

● PSF

Mexico

1943

*file
personal*EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICAMEMORANDUM

During a long conversation with the President of Mexico yesterday afternoon prior to my departure for Washington tomorrow, in his home at Los Pinos, the President spoke in terms of the greatest admiration and affection of President Roosevelt. He indicated clearly that in his opinion the hopes not only of the United States and of Mexico and all the Americas, but also of the rest of the world, were centered in him and his wise and sound policies. He spoke of the President in terms of great affection and he asked that when I saw the President on my arrival in Washington I would convey to him his affectionate greetings of respect and admiration, and say that he had a great desire, and had had for some time, to know him. He realized that it was very difficult for the President to absent himself from his duties and to make any trips whatever, but he hoped that before the end of the war, or certainly with the end of the war, the President, at the moment he would find opportune, would visit Mexico. Such a visit would give him great personal satisfaction and would have a great effect in Mexico. He wished me to say to the President that a great psychological change had taken place among the Mexican people, whose sentiments towards the United States had very rapidly and very radically changed, and that he would find here an enthusiastic and most friendly reception. The President said that such a visit would consolidate in a most marked way the changed relationships between Mexico and the United States - relationships which would have to be ever more close on the basis of the most complete mutual co-operation in every field.

Parenthetically, the President said that he had himself a great desire to visit the United States and President Roosevelt, but he believed that in this case it would serve every purpose better if President Roosevelt were to visit Mexico before he himself visited the United States. The effect in every way of such a visit would be more marked, not only in the two countries but throughout the world.

Mexico, January 14, 1943.

heserwith
[Signature]



*file
personal*

PSF: Mexico folder
1-43

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Mexico D.F.
Jan. 14, 1943.

My dear Franklin,

My secretary has gone and I am trying to type a sort of letter to you.

Helen and I are off for Veracruz in the morning and I want this to reach you before Mr. Messersmith gets to Washington.

On this survey of the Mexican roads I have covered almost the entire country.

The gist of the matter is Mexico is building roads everywhere except on the line of the Pan American Highway.

The possible reason for this is that we have not made representations, through our Embassy here, of a positive nature to the effect that we want the Road completed.

I feel sure you want this road as much as I do, so when you see the Ambassador, won't you impress him with this idea?

Letters to him from the State Department evidently have not been clear in this regard- in fact he tells me that some of them seem to convey the idea that we would be satisfied to let the road problem rest till after the war.

This attitude seems to permeate Mexico as well.

It has been stated to me in the Embassy that the Road is not of strategic value.- I am sure you know that this is not the case, for many reasons.

My report, when it comes, will show that many roads of no strategical value are being built.

If any further advance to Mexico could be held up until this report has been

has been received, perhaps some beneficial trade to the benefit of the Pan American Highway might result.

Now for the "gossip- off the record"! -- More Helen's activities than mine.

She has lunched with Mrs Messersmith and sat next to Md. Lupescu, and on Christmas we dined at the Embassy, and Carol took her in to dinner.

She reports both very human and charming- and the King very clever and good to talk with.

Mexico seems full of celebrities.

While following a new road up the Pacific, at Acapulco, we ran into Errol Flynn, hiding from the lime light with a friend in a little inn there.

He was goggling fish, by the way- a rather sporting thing to do, as the fish seemed to have as much chance as he, and sometimes more, depending on the size of the fish.

Just between ourselves, Flynn and his English friend, Mc Evoy, seemed very decent modest chaps!

Leila Delano, husband and children are here and finally settled in an house - well, but having the servant trouble that seems to have reached even this country.

Referring again to the Messersmiths. It seems to be the general opinion that the Ambassador is doing a good job. From my observation it is a one man's job. He seems to carry the whole load himself.

Mrs Messersmith entertains delightfully, without apparent effort, and if ever the time comes when she has to fend for herself I am sure she would make a most admirable instructor in teaching diplomats how to entertain!

Helen says, if you wish, when she gets back to Washington next month, she will give you all the "low down" of the celebrities et al. here!

For Heaven's sake, dont forget to tell Messersmith we want the road!

Believe me,

As ever yours,

J. Van Ness Philip

To the President
Washington, Wash. D.C.

PSF: Mexico folder 1-43

file
Bofe

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 11, 1943

~~SECRET~~

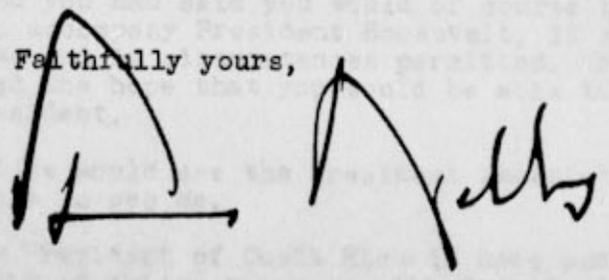
My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of George Messersmith's report, made to me under date of March 6, of his conversation with the President and Foreign Minister of Mexico regarding your visit to that country. As you will see, the President of Mexico is enthusiastic about the prospect of your visit and about the general plans you have suggested. He also makes certain specific suggestions for your consideration.

Will you let me know what your wishes may be with regard to these points, and I shall appreciate it if you will also let me know whether you wish me to discuss the matter involving Henry Wallace with him for you or whether you would prefer to do it personally.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,
The White House.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schauble Date FEB 10 1972

COPY

THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY
Mexico, March 6, 1943

Dear Sumner:

I received your secret letter of March 2 with regard to the President's plans, on the afternoon of March 3 just before I left to make my first call on Padilla since my return on March 1. We naturally set aside all the many things we had to talk about to discuss this matter of the President's visit, and I gave him the substance of your letter, making it clear that for the present no one but the President of Mexico and he should know anything about it. Needless to say, Padilla was very happy and thought the plans proposed in the letter were entirely feasible and would be acceptable to President Avila Camacho. He said the President would be tremendously pleased and happy when I gave him this message. I cannot express to you the satisfaction which the proposed visit gave to Padilla, who said that it would be a transcendental and epoch-making event in our relationships, the effect of which on the Mexican populace would be beyond words.

He made the observation that he hoped you would be accompanying the President and I told him that I was confident you would wish to come and that the President would wish you to accompany him; that I had raised this point with you and you had said you would of course be only too happy to accompany President Roosevelt, if he asked you to do so and if circumstances permitted. Padilla strongly expressed the hope that you would be able to accompany the President.

Padilla said he would see the President immediately and arrange for him to see me.

Although the President of Costa Rica is here and there are all sorts of things going on, the President received me at Los Pinos yesterday, March 5, and I conveyed

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

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schauble Date FEB 10 1972

to him the substance of your letter. I cannot tell you what gratification the message caused the President and how deeply he was moved by the fact that President Roosevelt will come to Monterrey first. He was of the opinion that Monterrey would be the best place for the meeting and he will of course be prepared to go to Corpus Christi. President Avila Camacho expressed himself as in entire accord with the plans and quite understood why President Roosevelt could not come farther than Monterrey, or stay longer. While the President said that the plans were quite satisfactory as proposed, and while he wished to fit himself entirely into President Roosevelt's plans, he did wish to think the matter over for a few days himself. He said the visit had such a transcendental importance that its full effect must not be lost. It would be, he said, an epoch-making event in our relationships, the full advantage of which would have to be availed of in the interest of both countries. He was looking forward with great eagerness to realizing his long-standing desire to meet President Roosevelt, for whom he had this great admiration as a man and as a statesman and as a leader. Aside from this personal satisfaction, however, our two countries in the present and in the future would have to be bound by the strongest links and in the closest collaboration, and such a visit by President Roosevelt to Mexican soil at a time like this would have an effect among the Mexican population beyond words, and the visit would have to be used to the fullest advantage. This was the phase of the matter to which he wished to give consideration and he would communicate with me early next week.

The President and Padilla fully realize the necessity for complete secrecy, which I am sure they will maintain. They will eventually, of course, have to take a few more people into their confidence. The President, however, observed that as soon as President Roosevelt's train entered Mexico and he arrived at Monterrey, his presence in Mexico would of course be known, just as it would be known in the various places he would visit in the United States on his contemplated trip. The appropriate arrangements could be made that there should be no mention in the press or over the telephone, radio, or telegraph - but his presence in Mexico would of course be known here. The President said that he understood fully the reasons for secrecy on the grounds of security, and said that no man's life was more precious in the world today than that of President Roosevelt. He hoped, however, that while the

President was here it would be possible for them to make some joint statement over the radio in Mexico from Monterrey, intended for the Mexican people. I told him I doubted whether this would be feasible, and referred to the joint statement which you mentioned in your letter, which would be made after they separated at Corpus Christi. The President said he did not wish to abandon the idea, as the visit was so important for Mexico and in our relationships that he hoped every way would be found to utilize it to the greatest advantage and maintain all measures of security.

