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**Formation of the United States Foreign Policy  
towards Latin America 1848-1898:  
Before the Eagle Flew Out of the Nest**

Dissertation Thesis

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I here declare that I wrote this dissertation on my own using under mentioned sources and literature.

In Prague August 10, 2008

Aleš Vytečka

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## **I. Introduction**

Foreign policy is an outer side of the nation's life, and this applies even more to the foreign policy of the United States. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. sums up this statement in his excellent book *The Cycles of American History* writing: "The foreign policy is the face a nation wears to the world."<sup>1</sup> Tremendous growth of the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century set up conditions, which helped to the 'Colossus of the North' to assume during the 20<sup>th</sup> century a role of the most important world power. Especially because of the result of the Cold War and the recent course of international events, political scientists are comparing present position of the United States with the Roman or British Empire in a peak of their power.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of a study of American history is its uninterrupted continuity and 'logic,' which consequently brings forward strong appeal to our presence. By continuity I mean creation of a national identity or a 'common identity' of the American nation. A line between the past and the present in case of the United States is very strong.<sup>3</sup> If we accept the statement of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., then the face of the American nation obtained mature features during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *process* of framing of principal characteristics and features on which the American foreign policy has been based throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century until today had been finished during the last thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the main purpose of this dissertation will be to analyze the formation of foreign policy of the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., *The Cycles of American History*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1986, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Out of innumerable publications see Ferguson, Niall, *Colossus. The Price of America's Empire*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2004, Nye, Joseph, S., Jr., *The Paradox of American Power. Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*, Oxford, New York, 2002, or Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, Basic Books, New York, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> A theory of a change in national identity isn't in opposition with the theory of 'givenness' of basic features of American nation as described by Daniel J. Boorstin in his book *The Genius of American Politics*. By 'givenness' he means more core traditions holding grounds of national identity. However, the change in the national identity is meant here as a growing maturity of national self-confidence. Boorstin, Daniel J., *The Daniel J. Boorstin Reader*, The Modern Library, New York, 1995, pp. 756-775.

during the years 1848 – 1898, when the Spanish –American War could serve us as a ‘climax’ of one period of U.S. history, in which it assumed a position of unquestionable leader of the Western Hemisphere. That was a pre-step towards joining of the ‘club’ of world powers.

The thesis is not going only to follow a course of events during this period but mostly will try to describe main causes and consequences of these events and relations among them from the perspective of building of basic principles of U.S. foreign policy. In this perspective the particular events, which will be analyzed will serve more as ‘case studies’ for description of more profound changes in the United States foreign policy. More precisely, it will focus on how and in what way the domestic and international development influenced “evolution” of U.S. foreign policy, and which were the most important aspects of this influence. Not surprisingly, books dealing with this topic were often titled with terms expressing dynamic process of change, movement, and emergence such as e.g. Robert L. Beisner’s *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, Charles S. Cambell’s *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, Paolo E., Coletta’s *Threshold to American Internationalism*, David Healy’s *U.S. Expansionism. The Imperialist Urge in the 1890’s*, Walter LaFeber’s *The New Empire. An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Eric T. Love’s *Race over Empire*, Richard W. Van Alstyne’s *The Rising American Empire*, or William Appleman Williams’ *Empire as a Way of Life. An Essay on the Causes and Character of America’s Present Predicament Along With a Few Thoughts about an Alternative*.<sup>4</sup>

Terms like *new*, *transformation*, *threshold*, *urge*, or *race*, are perfectly describing the process of unparalleled growth of the American nation during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Industrialization, millions of immigrants arriving to eastern harbors, extremely fast growing cities, growth of big capital, and peopling of last unsettled regions in the West caused such profound changes that they had also a tremendous influence on formation of American foreign policy.

We can pursue the progress of the U.S. foreign policy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by pointing out few basic characteristics. Before that, however, we should at least roughly divide the “long century” between the years 1783 and 1898. First phase

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<sup>4</sup> For more details about above mentioned books see the List of Bibliography.

was an era between the end of the American Revolution, or more precisely the signing of the Treaty of Paris with Great Britain, in 1783, and the end of the Mexican-American war that ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo early in 1848. Within these sixty-five years the United States had expanded from original thirteen colonies lying between the Atlantic coast and the Appalachian Mountains across the immense area of the North American continent.<sup>5</sup>

In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed on February 2, 1848, the United States ceased from Mexico almost one half of its territory. Along with resolving the Oregon question and establishing of the border with Canada on the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel the United States gained 1,204,000 square miles of new territory.<sup>6</sup> The young republic fulfilled one of the dreams of Thomas Jefferson and became the continental nation with an access to both, the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. Except the Gadsden Purchase (1853) and Alaska Purchase (1867) the continental United States gained their present shape.

The years 1848 and the beginning of the 1890's could set bounds to the second phase. It was an era of 'absorption' of this new huge area but also of resolving of a chronic problem of the slavery. The lust for expansion in this era didn't disappear but was overshadowed by a political quarrel between the North and the South over extension of slavery. Problems of slavery, causes of the Civil War, and following Reconstruction of the South are not purpose of this thesis. However, by being considered as a catalyst for amputation of a 'chronic ulcer' of American society, moral, political, and economical, it helped to clear off last barrier restraining to a complete settlement of the western parts of the United States. "Thus the Civil War revitalized confidence in the American mission, now properly national and northern."<sup>7</sup>

Great American historian Daniel J. Boorstin summarizes history of the United States until the decade after the Civil War that, the "American history, for at least a full century after the Declaration of Independence, could be summed up as a continuing discovery of America – a discovery at great cost and with great

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<sup>5</sup> This period of American history with special focus on the decade preceding Mexican – American War of 1846 – 1848 was analyzed in my Master's thesis *Character of Expansion of the United States during the 1840's*, Center for Ibero – American Studies, Charles University, Prague, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, New York 1963, p. vii

<sup>7</sup> Stephanson, Anders, *Manifest Destiny. American Expansion and the Empire of the Right*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1996, p. 65

rewards – of what the land held, what people could make of the land, and how its resources could remake people’s lives. This strangely American encounter with the raw land left birthmarks on American civilization at least into the later twentieth century.”<sup>8</sup>

Third phase was the era of the second upheaval of expansionism in the 1890’s that ended by the Spanish-American War of 1898.<sup>9</sup> Expansionists of the 1890’s were calling for opening of new markets in rapidly globalizing world, especially markets in Latin America and Asia. Latin America was naturally a center-point of interest since it was a target-market, a ‘backyard’ of the United States, how the Western Hemisphere was viewed, but also because of ideological reasons of a feeling of unity with other ‘sister’ republics. East Asia became the objective of growing interest of American exporters as a consequence of gaining of the Pacific coast and splendid harbors in California (San Francisco) and Oregon (Puget Sound). Thanks to hundreds of millions of consumers in China and Japan on one side and exotic products on the other, American merchants became anxious to establish economic connection.<sup>10</sup> Economical aspect belongs among the characteristics essentially important for understanding to the progress of the United States and formation of its foreign policy during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Therefore, one of the main purposes of this thesis seems to me an effort to show that during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States there had been spread roots of tight connection between social and economic progress of the American society and growing maturity of U.S. foreign policy as the ‘face of the nation.’

During the era between the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States went through a dramatic development and change. From agricultural products exporting country with no serious position in the world politics it became the second largest producer of industrial products in the world after Great Britain in the early 1890’s, and a

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<sup>8</sup> Boorstin, Daniel J., *Hidden History*, Harper & Row, New York, 1987, pp. 247-48.

<sup>9</sup> Respectively it ended with a collapse of the native uprising in Philippines in 1902.

<sup>10</sup> This economy-led-anxiety was very similar to the one when Americans were opening the trade with New Mexico and California before 1848. See Weber, David J., *The Mexican Frontier 1821-1846*, Albuquerque 1982.

decade later moved to the position of the biggest industrial and agricultural producer in the world with the role of the leader of the Western Hemisphere. Quick victory in the ‘splendid little war’ against Spain caused that the United States entered the group of world powers. This progress ended by 1900, and finished the era of nationalization and centralization of U.S. foreign policy.

Economic aspect was definitely essential in shaping of U.S. foreign policy. However, in my opinion it was just one of the parts of very vivid and complex ‘mosaic’ of reasons and causes that resulted in the war with Spain in 1898. Yet another aspect had strong influence on profound effect of these domestic changes on foreign policy. American political system was built upon a principle of representative democracy. Therefore, ever since the era of the Independence one of the essential characteristics of the political culture in the United States was a role of public opinion in a decision-making process and politics of the Administrations and the U.S. Congress. Principle of election cycles to the presidential office, Congress, and practically permanent political campaigns created a system of vigorous interaction with the public.<sup>11</sup> Importance of the public opinion was growing also in Europe, but except Great Britain the process was much slower and it was influencing mostly domestic politics but not so profoundly diplomacy. Existence of for the conditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century highly politically educated public was a heritage of colonial system of self-government and creation of information-exchange through a net of local, state, and nation-wide newspapers, and publishing of pamphlets and political essays.<sup>12</sup>

American society had experienced even deeper changes. First and foremost, the large territorial aggrandizement after the war with Mexico deepened the chronic problems between the pro-slavery South and the abolitionist North to such a degree that it almost brought the Union to its end. The second biggest

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<sup>11</sup> This ‘democratic revolution’ is usually granted to an incorporation of masses into the political life by Andrew Jackson during the 1820’s and 1830’s. But we can see the use of public opinion already during “dirty” campaign between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton before the presidential elections of 1800. In case of foreign policy the public opinion played very active role e.g. in declaring of the war against Great Britain in 1812. As one of the most controversial usages of the public opinion in American history is regarded political campaign of President Polk before the war with Mexico in 1846. Buel, Richard, *America on the Brink: How the Political Struggle over War of 1812 Almost Destroyed the Young Republic*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, Miller, John C., *The Federalist Era 1789-1801*, Harper&Row, New York, 1960.

<sup>12</sup> For general information look at: Starr, Paul, *The Creation of the Media. Political Origins of Modern Communications*, Basic Books, New York, 2004

change was caused by new wave of immigration from Europe after 1847. Millions of immigrants were arriving every year, at first mostly from Ireland, Scotland, Northern Europe, and Germany, but lately more and more from eastern, central, and southern parts of the Old continent.<sup>13</sup>

Yet another attribute is also vital for a depiction of full picture of the era, and that is the importance of ideologies for a legitimacy of the existence of the American nation. History of the principal political and cultural ideologies in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> and big part of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was influenced by two principal ideas, the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. Having to describe a substance of both theories by one simple expression; they would be a *confidence* for the Monroe Doctrine and a *morality* for Manifest Destiny.

The Monroe Doctrine was declared by the fifth President James Monroe in the Annual Message in December 1823, but it was mostly prepared by his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams.<sup>14</sup> It was at that point more a declaration of symbolical wish than an expression of growing confidence of the young republic towards old European powers, and it was not taken seriously at all. Whereas the idea of providential *mission* of the American nation to lead the world towards a self-government republican system, published in *Democratic Review* by John L. O'Sullivan in 1845, had roots and background in the American society ever since first Puritan settlers signed the Mayflower Compact in 1620.<sup>15</sup> Both ideas had to fight a hard struggle for serious consideration throughout the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1890's, when the economic potential of the United States gained them proper authority. The biggest change that had happened in the perception of the Manifest Destiny and the idea of the "mission" during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that economical development, social changes, immigration, but also influence of social Darwinism, or Anglo-Saxon racism caused a shift in the

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<sup>13</sup> Between the years 1815-1860 it was approximately 5,000,000, and between 1866-1914 25,000,000 of immigrants. Reader's Companion to American History, Boston 1991, pp. 533-6. For other information see Bailyn, Bernard, *The Peopling of British North America, 1600 – 1775*, Knopf, New York 1986, or Kraut, Alan M., *Huddled Masses: the Immigrant in American Society, 1800 – 1921*, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights (IL), 1982

<sup>14</sup> For the text of the Monroe Doctrine see Bruun, Erik, Crosby, Jay, (ed.), *Our Nation's Archive. The History of the United States in Documents*, Black Dog & Leventhal: Distributed by Workman Pub. Co., New York c1999.

<sup>15</sup> For the text of the Manifest Destiny o John L. O'Sullivan see *Ibid*, pp. 281-283.

perception of the role of American nation.<sup>16</sup> By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the American public was convinced that the role of the United States was to lead the republics of the Western Hemisphere whether by example or by force.

Perception of history of the fight for independence and its ideological impact helped and keeps helping the United States to overcome a complex of a 'lack of history.' Existence of every nation stands on its legitimacy – a belief in having a reason to exist and to have place among other nations. The American nation since it gained independence from Great Britain has tried to express its reason of existence through an idea of Divine quest for the good of humanity. When the United States gained the independence, and new republican 'experiment' became truth, another proof of the destiny of American nation was given.<sup>17</sup> A combination of this vision of predestination to lead the republican world and large aggrandizement of the new territory between the years 1783-1803<sup>18</sup> gave the United States important impulse – an 'outward' direction.<sup>19</sup> Thus the new nation got to the point, when there existed a symbiosis between the ideological expression of self-determination and 'drive' for the territorial expansion.

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<sup>16</sup> For more details about the phenomenon of social Darwinism and Anglo-Saxon racism see e.g. Hofstadter, Richard, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, The Beacon Press, Boston (MA), 1955 (First Edition 1944), Strong, Josiah, *Expansion Under New World-Conditions*, The Baker and Taylor Company, New York, 1900, Fiske, John, *American Political Ideas. Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History*, Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in May 1880, Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, New York, 1885, and from the articles e.g. Loewenberg, Bert James, "Darwinism Comes to America, 1859-1900," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (December, 1941), pp. 339-368, Muller, Dorothea R., "Josiah Strong and American Nationalism: A Reevaluation," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (December, 1966), pp. 487-503.

<sup>17</sup> Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., *The Cycles of American History*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston (ME), 1986, pp. 15-23.

<sup>18</sup> By signing the Treaty of Paris the United States gained access to the Ohio Valley and Mississippi river. This was an electrifying impulse for commerce of the new republic. The problem was that Spain was guarding, and often closing New Orleans, the entrance to the Mississippi River. President Thomas Jefferson was having nightmares when he found out that France took control over New Orleans and Louisiana in 1800 (secret Treaty of San Ildefonso was signed already in 1798). Then the course of events took fast speed. After the failure of Napoleon's plan to rebuild French empire by putting down the slave rebellion in Haiti and making Louisiana its supply-base, his minister Talleyrand helped to American emissaries to make quickly their 'noble bargain.' President Jefferson then used its powers and pushed the Louisiana Purchase through the U.S. Congress in spite of doubts about constitutionality of this step. Besides this territorial aggrandizement, the most important for the future growth of the United States was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 that put constitutional background to further territorial expansion.

<sup>19</sup> Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was only south and westward direction.

Yet throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the United States had to accept the position far behind traditional European monarchies in terms of influence in world affairs. In the Western Hemisphere issues the United States were soon on the second place behind Great Britain, practically since the long era of Napoleonic wars and after the 1820's, when majority of former colonies of Spain gained independence. Slow change in reception and enforcing of the Monroe Doctrine on one side and its acceptance by Great Britain towards the early 1900's on the other also gives us a proof of growing importance of the United States as a regional power in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>20</sup> This was fact was confirmed by the war with Spain and accompanied with declaring of the Open Door policy and by starting to play more active role in China and Japan.

Thus close to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the United States was rising in the 'ranking' among the world powers. By swift destruction of the Spanish navy fleets in Manila and Santiago de Cuba the American nation proved its strength not only to European powers but primarily to itself. The Treaty of Paris of 1898 then can be viewed as a 'ticket' to the group of the 'big-ones.' But every coin has two sides – by the Treaty of Paris the United States also joined the group of colonial *empires* and established thus a precedent, which created philosophical and moral problem influencing the *image* of the United States till the present day. Interaction between changes and development inside the American society and economy and a shift in U.S. foreign policy in the years between the Mexican – American War and the Spanish – American War of 1898 and vice versa will be the principal focus of this dissertation. Therefore, I attempted to choose most important and descriptive 'case studies' of U.S. foreign policy issues, which would best describe the *process of formation* of the principles, on which the United States stood when entering in the Spanish – American War. The dissertation will not focus in detail on the course of the war itself, because I found this idea too ambitious, since the topic is so extensive that it would be enough for another dissertation. Moreover, the main objective is to show the *process* of creation of conditions and causes of this conflict, and its meaning would be lost if I decided to go further in its day-to-day detail analysis. From that perspective the thesis will finish by the Venezuelan

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<sup>20</sup> For growing confidence of the US foreign policy toward Great Britain consider the change in the "Canal problemacy" between Clayton-Bulwer Treaty in 1850 and Hay-Pauncefot Treaty of 1901.

Crisis of 1895, and the war of Cuban insurgents and consequent Spanish – American War of 1898 will be described from more general point of view as the conclusion of this *process*, which had lasted throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **II. Decade of Frustration, 1848 – 1860**

“If the 1840’s are labeled the decade of Manifest Destiny Triumphant, the succeeding ten years may well be called of Manifest Destiny Frustrated.”<sup>21</sup> This way is the historian Julius W. Pratt describing the era between the Mexican – American War and the breakup of the Civil War. A dream of President James K. Polk to annex Texas, acquire California, and gain as much as possible of the Oregon Territory was completed within three years. The year 1848 started with signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, and on July 6 President Polk could announce in a special message to the United States Congress its successful ratification.<sup>22</sup> With the ratification of peace with Mexico ended the co called ‘Continental’ Expansion of the United States. Gadsden Purchase in 1854 and Alaska Purchase in 1867 added another continental territory to the Republic, but the era of great territorial expansion, which started at the real beginning of existence of the United States in 1783 by signing of the Treaty of Paris with the Great Britain, had finished in 1848.

During these sixty-five years the original thirteen colonies spread their republican system throughout a significant part of the North American continent from the Atlantic to Pacific Ocean. Old Jeffersonian dream was fulfilled. However, from an advantage of the time distance we know that this unprecedented expansion almost brought the American Union to its end. First sectional problems started to flow on the surface ever since the beginning of existence of independent United States but a belief in never ending power of compromise and ability to find

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<sup>21</sup> Pratt, Julius W., A History of the United States Foreign Policy, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1955, p. 279

<sup>22</sup> James K. Polk to the Senate and the House of Representatives, July 6, 1848, Washington D.C., Richardson, J., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, I.-X., Washington , 1910, Vol. IV, pp. 587-93.

a solution, like it was in the case of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, was prevailing throughout the 1830's and 1840's.<sup>23</sup>

However, the Mexican – American War fastened the process of growing disunion between the abolitionist North and pro-slavery South. A point brake sign that the system of compromise in keeping a number of seats in the Senate equal between both sections was close to be at the “end of the rope” came in the so called Wilmot Proviso.<sup>24</sup> The Proviso was never approved by the Congress but ran another trig in already growing gap between the North and the South. With signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo arose again a problem with the principle established by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 about transforming federal territories from newly acquired areas so they could enter to the Union after filling a number of 50,000 inhabitants.<sup>25</sup>

The problem was that Southern economy was based on extensive plantation agriculture, which was rapidly wearing out the soil. Moving a frontier of the slavery system was thus one of the solutions how to increase a production of cotton while its price was constantly dropping down, and the prices of slaves, on the contrary, were growing. On the other hand the 1840's were witnessing first massive wave of immigration from Europe, newly from Ireland stricken by several years of droughts and poor harvests, which caused big famine in 1846, and more and more also from German states and Scandinavia. Most of these immigrants were heading to big cities to the north of the Mason – Dixon Line separating both sections – New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For the text of the Missouri Compromise see Bruun, Erik, Crosby, Jay, (ed.), *Our Nation's Archive. The History of the United States in Documents*, Black Dog & Leventhal: Distributed by Workman Pub. Co., New York c1999, pp. 221-22.

<sup>24</sup> Proviso introduced by Congressman David Wilmot from Pennsylvania on August 6, 1846, was suggesting that Federal Law in any new territory seized from Mexico would outlaw the slavery. For the text of the Wilmot Proviso see Bailey, Thomas A., Kennedy, David M., *The American Spirit. United States as Seen by Contemporaries*, D.C. Heath and Company, Lexington (Massachusetts), Toronto, 1994, pp. 421-22.

<sup>25</sup> For the text of Northwest Ordinance see The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, *American History: A Documentary History Record, 1492 – present*, The Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787, An ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the Ohio River, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/nworder.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Mason – Dixon Line was a line established by surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon between 1763 and 1767. The line resolved a border-problem between Maryland and Pennsylvania but mostly came into the spotlight with the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The Compromise established a cultural boundary between the slave states of the South and the free states of the North (however its separation of Maryland and Delaware is a bit confusing since Delaware was a slave state that stayed in the Union). This boundary became referred to as the Mason-Dixon Line

Immigration and immense space on the west caused that after 1848 thousands of pioneers and farmers were every year moving behind the Mississippi River to establish economy of small farms, where slavery could not be profitable. The controversy was, as its author Senator of Kentucky Henry Clay hoped, resolved by famous Compromise of 1850.<sup>27</sup> “Douglas’s bill had a catastrophic effect on sectional harmony. It repudiated a compromise that many in the North regarded as binding. ...The act also destroyed what was left of the second party system.”<sup>28</sup> The problem of extension of slavery to newly acquired territories had become one of the most severe domestic problems until it was resolved by the blood bath of the Civil War and costly victory of the North. Sectional differences were also the most significant aspect influencing the course of American foreign policy in the pre-Civil War era.

## II.I. Yucatán

The sectional controversy had a significant influence on U.S. foreign policy already during the Mexican – American War. The province of Yucatán located in southern Mexico on the peninsula of the same name had had a long tradition of separatism, especially during the era of centralism of General Santa Anna after 1835.<sup>29</sup> Another aspect was an internal problem between white Creole and Indian population. The paradox is that the so called ‘War of Castes’ between

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because it began along the western part of the original Mason-Dixon Line and headed westward to the Ohio River and along the Ohio to its mouth at the Mississippi River and then west along 36°30’ North. See About: Geography, Internet Source: <http://geography.about.com/od/politicalgeography/a/masondixon.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Clay’s Compromise was trying to solve a constitutional problem of slavery in federal territories by introducing ‘the omnibus bill’ of several bills offering concessions to both sections. The Compromise of 1850 passed through the Congress because it was supported by new President Millard Fillmore, who came to office after the death of Zachary Taylor as a set of several separate bills. For more about the Compromise of 1850 see Bruun, Erik, Crosby, Jay, (ed.), *Our Nation’s Archive. The History of the United States in Documents*, Black Dog & Leventhal: Distributed by Workman Pub. Co., New York c1999, pp. 301-3, Bailey, Kennedy, *The American Spirit*, pp. 421-38, or Divine, Robert A. & Collective, *The American Story. Volume I: To 1877*, Pearson, Longman, New York, 2005, pp. 336-42 and 344-45.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 344.

<sup>29</sup> Yucatán didn’t join the United States of Mexico until the fall of Emperor Augustin I in 1824. The state, geographically and historically more belonging to Central America, declared independence in 1839 and maintained it practically until 1843. Its leaders were also negotiating a treaty with independent Texas in 1843, and again declared independence in 1846. Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, Knopf, New York, 1966, p. 202

these two groups in the spring of 1848 started as a struggle of two white parties represented by cities of Mérida and Campeche. Both parties armed Indians to fight for them but they eventually turned against all white population. Indian revolt united whites and on March 1848, Governor Mendez with the leader of Mérida Barbachano asked governments of the United States, Great Britain, and France for a help and protection. President Polk personally was willing to send troops still presented in Mexico, to help whites in Yucatán and gain strong positions in this strategically located region. However, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was at this moment disputed in the Congress and the President didn't want to lessen its chances to pass. Therefore, he decided to present a sympathizing commentary on a course of events on the Peninsula but let the Congress decide whether the troops should be sent or not. „These communications present a case of human suffering and misery which can not fail to excite the sympathies of all civilized nations. ... The inhabitants, panic stricken and destitute of arms, are flying before their savage pursuers toward the coast, and their expulsion from their country or their extermination would seem to be inevitable unless they can obtain assistance from abroad.“<sup>30</sup>

Already inflammatory dispute between annexationists and the opposition about the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which was even more difficult because of sectional differences, got another fervent impulse. Among one of the biggest supporters of help to whites on Yucatán was Senator Edward A. Hannegan of Indiana, who was arguing with yet the traditional argument of expansionists of possible threat that Great Britain, already established in Belize, would come first and take possession of Yucatán: „The possession of Yucatán by England would soon be followed by possession of Cuba. ... Place them in the hands of England, and she controls the mouth of Mississippi as absolutely as she controls the mouth of Thames.“<sup>31</sup> Other big supporters of action on the peninsula were Henry S. Foote from Mississippi, Lewis Cass from Michigan, or Sam Houston from Texas. Their arguments ranged from geopolitical aspects relating to proposals to build transoceanic canal or railroad, which would ease a transportation of thousands of

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<sup>30</sup>James K. Polk to the Congress, April 29, 1848, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, IV, pp. 581-83.

<sup>31</sup> Speech of Edward A. Hannegan in the Senate, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of May, 1848, Congressional Globe, 30<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., App. 591-7 in Merk, Frederick, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism 1843-1848, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1967, pp. 211-12.

Americans fleeing to California after gold was found there near the ranch of local big rancher and landowner John A. Sutter, through already noticed threat from the Great Britain, to calls for humanitarian action to help to white women and children.

Opposition came from various sides but mostly from the North like from Senators Clayton of Delaware, Davis of Massachusetts, or Miller of New Jersey. But the deathblow to the proposal came from the Southern leader and the biggest supporter of the annexation of Texas John C. Calhoun from South Carolina. Calhoun was mostly aiming at politicians, who were using rhetoric of the Monroe Doctrine against action of Great Britain. Sixty-six years old Senator was the last living member of the Cabinet, which signed the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. He argued that the original Doctrine was aiming against intervention of the Wholly Alliance in former Spanish colonies in Latin America, Russian actions on the Pacific coast, and that Great Britain was originally offering an assurance of the sovereignty of new Latin American republics in 1823. He also added the fact that the Peninsula didn't have any relevant value since there weren't harbors fit enough for bigger-size boats.<sup>32</sup>

„The speech was shattering attack on the message.”<sup>33</sup> On the position of one of the last giants of the American political life since 1820's we can describe the ongoing change in rhetoric of politicians from both sections. In spite of the fact that Calhoun was considered a leader of the Southern politicians, he stood against another territorial expansion to the region, where, like some Southerners suggested, the slavery would profit. He was in the politics long enough to notice growing antagonism between the two camps, especially since there was always existing danger of the Wilmot proviso. His antipathy towards another territorial expansion arose from an effort to protect the Southern system by not exposing it to criticism of the North. However, Calhoun belonged to a dying breed of pre-war politicians and his opinion prevailed for the moment just because of his strong position of the leader and his fame. The whole issue anyway ended as quickly as it started. Once the news of the peace on the peninsula arrived, the Senator

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<sup>32</sup> For more information about the debate and speeches of Sam Houston, Lewis Cass, John M. Niles of Connecticut, and John C. Calhoun see Graebner, Norman A., *Ideas and Diplomacy. Readings in the Intellectual Tradition of American Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 227-42.

<sup>33</sup> Speech of John C. Calhoun in the Senate, 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 1848, *Ibid*, p. 218.

Hannegan let yet John A. Dix from New York to present a compromise solution proposing mostly a humanitarian help to white population on the Peninsula. Right after that he announced that an accord between whites and Indians was established and that he is pulling his Message out.<sup>34</sup>

It is very likely that if the peace wouldn't have been established the Congress would have voted aye for Dix's bill. Thus ended the question of annexation of Yucatán, which can be viewed as one of the first results of the disunion between the South and the North in the American foreign policy, which fully erupted in the 1850's. Until this time politicians from both sections somehow always found a compromise solution. From now on the expansionist tendencies directed to the Caribbean and Central America were on both sides regarded with a suspicion. Since the two Presidents in office in the 1850's were from the Democratic Party, which was tending more and more to represent interests of the South, most of the attempts to acquire new territories were blocked by the North.

## **II.II. Challenging Great Britain in Central America**

The only integrating factor connecting the North and the South in the 1850's was a growing resentment toward the policy of Great Britain in Central America and the Caribbean. In reality the policy of the only hegemonic power in Latin America, and in fact on all oceans, wasn't changing so much. London had kept pursuing its economical interests established during the Napoleon wars in Europe and Wars of Independence in Latin America. It was the United States, who was testing the patience of its stronger opponent in the region.

The region, where the United States first challenged a position of Great Britain after the war with Mexico was Central America. This question was directly connected with a cession of California and gaining of substantial part of Oregon. President Polk, since he had entered the office, wanted to acquire

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<sup>34</sup> Significant is that the peace between white and Indian groups on the Peninsula was very soon broken again but at that point it wasn't an issue in Washington D.C. anymore. Mexican central government established order in the region with arms left behind for these purposes by the U.S. Army and the campaign was financed with money coming from the first payment of \$3,000,000 from the total sum of \$10,000,000 arranged by the two governments in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. For the question of acquisition of Yucatán see *Ibid*, Chapter VII, or Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, pp. 203-7.

California.<sup>35</sup> This goal was fulfilled after the war broke out by Colonel Stephen A. Kearny, who in the Treaty of Cahuenga from January 13, 1847, compelled local *Californios* to give up the resistance and finally got hold of California for the Union. To take in the consideration also acquiring of a big portion of Oregon Territory, the United States obtained a control of the western coast of the Pacific Ocean.<sup>36</sup> American settlers had started to migrate in smaller numbers to California and Oregon since the mid-1840's but the migration changed into a flood after gold was found in John A. Sutter's mill in central California in the same month as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed.

There were basically three ways how to get to California at that time. First was an overland trail through the continent, which usually last around three months and was a perilous voyage through unknown wild country with a danger from hostile Indian tribes. Second way was to circumnavigate the South American continent via the Magellan Strait. This route usually took around the same time. Third possibility was to cross the continent in one of the three narrow spots in Mexico and Central America. These spots were – Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico, Lake Managua and river San Juan in Nicaragua, or Isthmus of Panama. Central America thus became a central point of interest for American foreign policy from simply logistic reasons and as a result of the need to protect American citizens and their rights on the way to California and Oregon. Besides this practical aspect there were of course also growing economical interests of the United States in the region and rivalry with Great Britain.

Ideas about building of a canal between the two oceans were considered by Spanish colonial officials already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> In the United States several efforts had been made mostly by businessmen from New York and Boston, who had economical interests in the trade in the Pacific already since the early 1800's.<sup>38</sup> Acquisition of California and Oregon stirred up this idea again but canal

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<sup>35</sup> Polk announced intention to acquire California in his Inaugural speech in March 1845. For more details see James K. Polk, Inaugural speech, March 4, 1845, Washington, Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. IV, pp. 373-382.

<sup>36</sup> About Kearney's expedition see Rives, George L., Mexico and the United States 1821-1848, I-II, New York 1913, Vol. II, pp. 360-361, 470-482.

<sup>37</sup> Opatrný Josef, Průplav dvou oceánů, Mladá Fronta, Praha 1979, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Guerra, Ramiro, La Expansión Territorial de los Estados Unidos. A Expensas de España y de los Países Hispanoamericanos, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, 1975, pp. 235-36.

experts realized that at the moment it was technically and financially impossible to build such a canal. However, it didn't mean that American politicians and diplomats would cease efforts to gain special position in the region by negotiating exclusive treaties with governments of Nicaragua and New Granada. Their attempts were eased by a distaste of governments of Central America with the policy of Great Britain in the region.<sup>39</sup> First English settlers came to the mouth of Belize River to lumber precious wood and other products of the jungle already in 1638. British government set up good relations also with chiefs of Mosquito Indians on the Atlantic coast but had never established official control over the region until 1838. In 1844 the British government officially created a representation of the Crown over the Mosquito Coast, which provoked negative reactions in Nicaragua.<sup>40</sup>

However, the position of Great Britain has been unshaken and it is no surprise that historian Lester D. Langley is using a term 'Pax Britanica' for mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in Central America, respectively the whole South American continent.<sup>41</sup> A representative of Great Britain and a "belligerent agent of imperialism" in the region during years 1837-1852 was Frederick Chatfield.<sup>42</sup> A role of his main opponent in the region played American Minister in New Granada Benjamin A. Bidlack. Bidlack had been skillfully using anti-British sentiments in the region, coming from the fact that Great Britain was relishing from almost complete economical hegemony, to negotiate a treaty with good conditions for the United States already before California and other territories were acquired. The treaty negotiated with the Secretary of State of New Granada Manuel Maria Mallarino on December 12, 1846, was not supposed only to guarantee territorial integrity of New Granada and the Isthmus of Panama against Great Britain, but also against from time to time enlivened separatism of representatives of the province of Panama. Although Bidlack, who was sent to negotiate a commercial treaty, didn't have instructions and authority to sign such a document, he agreed to accept such an offer.

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<sup>39</sup> Langley, Lester D., *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, London, 1989, p. 75.

<sup>40</sup> Opatrný Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>41</sup> Langley, Lester D., *Struggle for the American Mediterranean. United States – European Rivalry in the Gulf – Caribbean, 1776 – 1904*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1976, p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

The Mallarino – Bidlack Treaty had been guaranteeing to American citizens in its Article XXXV the use of any means of transportation existed or transit that might be constructed across the isthmus upon the same terms as those enjoyed by the citizens of New Granada. In return the United States would guarantee the neutrality of the isthmus and the sovereignty of New Granada therein.<sup>43</sup> President Polk in his message to the Congress was remarking as for this article with words showing importance of this treaty for the nation: “The importance of this concession to the commercial and political interests of the United States can not easily be overrated. The route by the Isthmus of Panama is the shortest between the two oceans, and from the information herewith communicated it would seem to be the most practicable for a railroad or canal. The vast advantages to our commerce which would result from such a communication, not only with the west coast of America, but with Asia and the islands of the Pacific, are too obvious to require any detail. Such a passage would relieve us from a long and dangerous navigation of more than 9,000 miles around Cape Horn and render our communication with our possessions on the northwest coast of America comparatively easy and speedy.”<sup>44</sup>

The Mallarino – Bidlack Treaty was negotiated and consequently ratified in the Congress in a moment when it was already clear that California would become a part of the United States. This course of events was of course observed with resentment in London. The treaty wasn’t guaranteeing the United States special rights; mostly it was assuring the territorial integrity of New Granada. On the other hand it was auguring growing interest of American politicians and business circles in Central America and also establishing a principle that the United States would become a counterweight to Great Britain in its controversies with the countries of Central and South America. Overall the Mallarino – Bidlack Treaty symbolized first “fingers in the doors” attempting to open access to the Central American region.

Second spot geographically apt for building of the inter-oceanic canal was Nicaragua. Here the situation was aggravated for American foreign policy-makers

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<sup>43</sup> Opatrný, Josef, Průplav dvou oceánů, pp. 29-30; Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 287; Langley, Struggle for the American Mediterranean, p. 87.

<sup>44</sup> James K. Polk to the Senate of the United States, February 10, 1847, Washington, Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages, Vol. IV, p. 511

by the fact that Great Britain held Belize and created a protectorate over the Mosquito Coast. The central hot spot over which a diplomatic quarrel had been waged was the mouth of the San Juan River. The river is draining Lake Managua, which is on the west divided from the Pacific Ocean just by twelve miles of land, to the Atlantic Ocean. The situation escalated, when the Nicaraguan troops at the beginning of January 1848 re-occupied the city of San Juan, and arrested present British citizens supporting claims of Mosquito Indians. The city was considered by Great Britain a part of Mosquitia, and held by British since January 1.<sup>45</sup> British reaction came on February 12, when Royal marines seized the city back. Nicaragua didn't have instruments to change the situation and on March 7 signed the Treaty with Great Britain acknowledging a possession of Grey Town by Mosquito Indians.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile the Executive in Washington realized the importance of the region for future development of California, Pacific coast, and business interests of the United States in Asia. American Minister in Nicaragua Elijah Hise countered British – Nicaraguan treaty with a pact negotiated with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Selva of June 21, 1848, which was guaranteeing sovereignty of Nicaraguan borders. In return the United States were given the rights to build a future canal. Nevertheless, the treaty never came into an effect because Whig opposition voted it down.<sup>47</sup> Shortly after did Ephraim George Squier, who became even more merciless opponent of Frederick Chatfield in Central America, replace Hise. Squier took his mission with the most eager seriousness. He profoundly studied politics, geography, climate and culture of Central America. He also traveled through the whole region and later published several books about his surveys.<sup>48</sup> Describing his political view of the role of the United States in the

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<sup>45</sup> The name of the city was changed to Grey Town in December 1847. Guerra, *La Expansión Territorial de los Estados Unidos*, p. 238

<sup>46</sup> Ramiro Guerra also indicates that other reason for signing of the treaty by the Nicaraguan government was growing suspicion towards the United States after the Mexican – American War and hard conditions dictated in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. *Ibid*, p. 239.

<sup>47</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, pp. 91-2; Langley, *America and the Americas*, p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> Among books written by Squier belong *Nicaragua: Its People, Scenery, Monuments* (1852), *Notes on Central America: Particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador* (1855), *The States of Central America* (1858), *Travels in Central America, Particularly in Nicaragua* (1860), and *Honduras: Descriptive, Historical, and Statistical* (1870). Latin American Library of Tulane University, New Orleans (LA), Internet Source: <http://lal.tulane.edu/squiercoll.html>.

region he “exhibited the emotional fervor of Manifest Destiny and ‘Young America’ and saw in his Central American mission an unparalleled opportunity to open up new paths for American expansion.”<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, it was just a matter of time when the two aggressive Ministers of both countries would get in a discord. This inevitable conflict came at the moment when Squier, using his knowledge of the region and a nature of local politics, negotiated with Nicaraguan government new treaty giving American citizens exclusive rights for passage and transit across the country on their way to California and Oregon. The Treaty of Transit was signed on September 3, 1849. Squier scored yet another diplomatic victory by signing a treaty of American exclusive rights on Tigre Island belonging to Honduras. Chatfield seeing methods and successes of American Minister reacted without authorization from the Foreign Office and ordered an occupation of Tigre Island by British Troops. The Commander of British Royal Navy in the Caribbean very soon revoked this order. Nevertheless, the diplomatic incident had been already initiated.

Both Ministers went beyond their respective authority and the politicians in London and Washington steered immediately more moderate course than the two diplomats stirred up by their mutual quarrel. It is necessary to mention also that Great Britain was in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century the biggest global power with many spheres of political and economical interest around the Globe, of which many were considered at the Foreign Office more important than a controversy with the United States in Central America. London’s geopolitically most paramount areas of interest were Turkey, Egypt, India, East Asia, or Canada. Simply summed up, the British government still didn’t consider an influence and power of the United States in the region substantial enough in comparison with a clout of France or Russia in the Middle East, or Asia.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the British government didn’t want to risk a war over a less significant sphere, and thus crumble its naval force, and on top of that with the United States, which was becoming one of the biggest importers of British export. On the other hand the United States since the acquisition of California regarded Central America more

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<sup>49</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, p. 93

<sup>50</sup> Opatrný, Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, pp. 33-34. Excellent book about the slow deterioration of the British Empire is Judd, Denis, *Impérium. Britská imperiální zkušenost od roku 1765 do současnosti* [Empire: the British Imperial Experience, from 1765 to the Present], BB Art, Praha, 1999.

and more as one of its principal foreign policy concerns. Thus, when the Secretary of State John M. Clayton was impending that he would send Squier's treaty with Honduras to the Senate, with still a strong annexationist movement existing not only in the South but also in the North, where expansionists desired to add Canada to the Union as a counterbalance to newly acquired territory in the south, the British government rather dispatched to Washington one of its most experienced diplomats Sir Henry Bulwer to negotiate a dispute.<sup>51</sup>

William Henry Bulwer was one of the most experienced British diplomats of the era. Before serving in Washington D.C. in 1849-1852, he was a Minister Plenipotentiary in Constantinople (1837-38), where he negotiated a commercial treaty with Turkey. During years 1843-48 he was an Ambassador in Spain.<sup>52</sup> Bulwer arrived to Washington in December 1848 and immediately started to negotiate with Secretary of State Clayton. Central American issue was not the only problem he wanted to settle. Bulwer was also instructed to resolve a matter of commercial relations of the United States with Canada. Moreover, Central American problem had two aspects. First was the future inter-oceanic canal, and second the question of the dispute between Nicaragua and Misquito Indians. The last issue was at the moment the most fervent because of the still strong position of expansionists in the Congress and American press. Voices arguing with the defense of the Monroe Doctrine weren't so numerous, yet very loud. Expansion to the southern parts of the continent was more and more becoming a subject of domestic quarrel between the North and the South but for the moment a 'danger' of Central America controlled by the Great Britain prevailed.

