

S-POL-27 (A7)

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November 1, 1968

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

The Honorable
Henry Dearborn
Minister Counselor
American Embassy
Mexico, D.F.

Dear Henry:

This will probably be my last letter before the results of the elections turn our attention to a new range of problems. The polls printed today indicate the two candidates are virtually even, which heightens interest in the race. It is notable how the news of the bombing halt, added to that about the election, has made the impressive Olympics fade so rapidly.

In reviewing the recent work of this office it appears that there has been a marked slackening of the pace which has been normal for the past thirty months. In looking around for reasons, it appears that the slow-down is at least partly due to the fact that a number of major issues are quiet or resolved: Claims, Colorado and Rio Grande salinity, Mexicanization, and cotton textiles. The backlog of work resulting from the Presidential meetings is now largely worked off and A.I.D. matters are fewer and of less importance. With our leaner staff we ought to be able to respond with greater agility as problems arise. In addition to all the reasons cited above, certainly a major factor in the slower pace is the fact we are in the final months of an administration.

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In the time remaining before the new administration takes office, I would like to see the detached tracts, the broadcasting agreement, the Juarez statue, and possibly the cultural agreement all concluded. That is certainly an optimistic list. On the horizon I can see arising problems involved in the alteration of the "green card" practice -- by court order, by Congress, or both -- issues about the protection of U.S. citizens -- more conflict over Article 33 and arbitrary police practices -- and problems arising from Mexican efforts to reduce their current account payments deficit. CODAF may survive if the Democrats prosper, but with or without CODAF our border problems are not likely to decline. I suspect that the requirements for narcotics control may demand that we come up with some sort of subsidy or grant for the Mexican narcotics control authorities. This will take some ingenuity in the current climate for foreign assistance.

On the personnel side, I expect that a number of new requirements will emerge when the results of the election become known, or at the latest by the time this year's promotion list is announced. As it appears that Mexico may be in for some problems in the balance of payments and foreign financing fields, I am renewing my efforts to assure that the Economic Section will be adequately staffed.

If the political situation quiets down as the most recent Embassy reports suggest it may, perhaps the intense interest of the Washington intelligence community in Mexican developments will abate. I am currently negotiating for agreement to send you a copy of a Memorandum produced by CIA's Board of Estimates on the implications for Mexican political stability of the student disorders. As the subject might imply, the paper is rather pessimistic and it was so controversial in the Board's discussions that it was put out only as a memorandum to stimulate discussion rather than a more formal product. The other manifestation of interest in Mexican politics is the scheduled visit of Bob Cross who will be traveling with the blessing of the White House to look into youth activities and programs. Mike Yohn will have further details on the Cross group's plans.

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I am very much looking forward to my visit in December which will mean much more to me than did my orientation visit last year when I was barely acquainted with the individuals and issues in our relations with Mexico and the operation of our Mission. The CODAF Meeting is once again scheduled for December 5-6 and I am re-checking to see if Covey will attend.

Finally, I would like to add my own deep appreciation for the excellent way in which you all handled the multitude of demands on you occasioned by the Olympics. We are all aware that you did a very fine job.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely,

Maxwell Chaplin
Country Director
Office of Mexican Affairs

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