The President said that there was one matter which he would have to consider, and that was that he had to get authority from the Congress to leave the country. The Mexican Constitution, he was afraid, provided that he could not leave the country without the permission of Congress, and he did not have this. This was one reason why he had not made some visits which he had been asked to make to other countries. I told the President I thought he could get around this very readily and without creating any speculation as to a trip to the United States by asking the Permanent Commission of the Congress, which functions during the recesses of that body, in a routine way for permission to leave the country when and if he might consider it advisable. I said that as it is known here that he has been asked to visit several countries, I did not believe this would arouse too great speculation so far as a possible visit to the United States was concerned. The President said he thought this was a good idea which he appreciated my giving him and that he would consider this matter in the next day or two. I personally do not believe that the necessity for seeking this routine authorization from the Permanent Commission will raise any difficulties or particular speculation, although one would naturally have to expect some.

The President asked me to inform President Roosevelt through you of his deep appreciation of these plans and of his great gratitude. While the plans proposed were satisfactory and we could consider them as such, as to dates and places, etc., he did wish to give certain aspects his consideration in the next few days, when he would communicate with me further. This is just a preliminary word to say that the plans for the President's trip can go forward on the basis of your letter. I shall be in touch with you early next week.

While I think we must realize that it is more difficult to follow the same procedure of secrecy with regard to the President's trip which we are able to carry through at home, I feel sure that the appropriate arrangements can be made here to take the same procedure here. I do not think this need preoccupy the President.

Just a word more to say that I think the carrying through of this visit will go further to cement our relationships and open the way for all sorts of things, than anything which could possibly be done.

And now for another matter which is delicate and important. When I saw Padilla on March 3 on the above matter, he said he wished to speak to me not as to the Ambassador but as to a friend of the President and of his, on a delicate question. The President had just had a letter from Castillo Nájera, which he had shown him. In this letter Castillo Nájera referred to the trip which Vice President Wallace is making to several countries of the Americas. It seems that Mrs. Castillo Nájera saw Mr. Wallace at some social gathering and reproached him in what Padilla called "light conversation" for not visiting Mexico when he went to these other countries. The Vice President replied that he would be very happy to go to Mexico too, but that he had not been asked. It seems that this conversation got to Quintanilla, who as you know has this close friendship with the Vice President, and Quintanilla became very much interested and took up the matter with the Vice President, who said that of course he would be glad to go to Mexico if he were asked. The matter then came to the attention of Castillo Nájera, who I am sure is familiar through you with the President's plans to make this trip to Mexico, and who of course was not able to speak of this; but in his letter to President Avila Camacho must have indicated that in view of the President's trip to Mexico one by the Vice President would not fit into the picture at this time. Padilla said that of course under ordinary circumstances the Mexican Government would be very glad to receive Vice President Wallace, who would always be a welcome visitor here. But in the circumstances, he felt that the Mexican Government could not invite him unless it were understood that the Vice President would not come. He gave me the impression that in view of the situation which had been created they would like to ask him to come if they had the assurance that, in view of the President's visit, he would find a reason for not accepting.

I told him I was in entire agreement that, in view of President Roosevelt's plans respecting Mexico, the Vice President should not include Mexico in his trip. I said that I thought it was very likely that the Vice President did not know of the President's plans respecting Mexico, as the President was keeping his plans with regard to his trip through the United States and to Mexico among a very few people. I said that I was sure that if the Vice President knew the President was planning to go to Mexico he would forget all about a trip to Mexico himself.

Padilla and I agreed, therefore, that the best procedure would be for me to give you the above information which you could convey to the President -- the thought being that the President would tell the Vice President of the embarrassing situation in which the Mexican Government found itself, and say that while the Mexican Government would ordinarily greatly welcome a visit of the Vice President, in the circumstances if he (the Vice President) received an invitation from Mexico he should find a good reason for not accepting. Padilla said that when he had this knowledge that the President had spoken to the Vice President about the matter and when he (Padilla) knew that the Vice President would find an adequate reason to refuse an invitation to come to Mexico, an invitation could then be appropriately sent to the Vice President - perhaps while he is in Chile or one of those other countries - asking him to stop in Mexico on his return trip; and the Vice President could then find a convenient reason to regret. I could see that the President and Padilla feel that they have been put into a position where they must also send an invitation to the Vice President, but they do not feel his visit would be opportune at this time when the President has these plans. I told Padilla that I thought this was the best way out that I could see.

Padilla asked me to take up this matter with the President and you extra-officially and not through the Department, as they did not wish it to be a matter of record and thought it better to keep it in this altogether informal and personal channel. I assured him that I would do this.

I am sorry to have to impose this phase of the matter on the President and you, but I should appreciate your

taking this up with him at the earliest opportunity so that you can send me word to the effect that the President has talked this over with the Vice President, so that Padilla may know that if an invitation is sent to the Vice President to come here he will find an appropriate way of not accepting at this time. Padilla said he and President Avila Camacho wish me to emphasize to President Roosevelt and to you that of course in other circumstances they would always be glad to receive the honor of a visit from the Vice President.

With respect to this phase of the matter, I would appreciate your sending me word at your early convenience as I think the situation created inadvertently by Señora Castillo Nájera has embarrassed them here and they do not wish to have any embarrassment or misunderstanding so far as the Vice President is concerned.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
personal*

March 12, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

In regard to the letter from Messersmith, I think it is all right for the President of Mexico to get authority to leave the country without in any way announcing what direction he is going in.

In regard to Vice President Wallace, it is perfectly simple for you to arrange to have Wallace decline the invitation on the ground that he has to be back in Washington as quickly as possible after his Chile trip in order to preside over the Senate.

F. D. R.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

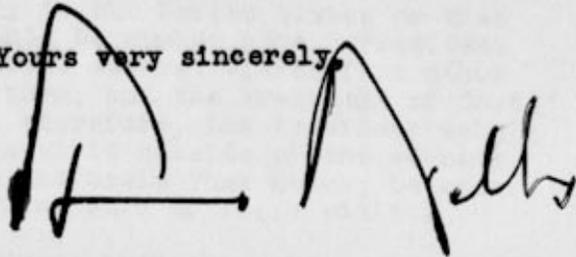
March 11, 1943

~~_____~~
Dear Pa:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have received from Ambassador Messersmith which is dated March 8, and which is self-explanatory. I shall be grateful if you will find out what the President's wishes may be with regard to the two points raised in this letter and let me know so that I may inform Messersmith accordingly.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Messersmith'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke.

Enclosure

Major General Edwin M. Watson,
Secretary to the President,
The White House.

COPY

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Mexico, March 8, 1943

~~SECRET~~

Dear Sumner:

I have to refer further to your secret letter of March 2 and my reply of March 6 with regard to the President's visit. I saw Padilla at noon today, just after he had had a long talk with President Avila Camacho. He reiterated that the President is much pleased and indeed very happy over these plans. The President told him that the plans in principle were entirely satisfactory to him.

Padilla said that there were two points which had to be considered: Under the Mexican Constitution the President of Mexico cannot leave the country without the authority of the Congress. This, Padilla says, will be very simple because the authority can be secured from the Congress without arousing any idea that the President is planning a trip to the United States or that President Roosevelt could be coming here. President Avila Camacho has received several visits from other Presidents during his term, and the President of Costa Rica is here now. If, therefore, the President asks for authority to make a visit outside of the country, he can do so merely on the basis that he may be under the necessity of returning some of these visits.

Padilla says, however, that there is a much more important question which he has to go into, and that is whether, under the Mexican Constitution, if the President leaves the country even for a few hours he has to name a substitute. Padilla says the Mexican Constitution is very badly worded in this respect and very unclear, and he was studying it at the request of the President this afternoon. He said that if it appears from the Constitution that the President would have to name a substitute for such a brief absence, then the President would almost find himself estopped from entering the United States at this time. For various

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

reasons

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By J. Schauble Date FEB 10 1972

reasons which it is not necessary to go into here, but which you will appreciate, it would be inconvenient for the President at this time to name a substitute. Padilla says that if his study of the Constitution leads him to the conclusion that the President would have to name a substitute, then he is sure you would understand that under these circumstances the President could not do more than accompany President Roosevelt to the border. Padilla says that the President is very anxious to set foot on our soil and actually to return this visit at Corpus Christi, and you may be sure that they will make every effort to find a solution. On the other hand, I am sure you will understand and the President will understand that if it is necessary for President Avila Camacho to name a substitute under the Constitution, he could not do so at this time.

I do not believe this will cause any serious inconvenience, because I think if it turns out that the President can accompany President Roosevelt only to the border, an appropriate explanation can be made.

Padilla said that he would like to inquire about two points. He said that they can find an appropriate place in Monterrey for a dinner, either for a small dinner, a medium-sized dinner, or a large one. He would like to know what President Roosevelt wishes in this respect. I think President Avila Camacho and Padilla favor the idea of a medium or a larger dinner, rather than just a dinner with half a dozen people. Padilla said that President Roosevelt's presence in Monterrey of course will be known. This could not be kept secret. Under these circumstances President Avila Camacho feels that a medium sized dinner would be very desirable, at which President Roosevelt could make a brief speech. He would like to know what the President's wishes are with regard to the dinner and whether he would be willing to make a short speech. President Avila Camacho and Padilla hope very much that the President can do this.

Padilla also wishes to know President Roosevelt's wishes with regard to the following: He said that of course there would be no advance notice of the President's being in Monterrey. His arrival there would come as a surprise to the people of the city. Once there, however, his presence would be known. Padilla said

that

that the enthusiasm of the Monterrey populace would be enormous and that it would be a great disappointment for them not to see the President. They could of course make all appropriate arrangements by the placing of troops, etc., completely to isolate the President; and he thought it would be a splendid thing, as did President Avila Camacho, if President Roosevelt could show himself from a balcony or in some way to the people of Monterrey. I am inclined to think that this can be done. The Mexican police and military can be depended upon to take all the security measures which are necessary or desirable, and these could be worked out with someone whom you could eventually send down here to talk over this matter with me and Padilla. The question Padilla would like to have answered now is whether the President would object to or find it inconvenient to appear before the people of Monterrey. It would mean, I suppose, his going onto the balcony of the building in which the dinner will be held. Personally I hope the President may be able to accede to this, as it will not cause too good an impression if he is kept away from the people, and his appearing before the people will have a tremendous effect all over Mexico.

So far as the press, cable and telephone arrangements are concerned to bring about the necessary secrecy, these can be made. The actual presence of the President in Mexico and in Monterrey will of course be known just as it will be known in the various plants and cities to which he goes.

I should appreciate your giving me a word with regard to the two questions in this letter as soon as you may conveniently be able to do so.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

G. S. MESSERSMITH

*file
personal*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 16, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Tell Messersmith I wholly agree that a small dinner or a medium sized one in Monterey would be much the best.

In regard to showing myself before a crowd, I think it will depend wholly on the physical problem and on the approval of the Secret Service. You might send for Mike Reilly, the head of the White House Secret Service Detail. I think he is going to Monterey shortly and perhaps he could try to work something out.

F. D. R.

Mexico folder 1-43

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

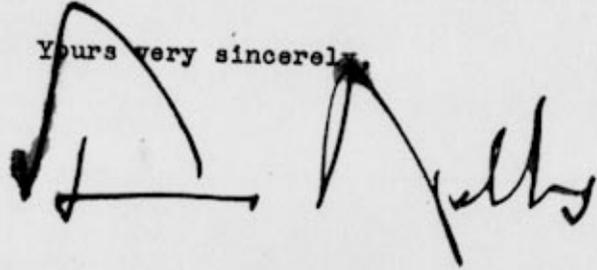
March 13, 1943

Dear Pa:

I have received today a further letter from George Messersmith with regard to the President's visit to Mexico. I shall appreciate it if you will let me know what the President's decision may be with regard to the questions raised in the last two paragraphs of this letter.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. S. Messersmith', written in a cursive style.

Enclosure:
From George S. Messersmith,
March 11, 1943.

General Edwin M. Watson,
Secretary to the President,
The White House.

AMERICAN EMBASSY
Mexico, March 11, 1943

Dear Sumner:

I have to refer to my secret letters of March 6 and March 8 in reply to yours of March 2 with regard to the President's visit. I saw Padilla late last night at his request and he said that he had studied the question of President Avila Camacho's departure from Mexican soil. The constitution, he found from study, made it necessary to ask the permission of the Congress, but this would not present any difficulties. Various visits had been made by other Presidents of the American States to Mexico, which the President of Mexico would in due course have to return, and it would therefore not cause any comment were the President to ask Congress for permission temporarily to absent himself from Mexican soil to pay visits of courtesy when and if the circumstances might make it desirable. He said the President of Costa Rica had just been here and as I would have noted in the morning papers had made publicly a very strong statement expressing the hope that the President of Mexico would shortly visit Costa Rica. Padilla said he did not believe, therefore, that the request of the President to the Congress to leave Mexican soil would create any undue speculation, and that what there was would be directed towards other American Republics than ourselves.

Padilla also said that he had carefully studied the provisions of the Constitution with regard to the appointment of a substitute when the President left Mexican soil. He was convinced, and was so advising the President, that when the President left Mexican soil for only a short period such as this contemplated for the visit to Corpus Christi, he would not have to appoint a substitute. The appointment of a substitute was, in his opinion, foreseen by the Constitution in case of sickness, incapacity, or absence over a period of time. He felt sure that President Avila Camacho would accept his interpretation of the Constitution in this sense.

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

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By J. Schauble Date FEB 10 1972

Padilla said that of course if the Constitution did require the appointment of a substitute for the President in case of a short absence, the President would not for the present be able to leave Mexican soil, as the appointment of a substitute would be inadvisable.

With respect to the stay at Monterrey, Padilla said that he had been talking with the President and he and the President both felt that President Roosevelt would not wish any large dinner. He felt sure that President Roosevelt would prefer a small dinner or a very medium-sized one, rather than a larger one. I told him that in this I was certain they were right but I had already taken this up with you and the President and I would have a reply shortly.

Padilla however did say that he thought it would be advisable for the President to show himself to the people of Monterrey, and perhaps make some brief remarks to them. He said that of course the President's arrival at Monterrey would not be known and there would not be a crowd on his arrival; but his presence would become immediately known and there would be a crowd and it would have a very good effect if the President showed himself before his departure and made some remarks. I said that I had also taken this up with you and would be hearing from you in due course and that I felt it was very advisable for President Roosevelt to do this.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

G. S. MESSERSMITH

PSF; Mexico folder
1-43

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 24, 1943

~~SECRET~~

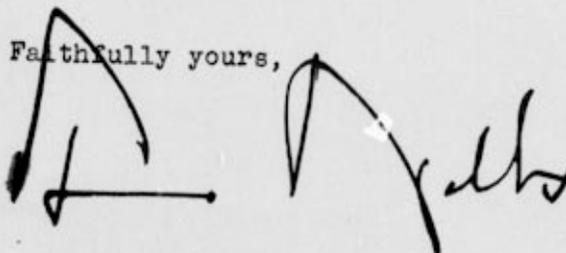
My dear Mr. President:

I have received today a confidential letter from George Messersmith dated March 22 which I believe you may wish to read over.

If there are any changes in the plans indicated by Messersmith which you wish to have made, will you let me know and I will then write him directly.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. M. Ladd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "L".

Enc.

The President,
The White House.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schauble Date FEB 11 1972

COPY

AMERICAN EMBASSY
Mexico, March 22, 1943

~~SECRET~~

Dear Sumner:

With reference to our recent correspondence concerning the visit of the President to Mexico, Mike Riley arrived here on Thursday, following your telegram 381 of March 16, 10 p.m. We had a long talk the afternoon of his arrival and I advised President Avila Camacho that I wished to see him. I called on him Friday afternoon at six o'clock and took Riley with me, as I wished him to have an opportunity of seeing the President. I had him present during the conversation with the President, but of course Riley does not understand Spanish.

I told the President that President Roosevelt's plans with regard to arrival at Monterrey at 4 p.m. on the 20th and leaving at 10 p.m. still stood and that Riley was here to discuss with the officer whom he might designate certain questions of arrangements in Monterrey bearing principally on security and comfort. The President said that he would designate Major Viñals, who is one of his personal aides and who speaks English, to remain in contact with Mr. Riley and to go with him to Monterrey in order to look over the ground. He said that he would give appropriate instructions to Major Viñals Monday morning, March 22nd, and that the Major would accompany Riley to Monterrey.

The President showed his extraordinary satisfaction that the plans for the visit are proceeding and concerning his genuine pleasure there is no doubt. He said that the night before he had wished that I were with him at a meeting at Bellas Artes during which Lombardo Toledano made a speech and in which Lombardo made reference to President Roosevelt. He said that he had never in Mexico seen such spontaneous and extraordinary enthusiasm as was shown by the large audience at the mention of the President's name. He said it was just another indication of the extraordinary manner in which President Roosevelt had won the regard and respect of the Mexican people. He was very sorry that I had not been there to witness the spectacle with him.

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

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By J. Schauble Date FEB 11 1972

The President said that he had been giving a great deal of thought to President Roosevelt's visit. He was a little hampered by the fact that I had told him that no mention could be made of the President's visit to Monterrey in the Mexican press, etc., until they released a joint statement in Corpus Christi on their arrival there. I told him that I was able to give him a good piece of news in this connection, as Mr. Riley had been able to inform me that it was President Roosevelt's intention that his visit to Mexico should be known in Mexico and the United States once he arrived at Monterrey. The President said this would greatly facilitate his plans and at the same time would make it more possible for the visit to have its full effect.

The President went on to say that he is thinking along these lines: He assumed that Padilla and I would be going north ahead of time, either together or separately, to meet the President's train and board it, so that we would be on the train with the President when he arrived in Monterrey. (I discussed this afterwards with Mr. Riley, who said he was sure the President would be quite in accord with Padilla's and my boarding the train so as to be on it when it arrived in Monterrey. I suggested to Riley that the train might be stopped at a place previously determined upon just after crossing the frontier and beyond Nuevo Laredo, not in Nuevo Laredo, and we could board the train.) The President said he would be at the station to meet President Roosevelt. He could board the train and have a brief talk with the President, and then they would proceed together to a place in the city where a reviewing stand would have been erected. There would then be a defile before the two Presidents of contingents of Mexican troops and "large numbers of Mexican school children." This latter, I may say, is always a very important thing here in Mexico, as they like to emphasize the civilian side of things and bring in the school children. After such a review, which would give a fine opportunity for the people of Monterrey to see the President, the President could then retire to his car or to a house which President Avila Camacho would like to arrange for him in Monterrey for his comfort, and then after a brief rest proceed to the place where the dinner was to be held. After the dinner the President could return to the car and proceed to Corpus Christi, and President Avila Camacho would follow shortly thereafter in his own train.

The President said that if President Roosevelt desired to see a little bit of Monterrey, they could take a short drive in an automobile to various sections of the city before they proceeded to the reviewing stand from the train. This of course he would leave to the President's discretion and wishes. I think probably President Roosevelt would wish to do this, as even a twenty-minute drive before they went to the reviewing stand would give him an idea of the city, and I think it would be a good thing.

So far as the dinner is concerned, I told the President that a small or medium dinner would suit President Roosevelt best. Riley, however, had told me that the President had spoken to him in terms of a "banquet". I therefore told the President that anything that he would wish to do in the form of a dinner, which would not be too large, would be acceptable to President Roosevelt. The President said that he was thinking of using President Roosevelt's trip to the greatest possible advantage in the interest of both countries and he thought it would be well to have a dinner of some 50 to 60 persons. I told the President I was quite sure this would be acceptable.

The President said that so far as the arrangements for President Roosevelt's security were concerned, we need have no fears, as the President would be welcomed as few people could be in Mexico, and certainly more than anyone else at this time. It was, however, always desirable to take certain measures of security and these would be worked out between Mr. Riley and Major Viñals. The President said that as this visit of his own to Monterrey had been something which the people in the north had been wanting for some time, he had already told some of his people that he was going to Monterrey at that time, and this made possible certain arrangements ahead of time which would ostensibly be taken solely because of his visit. He said the fact that his visit would occasion the presence in Monterrey of the military also made the appropriate arrangements much more easy. I may say in this connection that the Mexicans do this sort of thing very well. I have seen the arrangements which were made for the arrival of several Presidents here recently, and they were carried through extraordinarily well by the military. I think that so far as security is concerned there need be no fears. Mr. Riley and Major Viñals will

work out the details before Riley returns to Washington.

The President is very anxious that there should be an address by President Roosevelt and by himself and he is quite agreeable to have this at the time which may seem most appropriate. It could of course be done at the reviewing stand. The President, however, thinks it would be more appropriate to have this at the dinner, when the addresses could be transmitted to the people outside by loud-speaker and over the radio. He hopes there will be no inconvenience to arrangements being made for the transmission of the addresses, whether made at the reviewing stand or at the dinner, by radio both in Mexico and in the United States. There would seem to be no inconvenience in this, in view of the fact that President Roosevelt has now indicated that his presence in Monterrey can be known in Mexico and at home as soon as he arrives in Monterrey. Parenthetically, at this point I should say that this decision has given President Avila Camacho a great deal of relief, because the visit is really a transcendental matter in American-Mexican relationships and if nothing could be done toward making it public until after the two Presidents reached Corpus Christi, it could leave the impression in Mexico that there had been fears for the President's safety, etc. In any event, you will readily appreciate that the visit will have a tremendously important effect in Mexico, if President Roosevelt's presence here can be known in Mexico and at home as soon as he arrives in Monterrey.

So far as the security of the train on Mexican soil is concerned, you may be sure that the appropriate precautions will be taken to guard the track between Monterrey and Laredo.

I make here the observation that the President's train should not stop in Laredo or Nuevo Laredo in passing through, either going or coming. It should pass through these cities without stopping. The same is true of the President of Mexico's train. To this end we will have to make the appropriate arrangements with our own people and the Mexicans, but this of course is a simple matter and does not require any previous action. We have in Laredo this terrible pest Allen, with whom the Department is fully familiar, and the possibilities of disturbance by this man would be serious and cannot be discounted. I have told Riley about Allen.

I have told Riley that I hope very much you will come and that I think it would be most useful in many ways. I am sure it will help Padilla tremendously if you will come; and his position in Mexico is something we must help to maintain.

Riley says that the President's party arriving in Monterrey will be very small. I have suggested that it might be a good thing for the President to bring the new Commander of the Third Corps Area who replaces General Kreuger. There will be a lot of high-ranking military in Monterrey if only because of President Avila Camacho's visit there, and I think it would be most appropriate to have a high-ranking Army officer accompany the President, especially as there will be this military parade. Riley seems to think that the President would wish to bring the Commander of the Third Corps Area or perhaps General Somerville. I hope this will be favorably considered by the President.

Riley has several of his people in Monterrey and he wants in any event to go up there this afternoon. I have told him to go. The President said he would give the appropriate instructions to Major Viñals this morning to accompany Riley to Monterrey, but as I may not hear from the President until late this afternoon, there is no reason why Riley should not go to Monterrey today and I will arrange to have Viñals meet him there. Riley naturally wants to look over the ground and get back to Washington as soon as possible.

If the President should want you to accompany him, which I hope he will, you could fly to Fort Worth or some place indicated and take the train at that point.

President Avila Camacho told me that he was very anxious to have this visit make its full effect. While his own presence in Monterrey would give the opportunity for some special arrangements of various kinds, he had indicated to some of his people who were making the arrangements for his own visit that it was quite possible that while there he would receive also a visit of some distinguished person from London or somewhere. This would make it possible to make a little bit more elaborate preparations than he would ordinarily make for his own reception. I gathered from all the President said to me that he has taken our injunction not to mention the

President's visit to anyone other than Padilla most seriously, and it has of course handicapped him a great deal, and this is, I believe, why he has resorted to this subterfuge. In any event, it is quite clear that he has not told people, even those in his confidence, that he is expecting this visit from President Roosevelt. He says that when the distinguished stranger arrives in Monterrey it will be a pleasant and great surprise even to those in his confidence.

I have tried to clear this up with Riley as much as I could and he plans to fly back from Monterrey after he has seen Major Viñals there -- tomorrow, I hope, and then proceed to Washington where he will report to you and the President. I have, however, wanted to get this word to you in the meantime; although Riley will be making his own report to you and to the President, I thought it might be helpful for you to have this in writing.

President Avila Camacho said that he was preparing his speech and would let me have a copy in due course, but I think the President will wish to think of his own remarks before waiting to see those of the President here. I am sure that President Avila Camacho in his own speech will cover at least three points: (1) an expression of his own personal admiration and respect for the President; (2) an expression of the admiration and respect of the Mexican people and the people of the Americas for the President; (3) what he believes to be the transcendental nature of this visit in the history of Mexican-American relationships and an indication of the collaboration of the two countries not only for the near range but also for the long range. The President of course has not indicated to me what he is going to say in his speech as yet, but knowing him as I do I feel sure we can take it for granted he will cover these three points.

I hope to be able to see Padilla today and put him au courant of what has happened. I saw him last a week ago today, and I could see that he was not feeling fit. He has been out of circulation since and staying at Cuernavaca, where, in spite of the many reasons I wish to see him, I did not disturb him, as he has not been feeling well at all. I think it is his stomach or his kidneys. One of the strange things is that although

-7-

Padilla has lived most of his life in Mexico, I think he is one of those who suffer some of the inconveniences of the altitude. His indisposition is nothing serious but he has been away from his desk for a full week. I will see him today if he gets back.

Cordially and faithfully yours,

G. S. MESSERSMITH

Pres

file personal

PSF: Mexico folder 1-43

AIRGRAM

FROM

Mexico City

Dated April 28, 1943

Rec'd. April 29, 4pm.

Secretary of State

Washington.

A-949, April 28, 11 a. m.

Embassy's airgram No. A-924, April 23, 11:00 a.m., 1943 and previous telegrams regarding the Monterrey meeting.

After telling reporters last evening that it was not his function to synthesize the topics conversed upon between Presidents Avila Camacho and Roosevelt at their recent meeting, Foreign Secretary Padilla said that he could tell them nevertheless that the question of sending Mexican troops to the battle fronts had not been discussed. He said that an agreement was under discussion, the details of which he hoped to be able to make public within a few days, looking toward the acquisition by Mexico of machinery not being currently used in the United States' war effort with which new industries could be established in Mexico. This negotiation was so far advanced that Mexico is momentarily awaiting the arrival of American experts to make the necessary studies. He added that Mexico had also been negotiating for a supply of agricultural machinery.

