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December 24, 1950.

SECRET

Dear Ed:

I want to write you at this time very briefly concerning my plans. The day before O'Dwyer asked me to come to the Embassy this week I had received a letter from Brosens, the head of CADE, referring to previous conversations we had had during the last year concerning my making a trip to Buenos Aires in connection with CADE matters, and in which he said he considered it now in every way opportune and desirable that I make a trip to Buenos Aires in the near future, which trip he thought would be useful. I also had the same day I received this letter from Brosens a telephone call from Heineman in New York, also referring to previous conversations, stating that he thought a trip to Buenos Aires would now be opportune and useful. I had to give this serious consideration, as I knew that Brosens would not write me in the way he did unless he considered the circumstances were such, and of course he knows them, that the visit could be useful.

As I have not had any holiday for three years, since I joined Mexlight, and have had really a rather strenuous time, and as the two trips which I took to Europe in the early part of 1949 and this year were in no sense holiday trips, and as my doctor had, during my last trip to New York in September, indicated strongly that I should really take a bit of rest, my wife and I had been seriously considering taking a few months holiday, especially as the circumstances in connection with Mexlight were such that it looked as though I could take such a holiday. I was, however, frankly thinking of making the trip to Buenos Aires, even if I undertook it, in the spring of 1951.

When O'Dwyer showed me your letter, as the best way of communicating your message, I realized that you were asking me to do the one thing which so far as our Government is concerned I would be prepared to consider. I am very much of a realist and I have felt very definitely that even in this great emergency, of which I believe I realize the full significance and implications, there was nothing which I could be asked to do, should I be asked, which someone else, younger and more vigorous, could not do as well or better than I. The one thing which I am able to do as well as anyone, you have asked that I do, and of course there is no decision which I could make except to go.

I am

The Honorable
Edward Miller,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

I am not going to write you at any length because it is obvious that if I undertake to do anything in connection with the matters you have in mind that I talk with you and others in Washington before I leave. There are just a few observations I wish to make for your consideration before I see you.

In the first place, if I undertake to talk with Perón about these important matters and if such talks are to have any effect or value it is important that I go in a purely personal capacity, for if I should go openly for our Government, or should it become known that I will talk about certain matters, such knowledge and publicity would destroy any value which the trip would have. I think I know Perón's mind and his basic attitudes on certain matters and I think I know what he is willing to do if he feels he can do it, but it would be fatal for any such action as we desire that it should be thought that he had been influenced by me or anyone else. For this reason I have given careful consideration to how the trip can be made.

I found, after the conversation with O'Byer, that the S. S. ARGENTINA is sailing on January 10 on a cruise for Buenos Aires. This is really a break. All my close friends here and elsewhere know that I have been planning to take a holiday and they know that I have been considering a trip to Buenos Aires as the best way of getting a real rest through the long sea trip. I have decided that it is better even, for all purposes, that I do not say that I am going on any business of CADE or Sofina. There is ample basis for a purely holiday and rest trip.

I am therefore telling my people in my company here and our friends in Mexico City that my wife and I are making this cruise on the ARGENTINA in order to get the holiday and rest that we have been looking forward to for some time, and that as we have our program of works, which is so important, so well under way in the company and do not look forward to any particular activity requiring my presence here until towards the end of March, when we will have a good deal before us, I am taking this opportunity presented by this cruise to take the holiday and rest I have been looking forward to. I am adding that some of my friends are going on this cruise which is an additional basis for taking a holiday in this way.

I think that the foregoing, which is my story and which has really adequate basis in the real facts, is the one which I must stick to and will stick to. For a number of reasons it is better that I not even mention CADE business, although obviously I will be interested in going into matters concerning the CADE while I am in Buenos Aires. I like to think of myself as a modest person and I believe that I am, but I have many friends in every capital of Latin America and at home. Some of them will speculate as to why I am making this trip. Some of our correspondents and writers

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at home are people whose intelligence and perspicacity I do not underestimate and some of them almost certainly will speculate, perhaps in the press, when they know that I have sailed on this ship for Buenos Aires. In case there is speculation in the press that I may be going for the CADE, that I would prefer not to take place but nothing need be said about it. If there is real speculation in the press that I may be going, even most unofficially, to talk about matters affecting Argentine policy, then the Department will have to say, I believe, that I am not going for our Government and that so far as the Department is aware I am only going on a holiday and rest trip. This I think would be important for the success of the mission from our own point of view and the Argentine.

While there may be such speculation, and even more likely in the Argentine press than our own, when it is known there that I am coming or am there, I think the matter can be handled by such a statement by you or the Department when and if it may become necessary.

The other principal observation which I have to make is that I have had reason to believe during the last few years and until very recently that Perón still has the same confidence as he had while I was in the Argentine in my understanding, judgment, equity and fairness and he does believe that the counsel that I have given him in the past has been in the benefit of his country as well as of mine. I have never heard Perón make an unfriendly remark concerning the United States. I have not heard him make any hypercritical remarks concerning our policies. I have not heard him make unfriendly remarks concerning any American with the exception of Braden and a man named Griffiths, who was a stooge of Braden's and who, to the last of my knowledge, was still living in Uruguay engaged in activities attacking Perón and the Argentine. I am sure that Perón is fundamentally friendly to our country and he wants no truck whatever with Communism or Moscow. It would be completely lacking in realism, however, to think that he is prepared to fall all over himself to help us. He feels that there are many ways in which we could properly have been helpful to the Argentine and to him. It is extremely important to remember that already when I was in the Argentine he was pressing the idea constantly that the United States should take the lead in a movement of the American states in defensive measures against Communism and he was prepared to go along wholeheartedly. For reasons of public opinion or for other reasons, sound or not altogether sound, we brushed this idea of his aside.