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<sup>51</sup>The issue of the annexation of Canada was current throughout the 1840's to 1860's and politicians in London had still very fresh memory of the Feinian raids mounted by Irish-Americans in 1846 and the Canadian uprising in 1837. Talks about the annexation to the United States started again in 1846 after the government of Robert Peel repealed the so-called Corn Laws and ended thus a preferential system for products from British colonies. Canadian lumbermen and farmers got in serious economical troubles and as a solution saw huge market south of the Canadian border. Politicians in London and Canada, however, offered as a solution a reciprocity treaty with the United States. Negotiations started already in 1846 but dragged out till 1854 when British Governor General of the North American Provinces, Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, negotiated the reciprocity with American Secretary of State Marcy signed on June 5, 1854. Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 281-83.

<sup>52</sup> From Madrid he was expelled by dictator Ramon Narvez. Throughout the year 1849, as a specialist on Turkey agenda, he had to stay in London until the crisis between Russia and Austria on one side and Turkey on the other was resolved. Opatrný, Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, pp. 34-8. Later he served also in Florence, Bucharest, and again Constantinople. In 1871 he was ennobled with a title of Baron.

To stop British actions in Mosquitia seemed a vital goal for diplomats in Washington since gold had been found in newly acquired California. Thousands of Americans were hurrying to fulfill their gold dream, and the fastest way to the Pacific Coast was to cross one of the Central American narrow isthmuses. Bulwer, however, was a skilled diplomat; therefore he decided to put more attention of American politicians and the public to terms and rights of both countries in an intended construction of the trans-oceanic canal. Bulwer proposed the construction of the canal in Nicaragua, whereby San Juan would obtain a status of a neutral harbor. Later on both diplomats agreed to establish a joint commission for surveying the best location for the canal. Clayton, nevertheless, knew that the question of Mosquitia must be at least formally presented in the Treaty. Therefore he obtained from Bulwer some vague concessions, which had ambiguous meaning and were possible to be explained in different ways. Thus the treaty signed on April 19, 1850, didn't in fact resolve the up-to-date most actual issue for which Clayton and Bulwer held talks.

The treaty started with a preamble that the “United States of America and her Britannic Majesty, being desirous of consolidating the relations of amity which so happily subsist between them, by setting forth and fixing in a convention their views and intentions with reference to any means of communication by ship canal, which may be constructed between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, by the way of the River San Juan de Nicaragua, and either or both of the lakes of Nicaragua or Managua, to any port or place on the Pacific Ocean ... have agreed to the following articles.” Article I was proclaiming that neither the United States nor Great Britain “will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship canal,” or “colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America.” Here then Great Britain officially gave up a desire to extend its territory in Central America but nothing was said about the protection over Mosquito Coast.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Problem of Mosquito Coast was negotiated in Webster – Crampton Treaty of 1852, and again in 1856 in Dallas – Clarendon Convention. This treaty was in Article II establishing borders of British Honduras (Belize): “That Her Britannic Majesty's settlement called Belize or British Honduras, on the shores of the Bay of Honduras, bounded on the north by the Mexican Province of Yucatan, and on the south by the River Sarstoon, was not and is not embraced in the Treaty entered into between the Contracting Parties on the 19th day of April, 1850; and that the limits of the said Belize, on the west, as they existed on the -said 19th of April, 1850, shall, if possible, be settled and fixed by Treaty between Her Britannic Majesty and the Republic of Guatemala, within

Article V was securing neutrality of the proposed canal: “The contracting parties further engage that, when the said canal shall have been completed, they will protect it from interruption, seizure, or unjust confiscation, and that they will guarantee the neutrality thereof, so that the said canal may forever be open and free, and the capital invested therein secure.” And finally Article VII was saying that: “It being desirable that no time should be unnecessarily lost in commencing and constructing the said canal, the governments of the United States and Great Britain determine to give their support and encouragement to such persons or company as may first offer to commence the same, with the necessary capital, the consent of the local authorities, and on such principles as accord with the spirit and intention of this convention.”<sup>54</sup>

Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was by American expansionists viewed as a withdrawal from the principles of Monroe Doctrine but its value for the future course of American foreign policy was essential. Julius W. Pratt concludes that “to set up such a claim [Monroe Doctrine] in the 1850’s would have been to act in defiance of facts. Great Britain, France, and Spain all held colonies and naval bases much closer than the United States to both Panama and Nicaragua, the most feasible canal routes. Great Britain and France, at least, far surpassed the United States in naval power. The United States was in no position to assert its paramount interest in the canal routes. It won a victory, not often recognized, in attaining equality with England by means of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.”<sup>55</sup>

A profound significance of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty doesn’t lie exactly in the terms implicated in it. The most far-reaching aspect of the treaty was that the United States compelled Great Britain to acknowledge the fact that its position in the region wasn’t fully hegemonic anymore as it had been since the wars of independence in Latin America. As it was mentioned before, Latin America was

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two years from the exchange of the ratifications of this instrument, which said boundaries and limits shall not at any time hereafter be extended.” Diferendo Territorial, Libro Blanco de Belice, Internet source: <http://www.minex.gob.gt/libroblancoing/blaing19.htm>. Further, the Bay Island was proclaimed a free territory under authority of Honduras, and autonomy of Misquito Coast. Treaties with Honduras and Nicaragua were signed in 1859, respectively 1860. President Buchanan signed the treaty in 1860. Ibid, Internet source: <http://www.minex.gob.gt/libroblancoing/blaing24.htm>. Also see Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, pp. 99-103.

<sup>54</sup>The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, *Convention Between the United States of America and Her Britannic Majesty*; April 19, 1850, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britain/br1850.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 289.

just one of the spheres of interest of her Majesty's government, and by far not the most important. The middle of the nineteenth century was still a 'European Age' and it was to be like that until the World War I. Great Britain was playing a role of the guardian of the balance of powers established after the Vienna Congress in 1815 so it could have peace for spreading its economical hegemony. Therefore, power struggles with Russia in Turkey, Central and East Asia, with France in Africa, or with Prussia and Habsburg Monarchy in Central Europe were attracting more attention of the Foreign Office than far-away region, where Great Britain practically didn't have an opponent. Moreover, even though the American merchants entering Central American and Caribbean regions represented growing danger for British economical hegemony, nothing could shatter its position in control of local export-led production as well as investments.<sup>56</sup> In 1850, the goal, which the American foreign policy-makers tried to achieve, was to obtain access to the region and the same rights as local and British citizens. This would apply not only U.S. citizens traveling to California and Oregon, but also those, who were providing the transportation and other necessary services for them, and also American merchants allured by economic potential of the newly "discovered" region. Thus considering long-term interests of the United States and Great Britain, the Clayton – Bulwer Treaty can be viewed as a success for the American and the British delegation alike.

In addition to this, the United States hadn't even reached a position of a real political opponent of Great Britain in 1850's yet. The British position in Latin America was still unshaken and, as Julius W. Pratt correctly observes, ideas of Monroe Doctrine and a leadership of the United States in the Western Hemisphere were still far ahead of general recognition. Politicians in London and analysts of the Foreign Office were of course watching the course of events in the region very carefully not only because of preservation of economical hegemony, but also because of securing of very important colonies as Canada, Caribbean islands (Barbados and Jamaica), or continental colonies Belize and British Guiana.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>For more on economic history of Latin America in 19<sup>th</sup> century see Bulmer-Thomas, Victor, *The Economic History of Latin America since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 1-151.

<sup>57</sup>Barbados belonged (along with British Guiana), though very small in size, among one of the most important Imperial colonies since it was the most important provider of cane sugar for the mother country. For more information about history of the Caribbean see Knight, Franklin W., *The*

However, when they were analyzing development of the United States and its foreign policy in the region, they could not see but a republic with great internal problems. First of all it was the sectional problem between the South and the North, but also social animosity between old settlers and newly coming immigrants and so forth. Furthermore, they could see a country, which just acquired immense territory in the western part of the North American continent, and which was at the outset of the settlement of these new immense areas. Of course, American merchants had been tough competitors to the British, but the power of the country and support of the government in Washington standing behind them was far inferior to the one in London. Thus the main short-term consequences of the treaty, such as neutrality of the future canal, the same rights for the citizens of both countries in the passage, or a guarantee of integrity of Central American countries could have been viewed by American expansionists as backpedaling. But the long-term effect, obviously secret to politicians on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, was that Great Britain recognized growing interests of the United States in Central America.

Several incidents in Central America took again attention of American public and politicians throughout the rest of the 1850's. First occurred already in 1851 when the captain of American ship *Prometheus* with a millionaire Cornelius Vanderbilt on board refused to pay a fee to British clerks for using the harbor in San Juan, arguing that the city belongs to Nicaragua. The British Royal Navy ship *Express* forced the Captain to pay the fee, which caused resentment in the United States since Vanderbilt had counted among the richest businessmen in the country. His company *Accessory Transit Company* was providing transportation from the United States to California during the Gold Rush through Central America. Therefore, this attempt to enforce the British law on one of Vanderbilt's ships, moreover with the owner himself on board, was sensed as an assault on American interests and transportation rights in the region. Great Britain quickly apologized, and the situation was promptly settled, but a tension in the region between American private companies and British representatives endured.<sup>58</sup>

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Caribbean. The Genesis of Fragmented Nationalism, Oxford University Press, New York 1978. Table of the Caribbean sugar production, 1815-1894 is in *Ibid*, p. 240.

<sup>58</sup> Opatrný, Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, p. 41.

Position of the United States in Central America was aggravated in 1855 because of the incursion of the filibuster William Walker in Nicaragua. The ‘grey-eyed man of destiny’ was invited by Nicaraguan Liberals to assist them in a fight against the Conservatives. Walker soon gained control of the government and since he was a supporter of slavery, and needed to attract the support from the South, he repealed laws against slavery and promised to reopen the African slave trade. His actions, however, halted quarrels of Nicaragua’s neighbors who unified in an alliance supported not only by Great Britain but also by Cornelius Vanderbilt whose business was put in danger by this expedition.<sup>59</sup> Walker’s government collapsed in May 1857 and the great American filibuster had to return to the United States. However, as happened to many adventurers before him, he became a prisoner of a vision of his own greatness, and thus he returned to Central America in 1860 again. Walker landed near Trujillo in Honduras, hoping to get to Nicaragua, but only to get arrested by British naval vessel even before landing and handed over to Honduran authorities, which court-martialed him quickly and then executed him on September 12, 1860.<sup>60</sup> Reaction in the United States to the involvement of William Walker, supporter of slavery, in Central American politics clearly showed that interest of the South and the North shifted significantly since the war with Mexico had ended. But as Lester D. Langley writes: “in the decade following the great triumph over Mexico, Manifest Destiny was caribbeanized. The Sea of the New World became the American Mediterranean.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> William O. Scroggs, “Walker and Vanderbilt in Nicaragua,” in: William Appleman Williams, (ed.), *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, Volume I, 1750-1900, Rand McNally & Company, Chicago 1956 (fifth printing 1964), pp. 267-75.

<sup>60</sup> Walker also attempted to acquire Baja California before he turned his attention to Central America. His expedition across the Mexican borders in 1853 failed and Walker was subsequently tried by the court-martial in San Francisco for violating U.S. neutral laws. Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 291, or *The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco*, Internet source: <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/walker.html>. William O. Scroggs suggested that Walker’s idea wasn’t to gain control over the situation in Nicaragua and later on to annex it as a slave state to the Union. His plan was to build an independent pro – slavery Central American state, which would also include Cuba. Scroggs, William O., “*William Walker’s Designs on Cuba*,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, (Vol. I, No. 2), pp. 200-211.

<sup>61</sup> Langley, *America and the Americas*, p. 71.

## II.III. Cuba before the Civil War

The fact that the Caribbean became central issue of American foreign policy after the war with Mexico was confirmed by renewed interest of Washington about a development in Cuba. The island belonged to main agenda of the Department of State since the United States signed Louisiana Purchase with Napoleon's France in 1803. Cuba lies only eighty miles from the shore of Florida and it is strategically very important for the control of the Gulf of Mexico. One of the first politicians, who saw in acquisition of Cuba a result of 'natural gravitation,' was the Secretary of State of the President James A. Monroe, John Quincy Adams in his dispatch to U.S. Minister in Spain from April 28, 1823. "...there are laws of political as well as of physical gravitation; and if an apple severed by the tempest from its native tree cannot choose but fall to the ground, Cuba, forcibly disjoined from its own unnatural connection with Spain, and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only toward the North American Union, which by the same law of nature, cannot cast her off from its bosom."<sup>62</sup> Also Henry Clay warned Spain that the United States would never consent to its transfer to another European power.

Cuban question was revived much like the Central American one because of the acquisition of the Pacific coast after the war with Mexico, growing commercial interests of the United States on the island, and a fear that declining rule of Spain on the island would lead it to sell the 'pearl of the Caribbean' to some European power, most likely Great Britain or France.<sup>63</sup> The course of events in Cuba, for clear reasons, belonged among one of the principal U.S. foreign-policy concerns throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For now we will look at the Cuban problemacy in 1850's. New attempts to annex Cuba in the 1850's were directly connected with a rise of expansionism during the 1840's. We can follow two kinds of development of Cuban issue in this decade, official policy of U.S. government, and private activities of American and Cuban citizens more

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<sup>62</sup> Weinberg, Albert K., *Manifest Destiny. A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago (IL), 1936, Chapter VIII, pp. 224-51.

<sup>63</sup> Rauch, Basil, "*American Interests in Cuba*," in: Williams, William Appleman, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, pp. 263-67.

or less supported by groups interested in the annexation. However, from time to time the borders between these efforts were blurry.

A personification of attempts to acquire Cuba during late 1840's and 1850's in the United States represents a journalist and co-founder of *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, and author of the famous term Manifest Destiny, John L. O'Sullivan from New York. O'Sullivan was in his ideology proposing a dissemination of the principals of self-government, democracy, and individual rights as they existed in the United States to new areas throughout the North and South American continent. This theory, as its author meant it, was purely pacifistic, and new areas were meant to enter American Union only on voluntary rudiments. Despite the fact that Manifest Destiny throughout 1840's served to expansionists to justify annexation of Texas, demands for all Oregon territory, acquisition of California, and other territorial gains, O'Sullivan remained in opposition to a war and military solutions. For this reason he was in opposition to the Mexican-American War, and had to wait until it was over to present his proposal to buy the island with a help of Cuban and American planters and business circles. U.S. Congress ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on March 10, 1848, and already eight days later O'Sullivan sent a letter to the Secretary of State Buchanan summarizing all advantages resulting from an acquisition of Cuba. He also informed Buchanan about his previous negotiations with planters on the island, and that they were willing to pay \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000 to Spanish government as an indemnification for giving Cuba the independence. O'Sullivan and his brother-in-law Cristobal Madan, who had close relations with Cuban leaders, were also confidentially accepted by Polk.<sup>64</sup>

President Polk personally had no objections against acquisition of another valuable territory, but he was also a realist and knew that growing problems between the South and the North over Wilmot Proviso would make annexation of Cuba so shortly after the war with Mexico practically impossible. Therefore, he decided not to present officially his position but signed an unofficial instruction, written by Buchanan, to Minister in Spain Romulus M. Saunders of South Carolina to present American offer to purchase Cuba for \$100,000,000.

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<sup>64</sup> Opatrný, Josef, *US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in 1850's*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 1993, p. 176. For more about O'Sullivan's activity and subsequent debate of American politicians and press see Merk, *The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism 1843-1848*, pp. 246-59.

Unfortunately for Polk's administration there already existed talks in Madrid about American attempt to purchase Cuba, and when New York Tribune published an article called "Highly Important Intelligence from Spain," the reaction of Whig opposition and Great Britain wasn't long in coming. Buchanan in the Congress denied an official negotiation, which in fact, was truth. Saunders talked with Spanish Foreign Minister Pedro J. Pidal but at the end of the year he was reporting to Buchanan that "...he believed such to be the feeling of the country that sooner than see the island transferred to *any power*, they would prefer seeing it sunk in the ocean."<sup>65</sup>

President Polk's expansionist policy also caused that a candidate of the Whig party, war hero General Zachary Taylor, who was openly opposed to further expansion, won the elections of 1849.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Taylor shortly after the inauguration got ill and died on July 9, 1850. When former Vice-president Millard Fillmore entered the office, he inherited a problemacy of expansion of slavery to newly absorbed territories. Trying to maneuver between saving sectional peace and positions of the Whig Party, he supported Clay's Compromise of 1850, which eventually played a decisive role in its acceptance. In foreign policy, Fillmore took the line of the strict enforcement of the neutrality principle of the U.S. government in case of private, mostly Southern-based, filibuster attempts to start revolution against Spanish authorities in Cuba.<sup>67</sup> He also refused in his Message to the Congress in December 1850 U.S. involvement in European affairs, which was primarily aiming at a failure of liberal revolutions in Europe, but also showed President's opposition to designs of expansionists to annex Cuba.

"Among the acknowledged rights of nations is that which each possesses of establishing that form of government which it may deem most conducive to the happiness and prosperity of its own citizens, of changing that form as circumstances may require, and of managing its internal affairs according to its own will. The people of the United States claim this right for themselves, and they

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<sup>65</sup> Saunders to Buchanan, December 12, 1848, Department of State Diplomatic Dispatches, Spain, XXXV, National Archives, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 265-68. See also Van Alstyne, Richard W., *The Rising American Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1960, pp. 150-51.

<sup>66</sup> Opatrný, Josef, *US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism*, pp. 184-86.

<sup>67</sup> Fillmore held the position of strict following of law also partly to amend an image of the Administration, which was vehemently criticized from both sections for not enforcing properly the Fugitive Slave Act. Brinkley, Alan, Dyer, Davis, (eds.), *The Reader's Companion to the American Presidency*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2000, p. 164.

readily concede it to others. Hence it becomes an imperative duty not to interfere in the government or internal policy of other nations; and although we may sympathize with the unfortunate or the oppressed everywhere in their struggles for freedom, our principles forbid us from taking any part in such foreign contests. We make no wars to promote or to prevent successions to thrones, to maintain any theory of a balance of power, or to suppress the actual government, which any country chooses to establish for itself. We instigate no revolutions, nor suffer any hostile military expeditions to be fitted out in the United States to invade the territory or provinces of a friendly nation.”<sup>68</sup>

Thus during the Fillmore’s presidency official desire to annex Cuba receded and private activities took the place. Leading figures involved were again O’Sullivan, who seeing no help from the Administration, turned to support private filibustering activities of Venezuela-born former Spanish General Narciso Lopez, and the Governor of Mississippi John A. Quitman. First expedition led by Lopez was sent already in 1849 but failed and President Taylor denounced it as a “crime of a great grade.”<sup>69</sup> Another venture, on the ship *Creole*, anchored in a small village Cardenas near Matanzas on the west part of the island but found Spanish troops resisting more stout-heartedly, and local citizens reacting more cold-heartedly than the leaders of the expedition expected. Lopez withdrew back to New Orleans, when the rumors of great detachment of Spanish army coming from Matanzas reached Cardenas. The last attempt to start revolution on Cuba led by Narciso López took place in the summer 1851, but failed again, and this time the invasion army was forced to surrender. Its leader was executed on August 19, 1851, as well as almost all his men who survived.<sup>70</sup>

It was only a matter of time when the two European powers with interests in the region, Great Britain and France, would react on American attempts, whether official or private, to acquire or purchase Cuba. President Fillmore in his Second Annual Message refused still unofficial British and French proposals to guarantee sovereignty of Spain over Cuba. Though the President was openly

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<sup>68</sup> Millard Fillmore to Congress, December 2, 1850, Washington, Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. V, p. 78.

