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SECRET AND VERY RESTRICTED

Mexico, D.F., July 28, 1944.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have to refer to my confidential letters of July 25 and July 27, with regard to the Argentine situation and covering conversations with Padilla. You will recall that the Argentine Chargé here had asked to see Dr. Padilla, stating that he had a communication to make to him from his Government and that Dr. Padilla wished certain information from you urgently as to your thoughts on the specific points which I covered in my two letters under reference. You will recall that Dr. Padilla had been holding him off for some days.

I went to see Dr. Padilla today on my initiative in view of the fact that he had indicated to me that he would probably see Pardo, the Argentine Chargé, at 7 this evening. I told Dr. Padilla that in view of developments since your recent statement, there was no basis for giving Pardo any encouragement that he, Dr. Padilla, could act as an intermediary in any sense at present. I said that I thought that the recent Argentine reaction had been such as to probably put that out of the question.

Dr. Padilla said that he had exactly the same impression and for that reason he had already seen Pardo. He said that Pardo obviously under instructions from his Government put him three questions. I will give them and the answers which Padilla made.

1. Pardo asked Dr. Padilla whether he thought the statement which you had recently made had the support of the other American Republics. Dr. Padilla replied that he not only thought but he was sure that you had consulted the other American Republics before making this statement. He was confident that all the American Republics with the exception of the Argentine were in accord with your statement and fully behind it. So far as Mexico was concerned,

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The Honorable
Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

it had been consulted and he, Dr. Padilla, had informed our Government that Mexico was entirely in accord with the statement.

2. Pardo asked Dr. Padilla how this new situation would affect his status here. To this Dr. Padilla replied that he (Pardo) realized that he was receiving him not as the Argentine Chargé d'Affaires but entirely informally and unofficially. As to how developments would affect Pardo's status here, he was not yet in a position to say and it was a matter to which he would give thought. He could not give him any present indication as to what he would say to him on this subject.

Pardo, of course, was endeavoring to explore whether he could remain here as Chargé d'Affaires even though the Mexican Government had withdrawn its Ambassador from Buenos Aires and the present situation was developing as it was. Dr. Padilla gave Pardo no aid and comfort. He left him under the distinct impression that there was a possibility that the Mexican Government might tell him in answer to his question that as they had no Ambassador in Buenos Aires it would simplify the situation if Pardo were not here and even this unofficial contact were eliminated.

Parenthetically I may say that this particular question of Pardo's, which he undoubtedly put at the request of his Government, is an indication of the arrogant attitude which the Argentine Government is assuming and I think it was a very good thing that he put the question and got the answer which he did for it will certainly not give any aid and comfort in Buenos Aires.

3. Pardo asked Dr. Padilla what he thought the attitude of the Governments which had recognized the Argentine Government would now be. To this Padilla replied that the Governments which had recognized the present regime in the Argentine had removed their Chiefs of Mission with the exception of Paraguay. He, of course, was not able to speak categorically as to what the attitude of these Governments which had recognized the Argentine regime would be but he had the definite feeling that these Governments were all attached to the idea of American solidarity and would not break it. He said that he told Pardo that all the American Governments were concerned over the attitude of the Argentine regime which was assuming an attitude of complete lack of collaboration with the other American Republics and lack of adequate collaboration with

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the United States and the United Nations. Padilla said that he could not affirm it but that he had the definite feeling that even those Governments which had recognized the present Argentine regime were so completely attached to the idea of American solidarity and so out of accord with the attitude of the Argentine regime that they would remain solid in the attitude now assumed and "which had been faithfully interpreted" by Secretary Hull for the United States. Padilla said to Pardo that if he was making this exploration of his, Dr. Padilla's convictions and opinions and those of Mexico, he could although this was an informal conversation convey what he had above said to his Government.

Pardo then said that his Government had had the hope that Dr. Padilla with his statesmanlike qualities would be able to be of some use in composing the situation. Pardo did not say that he was authorized by his Government to say this. To this Dr. Padilla replied that he was sincerely attached to the idea of complete inter-American solidarity but that such solidarity had to be based on firm grounds and on the meeting of obligations which were common to all of the American States. He saw no present opportunity for his doing anything. He was always disposed to be helpful in any way that he could but Pardo would see from the foregoing answers to the questions which he had put to him where the Mexican Government stood and what its clearly defined policy was.

I have tried to give textually my conversation with Dr. Padilla today. I think you will agree that it was a useful one. If the Argentine regime had any idea that it could break the solid front through Mexico and Dr. Padilla, it will have no further illusions when Pardo reports this conversation. Padilla said that at the end of the conversation above described he told Pardo again that while the conversation was naturally an informal one in view of Pardo's status here, he (Dr. Padilla) had no objection to Pardo reporting textually what he had said. Pardo said that he would do so. I think that Pardo will do so and the report of the conversation and the answers given to the questions which Pardo posed will certainly not give any aid and comfort to the Argentine regime.

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I asked Dr. Padilla if he had any objection to my reporting to you the conversation which he had had with Pardo, above set forth, and Dr. Padilla said he would be very glad to have me report the conversation to you for your confidential information.

I think the foregoing will show how faithfully and correctly and wisely Dr. Padilla is proceeding in this important juncture, and I believe you will agree helpfully. A statement like this by Padilla as to the Mexican attitude and his own, which will reach the Argentine regime in so definite a form, will mean more than any public statement which Padilla could make.

Dr. Padilla, however, went even further with Pardo. He told him at the close of the conversation that it was quite probable that in due course he would make a statement along the line of what he had said to him (Pardo), set forth under paragraphs number 1 and 3, above.

In view of the fact that Dr. Padilla is taking this strong and energetic attitude, which of course not only finds its reflection in this conversation with Pardo but which he reflects in all his conversations with the other Chiefs of Mission of the American States here, I think you will agree that it is particularly important that he be kept fully informed with regard to our thoughts. It is extremely helpful for him to know what we are thinking with regard to all concrete attitudes on our part. I will, therefore, appreciate very much your keeping me informed of your thoughts so that I can pass them on to Dr. Padilla.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GSM:NA

G. S. Messersmith