Padilla told reporters that the Monterrey meeting was not an "incident of protocol" but an "eloquent expression of a sustained policy of solidarity in the war and of a community of aspirations for the peace". He said that President Roosevelt had expressed himself as appreciating highly the production efforts of Mexico in which the workers are assisting so conscientiously.

As for his personal impressions of President Roosevelt, which he had gathered during a conversation which took place aboard the latter's train, Dr. Padilla had observed that "in his words, in his countenance illumined by conviction, there burned the dramatic panorama of the war and the promises of peace". "He is a leader of humanity. He is a man in whom the democracies have faith". The Mexican press, he said, had

given

given genuine and unmistakable proof of the admiration and sympathy which the Mexican people felt for President Roosevelt.

In his interview, Dr. Padilla referred particularly and significantly to the pleasure it had given him to see the Under Secretary.

Clippings by airmail.

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PSF: Mexico folder
1-43

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 4, 1943

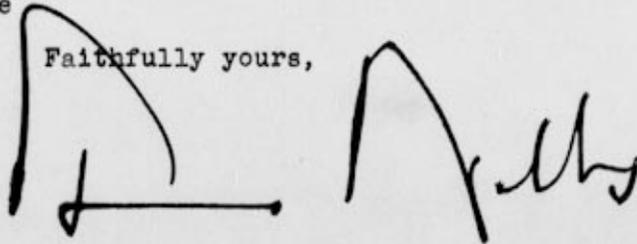
File
Per.

My dear Mr. President:

In the belief that it will be of interest to you, I enclose herewith a copy of a letter to me from George Messersmith dated April 30 with regard to your visit to Mexico.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large initial 'A' followed by a horizontal line and a cursive 'N'.

Enc.

The President,
The White House.

Mexico, D.F., April 30, 1943

Dear Sumner:

I have been wanting to write you ever since I returned to Mexico City last Saturday evening but I have been busy every moment since. Padilla and I drove down together by car from Monterrey to Mexico City, which is a comfortable two days' trip by automobile over a beautiful road, and we had time to talk over many things.

The President returned to Mexico City last evening as he made quite a tour of some of the towns in the north of the country. I shall undoubtedly be seeing him in a few days.

The reaction in Mexico to the visit has been all that we could have hoped for and more. We have sent a series of despatches to the Department reporting on various phases of the visit and on the press reaction as well as on the reaction of the public in general throughout the country. These reports give I think an adequate indication of the general reaction which was magnificent.

I believe it is safe to say that there has been no event in Mexican history in many years which has made so profound an impression on so great a mass of the Mexican people. This I think is true from the

top

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

top to the bottom. All the information which I got from all sorts of sources indicates that there has not been a single discordant note and that the appreciation of the President's visit and the understanding of its significance is profound.

I returned as you know from Corpus Christi to Matamoros with President Avila Camacho, at his invitation. He was very desirous that I should accompany him further on the trip which he was making to towns in the north of Mexico but as I would have been the only non-Mexican on the train I felt that it was much better in every way that I not go farther with him than Matamoros. It is interesting however that the President was obviously somewhat disappointed that I did not continue at least as far as Monterrey and Victoria with him on the train, but as this would have meant two more days I could not do it. That the President should have been desirous of having me with him on this trip when at every station he was meeting Mexican political friends and when there were all sorts of local demonstrations was an indication of his real feeling of friendship and that he had no hesitation of having his gringo friend around him. When I said goodbye to him at Matamoros he spoke of his impressions of the President and his appreciation of the exchange of visits with an emotion which I have never seen him show before. President Avila Camacho was our friend before this visit and he was the friend and admirer of President Roosevelt. The visit has consolidated that feeling and that friendship and admiration and I am confident that the President of Mexico now has a real affection and even heightened regard and admiration for President Roosevelt.

So far as the press reaction is concerned it was all that could be desired and unusual for the Mexican press. It showed itself very understanding all the way through and the interesting thing to note was that the press appreciated particularly the gesture of President Roosevelt not only in coming to Mexico but to penetrate into Mexican territory as far as Monterrey and not merely to meet President Avila Camacho at the border. I was confident from the outset that President Roosevelt's gesture in making the visit to Monterrey first and going as far as Monterrey instead of only to the border would be what would move the Mexican people as few things could move them.

So far as the Government is concerned here it has had a very deep effect on the members of the Government and

on

on the Congress and on Government officials all the way down the line. Our people wherever they go in Government offices here are met by expressions indicating what an extraordinary man they think President Roosevelt is. Suárez told Lockett yesterday that during the last few days he has had a very considerable number of people come in of importance, who have stayed away from the Government and who have been in opposition to the Government here and who have been bad friends of ours, who have told him that this visit of President Roosevelt has wiped out all their reserves so far as we are concerned.

So far as the great mass of the people are concerned all the information we get is to the effect that they have been deeply moved and profuse in their expressions. What has made the greatest effect I think is the fact that President Roosevelt came to Monterrey first and came as far as Monterrey. You know that the Mexican people are rather a somber people and seldom show very much emotion in public places but their reaction so far as the exchange of visits is concerned has been free and unrestrained.

Padilla of course is very happy and it has meant a great deal for him and it has solidified his position.

My colleagues of the other American republics have been most generous in what they have said concerning the visit. I thought some of them might be a little restrained due to a feeling of regret that Mexico should have been singled out in this way but their reaction seems to be that the exchange of visits between the Presidents of Mexico and the United States solidifies our continental policy of solidarity. The Argentine of course is the only really unhappy one and he is unhappy as he should be.

I have not yet written to the President as I know what a volume of work he had on his hands on his return from this trip but I hope when you see him you will tell him that there is no doubt whatever that these visits have caused a profound emotion here and that the visits will be a landmark in our relationships with Mexico. I am happy to have been able to be serving our Government at this time in this country and have been able to participate in this historic event.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GSM/mjs

George S. Messersmith

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 21, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

That is an interesting
dispatch from George Messersmith
about Ben Smith and Wenner-Gren.

Ed Flynn never spoke to me
in any way about the latter or
Ben Smith. The report is,
therefore, a complete falsehood.

I sincerely hope that
Wenner-Gren will not be taken
off the Proclaimed List, and
that Ben Smith will keep his
hands out of Mexico. You
might tell this to George
Messersmith.

F. D. R.

*Mexico folder 1-43
file
Confidential*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

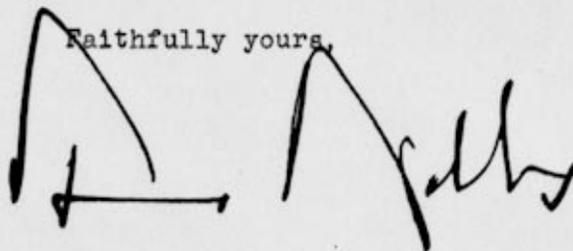
May 15, 1943

My dear Mr. President:

The personal letter from George Messersmith dated May 12 of which I am enclosing herewith a copy will, I believe, be of interest to you.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. M. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "M".

Enc.

The President,
The White House.

COPY

AMERICAN EMBASSY
Mexico, D.F., May 12, 1943

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dear Sumner:

You will recall the various efforts which are being made to remove Axel Wenner-Gren from our Proclaimed List. It is now interesting to note that Bernard E. Smith, who is better known as Ben Smith and who is now in Mexico City, has become interested in this matter of removing Wenner-Gren from the Proclaimed List. Ben Smith's interest in the matter is of course due largely to the interest of General Maximino Avila Camacho who has never abandoned his efforts in this direction. Ben Smith is said to be closely associated with General Maximino Avila Camacho in the new race track in Mexico City concerning which much could be said but most of which is better left unsaid. In any event it is one of the ventures promoted in Mexico by our money which has done us no good and the activities of Ben Smith in Mexico have in no way promoted our best interests here.

The foregoing is prompted by a memorandum which I have from the Civil Attaché of this Embassy (FBI) which I quote for your information.

"As of possible interest to you, a reliable contact of this office has recently advised that Bernard E. Smith, better known as Ben Smith, a well known contractor and alleged financier from New York City who is presently in Mexico City and who has been interested in various big business ventures in Mexico during recent months, recently stated that he had received a telephone call from Mr. Edward Flynn, of New York, shortly after Mr. Flynn's return to Washington from Mexico.

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

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By J. Schauble Date FEB 10 1972

"Smith stated that during this call Flynn advised him that he had spoken to President Roosevelt in an effort to have 'our mutual friend Wenner-Gren' removed from the U. S. 'black list'. Smith further stated that he 'informed the President through Flynn' that he, Smith, would back Wenner-Gren 100% if a move were made to remove his name from the U. S. 'black list'.

"According to this source Smith expressed no opinion as to the outcome of his and Mr. Flynn's plea to the President."

As of interest in this connection there are continued and insistent rumors here that the position of General Maximino is daily more precarious in Mexico and in the political picture here. There are increasing rumors which I for the present do not credit that his incumbency of the Ministry of Communications will soon end. I personally do not see his disappearance from the Ministry in the immediate future but as to his having lost almost completely political and personal prestige in Mexico there appears to be no doubt whatever.

I thought the foregoing would be of interest to you. You will of course use your own discretion as to whether you consider it of sufficient importance to pass on to the President.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
personal*

May 27, 1943.

PENDING FOLDER:

The President wants to take up the attached with the Attorney General and Leo Crowley when he gets back from Hyde Park.

FILE MEMO:

June 2, 1943

I took this matter up with both the Attorney General and Leo Crowley today.

F.D.R.

OFFICE OF
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



May 26, 1943

Dear Miss Tully:

Leo Crowley and I are very anxious to talk to the President about the Cyanamid contract. I enclose a memorandum which I should like him to see as soon as possible. Tomorrow, I shall ask General Watson for an appointment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Francis Biddle".

Francis Biddle
Attorney General

Miss Grace Tully

The White House

Mexico folder 1-43



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

F.P. 2

May 26, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The Alien Property Custodian of Mexico has, under pressure from the United States, seized the German interests in drugs, chemicals, photographic supplies, etc. - the basis of the German commercial power in Latin America. Mexico naturally wishes to use these properties as profitably as possible. After protracted negotiations, it is about to enter into a contract with American Cyanamid Company under which that corporation would have what amounts to an exclusive management of the German properties.

The Departments concerned are afraid of serious political repercussions if the Cyanamid deal goes through. Undoubtedly Cyanamid's competitors will protest vigorously against this "monopoly". The State Department feels, however, that they have gone so far with Mexico that it would upset the apple-cart to withdraw now or to suggest another arrangement.

Whatever arrangement is made with Mexico will set a pattern in Brazil, Columbia, and other Latin American countries. Negotiations with Brazil and Columbia are now proceeding.

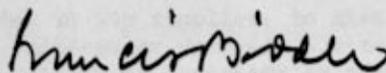
Leo Crowley is prepared to make an offer to the Mexican Government to execute a similar management contract through General Aniline or some of the other German corporations which have vested in him. As owner of these companies he can prevent the business drifting back to the Germans after the war and prevent a monopoly by permitting other corporations to supply Latin America with goods.

May 26, 1943

I enclose a summary of the proposed Cyanamid contract.

The decision must be made promptly. Crowley and I would like to talk to you about the whole matter as it involves basic policy considerations. Garfias, the Mexican representative, is now in Washington. I am asking Pa Watson to let us have an appointment as soon as conveniently possible.

Respectfully submitted,



Francis Biddle
Attorney General

Encl.

May 26, 1943

-PROPOSED AMERICAN CYANAMID CONTRACT

1. The Mexican Government will form a holding corporation (Quifar) to own the assets of 33 chemical, pharmaceutical and dye companies which were formerly Axis controlled. These firms control approximately 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the market.

2. The American Cyanamid Company will organize a Mexican management company (Tequis) which will manage all of the seized properties.

3. American Cyanamid shall manage the seized properties for a period of six years with an automatic renewal provision for succeeding three-year periods.

4. American Cyanamid will have full freedom to buy supplies; to hire or discharge employees; to establish, maintain, enlarge or decrease plants and offices; to conduct research; and to enter into sales contracts or agency agreements. The sales contracts or agency agreements will be limited to a duration of five years.

5. Costs and expenses of all kinds, except the salary of the general manager of American Cyanamid's managing company, shall be paid by the Mexican holding company. The American Cyanamid management company will be paid:

1. One million pesos per year regardless of net profits.
2. Ten per cent of net profits not exceeding 5 million pesos per year.
3. Fifteen per cent of net profits in excess of 5 million, but not over 15 million pesos per year.
4. Eighteen per cent of net profits in excess of 15 million pesos per year.

6. The management company is to advise the Mexican holding company as to the desirability of building plants and will furnish preliminary plans and drawings. New properties will be operated by the American Cyanamid management company.

(1360)

Mexico folder
1-43

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 1, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I do not think we should withhold having Messersmith make the suggestion. I think he should do so but with the definite explanation that the action decided on is wholly up to the decision of the Mexican Government and that we are not trying to force anything down their throats.

But I do think it important that President Cemacho and Secretary of State, Padilla, receive the information direct instead of through a committee or any other Mexican authority.

F. D. R.

Enclosures

Transmitting ~~copy~~ memorandum which the President received from the Secretary of State, 6/28/43, a copy of which has been retained for our files.

Published in

Foreign Relations of the United States

1943 Vol. VI The American Republics

Pages 510 - 511

CLS

June 28, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Ambassador Messersmith has telephoned from Mexico City. He has received the instruction recently approved by you, directing him to deliver to President Avila Camacho your letter regarding the Alien Property Custodian's proposal to furnish management services for the Mexican drug and chemical companies and to deliver to the Mexican Government the note containing the Alien Property Custodian's proposal. The Ambassador will, of course, carry out these instructions. He has requested that, before these documents are delivered, I lay before you the following expressions of his opinion:

The Ambassador has been informed by Senor Garfias that the American Cyanamid Company will withdraw its proposal to enter into a contract with the Mexican Government. He believes that, instead of proceeding along this line, the Mexican Government wishes to work out a management arrangement with a group of American companies.

The Ambassador believes that the Mexican authorities would not wish to enter into a contractual

arrangement with a company which had been formerly controlled by the Germans.

He believes further that the Mexican authorities would not favor a management arrangement made through an agency of this Government. He says that he understands that two members of the committee in charge of this matter in Mexico have so declared.

He believes that the proposal would be embarrassing to the President of Mexico, since the Ambassador believes that President Avila Camacho would not be able to accede to the proposal, and yet will find it most difficult to refuse the proposal endorsed by the President of the United States.

Finally, the Ambassador expresses the opinion that the proposal may result in no action being taken, with the result that after some lapse of time companies may find their way into private hands, and the replacement program may be prejudiced.

It was explained to the Ambassador that most of the points which he raised were canvassed by the agencies which have participated in the consideration of this matter and in the preparation of the memoranda for your consideration. However, he urges strongly that his views be presented to you. I presume that

-3-

you will wish the instruction to stand and wish
me so to inform the Ambassador.

Published in

Foreign Relations of the United States

Vol. VI 1943 The American Republics

Pages 509 - 510

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CLS.

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hm

Signed original of this letter sent to
the Mex. State.
hm

146

June 24, 1943

My dear Mr. President:

I am writing you because I believe that a splendid opportunity has arisen for me to apply the general principles of friendly cooperation which we discussed during our meeting at Monterrey. I have been told that your Government has again moved forward to implement the Rio de Janeiro and Washington Resolutions by vesting the enemy-owned chemical and pharmaceutical companies in Mexico. I understand that you plan to use these companies in connection with a program which is directed at the development of a nationalized drug and chemical industry, the expansion of your own domestic production, and the training of Mexicans to run that industry independently. I understand further that we in the United States, by furnishing certain management skills, technical services and supplies, could make a definite contribution to the success of this project. I am anxious to extend all possible assistance to your program because I consider it to be of great importance both to the economy of Mexico and the security

His Excellency
General Manuel Avila Camacho,
President of the United Mexican States,
Mexico City.

x146-A

of this hemisphere.

Mr. Leo Crowley, our Alien Property Custodian, has expressed to me his desire to place the facilities of his companies at your disposal. He has described to me a program involving the use of those facilities, which, he believes, could make a solid contribution to the success of your plans. I too believe that he could be of real service. I have accordingly asked Ambassador Messersmith to present Mr. Crowley's proposal to the appropriate members of your Government. x896

I have emphasized to Mr. Crowley that I wish him to be prepared to extend his fullest cooperation to you in the achievement of your objectives. Moreover, I have instructed him that the companies under his custody are to be used in the broad interests of your general program. You will appreciate that I am not in a position to issue such an instruction to a private American corporation. ^77

I fully recognize that arrangements for the management and development of the Mexican chemical industry are matters for your determination. I wish merely to emphasize my belief that the Alien Property Custodian, because of the status of his companies as publicly-owned corporations, could effectively promote the welfare of the Mexican industry. Accordingly, I hope that you will consider the proposal of the Alien Property Custodian

before reaching any final decision in the matter.

I am communicating with you in this personal way rather than through official channels because I am confident that in matters of this kind you would agree with me that it is more helpful to us both to communicate with one another in this direct and personal manner. W

May I say again how much I valued the conversations I had with you during our recent meetings and how truly beneficial I feel they have been to me. I am looking forward to carrying out the plans you were kind enough to suggest to me and I hope that I may therefore have the opportunity of seeing you again before many months have passed.

With the assurances of my highest consideration and of my warm personal regard, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Originals of these papers returned
to the Sec. State.
6/24/43 hm

Published in

Foreign Relations of the United States

1943 Vol. VI

Pages 508 - 509

No.

The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
American Ambassador,
Mexico, D. F.

CLF

Sir:

Reference is made to the Embassy's despatch no. 9463 of April 22, 1943 and to your letter of May 12, 1943 to Mr. Acheson. Attached are a copy of a letter which President Roosevelt himself is sending to President Camacho and a draft note to be submitted to the Mexican Foreign Office. You are requested promptly to put the enclosed note in appropriate form and to transmit it to the appropriate officials of the Mexican Government.

The issues raised by the proposed Cyanamid contract have been carefully considered by the interested governmental agencies and by the President. There has been special concern about the dominant position in the Mexican chemical and pharmaceutical industry which would be accorded to American Cyanamid Company if the proposed contract were executed. ~~It has also been felt that an arrangement~~ between the Mexican Government and the Alien Property Custodian along the lines suggested in the attached note would avoid difficulties which might arise from the Cyanamid arrangements and would be more advantageous to the Mexicans and to our economic warfare program. In view of these considerations, the President directed that his letter to President Camacho and the attached note to the Foreign Office be transmitted.

You should, in your conversations with the Mexican Government, emphasize the desire of this Government to work out an arrangement which will promote the best interests of the Mexican economy and the belief of this Government that the program outlined by the Alien Property Custodian affords a basis for achieving that objective.

Please send to the Department as soon as possible a copy of the note as transmitted to the Mexican Government, and please keep the Department promptly informed of all pertinent developments.

Very truly yours,

x77-7/11/43

Cordell Hall

Enclosures:

See attached page.

Enclosures:

1. Copy of letter
from President Roosevelt
to President Camacho.
2. Draft note to be sub-
mitted to the Mexican
Foreign Office.

In order to insure their collective security, the twenty-one American republics, in the Resolutions adopted at the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Rio de Janeiro, recommended that measures be taken to eliminate Axis influence from the economic life of this hemisphere. Further recommendations directed toward this end were embodied in the Final Act of the Inter-American Conference on Systems of Economic and Financial Control. It was recognized that some measure of technical, financial or managerial assistance from the United States of America might be necessary for the full accomplishment of the objectives underlying these recommendations. This Government has, therefore, offered to make available such assistance as is consonant with existing conditions.

It is with this offer in mind that this Government brings to the attention of the Mexican Government the desire of the Alien Property Custodian of this country to render such assistance as the Government of Mexico may wish in connection with the problems arising from the seizure of the enemy chemical and pharmaceutical companies. The Honorable Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian, has addressed a letter to the Department of State, the text of which is as follows:

"I have been advised that the Mexican Government has vested the Axis drug and chemical firms in Mexico and intends to use these vested firms as a nucleus for a nationalized drug and chemical industry. I understand that the Mexican Government, in connection with its program, wishes to secure certain management skill, technical services, and supplies from this country. As you know, it is my desire as Alien Property Custodian to cooperate fully in any program in the other American republics directed at the replacement of Axis enterprises. Moreover, it seems to me that as Alien Property Custodian, I am in a position to develop a program which will furnish the Mexican Government the kinds of assistance which it wishes from this country.

"As

"As Alien Property Custodian, I now own and control, for all practical purposes, certain drug and chemical companies in this country formerly owned by Axis interests. These companies include General Aniline and Film Corporation, which is one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of chemicals, dyestuffs and photographic materials and pharmaceuticals in this country; and the Schering Corporation, a large producer of drugs and pharmaceuticals. As Alien Property Custodian, I am prepared promptly to make a contract with the Mexican Government which will achieve the ultimate purposes that Government has in view. Specifically, the contract would cover the following points:

"(1) It would provide, through one of the companies I now control, or through a company to be organized for that purpose, a single managing unit for the Mexican properties. This unit would furnish the required management skill and assistance.

"(2) It would provide, so far as the exigencies of the war permit, supplies for the Mexican chemical and pharmaceutical industry. To provide these supplies, I would draw upon all of the resources of the American chemical and drug industry.

"(3) It would provide, to the extent feasible, for the establishment in Mexico of appropriate manufacturing operations and for the skilled personnel necessary to enable the Mexican Government, as soon as possible, to create its own sources of supply.

"(4) The contract would provide for compensation for management of the Mexican properties, but to the extent that the compensation exceeded cost the excess would be used either for research in fields designated by the Mexican Government or for the education of Mexicans in technical schools of the United States.

"I sincerely hope that you will find it possible to bring my offer to the attention of the appropriate agency of the Mexican Government so that it can be considered before a final decision regarding the disposition of the former enemy properties is made by the Mexican Government. If the Mexican Government is interested in my proposal, I am confident that we could agree upon its details and begin operations under the arrangement immediately."

If the Government of Mexico wishes to pursue these proposals, the Alien Property Custodian will be prepared to send representatives immediately to Mexico to carry on detailed discussions.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

My dear Mr. President:

June 23 1943

In accordance with the instructions given by you at your recent meeting with the Vice President, and Messrs. Welles, Crowley, and Acheson, upon the proposed communication to the Mexican Government regarding the management of the former German drug and chemical companies in Mexico, I am submitting to you a draft of a letter from you to the President of Mexico, a draft of a note to the Mexican Government, and our instructions to Ambassador Messersmith, all of which have been approved and copies of which have been initialed by the Vice President, the Alien Property Custodian, and the Attorney General.

The note puts forward the Alien Property Custodian's proposal and does not refer to the American Cyanamid proposal. Your wish, as I understand it, was that we should not state that there

was

The President,

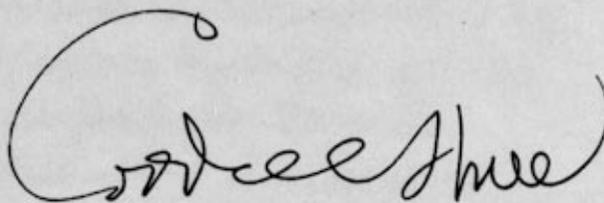
The White House.

x198

was no objection to this proposal. On the other hand, you did not wish formally to assert opposition since that might offend the Mexican Government which has not put the matter up to us.

The letter drafted for your signature makes it clear why you believe that the publicly owned companies here can more effectively perform the desired service than a private corporation.

Faithfully yours,



x20

Enclosures:

- Letter to the President of Mexico.
- Draft of note to the Mexican Government.
- Instruction to Ambassador Messersmith.

June 23, 1943

My dear Mr. President:

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Faithfully yours,

Cordell Hull

Enclosures:

Letter to the President of Mexico.

Draft of note to the Mexican Government.

Instruction to Ambassador Messersmith.

Mr. Latta

Please send copy
rather than original

copy to
Secretary
Munro sent
to him
7/23/43
JST!



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 21, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Attached is a letter from President Camacho, which is in response to your letter suggesting that the facilities of our Alien Property Custodian be used for the development of the Mexican drug and chemical industry.

You may wish to look at a copy of Ambassador Messersmith's covering despatch, a copy of which is also attached.

If you wish, I will send copies of these documents to Mr. Crowley and to the interested agencies, and will prepare the reply requested in the third paragraph of President Camacho's letter, for presentation by the Ambassador.

I concur in Ambassador Messersmith's suggestion that a small mission be sent and that it be prepared to submit specific plans to the Mexican Government.

Ambassador Messersmith's despatch refers to the unfortunate consequences of the inaccurate newspaper publicity concerning discussion of the Mexican drug and chemical problem in Washington.

The Ambassador has requested that there be no official or unofficial publicity concerning the

Alien



CH
OK
ZOR

Mexico folder
Carbon copy sent to Secretary Hull 1-13
7/23/43

Alien Property Custodian's mission. I am in complete agreement with this recommendation.

CH

Enclosures:

1. Original letter addressed to President Roosevelt from President Camacho, July 9, 1943, and translation.
2. Copy of despatch no. 11,442 from Mexico, D.F., July 13, 1943.

AIR MAIL

Mexico, D.F., July 13, 1943

No. 11,442

Subject: Transmitting Copy of Letter from President Avila Camacho to President Roosevelt in Connection with the Offer of the Alien Property Custodian to be Helpful in Arrangements which the Mexican Government may make Regarding Vested German Firms in the Chemical and Pharmaceutical Business.

