

THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN A. DIX, OF NEW YORK.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JAN. 26, 1848.

On the bill reported from the Committee on Military Affairs to raise, for a limited time, an additional Military Force.

Mr. DIX said: Mr. President, it was my wish to address the Senate on the resolutions offered by the Senator from South Carolina, (Mr. Calhoun,) and not on this bill. I should have preferred to do so, because I am always unwilling to delay action on any measure relating to the war, and because the resolutions afford a wider field for inquiry and discussion. But as the debate has become general, and extended to almost every topic that can well be introduced under either, the force of the considerations which I have been influenced, has become so weakened, that I have not thought it necessary to defer longer what I wish to say.

Two leading questions divide and agitate the public mind in respect to the future conduct of the war with Mexico. The first of these questions is, shall we withdraw our forces from the Mexican territory, and leave the subject of indemnity for injuries and the adjustment of a boundary between the two republics to future negotiation, or shall we continue the course of conduct on our part to produce a corresponding feeling on the part of Mexico? There are other propositions, subordinate to this, which may be considered as parts of the same general scheme of policy, such as that of withdrawing from the Mexican capital and the interior districts, and assuming an exterior line of occupation. I shall apply to all the propositions the same general considerations, and it were to undertake to distinguish between them, I am not sure that I should make any difference in the force of the application. For whether we withdraw from Mexico altogether, or take a defensive line which shall include all the territory we intend to hold permanently as indemnity, the consequences to result, so far as they affect the question of peace, would, it appears to me, be the same.

The second question is, shall we retain the possession of the territory we have acquired until Mexico shall consent to make a treaty of peace which shall provide ample compensation for the wrongs which we complain, and settle to our satisfaction the boundary in dispute?

Regarding these questions as involving the permanent welfare of the country, I have considered them with the greatest solicitude; and though never more profoundly impressed with a sense of the responsibility which belongs to the solution of problems of such magnitude and difficulty, my reflections have, nevertheless, led me to a calm and settled conviction as to the course which justice and policy seem to indicate and demand. The first question, in itself of the highest importance, has been answered affirmatively on this floor; and it derives additional interest from the fact, that it has also been answered in the affirmative by a statesman, now retired from the busy scenes of political life, who, from his talents, experience, and public services, is entitled to the respect of his countrymen, and whose opinions on any subject are entitled to be weighed with candor and deliberation. I have endeavored to attribute to his opinions, and to those of others who coincide with him wholly or in part, all the importance which belongs to them, and to consider them with the deference due to the distinguished sources from which they emanate. I believe I have done so; and yet I have, after the fullest reflection, come to conclusions totally different from theirs. I believe it would be in the highest degree unjust to ourselves, possessing, as we do, well-founded claims on Mexico, to withdraw our forces from her territory altogether, and exceedingly unwise, as a matter of policy, to do so. I believe, in the political relations of the two countries, to withdraw from it partially, and assume a line of defence, without a treaty of peace. On the contrary, I am in favor of retaining possession, for the present, of all we have acquired, not as a permanent conquest, but as the most effective means of bringing about, what all earnestly desire, a permanent peace. I will, with the indulgence of the Senate, proceed to state, with as much brevity as the magnitude of the subjects admits, my objections to the course suggested by the first question, and my reasons in favor of the course suggested by the other.

I desire, at the outset, to state this proposition, to the truth of which, I think, all will yield their assent; that no policy so calculated to produce a reasonable assurance of healing the dissensions dividing the two countries, and of restoring, permanently, amicable relations between them, ought to receive our support. We may differ in opinion, and, perhaps, hopelessly, as to the measures best calculated to produce this result; but if it were possible for us to come to an agreement in relation to the present course, their adoption could scarcely admit of controversy. This proposition being conceded, as I think it will be, it follows, that if the measures proposed—to withdraw our forces from Mexico—be not calculated to bring about a speedy and permanent peace; but, on the contrary, if it be rather calculated to open a field of domestic dissension, and possibly, in the end, to interference, in that distracted country, to be followed, in all probability, by a renewal of active hostilities with us, and under circumstances to make us feel severely the loss of the advantage which we have gained, and which it is proposed voluntarily to surrender, then, it appears to me, it can present no claim to our favorable consideration. I shall endeavor to show, before I sit down, that the policy referred to is exposed to all these dangers and evils.

I do not propose to enter into an examination of the origin of the war. From the moment the collision took place between our forces and those of Mexico on the Rio Grande, I considered all hope of an accommodation, without a treaty of peace, as at an end. I believed the peculiar character of the Mexicans would render any such hope illusory. Whether that collision was produced in my degree by our own mistakes, or whether the war itself was brought about by the manner in which Texas was annexed to the Union, are questions I do not propose to discuss; and if it were possible, I would submit whether or not discussion could serve any other purpose than to exhibit divided councils to our adversary, and to inspire him with the hope of obtaining more favorable terms of peace by protracting his resistance. No one can be less disposed than myself to abuse, in any degree, the legitimate boundaries of discussion. But I am not disposed to enter into such an interminable controversy. I am content to know, not how the war originated, not who is responsible for it, but in what manner it can be brought to a speedy and honorable termination; whether, as some suppose, we ought to retire from the field, or whether, as appears to me, the only hope of an accommodation lies in a firm and determined continuance of our present course.

The probable consequences of an abandonment of the advantages we have gained may be better understood by seeing what those advantages are. I speak in a military point of view. While addressing the Senate in February last on an army bill then under consideration, I had occasion to state, that the whole of northern Mexico as far south as the mouth of the Rio Grande and the 26th parallel of latitude was virtually in our possession, comprehending about two-thirds of the territory of that republic, and about one-tenth of its inhabitants. Our acquisitions have since been augmented by the reduction of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan de Ulua, the capture of Jalapa, Perote and Puebla, the surrender of the city of Mexico, and the occupation of the three States of Vera Cruz, Puebla, and Oaxaca, with nearly two million and a half of souls. It is true, our forces have not overrun every portion of the territory of those States; but their chief towns have been reduced, the military forces which defended them captured or dispersed, their civil authorities superseded, their capital occupied, and the whole machinery of the government within the conquered States virtually transferred to our hands. All this has been achieved with an army at no one period exceeding fifteen thousand men, and against forces from three to five times more numerous than those actually engaged on our side, in every conflict since the fall of Vera Cruz.

I had occasion, on presenting some army petitions a few weeks ago, to refer to the brilliant successes by which these acquisitions were made; and I will not trespass on the attention of the Senate by repeating what I said at that time. But I cannot forbear to

say, that there is a moral in the contest, the effect of which is not likely to be lost on ourselves or others. At the call of our people have literally responded to arms. The emulation has been to be received into the service, not to be excused from it. Individuals from the plough, the counting-house, the law-office, and the workshop, have taken the field, braving inclement seasons and inhospitable climates without a murmur; and, though wholly unused to arms, notwithstanding the most disastrous fire, and remaining batteries at the point of the bayonet, with the coolness, intrepidity, and spirit of veterans. I believe I may safely say, there has been no parallel to these achievements by undisciplined forces since the French revolution. I am not sure that history can furnish a parallel. As to the regular army, we always expect it to be gallant and heroic, and we are not surprised at its conduct; but the conduct of the war in the field has exhibited the highest evidence of our military capacity. It confirms an opinion I have always held—that a soldier is formidable in ratio of the importance he possesses in the order of the political system of which he is a part. It establishes another position of vital importance to us; that, under the present military system, the country would be the termination of every contest, lay aside the more massive and burdensome parts of its armor, and become prepared, with energies renewed by that very capacity, for succeeding scenes of danger.

Mr. President, the political condition of Mexico has been gradually approaching a dissolution of all order, and the country is fast becoming a chaos, and constituting her an independent state. This lamentable situation is not the fruit alone of our military successes. The factions, by which that country has been distracted, each in turn gaining and maintaining a temporary ascendancy, and often by brute force, lie at the foundation of the social and political disorder which reigns in that unhappy country. The most of the abuses of the old colonial system of Spain she has superseded the evils of an unstable and irresponsible government. The military bodies, which have been the instruments of those who have thus in succession gained a brief and precarious control over her affairs, though dispersed, still exist, ready to be re-called, and to renew the anarchy which we have superseded. It is not, therefore, a properly settled government; and this brings me to the first great objection to the proposition of withdrawing our armies from the field.

I have already said that no policy can deserve our support which does not hold the promise of a durable peace. Nothing seems to me more unlikely to secure this result than the abandonment of our claims on Mexico by us at the present moment without a treaty, leaving behind a strong feeling of animosity towards us, with party divisions as strongly marked, and political animosities as rancorous, perhaps, as they have been at any former period. Even when her capital had fallen, humbled and powerless as she was, party divisions were being kindled, and the military chiefs were struggling with each other for the barren sceptre of her authority. Our retirement as enemies would, in all probability, be the signal for intestine conflicts as desperate and sanguinary as those in which they have been engaged with us—conflicts always the most disastrous for the great body of the Mexican people, for on what side soever fortune should turn, there would be victors, and, on the other side, there are two great parties in Mexico, (I pass by the minor divisions), the "Federalists" and "Centralists." The former, as their name imports, are in favor of the federative system; they are the true republican party. With us, in former times, they are the "Federal" and "Republican" employed different names to designate the same thing. They designate the friends of the federative system. The Centralists are in favor of a consolidated Government, republican or monarchial in form, and are composed of the army, the clergy, and I suppose a small portion of the population. I believe our only hope of obtaining a durable peace lies in the firm establishment of the Federal party in power—the party represented by Herrera, and not by Santa Anna, or by others. I understand Herrera has been elected President of the Republic; and this is certainly a favorable indication. But, unfortunately, I fear this party would not succeed in maintaining itself, if Mexico were left to herself at the present moment, with an imbecile and feeble authority, and the military chiefs, who controlled the army, and who might rally it again for political uses, if we were to retire without a treaty, are, for the most part, enemies of the federative system, and conservators of the popular abuses, to which they owe their wealth and importance. Nothing could be more unfortunate for Mexico than the re-establishment of these men in power. I would bring to a hopeless perpetuation of the anarchy and oppression which have given a character to their supremacy in past years—a supremacy without a prospect of amelioration in the condition of the Mexican people—a supremacy of which the chief viceroy has been an exchange of one military despot for another.

Calculations as to the result of their return to their former ascendancy could be for Mexico, it would hardly be less so for us. Relying on military force for their support, their policy would be to continue the war as a pretext for maintaining the army in full strength, or, at least, not to terminate it till peace would ensure their own supremacy. It is believed that these considerations have been leading motives in their resistance to any proposal for a treaty. The republican party has been equally hostile, so far as external indications show; but it is accounted for by their desire to see the war continued until the army and its leaders, the great enemies of the federative system, are overthrown. Undoubtedly the obstinate refusal of Mexico to make peace may be very properly ascribed to the nature of the war, and to the people whose soil was invaded; but there can be little doubt that it has been influenced, in no inconsiderable degree, by considerations growing out of party divisions, and the jealousy and animosities to which those divisions have given rise. My confidence in our ability to make an amicable arrangement with the Federal party, and to bring to a speedy termination the present war, arises from the belief that their motives are honest, that they have at heart the public welfare, and that they must see there is no hope for Mexico but in a solid peace with us. My utter distrust of the Centralists arises from the belief that their objects are selfish, and that, to accomplish them, they would not hesitate to sacrifice the liberties, the people, and the prosperity of the country. I believe, I think, I am not far from the truth, when I say, that I do not err in believing that, if our armies were to be withdrawn from Mexico, without a peace, the flames of civil discord would be rekindled in that unhappy country, and burn with redoubled violence. I should greatly fear that the military chiefs would succeed in re-establishing their ascendancy, and that the Federal party would be assigned to the duration of the war. If I am right, our true policy is to stand firm, and, if possible, united, until wiser counsels shall prevail in Mexico, and cond, either as to the obstacles overcome, or as to the relative strength of the invaders. The triumphs of Cortez were achieved by policy and by superiority in discipline and in the implements of warfare. The use of firearms, and the use of the bayonet, were the great advantages of Mexico, which were sufficient to itself to make his force, small as it was, irresistible. In the eyes of that simple and superstitious people he seemed armed with supernatural power. Other circumstances combined to facilitate his success. The native tribes, by whom the country was possessed, were distinct communities, not always acknowledging the same head, and often divided among themselves by implacable hostility and resentments. Cortez, by his consummate policy, and by his superior arms, succeeded in conquering; he led the parties to their own ruin, and when he presented himself at the gates of the city of Mexico, he was at the head of four thousand of the most valiant of the natives, as auxiliaries to the band of Spaniards, with which he commenced his march from Vera Cruz. Thus his early successes were as much the result of triumph of policy as of arms. General Scott, and the whole band he led, had no such advantages. The whole population of the country, from Vera Cruz to Mexico, were united as one man against him, and animated by the fiercest animosity. He was opposed by military forces armed like his own, often better disciplined, occupying positions chosen with the most sagacity, and defended according to the strictest rules of art. These obstacles were overcome by his skill as a tactician, aided by a corps of officers unsurpassed for their knowledge in the art of attack and defence, and by the indomitable courage of their followers. With half his force left on the battlefield or in the hospital, and with less than six thousand men, after a series of desperate combats, he took possession of the city of Mexico, containing nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants, and defended by the remnant of an army of more than thirty thousand soldiers. I know nothing in modern warfare which excels in brilliancy the movements of the American army from the Gulf to the city of Mexico. I shall not attempt to speak of it with the language of eulogium. They are not a fit general for such comment. I refer to the great and able General Taylor and his brave men on the Rio Grande, at Monterey and Buena Vista, the highest and most appropriate praise is contained in the simplest statement of facts.

