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Daily Appeal.

SPEECH OF HON. WM. T. AVERY,

OF TENNESSEE.

Delivered in the House of Representatives on the subject of our Foreign Affairs.

Mr. AVERY. Mr. Chairman, the country has great cause of congratulation, sir, that the fruitful elements of domestic discord do not now distract us. Issues which heretofore thrilled and animated the public mind, seem, at least for a season, now to slumber. Kansas, for once, is quiet. I am gratified that the interesting and complicated questions of a foreign character, can now justly claim the consideration of the American Congress. Never did it seem to me that the matters which pertain to our foreign policy more peculiarly press themselves upon the attention of the representatives of the American people, than now. Great interests are at stake. In my judgment those interests are jeopardized. It behooves us, as sentinels upon the watch-tower, to look to it that "Mud they be not uncovered." Much has been said upon these questions, and but little done; the time for action has come. No stand-still policy suits our people. It is not adapted to their destiny. They are a progressive people, and demand a progressive policy.

Look, sir, a moment to our present surroundings. Upon our north, the border dominions of Britain frown upon us forever, peaceably, quietly, to be sure, and quite as much so, too, as some of our own northern sisters. Our vast open sea to the south! how stands the case there? Does the America patriot see no cause of apprehension lest foreign intervention may build shoot on in those regions walls which will shadow our destiny. Mexico, that land so blessed by all commercial gifts of a prodigal nature, is red and torn by annual revolutions, now in the midst of one threatening the downfall of her authority, rival military chiefs contending for military mastery, with no positive government of any kind, the opposing factions holding forcible possession of different states of the Republic. The President tells us in his recent message that:—

"No American citizen can now visit Mexico on lawful business, without incurring danger to his person and property. There is no adequate protection to either; and in this respect our country with that Republic is almost a dead letter."

Our political relations between that Government and this are suspended, while England, France and Spain are all openly intervening with her domestic interests; with no ability to pay her debts, and no Government against which to enforce them, inasmuch that the President recommends, as a last resort, a protectorate over a portion of her territory, in order to enforce our rights and redress our wrongs. My friend from Ohio [Mr. Cox] has thrown a flood of light upon the condition of that country. I listened with profound interest to his very interesting speech the other day.

But, sir, far above and beyond our interests with demoralized and disorganized Mexico, great as I acknowledge them to be, stand the questions of our relations with Cuba and the Central American States. These, sir, are, in my judgment, the foremost questions for the consideration of American statesmen. I cannot hope, sir, in what little I propose to say upon these topics, to be able to awaken any new light; and my apology for doing so is that I feel, concerning them, such deep solicitude.

And first, as to Cuba. Cuba, that one, cast throned in the sea, a mere lovely island, justly called the "Queen of the Antilles," almost in sight of our southern coast, is but ninety miles hundred and fifty miles; in breadth, averaging some sixty or seventy; with an area of some thirty-five thousand square miles—more than three-fourths as large as the State of Tennessee. Look, for a moment, to her commerce. For the year 1856, her exports consisted of over thirty-one million dollars; her imports, of forty-three million. The value of imports into Cuba, from the United States, in 1851, was over six millions, nearly all of which was in American bottoms. The entire trade of the Spanish dominions was over thirteen millions. The exports to the United States were over seventeen millions; a greater amount than we received from all other countries, even England and France. The trade between the United States and Cuba, in 1852, amounted to more than a half million tuns; employed, in 1853, eighteen millions exports; and, in 1853, about the same. In 1856, the number of slaves in Cuba, according to the census returns, was over forty-four thousand, of all ages and sexes. The value of her agricultural productions amounted to nearly sixty millions. These facts faintly give some idea of the mutual interests of the country, her growing commercial importance, the mutual trade between us, the great commercial relationship we sustain towards each other. It is unnecessary to dwell on the relative three items of resource, of a commercial character, as they have been so elaborately and eloquently interwoven into this debate by my distinguished friend from South Carolina, [Mr. Keitt.]

