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SECRET

Mexico, D. F., March 14, 1946

Dear Spruille:

I have your personal and secret letter of March 8, 1946, acknowledging mine of February 28, 1946, and others on developments in the Argentine situation. You have since that time received my letters of March 1 and March 2, 1946, on the same subject.

I had a long conversation with Castillo Nájera yesterday afternoon on a number of matters which I am reporting upon in separate letters.

We discussed the developments in the Argentine situation. I referred to the conversation which I had had with Tello, the Under Secretary, the afternoon before during the course of which I conveyed to him the substance of our last telegram on the Argentine and at the end of which I left with him a memorandum covering the substance of the telegram. I have reference to the circular telegram in which we inform the other American Republics that no matter what may be the outcome of the Argentine election, we cannot enter into a defense agreement with a government which contains Farrell-Perón elements whose connection with the enemy is so clearly established, and in which we ask the other American Governments to give us their comment on the Blue Book and particularly with reference to their attitude towards entering into a defense agreement with such a government.

Castillo Nájera said that Tello had immediately informed him of the conversation which I had had with

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The Honorable  
Spruille Braden,  
Assistant Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

him on this matter and that they were studying very carefully our communication and were preparing a reply. I gathered from what he said that we might have it relatively soon.

Castillo Nájera said that the Ecuadorian and Bolivian Ambassadors had both been in to see the Foreign Office recently and both had asked the Foreign Office as to what the Mexican attitude on the Blue Book, et cetera, would be. He said that the Bolivian Ambassador had indicated that his Government was preparing some sort of a reply to the Blue Book. He said that both the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Ambassadors had asked the Foreign Office to be good enough to indicate to them and through them to their Governments what the Mexican attitude on the Blue Book, et cetera, would be as their Governments "wished to follow the course taken by Mexico".

Castillo Nájera said that both Ambassadors had been informed that the Mexican Government was studying these matters and would in due course reach its decision, but that it was not yet in a position to inform them concerning its attitude. When any attitudes by Mexico were decided upon the other American Governments would all be informed including Bolivia and Ecuador.

Castillo Nájera said that he was not at all flattered by the request of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Ambassadors. He said that he was under no illusions that if Mexico expressed any attitudes with respect to the Argentine that Bolivia and Ecuador would follow them. He also said that he had no illusions to the effect that if Mexico conveyed any preliminary information concerning her thoughts on the Argentine situation to the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Governments and that if they took an attitude along the line of Mexico these Governments would place the responsibility for their attitude on Mexico. He indicated that the Mexican Government was fully aware of the maneuver of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Governments and was not going to fall for it.

Castillo Nájera and I then discussed at some length the developments in the Argentine situation. In spite of the press reports which come from the Argentine which

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seem to indicate that the election was in every way a fair one and that the votes are being counted accurately, there seems to be no doubt that Castillo Nájera is of the opinion personally that a tragic comedy is being played before the world with consummate skill. His personal attitude as I can see it is that while it may have been possible for the Argentine voters to actually cast their votes fairly and without molestation that the counting of the votes is in the hands of the Perón elements and that they are counting the votes in such a way as to make it appear that an accurate count is being made and thus giving every appearance of a close election. He, personally, however, seems to have little doubt that they are counting the votes the way they want to.

I want to emphasize that in this conversation as above-reported, and in previous conversations recently reported upon with respect to the Argentine, Castillo Nájera has been expressing his personal views and which, I think, reflect the attitudes which he would like to take as Foreign Minister, but whether these will be the official attitudes eventually of the Mexican Government and of the Ministry he cannot tell and I cannot tell of course. This will depend upon the final decisions of the President here.

We went into many phases of the Argentine situation, and I found Castillo Nájera very much preoccupied. He said it was a most difficult problem and most difficult to do the thing which had to be done in his opinion under the circumstances. It was obvious that although he is usually a very resourceful person that he was not clear in his own mind as to what could or should be done.

I said to him that there was one thing certain and that was that so far as the United States was concerned, we could take no attitude other than to refuse to enter into a defense agreement with the present Government of the Argentine or any growing out of it and containing the same elements which had had such close connection with our common enemies. I said in my opinion for us to

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enter into such an agreement with the Argentine under these conditions would be a negation of everything we had fought for and of all of our principles. I said, therefore, that I was confident that my Government would remain absolutely firm in its stand in this respect and that I thought if the other countries of the Americas had any real regard for our security and future and for real inter-American collaboration they also would not enter into such a defense agreement with such a government in the Argentine. I went into this in a good deal of detail and at the end of what I said, Castillo Nájera said that he was quite in agreement with that, but that was only one phase of the question.

He then went on to say that the question would arise what we were going to do about this new Government in the Argentine if Perón was declared "elected". He said that in spite of the fact that the likelihood was that a tragic farce was being played most skillfully for the benefit of the world, the press generally was speaking of the elections as being fair and democratic, et cetera, in such terms that it was more and more difficult for governments to take the action which they should.

I told him that I could not tell him what our own attitude in this respect would be as I had no instructions other than the communications which I had passed on to the Foreign Office. I have gone into this conversation with Castillo Nájera in some detail in view of the fact that I think the confusion and perturbation from which he suffers is probably characteristic of the situation in the other Foreign Offices to the south.

I wish to repeat again that I think that Castillo Nájera has very definite views personally on the Argentine situation which probably very much coincide with our own but whether these will finally crystallize into the attitudes of the Mexican Government I am presently unable to say.

I appreciated particularly your letter of March 8, 1946, which is most helpful and interesting to me and I appreciate your taking the time to write me.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith