

● PSF

Paraguay

War History

PSE Paraguay

HRL

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A)

Asuncion

Dated December 8, 1941

Rec'd 4:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

211, December 8, noon.

Department's circular telegram December 7, 10 p.m.

Today is main religious holiday of Paraguay.

Foreign Minister, President and all leaders dispersed at inaccessible points without telephone for long weekend, Asuncion is empty. I have transmitted message to Foreign Minister informally by army truck through Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs. While Argana did not plan to return until afternoon of 10th he will now probably arrive tomorrow. General reaction at Asuncion is excellent.

FROST

JRL

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file

Asuncion, May 22, 1943

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

With the keenest satisfaction I thank Your Excellency in the name of the Government and the people of Paraguay for the cordial message that you sent me on the anniversary of the independence of my country. It is equally pleasing to me to thank Your Excellency for your good wishes for my prosperity and welfare. In my forthcoming visit to your great country I shall have the honor and the pleasure to express to Your Excellency how cordial and sincere are the sentiments of friendship which my people feel toward your people. In expressing my great hopes for the triumph of the cause of liberty and justice for which Your Excellency is the most determined exponent it is an honor to me to renew to you the assurances of my high esteem and unwavering friendship.

(Signed)

HIGINIO MORINIGO

President of the Republic of Paraguay

*no memo
in file on this
6/11/43*

PSF Paraguay

The White House
Washington

MAY 22 3 09 PM 1943

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ASUNCION 1245 MAY 22 1943

EXCELENTISIMO SENOR PRESIDENTE DE LOS EE UU DE NORTEAMERICA

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

WASHNDC

CON LA MAS VIVA SATISFACCION AGRADEZCO A VUESTRA EXCELENCIA,
EN NOMBRE DEL GOBIERNO Y PUEBLOS PARAGUAYOS, LA CORDIAL
FELICITACION QUE ME ENVIARA, CON MOTIVO DEL ANIVERSARIO DE LA
INDEPENDENCIA DE MI PAIS.

IGUALMENTE PLACEME AGRADECER A VUESTRA EXCELENCIA SUS
AUGURIOS DE BIENESTAR Y PROSPERIDAD, EN MI PROXIMA VISITA
A SU GRAN PAIS TENDRE EL HONOR Y EL PLACER DE EXPRESAR A

VUESTRA EXCELENCIA COMO SON DE CORDIALES Y SINCEROS LOS
SENTIMIENTOS DE AMISTAD QUE MI PUEBLO SIENTE HACIA EL VUESTRO.
AL FORMULAR MIS MEJORES VOTOS POR EL TRIUNFO DE LA CAUSA
DE LA LIBERTAD Y DE LA JUSTICIA DE LA QUE VUESTRA EXCELENCIA
ES SU MAS ESFORZADO PALADIN, HONROME EN RENOVARLE LA
SEGURIDAD DE MI HONDO APRECIO Y AMISTAD INVARIABLES

HIGINIO MORINIGO M PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY

file

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1-43*



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 8. 1943

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest in connection with the forthcoming visit of President Morinigo, I take pleasure in transmitting a memorandum prepared in the Department including biographical sketches of President Morinigo and the members of his party, background material on Paraguay and the subjects which the President may wish to discuss with you.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Memorandum, Visit of President
Morinigo of Paraguay to the
United States.

The President,

The White House.



M E M O R A N D U M

VISIT OF PRESIDENT MORINIGO OF PARAGUAY TO THE
UNITED STATES.

I N D E X

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PRESIDENT MORINIGO.

Higinio Morinigo was born near Asunción, Paraguay, on January 11, 1897. He received his education at the National College and the Military Academy in Asunción, and since graduation has followed a strictly military career.

During the Chaco War (1932-1935) he commanded three regiments in the battle of Zenteno. In June 1940, he was made Brigadier General and Minister of War. Upon the death in an airplane accident of President Estigarribia in 1940, the Council of Ministers chose General Morinigo as President to finish the unexpired term of Estigarribia. In February 1943, President Morinigo was elected to an additional five year term commencing August 15, 1943. President Morinigo was made a Major General in May of this year.

President Morinigo depends almost entirely upon the Army for his support, although he has several civilians in his Cabinet. He has weathered several revolutionary storms and by his wise choice of subordinates, has actually accomplished some necessary social reforms.

President Morinigo is married and has three children. In May 1940, his wife and young son Higinio Emilio came to the United States as guests of the President in order that the son who was suffering from the effects of infantile paralysis might obtain specialized treatment at the Warm Springs Foundation. They stayed in the United States for about two months.

President Morinigo made an official visit to Rio de Janeiro in May of this year.

President Morinigo has a pleasing personality. He is particularly fond of horseback riding, swimming and dancing. During recent months he has been suffering from

a kidney

a kidney ailment and is now under the care of his physician, Dr. Rodriguez, who is accompanying him. He does not smoke nor drink any more than formality demands.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF MEMBERS OF PRESIDENT
MORINIGO'S PARTY.