I do not know enough of developments in the Argentine during the last year to be able to make an adequate estimate of the situation, but I do know that he has four Ministers in his Cabinet, and I happen to know them, who are making him a great deal of

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trouble in internal and external policy. In internal policy they are making it difficult for him to do what he wants to do and which is in the direction of what we think he should do and what would undoubtedly be in the interest of the Argentine and in the American picture. I know that these same four Ministers are the ones who are making him the principal trouble in doing in the external picture what I believe at heart he wants to do. While I do not know the situation in all its details adequately, as it now is, I am convinced that these most recent statements he has again made about the halfway position between Communism and capitalism have been based in the consideration which he feels he has to give to the attitudes of these particular Ministers.

Perón is considered as a dictator and in some ways he is one. He is not nearly as much of a dictator in fact, nor at heart, as the heads of some of the other American states to whom we do not attach this label in the United States. Whether it be through circumstances for which he is responsible, or for which he is not altogether or in any way responsible, he has a difficult situation to deal with and while the dictatorial front remains, like all Chiefs of State he has strong elements whom he has to consider in reaching his decisions as to what and what not to do. I found in my experience that at times Perón, although conscious of his strength, was fearful to do certain things which he knew were the right thing to do and which he really knew he could do when he was shown how to do it and was given the push in the right direction.

This letter is already getting too long and I do not want to burden you further, but what I did want to bring out is that the issues at stake in the big picture and in the American picture are so grave that we have to face every aspect of the solutions with realism. While I am going in this personal way and while I have reason to believe that Perón will be interested in talking with me and in knowing my views, that is not enough. I want to talk this over with you, but I feel that it would be useless, or at least unproductive, for me to talk to him purely as George Messersmith, in whose knowledge and understanding and judgment he has confidence. He is the President of the Argentine and he has, as you know, very serious problems to deal with. Just as in the case of any other country, if he is to deal with these adequately he has to have certain means at his disposal. I feel that if I am to talk with him there are certain things I will have to be able to say to him with his knowledge that I am speaking for our Government. This can be done in a number of ways. The President can write a personal note to Perón which I can carry, in which he will say that he is availing himself of the opportunity of the trip which I am taking to the Argentine to convey certain things to him, and the Department and

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perhaps other agencies can brief me very definitely as to what I can say and not say. Or, Mallory, who I think is Chargé in Buenos Aires, could be authorized to say to Perón that what I shall say to him I shall be saying with the knowledge and approval of our Government.

It is needless for me to say to you, I feel sure, that I am not seeking nor do I wish any recognition of any kind of what I may try to do or might be able to do. So far as I am concerned, the trip which I am making to Buenos Aires is for the purpose which I will openly say, for rest and recreation. On the other hand, I am too old in experience and I hope in knowledge and understanding to have any illusions as to what one can do on the basis of purely personal approach.

I know that since you are in the post you are you have been endeavoring to implement what should be a constructive, understanding and realistic policy towards our American neighbors. I wish to God that we were able to implement our policy towards these American republics with something of the same understanding and realism that we are using in the last few years in other areas. Until we do this we just cannot expect the wholehearted and full measure of support of these Latin countries. The time has come when, if we want their support, we have to treat those who can really help us and make a contribution realistically and adequately to be in a position to make that contribution. In spite of all the things that we can criticize, and properly so, in the Argentine, it is a great and strong country and can make a very real contribution, not only morally and politically, but materially. If I were the President of the Argentine today, from what I know, I would feel that with the best will in the world there were certain things which I would need to be able to make that contribution. I do not go into detail but the fact remains, talking about money alone, that anything that we would do for the Argentine would be repaid, and that is more than we expect from so many others whom we are helping. I just don't see why we cannot apply some realism and decision and certainly we are in times when realism and decision are imperative for our own security and survival.

I am giving every appearance of leisureliness to my trip, so my wife and I are leaving here by train on Saturday morning, December 30, and will arrive in New York on Tuesday morning, January 2, where we will be staying at the Hotel Carlyle, at 76th & Madison. I will be leaving for Washington on the same evening, staying at the Mayflower, and will be available during the rest of the week to you and others or until the following Monday or Tuesday. The ARGENTINA sails on Wednesday, January 10.

Because

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Because of the confidential character of this letter I am giving it to the Embassy to transmit by the air mail pouch to you. I will be in touch with you on Tuesday, January 2, by phone after my arrival in New York. I look forward very much to seeing you and can only say that within the limitations that are inherent in any individual I am willing to be of such help as I find I can be in this particular matter.

I hope that you and your wife have had a very happy Christmas and that the New Year will be filled with as full a measure of good things as any of us can hope for and expect in the disordered world in which we live.

Cordially and faithfully yours,