a disposition shall be shown to come to an amicable arrangement with us on reasonable terms. On the objection I have stated, the proposition of withdrawing our forces from Mexico, concerns only the relations which now exist, or may exist hereafter, between the two countries. If there were no other objection, the question might be decided upon considerations touching only their domestic interests and their mutual rights.

But I come to the second objection—one perhaps of greater importance than the first, because it supposes the probability of not the probability, of an interference in her affairs by other countries, if we were to retire without a treaty and without commercial arrangements, which it would be in our power to enforce. The President alluded to the subject in his annual message at the opening of Congress, and expressed an apprehension of danger from the conduct of the war in the field has exhibited the highest evidence of our military capacity. It confirms an opinion I have always held—that a soldier is formidable in ratio of the importance he possesses in the order of the political system of which he is a part. It establishes another position of vital importance to us; that, under the present military system, the country would be the termination of every contest, lay aside the more massive and burdensome parts of its armor, and become prepared, with energies renewed by that very capacity, for succeeding scenes of danger.

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The modern doctrine of intervention in the affairs of other States, which has sprung up within the last few centuries, and is now fast becoming a system, has grown into a practical system of supervision on the part of the principal European powers over their own relative forces and those of the other States of Europe; and though it may, in some instances, have been productive of beneficial effects in maintaining the public tranquility, it has as frequently been the cause of aggression, and of the most cruel and bloody wars. From the first extensive exhibition of this nature, which was formed during the long series of wars terminated by the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, down to the interference of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and France, in the contest between the Sultan and Schah Ali, in 1810, a period of nearly two centuries, the doctrine has been, in some degree, to prevent what was regarded as a dangerous protectorate over the affairs of the Porte by Russia—the exercise of the right has been placed, theoretically, on the same high ground of regard for the tranquility of Europe and the independence of States. Practically, it has often been perverted to the worst purposes of aggression, and of the most cruel and bloody wars. It is not, therefore, a doctrine which I think we shall find so sufficient a discountenance that I believe in its utility. Grotius, who wrote in the early part of the seventeenth century, denied its existence. Fenelon who wrote about half a century later, denied it, except as a means of self-preservation, and then only when the danger was real and imminent. Vattel, who wrote nearly a century after Fenelon, and a century before our own times, regarded the doctrine of Europe as forming a political system, and he restricted the right of entering into confederacies and alliances for the purpose of intervention in the affairs of each other, to cases in which such combinations were necessary to curb the ambition of any power which, by its superiority in physical strength, and its designs of oppression or conquest, rendered it become dangerous to its neighbors. He Martens, who wrote half a century ago, acknowledges, with Vattel, the existence of the right under certain conditions, though he hardly admits it to be well settled as a rule of international law; and he limits its exercise to neighboring states, or states occupying the same quarter of the globe. But, according to the two last writers, who have perhaps gone as far as any other public jurists of equal eminence, towards a formal recognition of the right, it only justifies a union of inferior states within the same immediate sphere of action, to prevent an accumulation of power in the hands of a single sovereign, which would be too great for the common liberty.

