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XLVII. U. S. Memorandum in Support of Uruguayan Proposal To Treat American Republics Engaged in War as Non-Belligerents

(Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. V ; No. 106, July 5, 1941)

On July 2 the Government of Uruguay made public in Montevideo the following text of a memorandum handed by the Acting Secretary of State, Mr. Sumner Welles, to the Minister of Uruguay in Washington, Mr. J. Richling, on July 1, 1941:

"MEMORANDUM

"The Acting Secretary of State of the United States of America desires to inform His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay of the gratification with which the Government of the United States has learned of the views of the Government of Uruguay as communicated by Dr. Guani in his memorandum of June 21, 1941.

"The Government of Uruguay has once again lighted the way toward a constructive and practical cooperation between all of the American Republics at this moment which is more critical than any which has transpired since the achievement of their independence.

"A black night of fear and destruction and organized murder has engulfed almost all of Europe and a great part of the rest of the world. Aggression without comparison in history for its deliberately planned frightfulness has annihilated the independence of one country after another. The right inherent in every man and woman to worship God has been ruthlessly and methodically destroyed. The cultures of centuries, the cultures from which every one of the American nations has derived its own national inspiration have not only been temporarily blotted out but an endeavor is being made to extirpate them forever. No country anywhere, today, is secure from this unmasked lust for power and loot which has no limit but domination of the entire world.

"In view of this situation, the Government of Uruguay addresses itself to the other American Republics urging positive implementation of the policy of hemisphere solidarity already unanimously adopted by the American nations at previous inter-American conferences.

"Uruguay recalls that its great liberator Artigas, over a hundred years ago, recognized the common interests of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere and suggested the undertaking of an offer of reciprocal and mutual assistance. Uruguay recollects that during the World War of 1914-1918 it adopted, long before its general acceptance in this hemisphere, the policy that any act susceptible of affecting adversely the rights of any nation of the Americas should be considered as constituting an offense committed against all the American nations, and should bring about a uniform and common reaction.

"Pursuant to this policy, Uruguay declared in 1917 that it would not treat as a belligerent any American country which, in defense of its own rights, should find itself in a state of war with nations of other continents. Finally, Uruguay recalls that the policy of solidarity which it espoused twenty-five years ago has now been accepted by all the other American countries in a series of inter-American instruments and, therefore, inquires of the other American Republics, whether, in their judgment, the moment is not opportune to give new content and definition to the policy of inter-American solidarity.

"The Government of the United States welcomes the opportunity afforded by the initiative of the Government of Uruguay briefly to restate the policies which it is presently pursuing.

"In the first place, the Government of the United States has considered it axiomatic that the security of each of the American Republics was dependent upon the security of all. It was for this simple but basic reason that it wholeheartedly supported at Buenos Aires, Lima, Panamá, and Habana the several agreements to make inviolate the peace, security and territorial integrity of the Americas.

"In the second place, the President of the United States has frequently declared, the last time formally before the

chiefs of mission of the other American Republics in Washington on May 27 last, the unshakable determination of the United States to give aid to whatever extent and in whatever quantity may lie within its power, to countries prepared to resist the forces of aggression. The Congress has passed legislation to enable the transfer of equipment and supplies to such countries, and practical assistance on a stupendous scale is now being furnished.

"In pursuance of these two policies, the one of hemispheric solidarity, the other of aid to countries resisting aggression—but both of them with one end in view, namely, the security of the Western Hemisphere—the Government of the United States has offered and extended cooperative assistance of various types to the other American Republics. The economic and financial resources of the United States, the naval and air base facilities acquired from Great Britain and from Denmark, and military and naval matériel, have been made available to all the American Republics on the fullest cooperative basis for the common defense of the New World.

"Equally significant of the desire and purpose of the United States to afford the greatest possible opportunity for realizing to the full the principle of hemispheric solidarity and defense, there was incorporated in the Neutrality Act of 1939 a provision excepting, subject to certain conditions not here important, American states from the operation of the act when engaged in war against a non-American state or states.

"The safety of the Americas hangs in the balance today. Constructive and far-sighted action now on the part of all the American Republics acting together will ensure the preservation for future generations of those liberties and other blessings which our forefathers so laboriously gained.

"The Government of the United States welcomes and wholeheartedly supports the present initiative of the Government of Uruguay, and earnestly hopes that it may secure the common approval of the Governments of all the American Republics.

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

"Washington, July 1, 1941."