

1649

AIR MAIL

CONFIDENTIAL

México, D. F., México,
November 9, 1944.

Dear Norman:

I have to refer to the Department's secret telegram No. 1958 of November 2, 4 p.m.; to my confidential letters to you of November 6, 7, and 8; to my despatch No. 21,242 of November 7 and my despatch No. 21,273 of November 8; and to my secret telegrams No. 1399 of November 7, 3 p.m., and No. 1404 of November 8, 8 p.m., as well as to the appended despatch which I have just dictated, transmitting the memorandum which Padilla handed me last evening.

After Padilla had called me to the Foreign Office last evening and after I got back to the Embassy it was already past nine o'clock Washington time. I therefore forwarded my telegram No. 1404 of November 8, 8 p.m. I called the watch officer in the Secretary's office and got Mr. Flood on the telephone. I told him that I had just left the Foreign Minister, who had handed me a memorandum on the Argentine which he had delivered to the Ambassadors of Brazil, Uruguay, and Cuba that day, and which he was going to hand to the other Chiefs of Mission of the American Republics today, with the exception of the Argentine. I said that the memorandum followed the main lines of the one he had transmitted to the Department, and which the Minister had handed me on the evening of November 6. I said that he was to tell you that this action on the part of the Minister came as a great surprise to me. I told Flood to say to you that I was dictating a telegram at the moment which would reach the Department during the course of the night and that he was to tell the Code Clerk to see that it was decoded during the night so as to be on your desk the first thing this morning. I suggested

to Flood

The Honorable
Norman Armour,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

to Flood that you might want to talk to me over the telephone this morning.

I have just completed dictating the appended despatch which I thought I had better make pretty complete, and in view of the fact that it is so complete I will not go into detail in this letter.

I know that you all will be as much surprised as I was over this initiative on Padilla's part in going ahead and suggesting to the other American countries a meeting, without waiting for our reply. I do not think, however, that this indicates any bad faith on the part of Padilla. Frankly, I think he doesn't think, although he has not said so, that we have handled this Argentine matter too well, for he thinks, I believe, that we have talked too much and not done enough. He thinks too that we have said too much publicly, and not enough ourselves and through the other American Republics privately to the Argentine. Whether we like to accept it or not, my own impression is, from what I have gathered during the last few months, that this is more or less the feeling of other American republics.

Then too there is this definite feeling that although they are fully conscious that we have consulted with them, we have been so definitely carrying the ball, and while they know that we have had to carry the ball because some of them were afraid to and others could not, they still do not like it.

I believe that in a good many of the other American republics they have been waiting for someone to take a sound initiative among the American republics. Various ones have tried it, but they were not in a position to do so. Uruguay made the last try, but she is a country under pressures and too close to the Argentine, and therefore her try was certainly not in the right direction and could not have been successful.

I am convinced that Padilla feels that the time has come for an initiative to be taken with respect to a meeting, and for certain action, and that he believes that Mexico is in the best position to take

forward

forward and strong action and that he has therefore decided to take the ball and carry it.

The memorandum which is transmitted with the appended despatch and which by the end of today will be in the hands of all of the Latin American Chiefs of Mission in Mexico City, other than the Argentine, is, I believe, a very sound one. It is a very carefully prepared one. It is prepared with the thought of meeting the objective, and certainly provides every safeguard. It is a very effective move. It is, in my opinion, going to be welcomed in every one of the Latin American republics. I think we might as well make up our minds to that. It is what they had been looking for. We have far more hope of success when one of them is carrying the ball than with our carrying it.

I was naturally surprised and somewhat shocked when Padilla, without any explanation, told me last evening what he had done and was doing, but I think he put it to me in that way so as to save me and us from any embarrassment. He is simply going ahead on his own. I think that has many advantages. My own feeling is, after a full night's reflection, that we should welcome this rather than resent it and that we should help him in every way we can, but again I say what I have said in my letters of November 7 and 8, we should really let him carry the ball, and while giving him our support, should remain in the background. I think what all of us are going to keep in mind is the objective we are after, and the objective is so important that we have got to let a lot of things be secondary to the objective. We can't sacrifice any principle, and we can't do anything which would not give every security for the future, but we cannot let any really secondary consideration stand in the way of our approving and going along with and aiding a sound initiative.

I have not had much sleep since I got back here on the afternoon of November 5, and I doubt whether Padilla has. I think he is profoundly affected by the importance of this situation, and I know that he has been working more actively since my return than he has probably at any period since I have been in

México.

1649

- 4 -

México. While it would have been nicer in some ways if he had at least told us what he was going before he did it, the more I think of it the more I am of the opinion that he did it so as not to embarrass us, and it is pretty clear that he is proceeding completely on his own initiative as he believes that this gives greater chance of success all along the line.

I recommend again that we give his initiative our full support and that we don't waste time in doing so. He will undoubtedly see the other Latin American Chiefs of Mission today, except the Argentine, to give them this memorandum. This means that by the evening of November 10 all of the governments of Latin America and ourselves will have this memorandum, on which Padilla has asked for comment. Of course the Argentine will know about it too because there isn't any doubt that some of these Chiefs of Mission here in Mexico City and some of the foreign officers of the other American republics keep the Argentine informed of these moves, but I think that that is all to the good in view of the substance of Padilla's memorandum. It is certainly strong and, in my opinion, effective.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Copy of despatch.