the conversation which President Truman and you and Senators Vandenberg and Connally had with Ambassador Ivanissevich on March 31. In the three letters above mentioned I have given the appropriate comment and information on developments since I received the telegram No. 252 of April 2, 6:00 P.M.

Last evening I had a long talk with the Foreign Minister on a number of matters. The Minister said that Ivanissevich was leaving here on May 3 for Washington. The President had asked him to remain for the opening of Congress on May 1. He said that Ivanissevich would carry a message from President Perón to President Truman and would, of course, get in touch with you on arrival. He said that the message had not yet been conveyed to Ivanissevich but that it would be along the following line:

Ivanissevich would be instructed to inform President Truman on behalf of President Perón that the Argentine Government and the President appreciated the friendly and understanding gesture which President Truman had made. The President was appreciative that the President and you were understanding of the fact that the Argentine in the matter of schools and institutions and propaganda, and in the matter of property had carried through its obligations under the Acts of Mexico City and

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The Honorable
Dean Acheson,
Acting Secretary of State,
Washington.

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was doing so in the matter of enemy aliens. The Ambassador was to say to President Truman that the Argentine Government and President Perón had the same interest in getting rid of certain German and other aliens who had engaged in improper activities as we did and the Argentine Government had spared and would spare no effort to get rid of them. Before the last decree, which listed 52, they had already sent out a good many people and this list of 52 represented the only ones remaining against whom adequate information was available. Of these 13 had already been deported to Germany. Others were under detention and would shortly be sent out. A ship was already being held ready to send them out and was being held to try to get on it as many as they could get. After having deported this lot the Argentine Government would not lessen its efforts to get the remaining of these people who were in the Argentine.

The President was very anxious to bring about a complete normalization of the relations between the two countries for he considered this so fundamental in the interests of both countries and to enable them to work together in the times in which we live. He hoped, therefore, that the good faith of the Argentine Government in the fulfilling of its obligations would be recognized by us and a complete normalization of relations follow without awaiting the departure of all these persons whom the Argentine might not have been able yet to get but which it was obligated to get and would make every effort to do, as it had been.

The Foreign Minister went on to say that they were doing everything they could as they had been doing. He said that the President and he appreciated the message of President Truman, and particularly its understanding character and the good will it showed. He knew that I had made it clear to the President and to our Government what good will and good faith there were on the part of the Argentine.

He then

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He then went on to speak about the times in which we live and the importance of collaboration among the American states and the new orientation of Argentine policy into the American picture.

The Minister said that before the departure of Ambassador Ivanissevich we would talk about this matter again and he would give me further concrete information and that of course the President and he would see Ivanissevich before he left for Washington.

I was very glad to have your telegram No. 322 of April 23, 11:00 A.M. referring to my despatch No. 2119 of March 31 and my letter of April 3. When this telegram was sent you had not yet had my letters of April 11 and 18.

I particularly appreciate the comment which you give me that the Department considers that the issuance of a statement by the Argentine Government would prejudice the chances of a satisfactory solution of the problem by freezing the Argentine position and bringing about press debate at home. I think I made it clear in my despatch No. 2119 and in my letter of April 3 that I did not mean to say that the Argentine was going to issue such a statement but that I felt it was possible it might do so.

Last evening during the conversation with the Foreign Minister I asked him if they had in mind any kind of a statement, without, of course, referring to your telegram. The Minister said that of course they were not making any statement with regard to the message which President Truman had sent to President Perón as they realized this conversation was off-the-record. He said they were not considering any other kind of a statement but that when they sent out the next lot, he would of course have to make a factual statement as to the number sent out on this ship which is to go. He said that in this statement he would simply refer to the decree listing 52 and state that this represented those remaining against whom the Argentine Government had information of an adequate character concerning acts against the state or the United Nations; that as was known, they had sent out 13 of these who were already in Germany; they were now sending out on this ship a specific number whom they had been able to locate and arrest and therefore deport; that the Argentine Government was continuing its efforts and would continue to

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make efforts to find the remainder of these people. He said he would say this and nothing more. I said I was very glad to hear this as I felt it would be better not to make any statement beyond that. He said he thoroughly agreed and had no intention of making any statement beyond that.

