

Transcribed Excerpts from the Memo of Herbert Hoover's Talks with Argentina President Juan Peron, June 11, 1946

Argentina

June 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1946

Buenos Aires.

As I have said my main objective in going to South America was to stimulate food exports from the Argentine and from Brazil. The former country was greatly the most important.

As the relations of the United States Government with the Government of the Argentine were bitter and filled with hate, it seemed almost impossible to do anything, but the stakes were so important - a possible increase in supplies by 1,000,000 tons - that I felt I must try.

When discussing the idea with President Truman, Secretary Anderson urged that I should try (sic) Truman accepted. Anderson said, "The State Department will protest against Mr. Hoover's going." Truman replied, "We won't give them a change, I will announce it at once..."

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My interview with Peron lasted 35 minutes. I apologized for coming in upon him forty-eight hours after he had taken office and explained that it was only the desperation of the situation that justified my doing so. I outlined the world situation, our "gap" in supplies, my hopes from the Argentine of an additional 1,500,000 tons to the ordinary routine exports. Leaving him with a simple presentation of the case and expressions of personal good will by way of sympathetic expressions on the difficulty of the tasks which confronted him...

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On Saturday, Messersmith gave a luncheon where the Minister of Industry (who had been present during the interview with Peron), the Foreign Minister, and the Minister of Agriculture were present. I outlined my plan of action to be taken by Peron and suggested that he was the man who out to be given the powers to expedite exports. He was pleased at this idea. I received an invitation to attend a great State dinner by Peron to the delegates to his Inauguration on Sunday evening.

I had great doubts as accepting this invitation for fear of incidents by super-heated Argentines or by unfavorable publicity in the American anti-Argentine press that might interfere with my job. However, I went with Mr. and Mrs. Messersmith who was steadily losing his fears and becoming

more friendly. I was placed at the 196th place in a dinner of 216 representatives of various government and of Argentine officials. I was resolved however to eat even Argentine dirt if I could get the 1,600,000 tons. This seating was no doubt the work of some minor Argentine official, although Messersmith should have seen to it that I was properly placed. Hugh had also been invited but no seat was provided for him and after being insulted by an Argentine Army officer quickly left...

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I telephoned Messersmith on Sunday to secure for me another meeting with President Peron on Monday, hoping to button up my proposals. Messersmith said that nothing could be done on Sundays in the Argentine, that the Argentines never did business then. I told him two of the Ministers had been working with me all morning on our plans. On Monday I telephoned Dodero, who called me back at once and said that President Peron wished me to come to luncheon alone for a confidential talk with him. He did not want Messersmith. Hugh took the message and suggested there would be a language difficulty if I came alone and suggested that Dr. Julius Klein come as interpreter, explaining that Klein was of my political party and had been Under Secretary of Commerce in my Administration. Dodero reported that this was agreeable and that he had been invited also. I squared the matter with Messersmith by proposing that in a meeting where he was not present I could better support his purposes.

Dr. Klein's note outlines the conversation fully on other subjects than food. In the food matter I outlined the plan agreed with the Ministers, and for speeding up exports, and stated that one of my purposes was the opportunity it gave him to impress the solicitude of the Argentines upon the starving nations. He told me he was going to issue the necessary decrees (regulations in American terms) at once. I asked if there were any objection to my commenting at a press conference I was having that evening upon the fine cooperation he was giving. Peron was pleased at this idea. And I did so in warm terms. Peron promised to telegraph me/the text of the decree

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On my return to Washington I sent out this whole situations to President Truman and urged him to release the gold and bank deposits at once and to cancel the black list. I stated that if this were done quickly, Peron would, I felt, respond to the gesture. Truman had not known the whole truth of our goings on in maintaining these pressures thirteen months after the war was over. When he confirmed my statement from the State Department (and had me repeat my statement to them), my recommendations were put into action within 48 hours. I sent a telegram to Peron through Dodero, saying that this was a gesture of personal good will from Truman and I hoped that he Person might respond. Peron sent me a cordial reply.