

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Latinoamerica
Mexico

TO : White House - Mr. Sayre

DATE: September 8, 1964

FROM : ARA - William T. Pryce

SUBJECT: Congratulatory Messages from the President

During a conversation between Mr. Bundy and Mr. Mann on Saturday the question of congratulatory messages from the President arose. In case the subject should arise again, I thought you might like to have the following information.

Bolivia - No congratulatory message was given Paz on his re-election. No congratulatory message was given Paz on his inauguration. However, Ambassador Henderson presented Paz a silver framed photograph, suitably inscribed, of the President, a few days after the inauguration. We also sent routine messages on August 6, Bolivia's independence day.

Venezuela - The Venezuelan national elections took place on December 1, 1963 and the results were generally known the next day. The final results were not officially verified by the Supreme Electoral Council until December 19. On that date, the Council announced that the results of the elections showed Raul Leoni to be the winner among the candidates for the Presidency, and he therefore became the official President-elect. On the same day a message of congratulations from President Johnson was sent to Embassy Caracas. It was delivered in writing to President-elect Leoni the following day (December 20).

Mexico - Elections were held in Mexico on July 5. On July 6 we authorized Ambassador Freeman to deliver an oral message from President Johnson to Diaz Ordaz as soon as returns were accepted as indicating the latter's election. Text of message:

"I extend to you upon your election to the Presidency my warmest congratulations and best wishes as you prepare to assume the heavy responsibilities of

that high office. I am sure that the mutual respect and close cooperation that have long characterized the relationship between the Presidents of our two countries will continue."

On July 15 Ambassador Freeman delivered the message orally and left an unsigned Spanish translation on a card. Diaz Ordaz was delighted with the message and informal way in which it was delivered. He asked Ambassador Freeman to convey to President Johnson his appreciation for message and Mexico's determination to continue to be a "fervent and loyal ally of the U.S."

Current plans are to send written messages of congratulations upon Diaz Ordaz' being officially named President-elect and then another upon his inauguration.

Panama - A congratulatory message from President Johnson to President-elect Robles was delivered to him on June 5, 1964, immediately following the formal presentation of his credentials as President-elect. Although Robles had been generally recognized as the winner of the May 10 elections for several weeks, it was decided to wait until the final legal confirmation of his victory before delivering the congratulatory message. The message was transmitted to the Embassy by cable and dated and delivered by the Embassy in the form of a letter.

Brazil - You are familiar with the way the Brazilian situation was handled.

We have checked with Blanche Halla (S/S-c) who also has our impression that there is no department-wide policy on this subject. Decisions on whether congratulatory messages should be sent are usually made on an individual country basis by the bureau concerned, taking into account all the circumstances relevant to the country concerned.

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