<sup>69</sup> Zachary Taylor to Congress, Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> For more information about Lopez’s expeditions and also more about the Cuban annexationist movement see Opatrný, Josef, US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism, pp. 191-205.

against any territorial expansion, European proposal could be in his opinion harmful to American shipping. “This paper will acquaint you with the grounds of this interposition of two leading commercial powers of Europe, and with the apprehensions, which this government could not fail to entertain, that such interposition, if carried into effect, might lead to abuses in derogation of the maritime rights of the United States.”<sup>71</sup> Ministers of both powers in Washington jointly invited the United States to adhere to a tripartite convention by which the three governments would forever disclaim any intention of acquiring the island. The Secretary of State Daniel Webster reacted by oral assurance that Spain doesn’t need to fear from Fillmore’s administration. However, official response came not until the December 1852, when new Secretary of State Edward Everett, who acceded to the office after deceased Daniel Webster. The United States, said Everett, had no intentions to acquire the island but President refused to join the convention arguing that the question of Cuba was of much more vital importance to Washington than to London or Paris. As Julius W. Pratt correctly observes, “such reasoning by the Whig Secretary of State was a close approximation to the Democratic dogma of Manifest Destiny.”<sup>72</sup>

## **II.IV. Administration of Franklin Pierce and Ostend Manifesto**

The year 1852 was also the presidential election year, and already a month before Everett’s reply to Great Britain and France, new President was elected. Presidential campaign and elections of 1852 came at the moment of economic boom caused by the gold rush in California, foreign investments to railroads (mainly from Great Britain), and growing immigration from Europe. Also sectional problems were for the moment resolved by the Compromise of 1850. Therefore, probably the biggest reason why Whigs lost the election with the Democratic Party candidate Franklin Pierce was that the official party candidate, Mexican-American War hero General Winfield Scott, had another two strong

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<sup>71</sup> Millard Fillmore, Second Annual Message, December 2, 1851, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, IV, p. 2653 quoted in Opatrný, Josef, US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism, p. 209.

<sup>72</sup> Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, pp. 294-5.

rivals in Fillmore and Webster, although he died in October 1852.<sup>73</sup> Historians consider Pierce's administration as one of the most expansion-oriented of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Julius W. Pratt considered new Democratic executive "avowedly expansionist."<sup>74</sup> Robert Kagan goes even further in describing the new Executive, but also anticipating its fundamental syndrome. "The Democratic administration of Franklin Pierce came into office in 1853 bursting with expansionist enthusiasm, determined to pick up where Polk had left off. But Pierce and his team of "Young Americans" were thwarted at every turn – in Cuba, in Mexico and in Central America – not by external resistance or by lack of means, and certainly not by any lack of expansionist fervor, but by the North that had itself become charged with new passion for the containment of slavery."<sup>75</sup>

Franklin Pierce came from New Hampshire and wasn't at all pro-slavery expansionist, however, his victory was mostly won by the votes in the South.<sup>76</sup> Pierce was, similar to James K. Polk a decade earlier, simply expansionist. Not to no end author of Pierce's biography, historian Roy F. Niebols, named the subtitle of his book *Young Hickory of the Granite Hills*, which evokes memory of General Andrew Jackson and his younger political student James K. Polk.<sup>77</sup> Intentions of new president were clearly stated in his Inaugural Message, where he disapproved Fillmore's policy saying that "...the policy of my Administration will not be controlled by any timid forebodings of evil from expansion." Yet he continued that "certain possessions not within our jurisdiction, eminently important for our

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<sup>73</sup> Franklin Pierce won with a landslide of some 220,000 popular votes, and 254:42 electoral vote majority. Third candidate, John Hale of the Free Soil Party, obtained 155,000 popular votes, and 0 electoral votes. See Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Internet source: <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/index.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 295.

<sup>75</sup> Kagan, Robert, Dangerous Nation. America in the World, 1600-1900, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2006, pp. 233-34.

<sup>76</sup> Winfield Scott won Massachusetts, Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee, but Pierce obtained more than 60% of popular votes in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, and in Texas even more than 70%. None of the northern states had such results. Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Internet source: <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/index.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Roy F. Niebols, Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1931, partly quoted in Williams, The Shaping of American Diplomacy, pp. 288-95.

protection, if not in the future essential for the preservation of commerce and the peace of the world,” should not be given up.<sup>78</sup>

The President confirmed new course of foreign policy by naming prominent expansionists to posts of Ministers in Europe. Newly appointed Ministers were – James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, former Secretary of State in Polk’s administration, who assumed an office in London. To the second mission in order of importance, Paris, was sent John Y. Mason of Virginia who was also in Polk’s administration in the position of Attorney General and later of the Secretary of Navy. Not less important was the post in Madrid, which was entrusted to Pierre Soulé of Louisiana who had been supporting U.S. expansionist attempts in Central America and the Caribbean since the 1840’s. To complete the list of newly appointed expansionists to European posts, to the post of the Minister to Lisbon was appointed the father of Manifest Destiny John L. O’Sullivan. Appointed members of new administration confirmed the fact that the southern element was gaining more influence with Pierce becoming the President. James C. Dobbin of North Carolina was appointed Secretary of the Navy and Jefferson Davis of Mississippi became Secretary of War. Exception in this list of southerners in Pierce’s administration was William L. Marcy of New York who became the Secretary of State. Marcy was a true Jacksonian Democrat and served as the Secretary of War in Polk’s administration. He had in general no objections against further expansion of American territory but opposed spreading of slavery.<sup>79</sup>

The administration of Franklin Pierce revived ideals of Manifest Destiny of 1840’s, but at the same time it was already influenced by a strengthening current of domestic quarrel between the South and the North over the issue of slavery. Several events, which occurred during the winter and spring of 1854, made expansionist politicians in Washington re-consider again acquisition of Cuba. First, on February 28, the Spanish authorities at Havana seized American

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<sup>78</sup> Franklin Pierce, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1853, Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Washington (D.C.), 1913, IV, pp. 2731, 2731ff, quoted in Opatrný, Josef, US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism, pp. 212-3. The full body of the Inaugural Address also Franklin Pierce, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1853, The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/pierce.htm>.

<sup>79</sup> Opatrný, Josef, US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism, pp. 213-6. On Pierre Soulé see also Moore, Preston J., “*Pierre Soulé: Southern Expansionist and Promoter*,” Journal of Southern History, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May, 1965), pp. 203-223.

steamer *Black Warrior* and confiscated its cargo with explanation that the custom regulations were violated. This incident fired up American press and public. Expansionists intended to use it for an escalation of American demands, which they hoped would possibly end in a war with Spain.<sup>80</sup> Also France and Great Britain entered the Crimean War in March 1854 in alliance with Ottoman Empire against Russia. The war took attention of European powers and it seemed very unlikely that politicians in Paris or London would risk another conflict. Even though the United States weren't yet considered as militarily dangerous enemy, its economical importance, especially for Great Britain, had been rapidly growing.

Other problems were more of a domestic character. Under the pressure of British abolitionists, Spanish crown ordered Cuban authorities to inaugurate a system of one-year apprenticeship, followed by a freedom, for Negroes illegally imported to the island. This move, even though not meant seriously by the Spanish government, caused protests of the Southern newspapers and representatives in the Congress fearing that it was the beginning of „Africanization“ of the island, and that Cuba would become another Haiti. John A. Quitman, with the help of John Slidell of Louisiana in Congress, started again to plan filibustering expeditions to save slavery-based system on the island.<sup>81</sup>

However, Pierce administration was already under fiery attacks of the Northerners for supporting Senator Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas – Nebraska Bill, which was opening both territories to slavery upon the principal of popular sovereignty.<sup>82</sup> “Douglas's bill had a catastrophic effect on sectional harmony. It repudiated a compromise that many in the North regarded as binding. ...The act also destroyed what was left of the second party system.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 221; Guerra, *La Expansión Territorial de los Estados Unidos*, pp. 266-7.

<sup>81</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 295-6.

<sup>82</sup> Popular sovereignty principle meant that citizens of newly established federal territories or states would decide in a plebiscite whether they would permit slavery or prohibit it. Kansas – Nebraska Bill in 1854 and consequent crisis resembling full-scale civil war in “bleeding” Kansas in 1856 were final blows to the structure of compromise-based political balance between the South and the North, and ended four years later in the Civil War. Holt, Michael F., *The Fate of Their Country, Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*, Hill and Wang, 2004, pp. 99-110. The full body of Kansas – Nebraska Bill, in The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, *An Act to Organize the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska*, May 30, 1854, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/kanneb.htm>. For more information about the debates concerning extension of the slavery from Wilmot Proviso to Kansas – Nebraska Bill look at Bailey, Kennedy, *The American Spirit*, pp. 421-38.

<sup>83</sup> Divine, Robert A., *The American Story*, p. 344.

Hence, the President couldn't openly support a resolution of expansionists for a suspension of neutrality laws of the United States for twelve months, which would help people like Governor Quitman to organize filibustering expeditions to Cuba. The Administration decided to repudiate the filibusters. In his First Annual Message to Congress the President praised that good relations without any major difficulties were established: „Independently of our valuable trade with Spain, we have important political relations with her growing out of our neighborhood to the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico. I am happy to announce that since the last Congress no attempts have been made by unauthorized expeditions within the United States against either of those colonies. Should any movement be manifested within our limits, all the means at my command will be vigorously exerted to repress it.”<sup>84</sup>

The situation suddenly worsened after the seizure of the ship *Black Warrior* at the end of February 1854, and the President reacted in a Special Message from March 15 stating that „I shall not hesitate to use the authority and means which Congress may grant to insure the observance of our just rights to obtain redress for injuries received, and to vindicate the honor of our flag.”<sup>85</sup> The Executive was caught under attacks of expansionist circles demanding to use the incident as a reason for punishing Spain or eventually for declaring a war. Pierce and Marcy decided, however, to make use of the situation by diplomatic offer to purchase Cuba or at least ‘detach’ it from Spain or dependence on any other European power.<sup>86</sup>

The Secretary of State Marcy gave basic instructions to the Minister in Madrid Soulé on April 3, 1854, where the highest sum of money possible to be paid for Cuba was stated \$130,000,000. This sum was enormous for conditions of mid-nineteenth century, but nonetheless Marcy had doubts that Madrid would accept even such an offer.<sup>87</sup> If Soulé were to be refused with such a proposal, the

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<sup>84</sup> Franklin Pierce, First Annual Message, December 5, 1853, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, IV, pp. 207-26.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, pp. 234-35. More about the *Black Warrior* affair also in Opatrný, Josef, US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism, pp. 221-22.

<sup>86</sup> Guerra, La Expansión Territorial de los Estados Unidos, pp. 271-3.

<sup>87</sup> For a comparison, the Louisiana territory was purchased in 1803 for \$15,000,000 making an acre of land cost ¢3. Alaska will have been bought at a cost of ¢1.9 per acre in 1867. According to this offer, the acre of land in Cuba would cost \$4.74. See also Table 2. Buying an Empire: Major American Territorial Acquisitions, 1803 – 1898, in: Ferguson, Niall, Colossus. The Price of

instructions were following: „Should you, however, become convinced that Spain will not, for any consideration you are authorized to offer, entertain a proposition for a transfer of sovereignty of Cuba to the United States, you will then direct your efforts to the next most desirable object, which is to detach that island from the Spanish dominion and from all dependence on any European power. If Cuba were relieved from all transatlantic connection and at liberty to dispose of herself as her present interest and prospective welfare would indicate, she would undoubtedly relieve this government from all anxiety in regard to her future conditions.“<sup>88</sup>

Formulation about ‘detaching’ Cuba from the Spanish dominion wasn’t Marcy’s intention to give Soulé a free hand in following of aggressive diplomacy because the Secretary of State, well aware of the domestic and international situation, pushed the President to more moderate policy. Neither another part of his instruction that the American Ministers in Paris and London, Mason and Buchanan, should „compare opinions as to what may be advisable, and ... adopt measures for perfect concert of action in aid of [Soulé’s] negotiations in Madrid,” had some deeper meaning.<sup>89</sup> Results of these consultations were to be delivered to Marcy by confidential messenger too. When the three envoys met in Ostend and again Aix-la-Chapelle in the fall of 1854 and from there sent to the Secretary of State a report dated on October 18, it consisted of a combination of Buchanan’s view of economic pressure and Soulé’s more radical idea of forcible seizure.

Ministers at the beginning of the document stated that they „have arrived to the conclusion, and are thoroughly convinced, that an immediate and earnest effort ought to be made by the government of the United States to purchase Cuba from Spain.” The first argument for purchasing of the island originated in

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America’s Empire, The Penguin Press, New York (NY), 2004, p. 40. With entering of Pierce to the White House older idea of purchasing Cuba through private funds was revived. Much like in 1848 the main protagonist involved was a young banker and newly appointed Minister to Hague August Belmont, who had connections to Rothschilds, bankers of the Spanish Crown. Other supporters of this plan were James Buchanan or former Minister to Spain George N. Sanders of Kentucky. Again the plan fell through but the idea of purchasing of the island from private funds “continued as a fixation in the American mind.” Van Alstyne, Richard W., *The Rising American Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York (NY), 1960, p. 154-55.

<sup>88</sup> William L. Marcy to Pierre Soulé April 3, 1854, Washington D.C., Manning, William R., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Inter-American Affairs*, vol. I-XII, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1936-1939, XI, p. 177, quoted in Opatrný, Josef, *US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism*, p. 222.

<sup>89</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 296.

traditional explanation of the geographical proximity to the United States and the distance from Spain, which „has proved to be a source of constant annoyance and embarrassment to [the United States'] interests.” The three Ministers continued that also the commerce between Cuba and Great Britain and France would profit from breaking of this „unnatural connexion [sic].” And finally they argued that the corrupt local government kept being a reason of existence of „that spirit of resistance and revolution against Spain, which has, of late years, been so often manifested.”

Then the document turns to answer the question, what should be done if Spain refused American offer to purchase Cuba using the argument that: „Self-preservation is the first law of nature... After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will then 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? Should this question be answered in the affirmative, then, by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain if we possess the power...”<sup>90</sup>

Julius W. Pratt indicates that the document resulting from the meeting in Ostend and Aix-la-Chapelle was by no means a „manifesto” but a confidential report of three Ministers to the Secretary of State. The Ostend Manifesto, as the document was called, got published thanks to a ‘leak’ to the *New York Herald* caused by enemies of the administration in the House of Representatives.<sup>91</sup> Whatever the goal of the Ministers drawing up the manifesto was, whether to threaten Spanish government and make it sell Cuba, or move moderate diplomacy of the Secretary Marcy and to strengthen positions of Southern expansionists in the time of another preparation of Governor John A. Quitman to invade the island, the results were opposite. In Spain the Liberals gained control of the government in the summer 1854 but despite of some hopes this change had created in Washington, neither of the Spanish governments could afford to negotiate selling of the last colony remaining from the once great empire.<sup>92</sup> This situation strikingly

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<sup>90</sup> The Ostend Manifesto, James Buchanan, John Y. Mason, and Pierre Soulé to Secretary of State Marcy, October 18, 1854, in: Williams, William Appleman, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, pp. 314-15.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.297; Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire*, pp. 156-57.

<sup>92</sup> Opatrný, Josef, *US Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism*, pp. 227-28.

reminded a position of several Mexican governments during the mid 1840's in negotiating with the United States possible independence of the Texas Republic.

Ostend Manifesto had also negative impact for the domestic sectional peace. Politicians, media, and public were more and more sharply divided over the extension of slavery and the debate over Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The manifesto written by three Southern expansionist Ministers was of course viewed in the North as a part of Southern efforts to spread the number of slavery states in the Union, in spite of the fact that part of Southern representatives opposed action of the Minister from the point that the territory acquired by the Federal government could end up being free of slavery. They were giving more hopes in Governor Quitman's invasion. These hopes, however, went in vain when the ship *Massachusetts* and another steamer were seized by US customs for having on board arms and ammunition for Quitman's troops.<sup>93</sup>

Pierre Soulé was shortly after the affair recalled from his post in Madrid but a suspicion of American intensions had remained in Madrid for another four decades. Ever since the mid 1850's the Spanish government and its representatives in Cuba had been looking at activities of American government and citizens with distrust, especially with increasing economical dependence of Cuban production of sugar on American market. Nascence of this mistrust, which the Ostend Manifesto caused, is the reason why this event is so thoroughly mentioned. But maybe even deeper effect had such events of the mid 1850's as the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, Ostend Manifesto, or William Walker's invasion to Nicaragua on domestic situation in the United States. All these and other episodes fastened the growth of a gap between the South and the North, which was ignited by the Mexican-American War. From the distance of history it was obvious that the administration of Franklin Pierce was predestined to be stigmatized by the sectional quarrel. It wasn't so clear to its then representatives, but that the every activity of the next president would be practically blocked by the issue of extension of slavery was clear to all observers.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, pp. 226, 229.

## II.V. Gadsden Purchase

Thus the only territorial success of expansionist movement during the 1850's became the Gadsden Purchase. Mexico had counted among the central U.S. foreign policy issues ever since the Austin family was given a land grant in Texas in 1819, at that time still one northern provinces of New Spain. Growing tensions between American settlers and Mexican authorities resulted in the declaration of independence of Texas in 1836 and it's annexation a decade later. This caused the Mexican – American War and a decisive American victory. In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo the United States acquired an area of over 500,000 square miles, and if annexation of Texas was included, almost 1,000,000 square miles covering today's states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.<sup>94</sup> Mexico by signing the treaty lost close to two-fifths of its territory. Also the tumultuous domestic political situation worsened. The acquisition of Oregon and California, where also gold was found in 1848, caused the need to improve the transportation of U.S. citizens migrating to the west, whether they were pursuing the quest for gold nuggets, or new rich land. As regards to Mexico, two foreign political issues referring to problem of transportation to the west arose for the U.S. government.

First of them was the competition of two rival American transportation companies, Hargous and Sloo, which both laid a claim to a right of way over the isthmus of Tehuantepec and were trying to elicit government support. The Fillmore administration had decided to support Sloo claim, and the treaty negotiations were going on, when Franklin Pierce was inaugurated. The second, and for the domestic political situation in the United States more compelling question was, that Southern politicians, led by the Secretary of War in Pierce's administration Jefferson Davis, were promoting southern route of the future railroad connecting the eastern coast of the country with California.

In the middle of the 1850's the question, whether the proposed railroad would lead along the northern, central, or southern route, had become a sectional and political problem. Since the two Democratic administrations of 1850's,

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<sup>94</sup> Beard, Charles A., Beard, Mary R., A Basic History of the United States, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia (PA), 1944, p. 494.

Pierce's and Buchanan's, tended more to look for political support in the pro-slavery South, promoters of the southern railroad route gained the upper hand. The southern route, however, was meeting with one technical obstacle, a lack of forests necessary for providing of wood to locomotive's engines, and also the lack of water resources, which the locomotive needed for a generation of steam. Therefore the promoters of the route turned their attention to the Mesilla Valley on the north border of Mexico, where wood and water were plentiful. Further to this accrued a proclamation of Governor of the Territory of New Mexico William C. Lane that the area of Mesilla Valley belonged to New Mexico and that it was thus ceded.<sup>95</sup>

Newly appointed administration of Franklin Pierce thus faced very confused relations with its southern neighbor, which were also from time to time aggravated by raids of Indians from one side to another along scarcely protected border between the two states. Therefore, Pierce and the Secretary of State Marcy decided to send to Mexico new Minister Plenipotentiary James Gadsden of South Carolina to settle the situation.<sup>96</sup> Gadsden had no special instruction about resolving the problem of the transportation rights over the Tehuantepec, but was instructed to secure American release from obligation to protect Mexicans from Indian incursion along the border included in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The main goal of new Minister was to secure a readjustment of the boundary with Mexico so the southern route could be built. For the basic offer guaranteeing enough area for building the railroad he was instructed to pay up to \$15,000,000. In case the Mexican government would be willing to cede additional territory on the north, Gadsden might offer more money, up to a top figure of \$50,000,000. Overall, five alternative boundaries, ranging through all northern Mexico, were suggested.<sup>97</sup>

When Gadsden arrived to Mexico Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was again, and for the last time, the president elect. His administration, as every other

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<sup>95</sup> Lane's activity was upheld but the Governor was ordered not to cede the territory, and eventually was recalled. New Governor David Meriwether of Kentucky was instructed to avoid collision with Mexican troops. Williams, William Appleman, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, p. 291.

<sup>96</sup> Gadsden himself was a railroad promoter and had personal interest in pushing through the southern route. *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 285.