I think you will agree that when this next lot is deported he will have to make a purely factual statement such as the one above referred to.

I have recently ^{a few} been giving a great deal of attention to the actual information which we have concerning these people in the list of 52. When this last deportation list of 52 was issued by the Argentine Government, the British and ourselves went over all of our lists of names of persons against whom we had any information and the British and we were in agreement that this list of 52 in the last deportation decree covered every one on whom the Argentine Government could be expected to take action. As a matter of fact, we were of the opinion that some of the people on this list were relatively so unimportant that we were surprised that the Argentine included them in the list. We felt that the fact they did so showed they were sending out any one against whom they had any real information.

Of the 52 in the list, 13, as you know, have been deported. Three more are known to be outside of the Argentine; one of them, Fernando BAULENAS, is known to be in Chile and the Argentine Government has informed the Chilean Government of this circumstance and with complete information concerning him. This makes a total of 13 plus 3 which is 16 accounted for, leaving 36. Of these 36, the ones that are really important are Hans HARNISCH, Juan Sigfrido BECKER, Gustavo UTZINGER, and Wilhelm von SEIDLITZ. The newspapers and we have laid more stress on Becker, but as a matter of fact, Harnisch is, in the opinion of the British and ourselves and of the Argentines, more important on the basis of the information available. Harnisch is among those who have been detained and are being held for deportation. Becker they have not yet been able to get, but they are determined to get him. Whether he is in the country still or not, it has not been possible to determine. Whether Utzinger and von Seidlitz are among those they have detained and are awaiting deportation I have not asked.

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Of these remaining 36 the above mentioned four are really important and could be put in the "dangerous" class. They were dangerous in the sense that they were active and capable and could do things when they were free to work, but whether they could be considered as dangerous now is another matter for they are not able to operate for as soon as they would show their heads anywhere in the country they would be arrested. They could not possibly engage in any activity because as soon as they engaged in the slightest activity the Argentine police, who are on the alert, would have this clue to where they were and be able to pick them up.

The remaining 32 cannot be considered as being of very real importance. I have gone into this matter with our people here. I have studied all of the records. While I think we are perfectly right in expressing the desire that these be deported and while I think the Argentine is right in deporting them, it can hardly be said that they are "dangerous" or ever were particularly important. In order that you may have an idea of the information which there is in the possession of the British and ourselves concerning all of the people in the list of 52, I am sending a brief paragraph with regard to each of them herewith and a glance at it will show you that most of them can hardly be called "dangerous" and certainly not under present conditions.

I am mentioning the foregoing because the President, in speaking to Ivanissevich, spoke of these "dangerous" individuals and I thought it would be interesting for you to have this very brief statement concerning these 52 people which I attach to this letter.

Of the 13 of the 52 in the decree who were deported in December, 1946, there were two of the most important in the list. One of them was Alfredo Juan Otto VOLCKERS and the other was Ino E. von ROLLAND who was of less but real importance.

Of the persons who were deported prior to the issuance of the decree covering 52, Ernesto SCHLEUTER and Wilhelm WIELAND were fully as important as anyone in the lists which we submitted to the Argentine Government.

A very important German agent whose deportation had been decreed by the Argentine Government before the list

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of 52 was Friedrich von SCHULZ HAUSMANN. He committed suicide before his deportation could be effected.

I do not know how many the Argentine Government really has at present in custody awaiting deportation. I know that Harnisch, who is perhaps the most important of all, is among them. I have, as I stated in previous letters, not asked for the names of the ones whom they have under detention as the information when it gets out leads to these writs of habeas corpus which have created so much difficulty for the Argentine Government and I do not want to run the risk of its being possible that any information leaks out from this Embassy which would lead to such writs for any of these people when I know what pains and effort the Argentine Government has gone to in order to locate and apprehend them.