I am confident, Mr. President, that no one can rise from a review of the history of Modern Europe, and from an examination of the writings of her public jurists, without being satisfied that the right of intervention, as recognized by civilized nations, is what I have stated it to be—a mere right, on the part of weaker states, to combine for the purpose of preventing the subversion of their independence, and the alienation of their territories, by a designing and powerful neighbor; a right to be exercised only in cases of urgent and immediate danger. It is simply a right of self-preservation, undefined, undefinable, having no settled or permanent foundation in public law, to be asserted only in extreme necessity, and when arbitrarily applied to practice, a most fruitful source of abuse, injustice, and oppression. One clear and certain limitation it happily possesses—a limitation which, amid all its encroachments upon the independence of sovereign States, has never until now been overpassed. By universal consent, by the varying testimony of abuse itself, it is not to be exercised beyond the immediate sphere of the nations concerned. It pertains rigidly and exclusively to states within the same circle of political action. It is only by neighbors, for the protection of neighbors against neighbors, that it can, even upon the broadest principles, be rightfully employed. When it traverses oceans, and looks to the regulation of the po-

litical concerns of other continents, it becomes a gigantic assumption, which, for the independence of every State, and for the tranquility of the Old World and the New, should be significantly repelled.

Mr. President, a review of the history of Europe during the last two centuries will bring with it another conviction in respect to the right of intervention—that no reliance can be placed on its restriction to liberty, security, and good government, and that a public jurist who admits its existence, is at the same time doing what is discouraging to the friends of free government as an extension of the system to this continent, if the power existed to introduce it here. Though the combinations it is claimed to authorize may, in some instances, have protected the weaker parties from the danger of being overrun by conquerors, and the peaceful and virtuous nations which their intervention has been lent to break down the independence of states, and to throw whole communities of men into the arms of governments to which their feelings and principles were alike adverse. The right, as has been seen—and it cannot be too often repeated—with the utmost latitude claimed for it, has been used by the stronger nations to form a league on the part of two or more weaker states to protect themselves against the designs of an ambitious and powerful neighbor. In its practical application, it has more frequently resulted in a combination of powerful states to destroy their weaker neighbors for the augmentation of their own dominions; or those nations which, under the pretext of a common self-preservation, they have made it in practice a right to divide, dismember, and partition states at their pleasure—not for the purpose of diminishing the strength of a powerful adversary—but under the pretence of creating a system of balances, which is artificial in its structure, and, in some degree, inconsistent with the principles of justice and equity. We need examples of the abuse of the power, I will not call it a right! They will be found in the dismemberment of Saxony, the annexation of the republic of Genoa to the kingdom of Sardinia, and the absorption of Venice by Austria. There is another and more aggravated example, which has recently occurred, and which is now prominent. In 1772, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, under the pretence that the disturbed condition of Poland was dangerous to their own tranquillity, seized upon about one-third of her territories, and divided it among themselves. In 1793, notwithstanding her diminished proportions, she had become so dangerous, that the first alliance, which was formed in 1792, grew dangerous as she grew weak; and in two years after the second partition, they stripped her of all that remained. In 1815, the five great Powers, at the Congress of Vienna, from motives of policy, and not from a returning sense of justice, organized the city of Cracow and a portion of the surrounding territory of Poland, under the protection of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, under a guaranty of its independence in perpetuity. Russia pledged herself, at the same time, to maintain her share of the spoil, as the kingdom of Poland in name and form, with a constitutional government. She kept her pledge so long, that she actually incorporated it as an integral part into the Russian empire. The little republic of Cracow was all that remained as a relic of the dismembered kingdom. A year ago, it was obliterated as an independent state by the three great powers of eastern and northern Europe, in violation of their solemn guaranty, and assigned to Austria. The same of Poland, the fountain of so many noble and animating recollections, is no longer to be found on the map of Europe. The three quarters of a century which intervened from the inception to the consummation of this transaction are not sufficient to conceal or even to obscure its true character. The very magnitude of the space over which it is spread only serves to bring it out in bolder and darker relief upon the page of history.