Mexican government of this era, was in bad need of money. Santa Anna was, therefore, willing to cede more of the Mexican territory, but knowing that his domestic position wasn't strong, he couldn't agree to more than to the basic American offer to purchase the Mesilla Valley. The treaty was signed on December 30, 1853, and Mexico was selling in it an area of 29,671 square miles originally for \$20,000,000, of which \$5,000,000 was to be paid to claimants in the United States. However, U.S. Senate while discussing the treaty significantly modified its wording. Monetary compensation was reduced to \$10,000,000, all going to Mexico. The treaty also included an article guaranteeing to government of the United States and its citizens the use of any means of transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Gulf of California. The United States also "may extend its protection [of the Tehuantepec] as it shall judge wise to it when it may feel sanctioned and warranted by the public or international law."<sup>98</sup> The treaty was further repealing Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which had made the United States responsible for depredations caused by Indians permanently settled to the north of the border on the Mexican territory. The new boundary started on the Rio Grande on "...the point where the parallel of 31°47' north latitude crosses the same [river]; thence due west one hundred miles; thence south to the parallel of 31°20' north latitude; thence along the said parallel of 31°20' to the 111<sup>th</sup> meridian of longitude west of Greenwich; thence in a straight line to a point on the Colorado River twenty English miles below the junction of the Gila and Colorado rivers; thence up the middle of the said river Colorado until it intersects the present line between the United States and Mexico."<sup>99</sup>

All conditions changed by the U.S. Senate Santa Anna accepted and ratifications were exchanged in Washington on June 30, 1854. The Gadsden Purchase Treaty has the significance for history of American foreign relations in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century for several reasons. By acquiring of the Mesilla Valley, the United States finished its continental expansion with exception of the purchase of distant Alaska in 1867. "So the West of Mr. Polk's original intention

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<sup>98</sup> These rights were never used by the United States and were formally given up in 1937. Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Gadsden Purchase Treaty: December 30, 1853. A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/mexico/mx1853.htm>.

became American,” Bernard DeVoto concludes.<sup>100</sup> The idea of the continental republic, as old as the republic itself, was fulfilled. On the other hand, the treaty was clearly the result of activities of southern pro-slavery politicians, who wanted to uplift the position of the South in the sectional struggle over the route of future transcontinental railroad. Having the railroad’s eastern post in New Orleans, Charleston, South Carolina, as Gadsden was suggesting, or any other southern city, the economic and political position of the South would significantly strengthen. Northern politicians and railroad promoters, of course, noticed this fact and tried to ban this project with might and main. So even though the Mesilla Valley was purchased, the route of the first transcontinental railroad eventually went through the central route and wasn’t finished until after the Civil War in 1869. Marcy’s instruction to Gadsden to try further and purchase more of the Mexican territory northern politicians also sensed as an effort to acquire yet more territory, where slavery would be introduced. As we’ll see soon, this fact stigmatized also James Buchanan’s administration, even though neither Pierce nor Buchanan was principally pro-slavery politician. Therefore, the Gadsden Purchase can be enlisted among other foreign policy issues of 1850’s influenced significantly by domestic sectional struggle over the institution of slavery.

Last but not least for the purpose of this dissertation is important, what resulted from the purchase of another territory in Mexico. Santa Anna was finally driven out of power by 1855, but this fact didn’t calm political situation, which eventually ended in establishing of two governments, one in Mexico City, and second in Veracruz. The civil war between Liberals and Conservatives, the so called War of Reform, last from 1857 to 1861, to be soon replaced by the French intervention 1862 – 1867, which was again considered in the United States as a major foreign policy issue. This issue will be analyzed in the next chapter.

## **II.VI. Administration of James Buchanan**

The whole period of the presidency of James Buchanan between years 1856 – 1860 was jotted with growing sectional problems. As a matter of fact, his election in 1856 was predicting the future of his presidency. Candidate of newly

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<sup>100</sup> DeVoto, Bernard, *The Year of Decision 1846*, New York, 2000, p. 491.

established Republican Party, famous explorer and the man that helped to acquire California, John C. Fremont, won slide victory in upper northern states. His chances could have been even higher, if the American Party, called also Know – Nothing Party, didn’t nominate its own candidate, former president Millard Fillmore. Buchanan at the beginning didn’t even have an intention to run for the presidency one more time, but was nominated as a compromise person between too compromised Franklin Pierce and the author of very unpopular Kansas – Nebraska Act Stephen A. Douglas. The Democrats, with Buchanan as a candidate and with Douglas’ principal of popular sovereignty in new territories endorsed in the party platform, won fairly in the South and thanks to Buchanan also in four northern states – Pennsylvania, Buchanan’s home state, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois, Douglas’ home state.<sup>101</sup> The election was clearly sectional, and the Republicans did remarkably well for being the party that was established not even two years ago. For Buchanan’s new administration was more important that he won mostly with southern support, although he personally was against slavery. Therefore a decision-making ability of his administration was significantly influenced. “A series of incidents provoked one side or the other, heightened the tension, and ultimately brought the crisis to a head. Behind the panicky reaction to public events lay a growing sense that the North and the South were so different in culture and so opposed in basic interests that they could no longer coexist in the same nation.” Not surprisingly the period starting with his presidency and ending in the Civil War is generally called ‘The House Divided.’<sup>102</sup>

Most of these public events had the domestic character, but also Buchanan’s foreign policy was primarily influenced by the sectional struggle. The main foreign policy issues of his administrative remained the same as those of the early 1850’s – Mexico, Cuba, and Central America. There already has been made a short description of events influencing the situation in Central America, including the U.S. – British quarrel over the influence in the region, the Mosquito

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<sup>101</sup> Divine, Robert A., *The American Story*, p. 348. For election results also look at Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Internet source: <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/index.html>.

<sup>102</sup> Term used by Abraham Lincoln during the famous Senate election debates with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. Divine, Robert A., *The American Story*, pp. 349-59. For the text of Lincoln’s speech see Bruun, Erik, Crosby, Jay, (ed.), *Our Nation’s Archive. The History of the United States in Documents*, Black Dog & Leventhal: Distributed by Workman Pub. Co., New York c1999, pp. 326-30.

Coast and San Juan problem, or William Walker's adventure in Nicaragua. All these controversies had basically one general reason; a control over the region, where the future inter-oceanic canal could be built. Buchanan's administration inherited all of them, mostly Walker's invasion. Walker was in the North considered as an exponent of southern pro – slavery interests, though his plans weren't to annex Nicaragua for the Union but to create a strong independent Central American state.<sup>103</sup> Pierce's administration recognized Walker's government in June 1856.<sup>104</sup> However, Buchanan opposed his action because of deepening sectional domestic problems, but also because he refused the use of arms for the acquisition of new territory. He described this philosophy at the end of his Inaugural Address as follows: "It is our glory that whilst other nations have extended their dominions by the sword we have never acquired any territory except by fair purchase or, as in the case of Texas, by the voluntary determination of a brave, kindred, and independent people to blend their destinies with our own...Our past history forbids that we shall in the future acquire territory unless this be sanctioned by the laws of justice and honor."<sup>105</sup>

Buchanan abided this policy also towards Mexico and Cuba. He, still as the Secretary of State in Polk's administration, had been proposing the acquisition of entire northern part of Mexico, at least up to Sierra Madre Mountains. Former Secretary of State and now U.S. representative in Mexico City, John Forsyth, proposed in 1857 and again in March 1858 similar offer. The United States offered \$15,000,000 for the states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Lower California but "encountered a terse refusal." Forsyth believed that U.S. proposal was refused strongly also by local governments and Mexican citizens because "the people of Mexico have been taught to believe, from the examples cited to them in California and Texas, that their property titles, especially to land, would not be respected by their new rulers. I have the opinion of the most intelligent men I meet here, that

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<sup>103</sup> See p. 18 and note No. 39.

<sup>104</sup> Bourne, Kenneth, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815-1908*, University of California Press, Berkeley (CA), Los Angeles (CA), 1967, pp. 195-96.

<sup>105</sup> James Buchanan, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1857, Washington D.C., The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Internet source:  
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/buchanan.htm>.

this circumstance alone has saved to the Republic of Mexico, the fidelity of Tamaulipas, New Leon, Chihuahua, and Sonora...”<sup>106</sup>

The negotiations were also handicapped by the ongoing civil war between the Conservatives and the Liberals of Benito Juarez. Buchanan was in his second Annual Message suggesting a temporary occupation of several northern Mexican states arguing that the U.S. intervention would prevent the same action by some European nation, help the United States to claim indemnity for losses of its citizens in Mexico, and to protect white inhabitants from Indian raids. He had no doubts “that this measure will be viewed in a friendly spirit by the governments of Chihuahua and Sonora, as it will prove equally effectual for the protection of their citizens on that remote and lawless frontier as for citizens of the United States.”<sup>107</sup>

Buchanan’s proposal is for this thesis significant for one reason. The United States administrative and the Congress had been pondering over the temporary intervention in case of protection of white inhabitants on Yucatán during the war of castes with Indians. This intervention, however, would be on request of a part of inhabitants of the region. Temporary seizure of Northern provinces of Mexico during the civil war, although in the name of the Liberal government, which the United States favored, but without its approval would be putting Washington for the first time in the position of an international police power, as Albert Weinberg argues.<sup>108</sup> In a certain way the United States had started its later policy of intervention by force in domestic matters of Latin American countries by this proposal. It necessary to add that it was almost impossible to imagine, that the northern opposition against any kind of territorial acquisition to the south of Mason – Dixon Line, would give approval to this intervention in the Congress. So in spite of the fact that Buchanan’s intention wasn’t to enlarge the Union with more slavery states, his hands were tied thanks to the sectional struggle.

Of maybe even bigger interest for the President was the problem of Cuba. Buchanan ever since the late 1840’s had been, from time to time, trying to acquire

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<sup>106</sup> Van Alstyne, Richard W., *Empire in Midpassage, 1845 – 1867* in: Williams, William Appleman, (ed.), *From Colony to Empire. Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York (NY), London, Sydney, Toronto, 1972, p. 124.

<sup>107</sup> James Buchanan, *Second Annual Message*, December 6, 1858, Washington D.C., Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers*, V, p. 514.

<sup>108</sup> Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, pp. 418-19.

the island. In 1848, being the Secretary of State at Polk's administration, he himself wrote down the instructions for Minister in Spain Saunders to unofficially offer to purchase Cuba. In 1854 it was Buchanan not Soulé, who sent the Ostend Manifesto to William L. Marcy to Washington.<sup>109</sup> As it was mentioned before, the President didn't have sympathies for the extension of slavery. He just was by his nature typical expansionist of the 1840's style, in other words of Manifest Destiny in its original version written down by John L. O'Sullivan in 1845. Buchanan, who was definitely more a politician of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and who personally, digested the era of great expansion of the United States and of great American presidents and politicians such as Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and James K. Polk, hoped to gain a 'spot' among them by acquiring Cuba.

The problem for Buchanan's desire to earn a place in American history, however, was that acquisition of Cuba became a principal sectional stumbling block in regard to U.S. foreign policy in the pre-Civil War decade. Robert Kagan rightly sums up that: "From the end of the Polk administration to the election of Lincoln in 1860, acquiring of Cuba became a primary southern preoccupation...It was no accident that America's pursuit of Cuba was most ardent when the southern-dominated Democratic Party held the White House. The South's desire to increase its power within the Union blended with the fear that slavery might soon be abolished in Cuba if the United States did not act quickly. An island led by emancipated slaves – another Haiti, less than a hundred miles from the American shores – would pose a grave threat to American slavery."<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, southern politicians feared efforts of Great Britain to pressure on Spain to abolish the slavery on the island. In 1854 Lord Palmerston assured the Spanish Minister in London that the emancipation of Cuban blacks "would create a most powerful element of resistance to any scheme for annexing Cuba to the United States."<sup>111</sup>

Buchanan explained his position on the Cuban issue in the second Annual Message from December 6, 1858. He began with words: "The truth is that Cuba,

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<sup>109</sup> See p. 20 and note No. 66.

<sup>110</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 238.

<sup>111</sup>No. 575. Viscount Palmerston to Lord Howden, October 20, 1854, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 239.

in its existing colonial condition, is a constant source of injury and annoyance to the American people.” Then he started arguing that Cuba was the only place in the world, where the import of African slaves still continued and that the United States and Great Britain had to maintain naval force around the coast of Africa to ban this trade. He continued that the United States had tried to purchase the island several times, and if it would have happened, “the last relic of the African slave trade would instantly disappear.” However, he said nothing about abolishing the slavery on the island not to raise southern opposition, especially since he had been elected as the Democratic Party candidate with the principle of popular sovereignty on party’s platform.<sup>112</sup>

On the other hand, he again repeated his position on purchasing Cuba as the only possibility, how to acquire it. However, he added: “This course we shall ever pursue, unless circumstances should occur which we do not now anticipate, rendering a departure from it clearly justifiable under the imperative and overruling law of self-preservation.” The same rhetoric will be so often sounded during the second Cuban war for independence after 1895. Buchanan concludes with geopolitical argument that Cuba was of much more bigger importance to the United States thanks to its proximity to the mouth of Mississippi river and growing economic connection to American market.<sup>113</sup> The President shortly repeated his opinion about purchasing Cuba again in his third Annual Message. “I need not repeat the arguments which I urged in my last annual message in favor of the acquisition of Cuba by fair purchase. My opinions on that measure remain unchanged. I therefore again invite the serious attention of Congress to this important subject. Without recognition of this policy on their part it will be almost impossible to institute negotiations with any reasonable prospect of success.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Buchanan was defending the slavery system in his third Annual Message saying: “For a period of more than half a century there has been no perceptible addition to the number of our domestic slaves. During this period their advancement in civilization has far surpassed that of any other portion of the African race. The light and the blessings of Christianity have been extended to them, and both their moral and physical condition has been greatly improved.” Thus he pledged his loyalty to the south-dominated Democratic principles and from now on became unacceptable to northern political representation. James Buchanan, Third Annual Message, December 19, 1859, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, V, p. 557.

<sup>113</sup>James Buchanan, Second Annual Message, December 6, 1858, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, V, pp. 497-529.

<sup>114</sup> James Buchanan, Third Annual Message, December 19, 1859, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, V, pp. 552-576.

Significant here is that Buchanan stressed that the decision-making role on this issue would be laid on the Congress, not the Executive. In essence, this was an aspect describing an inability of Buchanan's administration to pursue active foreign policy during the period of 1857-1860. The problem of acquisition of Cuba and in general extension of slavery system to new territories, whether foreign or domestic, remember Kansas – Nebraska Bill, or situation with Lecompton Constitution in Kansas, “remained a paramount issue right up to the outbreak of the Civil War. Indeed, for an increasing number of southerners, it became the price for continued allegiance to the Union.”<sup>115</sup>

In fact, Cuba issue became one of the last bargains by which some politicians, like Stephen A. Douglas, or the Whig Party senator from Kentucky John J. Crittenden, were trying to keep the South from seceding in late 1860. The Crittenden Compromise was trying to satisfy both sections. The North by reestablishing the Missouri Compromise the Missouri Compromise and the principle of prohibition of slavery above 36°60'. The South by guaranteeing the slavery in perpetuity in all territories south of that latitude, territories “now held, or hereafter acquired.” This clause was allowing to the South further expansion, the first target would be Cuba or Northern parts of Mexico. Several Republican leaders, including Seward, were willing to negotiate about this proposal to save the unity of the nation. Newly elected president Abraham Lincoln, however, firmly rejected any kind of “compromise in regard to the extension of slavery.”<sup>116</sup> As Robert Kagan summarizes, “Lincoln's stand on the “hereafter clause” just about destroyed any chance for compromise with the South in the difficult winter of 1860-61. His willingness to take that stand reflected his commitment to the northern strategy of containment [of slavery]...Lincoln would risk secession and even war rather than countenance the transformation of the Union, Jefferson's “empire of liberty,” into an empire for slavery. And that was the future that Lincoln and other northerners envisioned if southern expansion were permitted.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 242.

<sup>116</sup> Basler and Basler, *Works of Lincoln*, 4:150, quoted in Jaffa, Harry V., *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln – Douglas Debates*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 402.

<sup>117</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 244.

### **III. Civil War Diplomacy, 1861 – 1869**

When Major Robert Anderson surrendered in the Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861, one period of American history ended. The long-lasting process of growing division of interests of on the industry and small-farms-based North, and on the plantation and slavery-based South that had been present ever since the independence of the United States was declared came to its final conclusion. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, this process was fastened by the continental expansion of the 1840's and the problem of the extension of slavery to newly acquired territories. Growing sectional problems had brought to an end the Whig Party, which was split over the question of following interests of its voters in both sections. Thus in the mid 1850's comes to the scene a new political party, the Republicans, where the Northern Whigs were incorporated. The party, which became dominant in the South, and which therefore represented slavery interest was the Democratic Party. The point break moment was the elections of 1860. A candidate of the unified Republican Party Abraham Lincoln won over the Democratic Party nominee Stephen A. Douglas as well as John C. Breckenridge nominated by Southern Democrats.<sup>118</sup> After the election of Lincoln, who was known to oppose any kind of settlement according to the extension of slavery, seven southern states seceded between December 20, 1860, and February 1, 1861. Another four joined the Confederate States of America after the war broke up between April 17 and June 8, 1861.<sup>119</sup>

Election of Abraham Lincoln didn't mean immediate abolition of slavery. Lincoln was supporting a version of the original idea of some of the Founding Fathers that the containment of slavery and prohibition of its spreading to new areas would cause its slow end. He expressed his opinion saying that "toleration

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<sup>118</sup> For the results of the 1860 elections see Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Internet source: <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/index.html>.

<sup>119</sup> These states were – South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Several slavery states were forced to stay loyal to the Union and some stayed voluntarily. These were Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware. Divine, Robert A., The American Story, p. 366.

by necessity where it exists, with unyielding hostility to the spread of it.”<sup>120</sup> The declaration of the Confederate States was mostly an act of defense of the right to expand slavery further to new territories. It had two essential reasons. First, economical need since the extensive character of plantation agriculture was rapidly exhausting the soil. Second, the equilibrium of number of Senators in the Congress would be eventually broken and would move on the Northern side. Therefore, some moderate politicians still hoped in preservation of the Union by offering some kind of compromise, which would appease both sides. However, Lincoln refused any kind of settlement allowing further extension of slavery. In the words of one of his fellow Republicans, he stood “firm as an oak” on this issue.<sup>121</sup>

### **III.I. “Some Thoughts for President’s Consideration”**

It was clear that the last attempt to save the Union together must have different argumentation. The person who presented it was newly appointed Secretary of State William H. Seward. Seward’s plan basically counted with using of already few times applied phenomenon of foreign threat and famous ideas of non-intervention and non-colonization described in Monroe Doctrine as an aspect for unifying the divided society and politicians.<sup>122</sup> In his report from April 1, 1861, he advised to the President to: “Change the question before the public from one upon slavery, or about slavery, for a question upon union or disunion: In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question to one of patriotism or union.” The Secretary of State assumed that this unifying “national” issue could be aggressive foreign policy against European powers. Seward suggested without any further specification: “I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once. I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia,

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<sup>120</sup> Basler, Roy P., Basler, Ch. (eds.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick (NJ), 1952-55, quoted in Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 228.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>122</sup> Excellent book on the Monroe Doctrine is Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, P. Smith, Gloucester (Mass.), 1965 [c1937].

and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention. And if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France, would convene Congress and declare war against them. But whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.”<sup>123</sup>

Seward didn't specify what kind of explanations he would demand from Spain and France but it was just few days before he wrote the “Thoughts” that Santo Domingo returned voluntarily under the Spanish rule to prevent never ending attempts of Haitian governments to invade the eastern part of the island and domestic clash between the Conservatives and Liberals. Also French emperor Napoleon III wasn't hiding his intentions for a revival of the French influence to Western Hemisphere, and it was well known that he intended to do so by joint intervention with Great Britain and Spain in Mexico, where the government of Benito Juarez wasn't capable to pay off claims of citizens of these countries for financial injuries caused to them during the long civil war. In case of Great Britain and France, Seward correctly believed that they were considering the recognition of the Confederacy. He probably also targeted Great Britain as a traditional American foe and also because of eventual annexation of Canada in case the war would really start.

Most of all the Secretary of War was aiming at Spain, which recently annexed Santo Domingo and as Professor Pratt rightly suggests: “It was his hope that a foreign war, especially one with Spain, which might afford an opportunity to seize Cuba, would recapture the loyalty of the seceded states.”<sup>124</sup> The document is by historians studying foreign policy of William H. Seward considered as very interesting because its quixotic meaning doesn't fit to a picture of Seward being one of the most visionary U.S. Secretaries of States of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “The idea was fantastic; it was reckless and ill-advised; but the very fact that it could be held and held by one, after all, not wholly without practical political experience is, perhaps, some measure of the extent to which the [Monroe] doctrine of the two spheres had taken root in the American mind.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> William H. Seward, Some Thoughts for President's Consideration, April 1, 1861, in: Williams, William Appleman, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, pp. 296-7.