Dr. Luis A. Argaña, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Born November 10, 1897, in Asunción. Dr. Argaña is an outstanding lawyer in Paraguay and a member of a relatively small political group of intellectuals known as "Tiempiastas".

Dr. Argaña commenced his public career as Minister of Justice and Education under the Paiva Government in the late 1930's and also served for a time as Foreign Minister under the same Administration. Subsequently, he was Dean of the Faculty of Economics in the University of Asunción. He has also headed Paraguayan delegations to recent international conferences at Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro. He was appointed to his present post on November 29, 1940. He is devoutly religious and has been outspoken in his criticism of barbarities practiced by the Axis nations. He has staunchly advocated Paraguayan cooperation with the United Nations.

After his first wife's death he married her sister and has eight children. He is a polished after-dinner speaker, but prefers to speak at small gatherings because of his light voice.

Dr. Argaña owns a large ranch in Paraguay where he raises blooded cattle.

Rogelio Espinosa, Minister of Finance. Appointed October 1940. Born in Asunción June 2, 1903. Dr. Espinosa is of almost pure Spanish stock and has been educated in Paraguay, France and Great Britain having specialized in economics and finance. In 1933, he was a Paraguayan delegate at the London Economic Conference and was subsequently Paraguayan Chargé d'Affaires there for about six years. He has an excellent reputation and is very popular in Paraguay. He is a most active supporter of the Allied cause. Dr. Espinosa is married to an English woman who had divorced her first husband. He has one child by his wife and has custody of her child by the former marriage. He speaks perfect English, French and Spanish; is fond of tennis, bridge, swimming and golf and is an accomplished horseman.

Lieutenant Colonel Victoriano Benitez Vera. Graduate of Military School in Asunción. He is the brother-in-law of the Paraguayan Ambassador in Brazil, Juan B. Ayala. He was recently elevated from the rank of Major to his present grade of Lieutenant Colonel. He is the head of the Cavalry Division stationed in Asunción and this Division has been the recipient of a considerable part of lend-lease supplies recently sent to Paraguay. During recent months Colonel Benitez Vera has been much more friendly toward the United States than previously. He is considered quite a factor in the political situation and capable of exerting some force in certain branches of the Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Rodriguez. Colonel Rodriguez is the personal physician of President Morinigo and was trained in the highly reputed School of Dietetics in Buenos Aires. Since President Morinigo is suffering from kidney trouble, Colonel Rodriguez accompanies him at all times and prescribes his diet.

Major Eugenio Reichert, Aide-de-Camp to the President. Major Reichert is a young officer in the Paraguayan Army who has been acting as Aide-de-Camp to President Morinigo for the past year.

Lieutenant Commander Pedro Meyer. He is the head of the Naval Arsenal at Asunción. He was included in the presidential party at the last minute. Since the outbreak of the present war he is believed to have held pro-German sentiments. It is believed that his inclusion on this trip may bring about an alteration in his views.

Jorge Hipolito Escobar. Born in Asunción, April 23, 1916; Assistant Editor of newspaper El Tiempo and Editor of literary review Rumbo. Graduated from National University of Asunción in 1935 and was made Chief of International Section of National Post Office. Early in 1943, Dr. Escobar was made Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, having previously served as private secretary to Foreign Minister Argaña. He has been very cooperative with American officials in Paraguay and is sincerely pro-Allied. In April of this year, he came to the United States with three other Paraguayan journalists as guests of this Government. He has just completed a trip through the United States and Canada and will join President Morinigo's party in Washington. His knowledge of English is meager.

UNITED

UNITED STATES-PARAGUAYAN RELATIONS.

President Morinigo's Administration has adopted an international policy of increased collaboration with the United States, Brazil and other United Nations during the past year in spite of the fact that the economy of Paraguay has always been almost completely dominated by Argentina.

The Government of Paraguay was among the first of the American republics to break diplomatic relations with the Axis; it has also broken off relations with the Vichy French and has promulgated numerous decrees designed to suppress subversive activities on the part of Axis firms and individuals.

The Paraguayan Government has also assisted American officials in detecting clandestine radio stations and has placed interventors in the German and Italian organizations in Paraguay. These cooperative measures have all been taken in spite of the alleged pro-Nazi sympathies of several high ranking Paraguayan army officers.

When American forces entered North Africa, Paraguay sent prompt public congratulations.

1. Export-Import Bank Credit of \$3,000,000. In July of 1942, the Export-Import Bank extended a credit of \$3,000,000 to Paraguay of which \$2,000,000 is to be used on a road construction project which is now being undertaken by the United States engineering firm of R. W. Hebard and Company. No decision has yet been made concerning the type of projects to be undertaken with the \$1,000,000 credit still outstanding. R. W. Hebard and Company has been in Paraguay since 1939 and has just finished the construction of a highway from Asunción to Villa Rica using funds totaling \$3,000,000 from a former Export-Import Bank credit established in 1939.

2. Coordinator's Health Program. In 1942, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs contributed \$1,000,000 for a health and sanitation program, designed to provide for malarial control, and establishment of hospital clinics and health education, in cooperation with the Paraguayan Health Department. This program is under the direction of Dr. Richard Plunkett.