If the United States, in the progress of these usurpations, has not remonstrated against them, and contributed by her interposition to maintain the integrity of the states thus disorganized and dismembered in violation of every rule of right, and every suggestion of justice and humanity, it is because we have been too weak to do so. If we had been able to do so, we would have done so. The progress of these usurpations, I hold it to be our duty to inquire into what grounds it rests, that we may be prepared to resist all practical application of it to the independent states in this hemisphere.

Mr. President, the declaration of Mr. Guizot could hardly have been made without the previous approbation of the government of which he is a member. The same sovereign occupies the throne of France, and the same minister stands before it as the exponent of his opinions. Is the declaration to be regarded as a mere idle announcement in words of a design never intended to be carried into practice? Let me answer the question by the briefest possible reference to circumstances. France was the conductor of England, Prussia, and Austria, in the expedition to Mexico, and she has been the first to protest against the interference of France in the affairs of Spain in 1823; she has more recently protested against the interference of Cracow by Austria, and she has been the first to protest against the settlement at Vienna by the allied sovereigns, and against the Montpensier marriage as a violation of the treaty of Utrecht; but I do not remember that in either case she did anything more than to proclaim to the world her dissent from the acts against which she entered her protest. It has always seemed to me to be unwise in a government to put forth manifestoes without being prepared to maintain them by the sword. Declarations of abstract principle, on the occasion of a President having no power to make war without a vote of Congress, or even to employ the military force of the country except to defend our own territory, is very different from the protest of a sovereign holding the issue of peace in his hand, and the sword of war in his sheath. The former may not be less desirable when they are sustained, as I believe those of President Monroe and Polk are, in respect to European interference on the American continent, by an individual public opinion, even though they may not have received a formal response from Congress. I hold, therefore, if any such interposition as that to which I have referred should take place, resistance on our part would inevitably follow, and we should become involved in controversies, of which no man could foresee the end.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I desire to advert to some circumstances recently made public, and, if true, indicating significantly the extent to which Great Britain has been engaged in her encroachments on this continent, as in every other quarter of the globe. On the coast of Honduras, in Central America, commonly called the Mosquito coast, there is a tribe of Indians bearing the same name, numbering but a few hundred individuals, and inhabiting some miserable villages in the neighborhood of Cape Gracias a Dios, near the mouth of the river San Juan, running from Lake Nicaragua to the Caribbean Sea, a space of about two degrees of longitude, and the town of Nicaragua at its mouth, and a castle or fort about midway between the town and lake. The lake is only fifteen leagues from the Pacific, and constitutes the river San Juan, the outlet of the proposed line for a ship canal across the isthmus. Great Britain has recently laid claim to the river San Juan and the town of Nicaragua, if she has not actually taken possession of the latter. I have seen a communication from the British consul-general at Guatemala, asserting the independence of the Mosquitoes as a nation. I have also seen a communication from the British consul-general at Belmopan, asserting that "the Mosquito kingdom and the British Government are under the special protection of the crown of Great Britain," and that "the limits which the British Government is determined to maintain as the right of the King of the Mosquitoes" comprehend the San Juan river. By Arrowsmith's London Atlas, published in 1830, the Mosquito territory covered about 40,000 square miles, nearly as large an area as that of the State of New York; but it did not extend below the twelfth parallel of latitude, while the river San Juan is on the eleventh. I have seen the protest of the State of Nicaragua against the occupation of the town of Nicaragua on the river San Juan, which, as she protests, she has never been from time immemorial in her quiet and peaceable possession. The state of San Salvador, one of the Central American republics, also unites in the protest, and declares her determination, if the outrage shall be carried into effect, to exert her whole power until the usurper shall be driven from the limits of Central America.