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

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's instruction No. 3574, of June 24, 1943, with which were transmitted the original of a letter addressed by President Roosevelt to President Avila Camacho, and a draft of a note which I was instructed to submit to the Mexican Government, in which are set forth further the offer of the Alien Property Custodian of the United States to assist the Mexican Government in making certain arrangements to carry through operations it contemplates in connection with the former German chemical and pharmaceutical firms in Mexico now vested by the Mexican Government. I also have to refer in this connection to my letter of June 28 to Under Secretary Welles in which I raised certain questions respecting the delivery of this letter and of the note. I also have to refer to my despatch No. 11,260, of July 7, 1943, in which I informed the Department that the letter of President Roosevelt had been delivered to President Avila Camacho, and with which I transmitted a copy of the note which I had addressed to the Foreign Office with regard to this matter.

I now have to inform the Department that yesterday I was requested to call at the Foreign Office, where I was received by the Under Secretary, Mr. Torres Bodet, in the temporary absence of the Minister, Dr. Padilla. Mr. Torres Bodet stated that my note No. 1438, of July 3, 1943, a copy of which was transmitted with my despatch No. 11,260, of July 7, had been brought to the attention of the President, together with the original of the letter addressed by President Roosevelt to President Avila Camacho. He then handed me the original of a letter addressed by President Avila Camacho to President Roosevelt which he asked me to deliver to President Roosevelt. A copy of the letter addressed to President Roosevelt by President Avila Camacho, dated July 9, 1943, is transmitted herewith (Enclosure No. 1). There is also transmitted herewith a translation of the letter (Enclosure No. 2).

On handing me this letter, Mr. Torres Bodet stated that in view of President Roosevelt's letter and my note to the Ministry, this matter had naturally received the personal

attention

attention of the Ministry. Referring to the letter of President Avila Camacho to President Roosevelt, he said that it was desired to make it clear that the Mexican Government, on the basis of the information which it had, was not in a position to give any definite answer as to whether it would be prepared to accept the collaboration of the Alien Property Custodian in the matter of the former German chemical and pharmaceutical firms now vested by the Mexican Government. The President, however, and the Foreign Office, appreciated the spontaneous and friendly interest which President Roosevelt and our Government had shown and were therefore prepared to consider the matter further on the basis of the more detailed information which a representative of the Alien Property Custodian would be able to give.

Mr. Torres Bodet pointed out that in the letter from President Avila Camacho to President Roosevelt, he indicated that it would be suitable for Mr. Crowley or his authorized representative, to come informally to Mexico with the object of explaining more fully the project he had in mind. He emphasized that the reference to Mr. Crowley, the Alien Property Custodian, making the visit himself, was merely placed in the letter by President Avila Camacho in view of the fact that President Roosevelt in his letter had referred directly to his conversation with Mr. Crowley. Mr. Torres Bodet emphasized that this in no way implied that the President or the Foreign Office expected Mr. Crowley to come, but that a duly informed representative of Mr. Crowley would be entirely acceptable.

Mr. Torres Bodet also stated that on the arrival of the representative of the Alien Property Custodian, the Embassy should inform the Foreign Office as the conversations which would be held with such representative would be in the Foreign Office and not in other agencies of the Mexican Government, in accord with the wishes expressed by the President of the Republic.

It will be noted therefore that the Mexican Government is prepared to receive, through the Foreign Office, a representative of the Alien Property Custodian for the purpose of getting further information concerning the method of collaboration which the Alien Property Custodian has in mind. In his letter, the President refers to the visit of such representative as "informal," and the Under Secretary in his conversation several times used this word "informal". I gathered the definite impression that the Mexican Government does not wish any publicity with regard to a representative of the Alien Property Custodian coming to Mexico on this matter and that it desires the conversations on the matter to be kept on a purely informal and exploratory basis until it is in a position to determine whether it is able to entertain the method of collaboration proposed. While the President's letter refers to "a representative," I see no objection to several members, not exceeding two, of the staff of the Alien Property Custodian proceeding to Mexico for the purpose of such informal conversations, I would strongly recommend, however, that no more than two such representatives should come from the Office of the Alien Property Custodian and that no publicity whatever should be given to their trip or to its objectives. I say

this

this as I believe that such publicity would only tend to defeat the objectives which both governments may have in mind. The unfortunate publicity which has appeared in the articles of several columnists, or at least one, in the United States, has not failed to come to the attention of the Mexican Government, and has been annoying to it.

I can give no assurances that the informal conversations which the Mexican Government is prepared to enter into on this matter will lead to a successful result. It is my opinion that the decision of the Mexican Government will depend on the method of approach and upon the form of arrangement which is proposed. For this reason it is I believe important that the representative or representatives of the Alien Property Custodian should not proceed to Mexico City until they are fully documented as to the arrangement which they intend to propose and are in a position to speak with some authority as to the details of the arrangement.

Should it be decided to send a representative or representatives of the Alien Property Custodian to Mexico City to enter into these informal conversations with the Embassy and with the Ministry of Foreign Relations, I would ask to be informed of the date of their proposed arrival, in order that I may appropriately inform the Foreign Office.

The original of the letter addressed to President Roosevelt by President Avila Camacho, together with a copy of this despatch, are being transmitted under personal cover to Assistant Secretary Acheson.

Respectfully yours,

G.S. Messersmith.

Enclosures:

1. Copy of letter from President Avila Camacho to President Roosevelt.
2. Translation of above.

869.2 Chemicals and Dyes, General
GSM/aw

To the Department in Original and 4 Copies.

*Correspondencia Particular
del Presidente de los
Estados Unidos Mexicanos*

Excelentísimo Señor Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Presidente de los Estados Unidos de América,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Translation published in
Foreign Relations of the United States
1943 Vol. VI The American Republics
Pages 515-516

CLS

*Correspondencia Particular
del Presidente de los
Estados Unidos Mexicanos*

México, D.F., 9 de julio de 1943.

Excelentísimo Señor Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Presidente de los Estados Unidos de América,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Muy estimado señor Presidente:

Me complace en acusar recibo de su atenta carta del 24 del mes pasado, en la que me indica la posibilidad de que el Custodio de la Propiedad Enemiga, señor Leo Crowley, ponga a disposición del Gobierno de México los elementos de las empresas que administra, a fin de contribuir al éxito de nuestras industrias química y farmacéutica.

Mucho agradezco a usted el espontáneo y amistoso interés con que se ha servido considerar este asunto dentro del marco de estrecha cooperación en que se desenvuelven las relaciones de nuestros pueblos y, aunque no estoy por lo pronto en aptitud de tomar una determinación concreta sobre el particular, sí creo que sería muy conveniente que el propio señor Crowley -o un representante autorizado suyo- se trasladara, informalmente, a México con el objeto de exponer más ampliamente sus proyectos ya que todo lo que pueda redundar en una colaboración de mutuo provecho para nuestras Repúblicas encontrará siempre en nosotros grata acogida.

*Correspondencia Particular
del Presidente de los
Estados Unidos Mexicanos*

2.

Si estima usted que el viaje a que aludo puede llevarse a efecto, le agradeceré me lo haga saber ya sea directamente ya por conducto del señor Embajador Messersmith, quien se halla al tanto de la cuestión por haberla empezado igualmente a tratar con el señor Secretario de Relaciones de México.

En los últimos párrafos de su carta se refiere usted muy amablemente a nuestras entrevistas de Monterrey y de Corpus Christi. Yo conservo también el mejor recuerdo de las importantes conversaciones que sostuvimos en esa ocasión, que me dió la oportunidad de apreciar directa y personalmente el noble fervor democrático de su determinación en pro de una política de equidad y justicia social para nuestra América.

Con la esperanza de verle próximamente en la forma en que lo proyectamos durante nuestro encuentro del mes de abril, saludo a usted con toda estimación y le reitero las seguridades de mi cordial amistad,

M. C. C. C.

México, D.F., July 9, 1943.

His Excellency
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

I take pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your kind letter of the 24th of last month, in which you ~~mention the possibility that the Alien Property Custodian, Mr. Leo Crowley, put at the disposal of the Mexican Government members of the enterprises which he manages, in order to contribute to the success of our chemical and pharmaceutical industries.~~

I am very grateful to you for the spontaneous and friendly interest with which you have been good enough to consider this matter within the framework of close cooperation which characterizes the development of relations between our peoples and, although for the present I am not in a position to make a concrete decision in this matter, I believe that it would be very suitable for Mr. Crowley himself--or his authorized representative--to come, informally, to Mexico with the object of explaining his projects more fully since everything which could result in a collaboration of mutual benefit for our Republics will always be warmly welcomed by us.

If you consider that the trip I allude to can be accomplished, I shall appreciate your letting me know either directly or through Ambassador Messersmith, who is fully acquainted with the matter as he has likewise begun discussions regarding it with the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

In the last paragraphs of your letter you kindly refer to our interviews at Monterrey and Corpus Christi. I also retain the best of recollections of the important conversations we had on that occasion, which gave me the opportunity of appreciating directly and personally the noble democratic fervor of your decision in favor of a policy of equity and social justice for our America.

With the hope of seeing you soon in the manner in which we planned it during our meeting in the month of April, I greet you with all consideration and renew the assurances of my cordial friendship.

M. Avila Camacho.