3. American

3. American Airport Development. Under the Airport Development Program Pan American Airways has airport construction programs at Asunción and Concepción.

4. Agricultural Mission to Paraguay. The Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs advanced the sum of \$250,000 for the establishment of an agency in Paraguay to develop agricultural and derivative industries. This agency is already operating.

5. Military and Technical Assistance to Paraguay. The lend-lease agreement with Paraguay calls for delivery of \$11,000,000 worth of equipment. Almost \$1,000,000 of equipment has already been delivered, the principal items including over 100 trucks and nineteen advanced training planes.

TOPICS WHICH PRESIDENT MORINIGO MAY BE EXPECTED
TO DISCUSS.

There are no problems pending between the United States and Paraguay and while President Morinigo's visit should be considered primarily as one of good will, there are a number of questions in which he is interested and which he may wish to discuss as follows:

Financial Mission. The Paraguayan Government has requested that a mission be sent to Paraguay composed of experts from the Federal Reserve System, Farm Credit Administration, Office of Price Administration and the Federal Home Loan Bank System. These experts are desired for the purpose of reorganizing the agricultural Bank, furnishing details concerning the extension of agricultural credits, organizing a system of savings deposits, advising on long term mortgages and finally, to establish a system of price controls. These agencies have each agreed to send one of their experts, but details regarding payment of costs remain to be settled.

Military Missions. The Paraguayan President may be expected to request a United States military mission to replace a French Mission which has been in Paraguay for a number of years. The War Department is willing, as soon as the present French Mission now in Paraguay leave for North Africa, to send such a mission. The Paraguayans are

also

also interested in obtaining a United States Aviation mission. There are very few Paraguayan officers who know how to fly the planes they have received and a small United States Aviation mission would be of great assistance to the Government of Paraguay.

River Port Facilities. The Paraguayan Government has consistently been interested in arranging for the construction of river port facilities such as docks and warehouses. There is \$1,000,000 of the Export-Import Bank credit which has to date ~~not been allocated~~ and the Paraguayans may request that a portion of this amount be used for river port facilities.

Roads. The Paraguayans consider that a road from Villa Rica to the Brazilian frontier near the Iguazú Falls would be a very important contribution to the industrial development of Paraguay. Since Hebard and Company are now engaged on a \$2,000,000 road construction project in Paraguay, it would appear that consideration of this new proposed highway should be deferred until the termination of the present work.

Airport. The Paraguayans may seek funds to construct aviation hangars, military arsenals, warehouses and possibly barracks on the new airport. The Paraguayans have already been informed that it would be extremely difficult to obtain steel at the present time to furnish the type of construction which they appear to desire.

Exploitation of Petroleum Resources. The Paraguayans are under the impression that their country may have considerable petroleum resources and they have indicated that they desire the United States Government to undertake the actual geological exploration of Paraguay to determine the possibility of producing oil. Several months ago this Government sent a prominent petroleum expert to Paraguay to advise the Government on proper legislation concerning exploitation. World wide experience has shown that many years of intensive development are required before oil can be found and produced in commercial countries. This Government is prepared, however, to assist the Paraguayan Government in selecting competent and reputable American firms with whom the Paraguayan Government might enter into negotiations for the exploitation of its petroleum products.

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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 9, 1943

My dear Mr. President:

I believe that the most important point that you may wish to make tonight -- and the one that will be most appreciated by your guest -- is the fact that during the conference at Rio de Janeiro Paraguay promptly took action to break all relations with the Axis powers and since that time has been cooperating with us and with the other American republics who have declared war or broken relations one hundred percent in the United Nations effort.

You may also wish to make some reference to the traditional bravery of the Paraguayan people and that it is only natural that people who have so valiantly defended their liberties throughout their history should have adopted the policy of joining with the other United Nations in the present war.

One of the chief complaints the Paraguayans have had to make in the past is the fact that there has been so little trade between Paraguay and the United States. I think it would be appreciated if you would express your hope that after the war is over this Government will be

The President,

The White House.

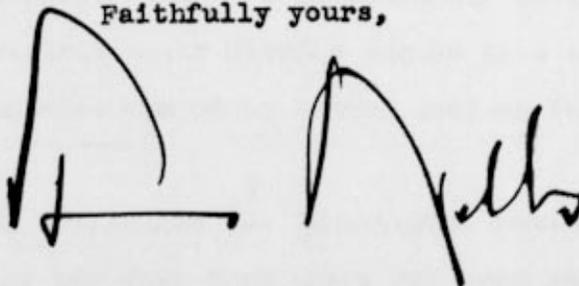
be interested in doing what it can in developing trade and other communications between the United States and Paraguay. We have made available to Paraguay credits for the construction of roads and for agricultural development projects. These arrangements have worked out very satisfactorily and have created a very friendly feeling for us in the country.

You remember, of course, that you had General Morinigo's son come with his mother to Warm Springs two years ago and that that gesture was also very greatly appreciated in Paraguay.

I hope that these suggestions may be of some use to you.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "A" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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SUMNER WELLES