Sir, the acquisition of Cuba is no new question. I may be excused for some observations on this subject, when I say that I, at a time, too, when its necessity was not half as pressing as now, Mr. Jefferson, in 1820, in writing to Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of State, (and who seemed to favor the idea,) among other things uses the following strong and significant language:

"From the situation in which our country is now placed in relation to the great European Powers, policy, commercial and political, as well as military, points out the necessity of taking immediate possession of Cuba; and, from the numerous aggressions, and the uniform hostility of Spain, such an act would not be inconsistent with the combined political morality. It is an act which must be justified by every principle which governs the moral upright nations. The Spaniards are already at war with Spain. The Spaniards are already the aggressors, and have been throughout the whole period of our history since the peace of 1783. The country in question is necessary to our defence, and in the possession of Great Britain, or any other maritime power, would be dangerous to our repose.

"The people of this country are anxious for the event."

Sir, with what ten-fold force with our every argument employed in this letter, more than forty years ago, now apply!

What, let me ask, are our relations with the Spanish Government? What have these relations ever been? Have we not been the aggressors, as a Republic, for half a century, a protectorate over a portion of her territory, in order to enforce our rights and redress our wrongs. My friend from Ohio [Mr. Cox] has thrown a flood of light upon the condition of that country. I listened with profound interest to his very interesting speech the other day.

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"I candidly confess I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of states. The control which, with the Florida point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the commerce and richness bordering on it, as well as those which flow into it, are what would fill up the measure of our political well-being."

Mr. Adams, in the same year, as Secretary of State, said:

"Cuba's commanding position, with references to the Gulf of Mexico, and the West Indies, etc., gives it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared."

Mr. Everett, in 1852, while Secretary of State, in his reply to the French Minister, in opposition to the proposed convention between England and France and the United States, to commit as against the acquisition, clearly looked forward to its accession to our Union.

President Buchanan, some years since, when he graced the Sage of the American Senate, warmly advocated the acquisition of Cuba, as shown by his recent message to Congress, has not relaxed his ardent desire to commission this great and vital measure. In this concession he says:

"The Island of Cuba, from its geographical position, commands the mouth of the Mississippi, and the immense and annually increasing trade, foreign and coastwise, from the valley of that noble river, now embracing half the sovereign States of the Union. With this island under the dominion of a distinct foreign power, this trade, of vital importance to these States, is exposed to the danger of being destroyed in time of war, and it has hitherto been subjected to perpetual injury and annoyance in time of peace."

The publicity which has been given to our friendly negotiations upon this subject, and the large appropriation which may be required to effect the purpose, render it expedient, before making another attempt to renew the negotiation, that I should lay before the Senate the reasons which have induced me to think that the present time is favorable for renewing the attempt to purchase the island of Cuba without the consent of Spain, unless justified by the great law of self-preservation. We must, in great event, preserve our own conscious rectitude and our own self-respect. While pursuing this course, we can afford to disregard the censures of the world, to which we have been so often and so unjustly exposed. After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba, far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will be time to consider the question, "does Cuba, in the possession of Spain, seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union?"

This, sir, is the doctrine enunciated by the present enlightened Chief Magistrate of our Republic, every word of which I indorse and defended upon every occasion where I had the honor to address my fellow-citizens. The great idea is here boldly advanced, that nations as well as individuals have the right to use such means as they may deem necessary for their own self-preservation, and that it may not only be a present but a prospective danger. This doctrine, sir, was unanimously vindicated by the American people in the election of James Buchanan to the Presidency of the United States.

Why, sir, this notion of taking Cuba upon the ground of self-preservation was by no means then a new one. Eighteen eighteen thought seriously on the subject some forty years ago. So long ago as 1819, General Jessup, then a Colonel in the American Army, in a very able letter written from New Orleans