

AIR MAIL

1677

S E C R E T

México, D.F., México,
February 12, 1945.

Dear Nelson:

Supplementing the despatches and letters which I have written to the Department and to you with regard to Oumansky, formerly Soviet Ambassador here, I wish to give you the following information.

I have information from very reliable sources, who are in close contact with the Spanish republicans in Mexico City, that the majority of the Spanish republicans in Mexico seem to be, in many respects, quite pleased that the Soviet Ambassador, Oumansky, has been removed from the Mexican and American picture. The reason given is that the Spanish republicans feel that he was gaining much influence over their leaders.

I must say that I think there is a good deal to the foregoing. Oumansky was particularly active among Spanish republican circles. He had the most intimate contact with them - that is with many of them. He was practically in the position of giving orders to some of them. I think the correct way of putting it is that one group among the Spanish republicans in Mexico mourns the death of Oumansky as they feel, as one of them put it to me, that they have lost not only a General but a field marshal. On the other hand, I think the larger group of Spanish republicans in Mexico do feel that Oumansky was controlling the situation too much here among them and that he was prejudicing the possibilities of the Spanish republicans ultimately getting in control in Spain.

And now something more important. I had information this morning from the most reliable source to the following effect. Two officers from the Ministry of Foreign Relations were among the first to reach the airfield after the unfortunate crash in which Mr. and Mrs. Oumansky lost their lives.

One of

The Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

One of them is a Mexican Foreign Service officer whom I know very well. He states that on his arrival at the accident he found the briefcase of Oumansky very close to the body of Oumansky. The briefcase was opened by him and by another person, and it was found to contain between 150,000 and 200,000 dollars in United States 1000 dollar bills. They had to count the money roughly because of the circumstances. In the briefcase also were a number of papers, among which, one was a Spanish translation of the Russian Constitution. This officer kept the briefcase in his possession until shortly thereafter when a representative of the Soviet Embassy arrived at the airfield. The briefcase was immediately turned over to him and he opened it and took out the money. He looked over the papers and then took most of these papers to the remains of the plane, which were burning, and burned them in the wreckage of the plane.

The foregoing information was not given to me by the Foreign Service officer of the Mexican Government but it comes to us from a friend to whom he gave this information.

This Foreign Service officer of the Mexican Government who gave the above information is, for the present, outside of Mexico City and will not be back for four or five days, but on his return I will not hesitate to ask him myself about the correctness of the foregoing, and I am sure he will either confirm or deny the story. If the facts are as above stated, I am sure he will tell me so.

I think this matter is very important, for if it is true that Oumansky had this large sum of money with him, it has a special significance. He was going to Costa Rica only for the purpose of presenting his credentials and he was going to stay but a short time. He would therefore not have any need for any such sum of money for his personal use and there would be no need for taking so much money for the use of the personnel he would leave in Costa Rica to run the Soviet Mission there. So far as the expenditures of the Soviet Mission in Costa Rica are concerned, there would be no difficulty in transferring the funds in the forms of drafts or checks, either from the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City or in Washington.

There must have been, therefore, some very definite and secret use which he planned to make of this money. If this information is confirmed that he was carrying this large sum of money in United States bills, we must take it for about as definite proof as we have yet had

that

1677

- 3 -

that Gumansky was using large sums of money for various, what we would call, improper purposes. The only way in which the money could have been used would be to suborn Government officials or labor leaders in Costa Rica or some of these other Central American countries.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH

GSM:fm