I have noted with some concern that the Department has considerable doubt whether the Argentine ascertainment that agents in hiding are actually beyond reach of the Argentine policy is true. I think I should say that any reserves we may have in this connection are not well founded. I think you do not doubt that I would give you the most full and accurate information concerning what the Government is doing here and I hope you do not doubt that I am well informed. I am well informed because I have given to this matter an attention so serious and so complete that I have never in my long career in the Service worked harder on a matter than I have on this. If I felt that the Argentine Government and authorities were not doing everything in their power to get these people, I would be the first to tell you. Being on the spot, I think I should be in the best position to know what the Government is doing here and what not doing. I have had enough experience with problems of this kind to know how difficult it is to find people who are being sought by the authorities or the police. The problem is more difficult in a country like the Argentine than it is in our own, principally because there are so many places in a country like this where people can hid away for long periods in distant and isolated places. I do not discount the possibility that certain people in the Argentine may be shielding some of these people whom the Government is looking for. That is altogether possible. That happens in all countries. I do not believe that anyone in the Government is shielding anyone, and I cannot find any-

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ernment, who has that to say. It is well understood here among people who know that the Government is making this and has been making this great effort to find these people.

With reference to the statement in the telegram that it is pertinent that at the time some approximately 40 dangerous aliens were released they were put under surveillance and that some of them may have escaped because they were warned in advance. This is quite true and the possibility that some of them were warned is a real one. I myself pointed out that the possibility was a real one. As a matter of fact my reports will show, I feel sure, although I do not have time to check before this letter goes out in the pouch this evening, that I reported that the Foreign Minister himself and the President said to me that they feared that some venal police official of a secondary character who had to have cognizance of the search to be made when they organized this large-scale search, may have given information.

I do not think we can permit any such consideration to control us because the Argentine authorities have been very frank about it themselves. They have a situation to deal with just as so many governments have to deal with. Venal officials are found in all of these governments. The most important thing is that so far as the Argentine action connected with these aliens is concerned they have shown good faith and have been completely frank with the British and ourselves, and I think that any examination of the record made objectively and carefully will show that the Argentine has collaborated with us and with this Embassy in this matter of enemy aliens more closely and more effectively than the officials in any one of the other American countries.

You know how closely I followed this matter in Mexico, and we never got very much collaboration from the Mexican Government in this matter of aliens even though the Government was friendly. In Mexico there was actual protection given to some of these aliens by members of the Government to my knowledge, and this is something I cannot say here. I speak about Mexico because I know the situation there, but I am sure, as I said before, if we go into this matter with respect to each of the other Americas, we will find that we have had and are getting more real and effective collaboration from the Government with regard to aliens here than we are getting elsewhere. I am not

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making any plea for the Argentine Government, but I am stating what the facts are and certainly our Government works on the basis of facts.

I think you will be interested in looking over the sheets appended to this letter as you will find them revealing. In my despatches and in my letters on this matter of aliens, I have not spoken of them for the most part as "dangerous." I have consistently spoken of these people as people against whom there is adequate evidence available for the Government to take action against them. Some of them were dangerous during the war. These same people would be dangerous in peace if they were permitted to operate. The greater number of them, however, were never dangerous in the sense that they were leaders. They were for the most part purely instruments and engaged in secondary activities as the sheets will show. I think you will also find it interesting to note at the end of each sheet that the Argentine Government has with regard to all of these people taken action from time to time but has been hampered by the courts.

I have impressed on the President and the Foreign Minister the importance of their getting as many of these people as they can, and I have felt that I was bringing coals to Newcastle for I know what they are doing and that they are not failing to take any possible measure.

I am pleased to note from the Department's telegram No. 322 of April 23 that we expect reasonable and substantial compliance and that good performance on deporting the more important on the list of 52 would do this. I think we can no longer speak about the Argentine giving us words instead of deeds for in the matter of schools and institutions and property it has certainly done a fine job and in the matter of aliens, we cannot speak about words for there is no question about what they have done and are doing.

I shall keep the Department informed of developments.

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith

Enclosure:
List.

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