<sup>124</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 300.

<sup>125</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 286.

One character of his vision of the United States showed Seward in the “Thoughts” clearly; that the glory and preservation of the Union were for him above all others. He, however, didn’t realize as Lincoln did, that the sectional struggle had gone so far that it was impossible to save the unity of the country. Lincoln proved at this moment his greatness, which puts him among the greatest American presidents, by sensing that the only way how the Union could survive was to preserve corner-stone principals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution even though it would mean to risk an outbreak of the civil war. Another smaller aspect of the matter was that Seward was acquiesced Republican leader who definitely had been suggesting that it was him who should have been nominated for the Presidency during the campaign of 1860. Here Lincoln again proved that he wasn’t only the President with clear vision of the future of the Union but also a good tactician. He “quietly pocketed this stupefying document...Tactfully avoiding anything like a direct clash, he quietly let it be known that he fully intended to be President in fact as well as in name and that his was the final responsibility in making policy both at home and abroad...Moreover, as the time went on and the Civil War followed its unhappy course, Lincoln and Seward were to work together in close harmony.”<sup>126</sup>

### **III.II. William Henry Seward’s Expansionism**

Our nation with united interests blest,  
Not now content to poise shall sway the rest;  
Abroad our empire shall no limits know,  
But like the sea in boundless circles flow.<sup>127</sup>

Before the foreign policy of the Civil War will be analyzed, it is necessary to describe foreign policy principles of the Secretary of State who during the presidencies of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson had created visions and

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<sup>126</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power. American Diplomatic History, 1860 – 1900*, The Macmillan Company, New York, Collier – Macmillan, London, 1965, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> William H. Seward to Phillip Tompett [Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky], May 10, 1867, Seward Papers, quoted in Sharrow, Walter G., “*William Henry Seward and the Basis for American Empire, 1850 – 1860*,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 36, No. 3. (Aug., 1967), p. 325.

principles, on which next two generations of American foreign policy makers would build upon. Milton Plesur describes Seward as the “harbinger of a new variant of expansionism. His predictions about future territorial acquisitions blended realism with idealism, and were startlingly prescient. Seward grasped the impact of the closing frontier on overseas expansion and mapped out a theoretical plan for American empire.”<sup>128</sup> The “heartland” of the future struggle for world and economical power according to Seward lied in Eastern Asia, precisely in China and Japan. To obtain easy access to this region and opening of huge Asian markets were the basic goals of all Seward’s expansionist attempts. Notwithstanding that Ernest N. Paolino in his book *“The Foundations of the American Empire. William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy”* observes that Seward was “never sure just what the extent of that expansion should be,” he in general concludes that his vision of the empire was mostly commercial, and therefore it required “essentially such strategically located areas as would aid in American domination of sea lanes.”<sup>129</sup>

Seward went during his long career of Senator from New York<sup>130</sup> through a long process of evolution. In the 1840’s he was opposed to American expansion caused by the war with Mexico arguing that it should be based strictly on voluntary acceptance of the “American” system. He believed in John O’Sullivan’s Manifest Destiny that American settlers would sooner or later spread throughout the whole North American continent. Sometimes he went so far that he dreamed about the new capital of the United States placed in Mexico City.<sup>131</sup> However, the territorial expansion wasn’t a principal objective for him. He was more proposing the expansion of American commercial influence. In the speech to the Pacific Railroad Convention in October 1849 he described his enthusiasm for expansion of American commerce: “Attracted to the great eastern station of the Continental Road, as steel to a magnet, a freight would roll down upon the States of the Union, such as the India Company never saw, embracing the furs of

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<sup>128</sup> Plesur, Milton, *America’s Outward Thrust. Approaches to Foreign Affairs, 1865 – 1890*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb (IL), 1971, p. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Paolino, Ernest N., *The Foundations of the American Empire. William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY), London, 1973, pp. x, 10.

<sup>130</sup> He entered the politics in his home state in the 1830’s.

<sup>131</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire. An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY), London, 1963, p. 28.

the north, the drugs and spices of the south, the teas, silks and crapes of China, the Cashmeres of Thibet, the diamonds of India and Borneo, the various products of the Japan Islands, Manchooria, Australasia, and Polynesia, the results of the whale fishery, the gold, the silver, jewels and precious stones of California, and the innumerable and unimaginable elements of commerce which would be brought into life from the depths of the sea...Our surplus meat and bread, cotton goods, hemp and cordage...and other products, would find a new large and increasing market in return; while the Bible, the Printing Press, the Ballot Box, and the Steam Engine, would receive a welcome passage into vast and unregenerated fields...”<sup>132</sup>

Throughout the 1850’s, and especially after he became the Secretary of State, Seward moderated his vision of peaceful territorial dispersion of the “American system.” He realized that the United States had already acquired area large enough to become the biggest producer of agricultural and industrial goods in the world. Now it was necessary to find means of how to gain and secure such commercial supremacy. As it was already noticed, he saw the main commercial goal in acquiring enormous markets of Eastern Asia. The second most important region for him was logically Latin America. It was so for two reasons – it was the closest region to the U.S. market, and also the Caribbean and Central America were two regions important for securing American influence in Asia. Analyzing all these aspects, it becomes clearer why Seward’s essential goals during the 1860’s were the acquisition of insular bases in the Caribbean, securing of American rights in transcontinental passages through Central America, obtaining some possessions in the Pacific, and opening of lucrative commerce with Japan, Korea and China.

Seward’s tremendous importance for the foreign policy of the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lies in the fact that, even though his vision was changing throughout the time, he pulled out to the light practically all basic principles and foreign policy issues, which the following generations of American foreign policy

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<sup>132</sup>Seward to the Pacific Railroad Convention, Oct., 1849, Seward Papers, quoted in Sharrow, “*William Henry Seward and the Basis for American Empire, 1850 – 1860*,” p. 339. See also Williams, William Appleman, (ed.), *From Colony to Empire. Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, p. 119 and LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, pp. 25-8. See also Stephanson, Anders, *Manifest Destiny. American Expansion and the Empire of the Right*, Hill and Wang, New York (NY), 1996, p. 58-63.

makers would be dealing with. “In the 1860’s Seward sought hemispheric peace and security, the expansion of American trade, and the preservation of democratic institutions. The expansionists of the 1890’s pursued similar goals, as did Fish and Evarts, the men at the helm of American foreign policy during the 1870’s. The Grant administration declared the “no-transfer” resolution to the Monroe Doctrine and attempted to annex the Dominican Republic. Under Hayes the world was informed of prior American rights in the isthmian region, and a presidential message to Congress in 1880 stressed the “unrelaxed” efforts of the States Department to increase American trade. The aims of American diplomacy toward Latin America during the 1860’s and 1870’s were thus not so different from those of the 1890’s.”<sup>133</sup> More in detail about particular foreign policy issues of the 1860’s, in which William H. Seward was one of the principal actors will be analyzed in following parts of this chapter.

### **III.III. Union and Confederacy during the Civil War: Foreign Policy Issues**

When the war burst out, it became clear that the foreign policy would play primary importance in the struggle. It became simply essential for the Lincoln administration to keep European powers away from intervening in the war with the South.<sup>134</sup> Secretary of State Seward hurried to insure Great Britain and France that the conflict was simply an insurrection within the United States limits. In the instruction to Minister in London Adams he defended the general right of a nation to defend its existence: “The nation has a right, and it is its duty, to live. Those who favor and give aid to the insurrection, upon whatever pretext, assail the nation in an hour of danger, and therefore they cannot be held or regarded as its friends. In taking this ground, the United States claim only what they concede to all other nations. No state can be really independent in any other position.”<sup>135</sup> In

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<sup>133</sup> Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict. Anglo – American Diplomacy toward Latin America, 1865 – 1896*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh (PA), 1979, p. 32.

<sup>134</sup> Graebner, Norman A., *Foundations of American Foreign Policy. A Realist Appraisal from Franklin to McKinley*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington (DE), 1985, p. 259.

<sup>135</sup> Seward to Adams, August 18, 1862, Instructions to Great Britain MSS, Department of State, National Archives, Vol. XVIII, in: Graebner, Norman A., *Ideas and Diplomacy. Readings in the*

another letter to the American agent in Paris he continued that the conflict in United States is purely domestic issue: “There is here, as there has always been, one political power, namely, the United States of America, competent to make war and peace, and conduct commerce and alliances with all foreign nations. There is none other, either in fact, or recognized by foreign nations. There is, indeed, an armed sedition seeking to overthrow the government, and the government is employing military and naval forces to repress it.”<sup>136</sup>

Leaders on both sides of the conflict could still remember how important role played the question of independent Republic of Texas in international relations before its annexation to the United States in the mid 1830’s and 1840’s.<sup>137</sup> Lincoln, as well as the President of the Confederate States Jefferson Davis, was aware of this fact and the foreign policy during the war became, besides the progress on the battlefields, the most important aspect influencing the result of the war. Lincoln’s Minister to Russia Cassius Clay described the situation correctly, when in April 1862 concluded that it was “useless to deceive ourselves with the idea that we can isolate ourselves from European interventions. We became in spite ourselves – the Monroe Doctrine – Washington’s farewell – and all that – a part of the ‘balance of power’.”<sup>138</sup> Domestic struggle in the United States thanks to its growing commercial potential and also influence in the Caribbean and Central America obtained international scope.

Reasons, why the American Civil War became an international issue, were several. Politicians on both sides of the conflict realized very well that the recognition of independence of the Confederacy by European powers would significantly influence the result of the war. International recognition of the South would have several important levels. Besides the moral impact of this act in both sections, official recognition would permit to European powers to negotiate commercial treaties with the South, respectively supplies of military equipment.

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Intellectual Tradition of American Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 302-5.

<sup>136</sup> Seward to Minister in France Dayton, June 17, 1861, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and despatches: France, United States Department of State, p. 226, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1861v01.p0226&isize=M>.

<sup>137</sup> See for example Pletcher, David M., The Diplomacy of Annexation. Texas, Oregon, And the Mexican War, University of Missouri Press, Columbia 1973.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, pp. 259-60.

Moreover, European countries still possessed various colonies in the Western Hemisphere and therefore had their own political interests in the region, and secondarily involvement in the American Civil War could play a role in European politics as well.

From all European countries the war had by far the biggest importance for Great Britain. In fact the war through its economic impact influenced also British domestic political situation. Great Britain was the biggest commercial partner of the United States before the war and also the biggest investor in the country. The problem for politicians in London was that Great Britain had strong commercial ties with both sections. The North with its growing industrialization and much bigger population was principal importer of wide scale of commercial goods and a target of heavy British investment. On the other side, Great Britain was the biggest importer of southern cotton, which as it will be described later in this chapter, raised southern hopes for recognition. British bank houses were also the biggest creditors of southern planters thanks to an old system of financing by paying off the debt with the next-year crop, which had existed in the South since the colonial times. Another aspect increasing chances of the Confederacy to obtain the recognition from Great Britain was that it was mostly the North that competed with British naval power and commerce in Latin America. "British conservatives resented the growth of the United States into a formidable maritime rival no less than the progress of its democratic system." The Russian minister reported from London that Britain's ruling class "at the bottom of its heart, desires the separation of North America into two Republics...The England, on terms of peace and commerce with both, would have nothing to fear from either; for she would dominate them, restraining them by their rival ambitions."<sup>139</sup>

In case of France, where from the beginning of the 1850's ruled Napoleon III, the question of commercial exchange wasn't so significant. On the other side French Emperor ever since he was in power dreamed about reestablishing of French influence in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, weakening of the United States represented by the Union, and creating of good relations with the

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<sup>139</sup> Graebner, Norman A., *Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, p. 260.

conservative South, would significantly improve his chances to realize the plan of installment of one of his aristocratic pretenders to the Mexican throne.<sup>140</sup>

Also politicians in Spain carefully observed the course of events in the United States because of permanent interest of American expansionist in its remaining colonies in the Caribbean, Cuba and Porto Rico. Other reasons were that also Spanish citizens claimed significant financial compensations for loses caused during the long domestic turmoil in Mexico, and last but not least, because the politicians in Madrid still didn't put away the idea of acquiring of some of Spanish former colonies back, as it actually happened in case of Santo Domingo in 1861.

Paradoxically the only European power, which firmly supported the Union during the war, was Russia with its imperialistic and profoundly non-democratic political system. "Traditional Russo-American friendship had been based on a mutual rivalry toward Great Britain; it had been the case of the enemies of rival becoming friends. After the outbreak of the Civil War the *Journal of St. Petersburg*, official organ of the czarist government, declared "Russia entertains for the United States of America a lively sympathy founded on sentiments of mutual friendship and on common interests."<sup>141</sup>

As it has been already noticed, paramount importance for the result of the war from the foreign policy view had the situation in Great Britain. The essential task for the Secretary Seward and newly appointed Minister to London Charles Francis Adams was to prevent Great Britain from recognizing the independence of the Confederation. "It was Seward's hope to keep the conflict on a purely domestic footing, to have it treated as an insurrection, a local disturbing of the peace, not as a war."<sup>142</sup> British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston with Foreign Minister Lord Russell were considering the possibility of recognizing the Confederation, but at the same moment they both pragmatically admitted that the abolitionist public opinion in England in big majority supported the Union for fighting against the slavery.

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<sup>140</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> Graebner, Norman A., *Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, p. 262.

<sup>142</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 304.

The situation got easier for both politicians because of the course of events in the United States. The Confederacy President Jefferson Davis few days after the surrender of Fort Sumter issued a proclamation establishing an institution of privateers. Lincoln, therefore, on the basis that the southern secession was just the domestic rebellion announced that privateers would be treated as pirates, and most importantly gave the notice that a blockade of the South would be instituted.<sup>143</sup> At this moment the Queen was, after the consultation with her lawyers, free to issue a proclamation of neutrality on May 13, 1861, which was recognizing both sides as belligerents in the regular war. The recognition of belligerency to the Confederacy by Great Britain was explained by the need to protect its naval commerce and to keep British citizens away from the conflict. Since the United States followed similar tactics during the Canadian rebellion of 1837, Seward, Lincoln, and other politicians in Washington could only protest verbally. Charles Sumner, the Massachusetts senator, called the Queen's proclamation "the most hateful act of English history since the time of Charles 2<sup>nd</sup> [sic]." Seward also reacted angrily saying that "They have misunderstood things fearfully, in Europe, Great Britain is in great danger of sympathizing so much with the South for the sake of peace and cotton as to drive us to make war against her, as the ally of the traitors."<sup>144</sup>

The situation escalated to even higher level, when the Secretary of State was informed that Lord Russell unofficially received southern commissioners led by William L. Yancey. Seward reacted by writing an instruction to Adams so strong that first Lincoln himself and then Adams had to soften its tone not to offend Russell and Palmerston. Adams himself considered the instruction close to the ultimatum. As to further contacts with Confederacy commissioners, the American Minister was to announce the British government that: "Intercourse of any kind with the so-called commissioners is liable to be construed as a recognition [sic] of the authority which appointed them. Such intercourse would be none the less hurtful to us for being called unofficial, and it might be even more injurious, because we should have no means of knowing what points might be resolved by it...You will, in any event, desist from all intercourse whatever,

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid. Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>144</sup> Graebner, Norman A., *Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, p. 264.

unofficial as well as official, with the British government, so long as it shall continue intercourse of either kind with the domestic enemies of this country.”<sup>145</sup>

Proclamation of neutrality by Great Britain, which was followed soon by the same act of other European powers, in the long-term perspective of the war was more useful for the Union than Seward could realize at the moment. The recognition of belligerency slackened chances of the Confederacy to be recognized as an independent state and the blockade didn't hurt the British commerce at all. On the contrary, Great Britain welcomed principles of blockading warfare, “which the Royal Navy was anxious to see upheld for future use.”<sup>146</sup> Especially the principle of ‘continuous voyage’ was of great value for London since the ships of the British Navy, thanks to its hegemony on high seas around the world, very often encountered in similar situations. The ‘continuous voyage’ doctrine principally meant that the ship of one of the belligerents in the war would bring cargo destined for the blockaded port to an intermediate neutral port, where it would be reloaded (very often to a different ship) and would continue to the belligerency port with different documentation. The United States Supreme Court decided in cases of ships *Bermuda* and *Springbrook* that this cargo along with the ship would be liable to confiscation for breach of the blockade. Professor Pratt observes that it was significant that the continental jurists from France, Germany, and Holland were vigorously attacking this decision, whether the British government “said not a word in protest, although the property condemned was the property of British subjects.”<sup>147</sup>

At the moment, when the tension created by establishing of the blockade of southern ports by Lincoln and queen's answer by proclaiming of the neutrality cooled down, an incident occurred in November 1861, which affected with the gravest strength the Anglo-American relations during the entire war. The so called *Trent* Affair almost brought both nations close to the war, which proves the fact

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<sup>145</sup> William H. Seward to Charles F. Adams, May 21, 1861, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1861v01.p0088&isize=M>, pp. 87-90.

<sup>146</sup> Johnson, Paul, *A History of the American People*, Harper Perennial, New York (NY), 1997, p. 465.

<sup>147</sup> *Bermuda*, 3 Wall. 514 (1865); *Springbrook*, 5 Wall. 1 (1866) in Pratt, J. W., “*The British Blockade and American Precedent*,” U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, XLVI, 1789-1802 (1920), quoted in Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 311-12.

that the British government between November 27 and December 6, 1861, changed its decision to send to Canada heavily and well equipped military enforcement counting ten thousand soldiers instead of just supplies and arms as was planned originally.<sup>148</sup> The incident occurred near the coast of Cuba, where Captain of the U.S.S. *San Jacinto* Charles Wilkes forcibly stopped the British mail steamer *Trent* heading to St. Thomas in Danish West Indies and then continuing to Europe with two newly appointed agents of the Confederacy James M. Mason and John Slidell on board. Wilkes ordered entirely upon his own decision the two southern commissioners to be brought on board of *San Jacinto* and released *Trent* to proceed in its course to Europe. Mason and Slidell were then taken to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, where they were put under arrest.

“The news of his startling deed was a bombshell, creating immense excitement – from quite different points of view – in both America and England. Smarting under the impact of the military defeats sustained in the first phase of the war and irritated by British sympathy for the southern cause, the entire North went wild.”<sup>149</sup> Northern politicians and public celebrated Wilkes as a national hero who at the same time humiliated the South by imprisoning two important agents and also showed John Bull that the North was able to enforce the blockade swiftly and decisively. Wilkes acted wittingly against the international law but during first days after the incident neither American public nor the government had other words for him than of admiration and gratitude. The House of Representatives voted him a gold medal and *The New York Times* expressed the national feelings writing: “There is no drawback to our jubilation. The Universal Yankee Nation is getting decidedly awake....As for Commodore Wilkes and his command, let the handsome thing be done. Consecrate another *Fourth* of July to him. ...Let us encourage the happy inspiration that achieved such a victory.”<sup>150</sup>

Anti-American reaction in England wasn't any softer. Palmerston wrote for Lord Russell such an instruction how to react that Prince Albert, Queen's

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<sup>148</sup> For more information about preparations of the British government to defend Canada during the Trent Affair see Bourne, Kenneth, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America*, pp. 218-44. During the whole incident Seward was letting the Foreign Office in London know that the United States had no intension to attack Canada. Paolino, Ernest N., *The Foundations of the American Empire*, pp. 14-5.

<sup>149</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 9.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

husband, had to intervene personally to tone it down. However, the instruction to British Minister in Washington Lord Lyons directed him to ask for release of the prisoners and apology for offending British flag. If it weren't done so within seven day, he was ordered to ask for his diplomatic passports, close the delegation, and come back to London. This way presented, the instruction had the language of an ultimatum. At the same time, however, politicians on both sides of the Atlantic moderated their proclamations. Great Britain didn't want to go to war with the North because of the fear that poorly defended Canada would be lost because of disputable claim. For Seward and Lincoln the war with Great Britain in the time of continuing military failures on the battlefield at home would mean just strengthening of southern chances for recognition of independence. Seward needed to yield to British demands and not to lose face in front of American public. He did so with "remarkable grace, when he wrote to Lyons: "In coming to my conclusion I have not forgotten that, if the safety of this Union required the detention of the captured persons, it would be the right and duty of this government to detain them. But the effectual check and waning proportions of the existing insurrection, as well as the comparative unimportance of the captured persons themselves, when dispassionately weighed, happily forbid me from resorting to that defense."<sup>151</sup> Mason and Slidell were eventually released, but thanks to moderate attitude of diplomats on both sides the Confederacy didn't gain any sympathies or hopes for recognition of independence. Southern politicians, however, still hoped in the economic weapon of the South, the cotton.

