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VIA AIR MAIL

México, September 21, 1942

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Sumner :

I have to refer to my confidential letter of September 17 with regard to the stay here of General Embick and Admiral Johnson. They left on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock and Sánchez Hernández went back with them. Castillo Nájera is staying here until some time this week. I think he has some family matters to look into and he also wants to have some talks with the President which, on account of the President's occupations, he was not able to have last week. It is my understanding that Sánchez Hernández will only be staying a short time in Washington and that he may be replaced by General Alamillo. This situation is not at all clear. What I do know now is that General Alamillo went up on Sunday with the returning group and that he is to be Military Attaché in the Embassy. I do know also that Sánchez Hernández expects to return to Mexico City very shortly and to bring his family with him. I think this means very certainly that he will be off the mission, and the chances are that General Alamillo, in addition to being Military Attaché, will be designated to serve with Castillo Nájera as the Mexican members of the mission.

I understand that Sánchez Hernández has been told he will have a responsible post in Mexico City on his return and as nearly as I can gather, he is to be attached to General Cárdenas. Much as we shall miss Sánchez Hernández in the mission in Washington, it would be very helpful to have a man like him close to General Cárdenas here. So far as General Alamillo is concerned, I can give you very little information as to his attitudes, etcetera. He has been Deputy Chief of Staff to General Cárdenas in the Northwestern Area. Whatever his attitudes may have been in the past, I think his stay in Washington will be very

helpful/

The Honorable  
Sumner Welles,  
Under Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

helpful for him and I think he is very susceptible to attentions.

The mission had really only one meeting while they were here and General Embick, who spoke to me about it, was at first inclined to be pessimistic. He said that Castillo Nájera, who naturally acted as Chairman of the Meeting here, had been inclined to be a bit too demanding and that he thought his general attitude was quite different from that which it usually is in Washington. The General had the impression that Nájera was taking a very exacting attitude. I told General Embick I thought probably it would be well to bear in mind that Nájera was on his own ground and that General Salvador Sánchez, the Chief of the Presidential Staff, was present and that naturally Nájera would have to be a little stronger and more demanding than he would be in the meetings at home. After I saw General Embick the second time after this meeting, he felt very much different about it, and not so pessimistic. I will not go into the discussions at the meeting because I was not present and in any event, General Embick and Admiral Johnson will be better prepared to report thereon, as they will upon their arrival home. It is my understanding that no agreements or decisions of any kind were made while the mission was here.

You will be interested to know that on Friday evening, September 18, I gave a dinner in the Embassy for the mission, and President Avila Camacho came. He arrived promptly at 9, accompanied by General Cárdenas. I had kept the dinner very small and had invited the guests in accordance with the President. In addition to the President and General Cárdenas, there were Dr. Padilla and Torres Bodet from the Foreign Office; General Macías, former Minister of Defense, who now takes General Cardenas' post in the North; General Abelardo Rodríguez, who is in command of the Gulf Zone, and his Chief of Staff, General Azcarate, who was formerly Mexico's Minister to Germany; General Amezcua, who was formerly Mexico's Ambassador to Japan and concerning whom I recently wrote you; General Jara, the head of the Navy, and Admiral Blanco, the Sub-Secretary; General Urquiza, who is the Sub-Secretary of National Defense. In addition to General Embick and Admiral Johnson, I had the Military and Naval Attachés of the Embassy, and several of the officers who accompanied General Embick and Admiral Johnson here.

It was quite significant that Cárdenas should come to this dinner, as I think it is the first function of this kind

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that he has attended for years. He sat on the President's right and Admiral Johnson was opposite him. He was very affable and cordial all during the dinner and afterwards, and obviously put himself out. He usually says very little and keeps his face absolutely immobile, but from the time that he came into the house until he left, he was more than agreeable and talkative. I do not wish to read more into this than it means, but as General Cárdenas knew that there would be at least some notice in the papers about his having attended this dinner, that alone is significant.

After the dinner, the President, Embick, Johnson, Cárdenas, Padilla, and Rodríguez had an opportunity to sit down and have a real talk, and in accordance with the suggestion which I had made to Embick and Johnson, they talked as freely as possible about the war. I thought this was highly desirable as the President is very much interested in strategy and I knew he would enjoy this opportunity to talk with Embick and Johnson. I feel that if the only result we got out of this mission coming down here was to have had this dinner, it was well worth-while.

General Embick and Admiral Johnson made a very good impression while they were here. Unfortunately General Embick had been ill before he left Washington and wasn't feeling very fit most of the time he was here. He did a good job, however, and made a real effort, in spite of his not being well.

In my letter of September 17 I told you that I had some three hundred people in the Embassy for a supper on Monday evening immediately following the arrival of the mission. A number of the guests were high-ranking Mexican Army Officers and their wives, and ranking members of the Mexican Government. I think this was also very useful as it turned out to be a very informal gathering. There is no doubt that the Mexican officers, so many of whom were not too enthusiastic about "fighting" with us, are turning very rapidly and that this opportunity for contact with Embick and Johnson in the Embassy was most helpful.

I am hoping that Embick and Johnson may have an opportunity to give you their own impressions when they get back.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

G. S. Messersmith

GSM/aw

In duplicate to Under Secretary Welles