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Buenos Aires, March 31, 1947

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My dear Mr. Secretary:

In view of the progress which the Argentine Government has made in the matter of compliance with its commitments under the Acts of Mexico City, and as the stage is rapidly being reached when it will have adequately met its obligations with respect to enemy aliens, as it has already done in the matter of schools and institutions and property, we will in all justice and equity, as well as in our own interest and that of the hemisphere, have to reach a decision in the matter of normalization of relations with the Argentine on the removal of the reserves which we had and expressed in former Secretary Byrnes' statement of April 8, 1946.

As soon as the Argentine Government makes the declaration, which I believe it is naturally and consequent for it to make when it deports further enemy aliens which it now has under arrest and those further ones it hopes to detain in the near future, I think there would be general agreement that we have to take note of this declaration and of the facts on which it is based and make the appropriate decision and statement on our part. I feel a very keen sense of responsibility in this matter, and I have in a despatch no. 2119 of March 24, 1947, a copy of which is hereto attached, expressed my present views on this matter. When the declaration is made by the Argentine Government, I would, of course, make a further definite recommendation to the Department, but as I see things, it would be identical with the conclusions set forth in the appended despatch.

I will

The Honorable
George C. Marshall,
Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

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I will not in this letter go into the multiple reasons which make it necessary for a decision in this matter not to be much further delayed. The basic circumstances on which we have to reach our decision is whether the Argentine has or has not loyally and adequately met her inter-American commitments through deeds rather than words as set forth in the statement of former Secretary Byrnes on April 8, 1946. There is no doubt in my mind, and I do not believe that any objective observer who takes into account all the acts and facts and factors, could reach any other conclusion, that the Argentine has loyally met these obligations and commitments. This country, which is in many respects a great one and certainly potentially if not presently the strongest of the other American republics and which has traditionally had many reserves with respect to us and which has looked to Europe rather than the United States, has humbled herself in a measure that the other American republics never thought possible; and it is the fact that there is a new government in the Argentine which is taking cognizance of the facts concerning the world in which we live that has made it possible for this new orientation in Argentine policy so definitely directed towards collaboration with us and with the other states in this hemisphere.

We have the opportunity today to consolidate our relationships with the Argentine and put them on a basis that they have never been before and to bring about a situation of collaboration with her such as we have with the other two great countries, Brazil and Mexico, and re-establish on a firm basis that collaboration among the American states which has always been recognized by us and by them as essential and desirable but which is now recognized in the world in which we live as imperative.

If we miss the opportunity which we now have, the unhappy consequences would be so far reaching in the political, economic, social, and defense field, so far as vital interests of our country, and of this whole hemisphere are concerned, and I believe, in certain respects in the world picture, would be so great that I do not wish even to contemplate them, much less to recite them in this letter, as they are so obvious to anyone who

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is aware of the real situation in the American picture and in the world today.

The appended despatch, while I would be very happy to think that you, yourself, would have the time to read it, is of such importance that I am sure you will wish to have the substance thereof given to you very fully on your return from Moscow.

I will keep the Department fully informed of developments.

Believe me, with all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith

Enclosure:

Copy of despatch no. 2119

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