Southern expectations from the influence of its production of cotton to Great Britain were at the beginning of the war very high. *De Bow's Review* predicted that the blockade of the Southern ports would be "swept away by the English fleets of observation hovering on the Southern coasts, to protect ... the free flow of cotton to English and French factories." The *Charleston Mercury* was even more enthusiastic stating that "the cotton would bring England to her knees."<sup>152</sup> Great Britain was importing 80% of its cotton from the United States in the 1850's. Therefore, President Davis accepted an opinion of Senator James Henry Hammond from 1858, when he in his speech in the Congress argued, that

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<sup>151</sup> Seward to Lyons, December 26, 1861, in Baker, Works of William H. Seward, 5:295-309, in: Graebner, Norman A., Ideas and Diplomacy, p. 308.

<sup>152</sup> Graebner, Norman A., Foundations of American Foreign Policy, p. 268.

“England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her, save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton is King.”<sup>153</sup>

At the beginning of the war there were also fears of influence of the blockade on importations of cotton to England expressed by British politicians and newspapers. For example *The Times* observed in June 1861 that the textile industry in Great Britain would suffer great losses, which would cause unemployment and labor unrest: “...so nearly are our interests intertwined with America that civil war in the States means destruction in Lancashire.” Lord Palmerston in October 1861 complained that if the war continued into 1862, Britain might “be obliged either singly or conjointly with France to tell the Northerners that we cannot allow some millions of our people to perish to please the Northern States, and that the blockade of the South must be so far relaxed as to allow cotton loaded ships to come out.”<sup>154</sup> It is necessary to say that Palmerston’s statement was also meant as a part of the diplomatic pressure the British government was putting on the North, not mentioning the well-known fact that the British Prime Minister was openly sympathizing with the Confederacy

But Davis as well as other southern politicians miscalculated Britain’s dependence on its production of “white gold.” The main reason for that was that warehouses in England and France were “bulging with such large excess stocks that a cessation of imports proved to be a benefit rather than a disaster for the cotton manufacturers.” The cause of that was a bumper crop of cotton from previous few years. European importers, partly because they had been expecting the conflict between the North and the South, and partly because of low prices of cotton bales, stored their warehouses beforehand.<sup>155</sup> Stoppage of import from the South raised the cotton prices, however, before the surplus in the warehouses was used up, alternative sources had been found in India, Egypt, or Australia.

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<sup>153</sup> James Henry Hammond, On the Admission of Kansas, Under the Lecompton Constitution (“Cotton is King”), Speech Before the United States Senate, March 4, 1858, America’s Civil War Documents, Professor John C. Willis, History 393, Internet source: [http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil\\_War/documents/HammondCotton.html](http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents/HammondCotton.html).

<sup>154</sup> Graebner, Norman A., Foundations of American Foreign Policy, pp. 268-9.

<sup>155</sup> Williams, William Appleman, (ed.), The Shaping of American Diplomacy, Volume I., p. 303, or Dulles, Foster Rhea, Prelude to World Power, p. 12.

Southerner's hopes for domestic social unrest in regions like Lancashire didn't come to realize either, in spite of the fact that during the transition period before the import from British colonies arrived, the unemployment caused by the blockade reached some 330,000 men and women. But British labor workers were throughout the whole war firmly supporting the case of the North and its fight against the slavery. They sent a petition to President Lincoln: "Our interests are identical with yours. We are truly one people...If you have any ill-wishers here, be assured they are chiefly those who opposed the liberty at home, and that they will be powerless to stir up quarrels between us." Lincoln's reaction was that their words were "an instance of sublime Christian heroism."<sup>156</sup> When short wheat harvests in British Empire of those years increased grain imports from the northern parts of the United States, the *Continental Monthly* could express sarcastically on the address of the South that "Old King Cotton's dead and buried, brave young Corn is King."<sup>157</sup>

Notwithstanding that neither the blockade and subsequent recognition of belligerency nor the economic pressure caused by the "Cotton King" didn't increase the Confederacy's chances to win the recognition of independence, politicians in Great Britain and France were considering offering diplomatic mediation between the two sections. The reason for that lied in the progress of war during the first two years of the war and an incapacity of the North to win a decisive victory on the battlefield. Southern success in the second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862 caused much impression in Great Britain and politicians in London and Paris always willing to accept existence of two rival states instead of strong United States started to negotiate about the mediation offer. On the other hand the public in Great Britain was in great majority supporting the North, in spite of growing voices for some kind of reconciliation.

Palmerston was realizing this fact and refused to propose joint mediation together with France. Emperor Napoleon III was more than willing to recognize Confederacy's independence because it would increase his chances to install Maximilian, brother of Austrian Emperor Franz Josef, to the Mexican throne. Southern commissioner John Slidell wrote to his colleague in London Mason:

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<sup>156</sup> Johnson, Paul, *A History of the American People*, p. 464.

<sup>157</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 14.

“The Emperor’s sympathies are with us – that he would immediately raise the blockade and very soon recognize us, if England would only make the first step, however small, in that direction, but for the present at least he is decided that she shall take the initiative.”<sup>158</sup> But neither French public was inclined to support the South and France was also involved in Italy and Greece.

Bloody Battle of Antietam of September 17, 1862, which brought big casualties but no decisive victory on either side, brought the matter of mediation to its peak point. Palmerston started to seriously consider joint action with France and was looking for support for this action in the Parliament. At this moment, however, influential and recognized Lord Granville advised to the Prime Minister that he should wait until the moment, when the victory of the South would be inevitable because the hasty recognition would be disastrous.<sup>159</sup> Palmerston finally accepted this policy though Foreign Minister Russell and the Chancellor of Exchequer Gladstone strongly opposed it. The British government finally refused to offer joint mediation on November 12, which didn’t stop Napoleon from acting alone in January 1863. Seward and the Congress on the basis that the war was a domestic problem of the United States of course rejected this.

After the Battle of Antietam the initiative started to move to northern side and Britain’s abidance in following strict neutrality caused that France stayed away from the conflict. Indirect but very strong influence on the decision of London to stay neutral had Lincoln’s proclamation, which abolished slavery – the famous Emancipation Proclamation Act announced in September 1862 and declared effective from January 1, 1863.<sup>160</sup> The immediate impact in Great Britain was small but the South was put to “morally indefensible position,” and as Henry Adams reported from England: “The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us than all our former victories and all our diplomacy. It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favor all over this country.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Slidell to Mason, February 12, 1862, Mason Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in: Louis Martin Sears, “A Confederate Diplomat at the Court of Napoleon III,” *American Historical Review* 26, No. 2. (January, 1921), p. 257.

<sup>159</sup> Graebner, Norman A., *Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, pp. 275-7.

<sup>160</sup> For the text of the Emancipation Proclamation Act see Bruun, Erik, Crosby, Jay, (ed.), *Our Nation’s Archive. The History of the United States in Documents*, Black Dog & Leventhal: Distributed by Workman Pub. Co., New York c1999, pp. 359-60.

<sup>161</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 18.

With the beginning of the year 1863 the North basically secured that Great Britain wouldn't recognize independence of the Confederacy, and without her consent none of the European countries, especially France and Spain desired to do so, really considered this possibility. From this moment on the result of the conflict between the North and the South depended only on military progress of the war, economic strength, and human potential of both belligerents. It was slowly becoming clear that in all of these aspects the Union had the edge on. That the government of Great Britain officially confirmed its neutrality, however, didn't automatically mean that there didn't come around other serious problems with the Lincoln administration. Smaller grievances were from time to time coming up caused mostly by breaking through the blockade by southern ships, which were then mostly heading to ports in Great Britain or its colonies. But none of them caused international dispute since Great Britain strictly accepted the rules of the blockade. The problem was more on the side of the Union.

When Lincoln announced the blockade in April 1861, he was talking about the coast 3,000 miles long starting in northern Virginia and ending on the border between Texas and Mexico (with approximately 185 ports). At the beginning the US Navy possessed some 100 ships, some of them being repaired in docks and most of them of insufficient quality. During the war, however, the number of ships blockading the South increased to 418, of which 313 were steamers.<sup>162</sup> The North from early stages of the blockade occupied some big ports. The most important of them was New Orleans and Fort Pulaski at the mouth of the Savannah River. But others like Mobile, Charleston, or Wilmington remained controlled by the South till the end of the war. Critiques of the blockade were impugning the effect of the blockade but in general it was effective and most of all the North compelled Great Britain to accept the blockade as a fact. Secretary of State Seward was right when he argued that: "...the true test of the efficiency of the blockade will be found in its results. Cotton commands a price in Manchester, and in Rouen, and Lowell, four times greater than in New Orleans; salt, a price ten

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<sup>162</sup> Alden C. S., Westcott Allan, *The United States Navy: A History*, J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1943, quoted in Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 310.

times higher in Charleston than in Liverpool. Gold is worth fifty per cent more in Richmond than in New York.”<sup>163</sup>

The biggest problem between Washington and London during the second part of the war occurred in fact because of private activities of British ship building company Laird Brothers of Birkenhead. The Confederate official envoys failed to win official recognition, but them and other agents of the South successfully negotiated contracts for military supplies and building up of ships for Confederate Navy. The most successful of them was Captain James D. Bulloch who signed the contract with the Laird Brothers for the construction of ships originally named *Oreto* and ‘No. 290,’ which later acclaimed fame under names *Florida* and *Alabama*. Even though Charles Francis Adams, and later with more success Thomas H. Dudley, were gathering immense number of evidence, the slow reaction of the British government didn’t stop *Florida*, *Alabama*, and another cruiser *Shenandoah* from escaping to high seas, where they were additionally equipped and armed.

Overall these cruisers, before they were captured or destroyed, had sunk around 250 Union ships and caused that another seven hundred of them had changed the flag, under which they sailed, not to be attacked. The situation escalated when Adams, knowing that Laird Brothers were contracted to build other two war cruisers, expressed profound regret that the British government didn’t take proper steps to stop the construction of these cruisers. In his note to Lord Russell he stated solemnly, “It would be superfluous in me to point out to your Lordship that this is war.”<sup>164</sup> The British government, however, meanwhile ordered seizure of both cruisers. The question of ‘Alabama Claims’ became an issue of distaste between the two governments again after the end of the Civil War when the United States claimed indemnity for losses caused by *Alabama*, *Florida*, and *Shenandoah* from the British government arguing that it was responsible not only for direct but also indirect damages. The Treaty of Washington from May 8, 1871 and Geneva arbitration from September 14, 1872 resolved the issue.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> William H. Seward, Dept. of State, op. cit., I, p.442, quoted in Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>164</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, Prelude to World Power, p. 21.

<sup>165</sup> Beisner, Robert L., From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights (IL), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1986, pp. 38-42. Bourne, Kenneth, Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, p. 305. Kagan, Robert, Dangerous Nation, pp. 275-76. Alabama Claims

#### **IV. Monroe Doctrine Reborn: the United States, Europe, and Latin America, 1861 – 1869**

The Civil War has been until present time the bloodiest conflict the United States ever went through. Over 600,000 men died and hundreds of thousands of war veterans remained crippled. The South was economically ruined and stayed under military control during the Reconstruction until 1877. Robert Kagan sums the situation of the South with following comment: “To the North, the defeated South was, in the argot of the twentieth century, an underdeveloped nation.” On the other hand the final stage of the unification and centralization of the country had finished. The phrase was no longer, as it had been before the 1860’s, “the United States are,” but “the United States is.”<sup>166</sup>

I have put this little emphasis on the Civil War foreign policy towards European powers, especially Great Britain, for two reasons. It is necessary to realize that the American Civil War signified a profound point break in the history of the United States. The country ended horribly hurt- economically, politically, and socially. However, it ended finally united. Another reason for which it was important to mention the European aspect of the Civil War diplomacy was that European powers, most of all France and Spain, used the domestic conflict in the United States to attempt to reestablish their former empires and influence in Latin America. But when the Civil War was over, the United States quickly returned its attention to the surrounding regions and, also using the rhetoric of the Monroe Doctrine, started to push European powers away from the Western Hemisphere.

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belonged among the most discussed foreign policy issues during the late 1860’s but it doesn’t directly relate to U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America so it will not be discussed more in detail in this thesis. For more information see Cook, A., *The Alabama Claims*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1975.

<sup>166</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 270. LaFeber, Walter, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Volume II: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865 – 1913*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 3.

## IV.I. Spain's Attempts to Regain Position in Latin America

As it was shown above, the Civil War in the United States had a significant foreign policy aspect in respect to the direct relation with European powers. No less, or maybe even more, important for politicians in Washington was that some European powers attempted to use the domestic conflict between the North and the South to reestablish their former influence in the Western Hemisphere. These countries were Spain, which tried to regain parts of its empire lost in 1810's and 1820's during the Wars of Independence of Latin American republics, and France, where the Emperor Napoleon III was dreaming about restoring of former glory of his famous uncle Napoleon I and presence of France in Americas, lost after the French and Indian War in 1763. "The coming of the Civil War seemed to offer the best of opportunities to Spanish, as to other European, statesmen to redress the balance of power in the New World."<sup>167</sup>

The significance of the impact of the Civil War on subsequent transformation of U.S. foreign policy during next thirty years was crucial. The purgatory of the blood bath on battlefields like Antietam or Gettysburg definitely showed the Americans that their vision of the United States as a divined country, the "land of Canaan", destined by God to give an example of the progress of humankind was drastically shaken. On the other hand, the fact that the slavery was finally destroyed, and the land was abundant and practically free after issuing of the Homestead Act, caused that the prestige of the United States among European public rose significantly. This caused one of the biggest waves of immigration in modern history.<sup>168</sup> Various conditions, such as the immigration, vast space in the West, capacity of self-absorption of growing industrial and agricultural production, and technological progress, were basic causes of unprecedented economical, social, and political development of the United States in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>167</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 256.

<sup>168</sup> See Curti, Merle, Birr, Kendall, "*The Immigrant and the American Image in Europe, 1860-1914*," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (September, 1950), pp. 203-230.

For the purpose of this thesis the most important characteristic of this era was a slow process of growing “self-confidence” of the Americans and their representatives in foreign policy towards the breakthrough point in the victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898.<sup>169</sup> As one of the proofs confirming certain change in the perception of U.S. foreign policy issues in the hemisphere was also the revival, even though still more theoretical than in reality, of the ideas of the Monroe Doctrine. However, this time more in the meaning of the right of the United States to be the leading country among the American republics against European influence.

Spanish and French attempts to reestablish former influence in Americas in the early and mid 1860’s, and their failure, caused also partly because of the fact that the Civil War in the United States ended and U.S. foreign-policy makers thus could again put more attention to events happening in an American “backyard”, could be seen as the beginning of the transition period between European and United States’ domination in the hemisphere. Of course, the hegemony of Great Britain predominated practically until the Venezuelan crisis in the mid 1890’s, and in some regions like La Plata or Chile until the World War I, but yet the cautious neutrality policy during the progress of the American domestic conflict and interventions of Spain and France in Santo Domingo, Mexico, or Peru, showed changing attitude of the Foreign Office towards the United States and its dominant sphere of foreign policy.

#### **IV.I.I. Annexation of Santo Domingo, 1861-1865**

Spain’s first attempt to regain back its influence in Latin America took place paradoxically in the island of Hispaniola, where former French colony Haiti ruled over Spanish-speaking eastern part of the island from 1821 until 1844, and which then kept invading it with periodicity of every few years. Haiti during the rule of President Jean-Pierre Boyer (1818-1843) signed an agreement with France for a payment of indemnity of hundred fifty million francs, later reduced to sixty

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<sup>169</sup> This theory of certain pre-mature years of the creation of solid principles of the U.S. foreign policy principles is best described in (although from a different points of view) Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights (IL), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1986, and LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire. An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY), London, 1963.

million (1838), for a recognition of independence and assurance of no more French interventions on the island. Former most profitable French colony also experienced profound decline of sugar cane-production oriented agriculture caused by a long series of wars and internal political turmoil. Economic decay was completed by other loans, with which Boyer's government tried to pay the French indemnity and other loans.<sup>170</sup>

It is necessary to mention that it was the influence and intrigues of French agents, however without any significant support from Paris, which helped Spain to annex the island. Eastern provinces, where the Spanish-speaking plantation elite dominated, revolted against forcible Haitization,<sup>171</sup> worsened by economical troubles of the government dominated by French-speaking generals, and declared independence on February 27, 1844.<sup>172</sup> French representatives on the island, headed by the consul in Santo Domingo M. Juchereau de Saint-Denis, and the commander of the French fleet in the Antilles, the Admiral Des Mages, suggested that France's financial claims would be paid off better by establishing of the French protectorate over the eastern part of Hispaniola. In fact, the revolutionary junta, led by two politicians who would influence history of the Dominican republic for next twenty five years, Buenaventura Baez and Pedro Santana, signed in March 1844 formal treaty of friendship and alliance with Saint-Denis in exchange for the harbor in Samaná Bay on the north-eastern part of the island. However, Guizot's central government in Paris was concerned about the position of Great Britain and Haitian debt.

The question of French protectorate occurred again in 1849, when new Haitian dictator and self-pronounced emperor, Faustin Élie Souloque, invaded again the eastern part of the island with a remarkable force and brutality.<sup>173</sup> French small interest in taking some action on the island was mostly caused by a precaution against the action of Great Britain and French bigger interests in

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<sup>170</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, pp. 254-6, or Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vols. I-XI, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1984-1995, Vol. III, p. 262.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, p. 263.

<sup>172</sup> On the independence of Santo Domingo more in *Ibid*, pp. 265-268, or Schoenrich, Otto, *Santo Domingo. A Country with a Future*, 1918, Full Books, Internet source: <http://www.fullbooks.com/Santo-Domingo1.html>.

<sup>173</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 259.

Europe and Africa. Certainly it was not because it contravened principles of the Monroe Doctrine or from the fear of the reaction of the United States. Although there were some American activities planted on the island, especially we could mention the mission of very active son of Texan politician Duff Green, Benjamin E. Green; the interest of the U.S. foreign policy-makers in the 1840's was focused predominantly on the continental expansion and Mexico. The question of the inter-oceanic canal in Central America also wasn't on the main agenda in Washington either, so the need to acquire some insular bases in the Caribbean had not appeared yet. The foreign policy of the United States wasn't "Caribbeanized" yet in the 1840's and 1850's, to be using a term of historian Frederick Merk.<sup>174</sup>

In 1850 the joint action of representatives of the United States, Great Britain, and France took place on the request of the government of Buenaventura Baez. New American agent R. J. Walsh tried to negotiate a peace with the Haitian emperor but with no big success. Soulouque, now ruling as Faustin I, agreed to a one-year truce only after a military threat of British and French naval ships off the coast of Port-au-Prince. During the 1850's practically every Dominican government, whether dominated by Baez or Santana, was pushed, by a danger of another Haitian invasion, to consider establishment of some kind of protectorate or even annexation by some European power or the United States. "The Dominican government ... was always ready for a deal with a strong power. Its leaders, though they might have mild prejudices in favor of this or that particular state, were never so blinded by these prejudices as to be unwilling to consolidate their own position by a compact with some other government."<sup>175</sup>

At this moment, in the mid 1850's, came to the scene General William L. Cazneau, former U.S. Army general that became one of the biggest supporters of the annexation of Santo Domingo until the time of President Grant in 1870's.<sup>176</sup> Cazneau immediately entered into negotiations with at the moment sitting President Pedro Santana, and the treaty of protection in exchange for the concession on territory around Samaná Bay was signed shortly after. The treaty was approved by the Franklin Pierce's administration, however, the consuls of

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<sup>174</sup> Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, Knopf, New York, 1966, pp. 202-12.

<sup>175</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 268.

<sup>176</sup> This was caused mainly because of his large investments on the island.