I understand, for I speak only from information, that Great Britain has for some time claimed to own the Mosquitoes, a mere naked tribe of Indians of a few hundred persons, under her protection. Through her influence they appointed a king, who was taken to Belize, a British station on the bay of Yucatan, and there crowned. It is said, also, that on the decease of the king, he was found to have bequeathed his dominions to her Britannic Majesty. It appears to be certain that she has, under this pretence of protection, extended her dominion over an immense surface in Central America; that she has at least one

"Extract of a letter from the Supreme Government of the State of Nicaragua to the Supreme Government of the State of San Salvador." "A nation and a recognized form of government, without civilization, and entirely abandoned to savage life, is suddenly made use of by her liege upon the Atlantic coast of this State, on a pretext of the purpose of taking possession of the port for commerce between Europe, America and Asia, and other important countries at the point where the great inter-oceanic canal is most practicable."

"The establishment in Mexico of a monarchy of any description whatever, resting upon a solid basis, should be the first object of our policy for we know that the tranquility of the actual form of its government, brings with it disadvantages for our commerce, and inconveniences for our people."

He adds, that if Mexico is to preserve her republican form of government, her incorporation into the Union of the North would seem more favorable to France than her existing condition, on account of the development of commerce and all the guarantees of liberty, security, and good government, and that a nation which enjoys and the England would not enjoy such an order of things, what France would gain. Thus, though the dismemberment and absorption of Mexico by the United States, are regarded by M. de Molras as preferable to the commercial monopoly and the "species of political sovereignty," as he denominated it, which England has exercised in that country, the first object of France, according to him, should be a reconstruction of monarchy in Mexico, with a foreign prince on the throne, and this prince from some branch of the Bourbon family. The opinions contained in this book are not put forth as the mere speculations of a private person. They are the opinions of an agent of the government; the publication is made by order of the king, and under the auspices of his two chief ministers, and so stated in the title page. I do not mean to hold the government of France responsible for all the opinions contained in that work; but, can we believe that those I have quoted, concerning as they do so grave a subject as the international relation of France with Mexico, and of Mexico with the United States, and which have been put forth without modification under such official sanctions, if they had been viewed with positive disfavor? It appears to me, that we are constrained to view them, like the declaration of M. Guizot, though certainly to a very inferior extent, as possessing an official character, which we are not at liberty wholly to disregard, when we consider the one in connection with the other.

And now, sir, I ask, do not these opinions and declarations, especially when we look to the open and direct interference with Great Britain and France, by the force of arms, in the domestic affairs of some of the South American republics within the last two years, furnish a just ground for apprehension, that we should retire from Mexico without a treaty, and as enemies, that it might become a theatre for the exercise of influence of a most unfriendly character to us? With the aid of the monarchial party in Mexico, would there not be danger that the avowed design of establishing a throne, might be realized? The chances of open interposition are unquestionably diminished by the results of the war; but I am constrained to believe the chances of secret interference are increased by the avidity inquired to us for territorial extension. Ought not this danger to influence, to some extent, our own conduct, at least so far as to dissuade us from abandoning, until a better prospect of a durable peace shall exist, the territory which we have gained as belligerents? We know that a great majority of the Mexican people are radically averse to any other than a republican form of government; but we know, also, the proneness of a people among whom anarchy reigns triumphant, to seek any refuge which promises the restoration of tranquillity and social order.

Mr. President, any attempt by a European power to interfere in the affairs of Mexico, either to establish a monarchy, or to maintain, in the language of M. Guizot, "the equilibrium of the great political forces in America," would be the signal for a war far more important in its consequences, and insupportable in its issues, than this. We could not submit to such interference if we would. The public opinion of the country would compel us to resist it. We know that a great majority of the Mexican people are radically averse to any other than a republican form of government; but we know, also, the proneness of a people among whom anarchy reigns triumphant, to seek any refuge which promises the restoration of tranquillity and social order.

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