Great Britain<sup>177</sup> and France promptly opposed this activity and the negotiations ended in vain. This relatively small event can serve as an indicator of the development of the U.S. foreign policy and mainly to show that European powers weren't considering the United States as equal to them in the region few years before the breakup of the Civil War. This doesn't mean that the United States would be much stronger after 1865, but the overall conditions had changed during these ten important years the way that the Foreign Office in London had to acknowledge growing influence of Washington in the Western Hemisphere. Great Britain remained the principal opponent of the United States in Latin America until the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century but wouldn't enter in any direct military or diplomatic alliance with other European state to stop growing American influence in the region. It is possible to say that in two decades after the end of the Civil War the background was created for the so-called "Great Rapprochement," which took place in 1890's between the two Anglo-Saxon nations.<sup>178</sup>

So much as Cazneau was trying to attract the attention of Pierce's and Buchanan's administrations, neither of them was able to produce any activity towards a creation of the protectorate or even annexation. In the 1850's "hotter" issues of the foreign policy was the lust for more territory in the north of Mexico, inter-oceanic canal in Central America, or acquisition of Cuba. None of these goals, however, could be accomplished because of the growing problem between the North and the South. In fact, the question of Santo Domingo wasn't discussed at all except the State Department. U.S. government didn't even back up Cazneau, when he argued with French and British consuls using the principles of the Monroe Doctrine and arguing that the United States couldn't allow any European power to acquire new territory on the Western Hemisphere. On the other hand the American agent Jonathan Elliott negotiated lucrative commercial treaty<sup>179</sup> and by the end of the 1850's the era of Faustin I was also over. The Dominican Republic seemed to enter into the era of relative peace with its neighbor.

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<sup>177</sup> British consul in Santo Domingo at that time was Robert Herman Schomburgk, who would later be discussed also as the creator of the border line between Venezuela and British Guyana – a principal problem, which caused the Venezuelan crisis of 1895.

<sup>178</sup> See Burton, David H., *British-American Diplomacy, 1895 – 1917. Early Years of the Special Relationship*, Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar (FL), 1999.

<sup>179</sup> The treaty wasn't approved by the U.S. Congress, Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 279.

Spanish flirting with the idea of securing or annexing of the island was as old as that of France, or better said, that of the first Dominican government seeking for foreign support against Haitian invasions. Attempts made in the mid 1840's through a mediation of Spanish vice-consul at Jamaica and Governor-General of Cuba failed because of the stirring domestic situation in Spain. At the beginning of 1850's the Spanish agent named Mariano Torrente visited the island and after the return he published the book called *Política Ultramarina*, which was a remarkable defense of the Spanish protectorate.<sup>180</sup> The book is noteworthy especially for its geopolitical dimension. Torrente recommended a creation of a protectorate over the island so the United States wouldn't surround Cuba, the most precious, and besides Puerto Rico, the last Spanish colony in the Americas. On the other hand he didn't mention any notice about the Monroe Doctrine at all. It is another signal of the growing sense of strain in Madrid from growing American presence in the Caribbean basin and Central America, but the presence as such, not because of Monroe's theoretical principles. The time of real renewal of the Monroe Doctrine would come few years later after the Civil War in case of the French intervention in Mexico. Several other contacts between the Dominican and Spanish government took place during the 1850's but unstable domestic situation in Spain didn't allow any vigorous action. When there was a stable and energetic government led by Marshall O'Donnell in Madrid, it was occupied with closer foreign policy issues such as Morocco.

The course of events on the island started to change towards the end of the 1850's. In October 1858 the Emperor Faustin I, fearing that the Dominican Republic would accept the annexation by the still pro-slavery United States, sent a diplomatic agent to Santo Domingo with an offer to create a federation, which would secure the eastern part of the island from foreign rule. When the Dominican government swiftly refused this offer, Faustin I started to plan another invasion. This time, however, leaders of Haitian army under the leadership of General Fabre Geffrard organized a *coup d'état*, and the Emperor had to flee to exile at the

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<sup>180</sup> Torrente, Mariano, *Política Ultramarina, que abraza todos los puntos referentes a las relaciones de España con los Estados Unidos, con la Inglaterra y Las Antillas, y señaladamente con la Isla de Santo Domingo*, Madrid, Imprenta Compañía General de Impresores y Libreros del Reino, 1854 in: Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 276. See the book in Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, Biblioteca del Derecho, Internet source: <http://fama2.us.es/fde//ocr/2006/politicaUltramarina.pdf>.

beginning of 1860. New Haitian government promptly assured the Dominicans that there would be no invasion, but they, after so many years of a threat from the western neighbor, didn't have many reasons to believe to this statement. "The Dominican government was indeed passing through a period when its morale was at its lowest ebb."<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the Haitians came up with new policy of alluring the border region commerce again towards Port-au-Prince. President Geffrard preferred by Haitianization of the Dominican economy to achieve what his predecessors weren't able to do by force.

The President of the Dominican Republic at this point was again Pedro Santana. It is hard to say, whether he saw the future security of his country more secure under the protection of the United States or some European power. But the internal situation in the northern republic was rapidly heading towards the war between the North and the South. And as it was mentioned above, the interest of Great Britain and France weren't at the given moment so imminent. In fact even the situation in Spain was not very favorable for any kind of action, so the initiative took in his hands the Captain-General of Cuba Francisco Serrano, one of the leaders of Spanish Liberal movement. "Ardent for distinction, he now saw in the question of Santo Domingo an excellent opportunity to achieve it. Impetuous by temperament, he pressed forward not a little faster than the timid and tentative authorities at Madrid."<sup>182</sup> O'Donnell recommended to support the Dominicans with a loan and military equipment, but preferred to postpone the annexation for one more year. The Spanish Prime Minister, however, declared in the dispatch to Serrano clear support for the takeover of the former colony. When Serrano communicated this to Santana, he immediately issued the declaration of the annexation by Spain on March 18, 1861, and the Cuban Captain-General immediately started to dispatch Spanish troops from Cuba.

The relationship between the Spanish army officers and Dominicans, however, was strained since the beginning. It was caused by the protest of Spanish General Pelaez against the execution of several Dominican leaders plotting against the annexation ordered by Pedro Santana who wanted to use this uprising for consolidation of his political position. This incident resulted badly for both,

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<sup>181</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, p. 272.

<sup>182</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 281.

the Spanish and also Santana. Spain was seen by the population from the beginning as a former colonial usurper, and Santana, who didn't gain more power, decided to risk all by resigning in January 7, 1862, hoping that he would be given by the Queen a *carte blanche* in the Dominican affairs. To Santana's surprise the resignation was accepted, and the power was completely transferred to the hands of Spanish officers.<sup>183</sup> Supporters of Buenaventura Baez led the revolt against the Spanish rule more because he was the main contender of Santana than because of his opposition against Spain. Therefore, the bigger problem of the Spanish administration was its incapacity to learn from the past colonial mistakes such were colonial style of ruling, heavy taxation, non-paid requisitions, comeback of hard control the Catholic Church over education etc.

Besides these newly established conditions, there existed also racial distinctions since the majority of Dominican population was colored. Almost forty years of Haitian supremacy and consequent independence also changed the perception of the Dominicans itself and created a sense of nationalism and republicanism.<sup>184</sup> The Spaniards had to suppress several uprisings during 1863, and by establishing of provisional Dominican government in Santiago, headed by General Jose Antonio Salcedo Ramirez, on September 14, 1863, started the so called War of Restoration. The Spanish again called Santana to suppress the rebellion, but his popularity was long time gone. His death and growing popularity of the provisional government started to show the Spanish rulers that it was time to withdraw from the island. Not even a contingent of twenty five thousand soldiers could win over the insurgents and the intervention cost the Spanish government over thirty three million pesos. The casualties were also very high – ten thousand dead, however, most of them died on yellow fever and smaller portion on the battlefield. The Dominican independence was restored completely by the summer 1865, but for the prize of devastated economy and deep division between *santanistas* and *baecistas*.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Schoenrich, Otto, Santo Domingo. A Country with a Future, 1918, Full Books, Internet source: <http://www.fullbooks.com/Santo-Domingo2.html>, or Haggerty, Richard A. (ed.), Dominican Republic: A Country Study, Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989, Internet source: <http://countrystudies.us/dominican-republic/6.htm>.

<sup>184</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), The Cambridge History of Latin America, pp. 272-3.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, pp. 273-5.

The course of events happening on the island had been under close attention of American foreign policy-makers since the time of the revolution of black slaves at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As it was mentioned above, the Spanish activity on the island was considered by the Secretary of State Seward as the last opportunity how to prevent the North and the South from the conflict over slavery.<sup>186</sup> Seward's famous paper "Some Thoughts for President's Consideration"<sup>187</sup> was directly reacting on the Spanish annexation of Santo Domingo and planned European intervention in Mexico. The main goal of the report was to stop the two sections from going into the Civil War. It is important to realize, however, that the foreign policy issues of the Western Hemisphere had such a big significance that Seward considered them to be able to prevent the war. President Lincoln refused this unrealistic idea. Therefore, the Secretary of State at least expressed strong American disapproval through a diplomatic note to Spanish minister in Washington Tassara, which had very menacing language: "Spanish subjects ... in pursuance of a previous plot; such an attempt to introduce Spanish authority within the territory of Dominica ... cannot fail to be taken as the first step in a policy of armed intervention by the Spanish Government in the American countries which once constituted Spanish America, but have since achieved their independence; and as it cannot be known where the next demonstration of the ambition it would imply would take place, it must be regarded as threatening Haiti, Mexico, the seven States on the Spanish Main, and even those once Spanish-American states, which having been peacefully acquired and admitted into the American Union, now constitute a part of this republic."

Seward continued expressing with even stronger language that the United States regarded the annexation as an act against interests of the U.S. government stating that: "The President will not willingly believe that these proceedings have been authorized by the Government of Her Catholic Majesty, or that they can receive its approval. But I am directed to inform you, and also the Government of Her Catholic Majesty, that if they shall be found to have received at any time the sanction of that Government, the President will be obliged to regard them as manifesting an unfriendly disposition toward the United States, and to meet the

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<sup>186</sup> See p. 47.

<sup>187</sup> William H. Seward, *Some Thoughts for President's Consideration*, April 1, 1861, in: Williams, William Appleman, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy*, pp. 296-7.

further prosecution of enterprises of that kind in respect to either the Dominican Republic or any part of the American Continent or islands with a prompt, persistent, and, if possible, effective resistance.”<sup>188</sup>

With the Civil War starting practically simultaneously with events on Hispaniola, the administration of Abraham Lincoln was in no position to express its opposition to the annexation in other means than through stringent diplomatic notes. It is certain that Seward, who saw in the spring of 1861 Southern politician’s decision to secede as a temporary situation, could have thought that strong diplomatic position of the United States would prevent the Spaniards from the annexation. On the other hand, this tactic was very smart in a way of showing to other American republics that the United States were represented solely by the Lincoln’s administration. Besides the fact that the Union fought against the pro-slavery South, also the defense of the “sister” republic would gain it even more support from its southern neighbors.

However, Seward’s words were quite risky because Spain could obtain monarchic support from France and even Great Britain. But neither France nor Great Britain had any intention to support Spain’s attempts to reenter to Latin America because their attention was attracted more in Europe, Africa, and Asia. France’s Emperor Napoleon III also had in mind his own activity in Mexico, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. Politicians in London considered the government of Abraham Lincoln as an official representative of the United States, and when the Secretary of State softened his language, there was no reason to create new tensions in the Western Hemisphere, where the position of Great Britain was quite strong and stable.

From the point of view of the analysis of U.S. foreign policy, William H. Seward needs to be given a credit for a revival of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, which functioned with some modifications as one of its pillars until the end of the World War II. In his note from June 1861 he declared: “It is the moral and political significance of the act of Spain which gives it importance, and because this is the first instance since the foreign policy of the U.S. was announced to the Allied Powers of Europe in 1823, that any nation has failed to see its own clear interests in the maintenance of that policy ... the undersigned has

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<sup>188</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine*, Little, Brown & Co., New York, 1946, pp. 139-40.

now to fulfill the duty imposed upon him by the President, and in the name of the government of the U.S. of America solemnly protests against the assumption or exercise of Spanish authority in the island of San Domingo; and this protest the U.S. in every case will expect to maintain.”<sup>189</sup>

References to the principles of the doctrine, which was announced for the first time by the President James Monroe in his Annual Message in December of 1823, had become more and more alluded to since the 1860’s. This doesn’t mean that European Powers were giving the Monroe Doctrine any attention. In fact, until the mid 1890’s American politicians and diplomats were using ideas of the Monroe Doctrine more with a purpose to address the domestic public opinion and stir up image of the United States among Latin American countries. The principles of the Doctrine weren’t openly and seriously exerted until the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895. It is more than clear that in case of the Spanish annexation of Santo Domingo the Monroe Doctrine “had suffered a temporary rebuff.” The end of Spain’s attempt to reenter to the island was caused by the domestic uprising against a foreign invasion and from a very large part also from the opposition against Pedro Santana. Dominicans had already got used to the republican political system and the independence in general.<sup>190</sup>

#### **IV.I.II. Spanish War with Peru and Chile**

In case of Santo Domingo Spain didn’t concede to Seward the right to use rhetoric of the Monroe Doctrine except several exceptions. It, however, acknowledged its principles in another smaller international issue, where the Secretary of State intended to involve the U.S. influence. When the Spanish squadron seized in 1864 small Chincha Islands in the controversy with Peru, the United States promptly protested against another attempt of the European Power to put a foot again on the American continent. Spain categorically denied this and assured the Lincoln’s administration that “the Monroe Doctrine of the United States would not be called in question by any proceeding of Spain in or against Peru. If President Monroe were alive and on the spot [the Spanish Foreign

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<sup>189</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>190</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 339.

Minister added], he should see nothing running counter to his famous declaration.”<sup>191</sup>

This was the first official recognition of the Monroe Doctrine by any European Power. On the other hand, it is necessary to realize that it was recognized by the weakest of them at the moment, when the Civil War in the United States was clearly heading towards its end. Great Britain had not taken the concept of President Monroe into account for another thirty years. As it was already noticed, the Venezuelan crisis of 1895 was the breakthrough moment in the acknowledgment of the position of the United States in the Western Hemisphere by politicians in London. Growing economic, political, and geopolitical power of the United States in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century finally obtained complete recognition after the Spanish-American War of 1898, when proud but weak Spain was defeated with such forcefulness that Europe had to accept U.S. hegemony in Americas.

The annexation of Santo Domingo by Spain between 1861 and 1865 was just a small episode in the course of international events in the Western Hemisphere during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its importance lies in an impulse, which this affair gave to enormous interest of American politicians and public to an acquisition of new islands in the Caribbean during the 1870's, and later in the Pacific Ocean. The foreign policy, therefore, obtained an “insular” aspect. The reasons for this were various; some of them were residues of older historical processes, and some of them were created by new reality, which arose after the Civil War.

However, it is necessary to mention shortly another small historical issue – American diplomatic intervention in the war of Peru and Chile against Spain between 1864 and 1866.<sup>192</sup> The reason for noticing this minor event was that it was for the first time, when the United States tried to influence openly an international quarrel between one of the European Powers and the republics of South America, and also because Spain as the first European Power recognized the Monroe Doctrine to be one of the official principals of U.S. foreign policy. Practically the same case was an attempt of American mediation in the war of

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<sup>191</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *Hands Off*, p. 146.

<sup>192</sup> The fighting ended in 1866 but the formal armistice was signed in 1871 and peace treaties even later.

Triple Alliance between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay of General Lopez.

Neither of these conflicts had greater significance for the status quo in the Western Hemisphere. The hegemony of Great Britain in the South American continent remained unshaken. The foreign policy-makers in London continued following traditional British tactic of not intervening directly in the political situation of Latin American republics, and rather of using its economical and naval power and authority. On the other hand, first American merchants, and after them American consuls, agents, and ministers had tried to play, since the late 1820's more and more active role in the political life of newly independent republics, and thus they were viewed as the main opponent of Great Britain. It was then throughout the 1860's, when the United States assumed this role and finally replaced France and Spain from the position of the second most important power in the Western Hemisphere. In case of the war between Spain and Chile, respectively with Peru, James W. Cortada analyzes the Spanish-American relation with these words: "Rather, the significance of this conflict lies in its diplomacy since it illustrated the types of problems Spain faced in the New World with the United States. It offered a unique opportunity to switch their diplomatic conflict from the Caribbean solidly into South America, thereby exposing even further some of the basic elements of Spanish and American policies in that part of the world."<sup>193</sup> This episode was also the last major Spanish intervention in Latin America before the Spanish-American War of 1898, which put an end to four hundred years of Spanish influence in America's. It is quite significant that in the last two Latin American international conflicts, where Spain was involved, the U.S. interests played important role.<sup>194</sup>

The conflict between Spain on one side, and Peru and Chile on the other, which later included practically all countries on the South American Pacific coast, after Ecuador and Bolivia entered symbolically into the war the war as well, has several aspects announcing significant shift in international role of the United

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<sup>193</sup> Cortada, James W., *Spain and the American Civil War: Relations at Mid-century, 1855-1867*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1980, Internet source: Google Book Search, <http://books.google.com/books?id=21ALAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&sig=nic1DQOr04e4wc9zNvFedM9RRnw> , p. 93.

<sup>194</sup> To be completely correct, there was a thirty years long Cuban conflict, which could be, however, considered a domestic Spanish problem until the mid 1890's. This issue will be discussed in the last chapter.

States in Latin America.<sup>195</sup> The controversy with Spain started separately in Peru and Chile.

In Peru it was initiated in August 1863, when several Spanish workers were attacked by locals at the farm called Talambo in northern Peru with one Spaniard remaining dead.<sup>196</sup> Spain never recognized the independence of Peru, and the government in Lima was observing with great awareness Spanish annexation of Santo Domingo since there still remained quite sound loyalist feelings in the former most loyal colony. The fear got even more dismal, when the expedition of Spanish scientists was sent in 1862 to map the Pacific coast of the American continent. In fact, the purpose of the expedition was to raise good will in Latin America towards its former mother country. However, Peruvian government believed that Spain wanted to seize the guano-rich Chincha Island off the coast of Peru. In spite of that, the expedition fleet, led by Admiral Hernandez Pinzon, was at first received in Chile and then in Peru with all possible distinction.

The troubles started, when the Talamba incident occurred.<sup>197</sup> Pinzon, already on its way to San Francisco returned to Lima in November 1863, and demanded a government apology and reparations to Spanish citizens. Peruvian government refused this with an explanation that the incident was to be prosecuted within the domestic jurisdiction. Spanish government, blaming Peru for spreading anti-Spanish feelings in Latin America, sent a hard-line minister Eusebio de Salazar y Mazarredo to settle the dispute. His instructions weren't directly mentioning the use of force. The instruction given to Salazar sounded: "The mission confined to you is one of peace; the Government wishes peace and good understanding, and by this means, rather than by any other, the just reparation to which it aspires, and if without its fault, it should be necessary to resort to demonstration of force, the reasons which determine such action, taken in concert with the commander of the squadron, ought to be such that the Spanish government, by simply stating them, will be justified before the nations of Europe and the rest of the civilized world." Salazar then was given the right to announce

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<sup>195</sup> At this moment Bolivia was still possessing portion of the Pacific coast.

<sup>196</sup> Spanish settlers from Basque Country were originally invited by the Peruvian government in the 1850's. Cortada, James W., *Spain and the American Civil War*, p. 93.

<sup>197</sup> Barros, Mario Van Buren, *Historia Diplomática de Chile, 1541-1958*, Editorial Andrés Bello, Santiago, 1958, p. 236.

an ultimatum, but even after this, he was to accept the mediation of the foreign Ministers in Lima, if it were offered.<sup>198</sup>

Because of Salazar's hard diplomatic conduct the situation escalated in a seizure of the Chincha Islands by four hundred Spanish marines. Occupation of these islands, rich in guano, was immediately explained as not an attempt to occupy the territory of Peru, but a retribution for the indemnity not paid to Spanish citizens attacked in Talamba. This action put the Peruvian government in very serious situation, since the production of guano represented some 60% of Peru's national income. The occupation of Chincha Islands provoked strong anti-Spanish feelings in all South America, and even Great Britain protested, since her commercial interests were put in danger. Spanish government, from September 1864 again led by General Narvaez, realized the seriousness of the situation and sent José Manuel Pareja to replace Salazar and Pinzon. The press in both countries, however, attacked the compromise settlement, and neither of the governments was in an easy position to approve it. The Vivanco-Pareja Treaty of January 27, 1865, was immediately very unpopular in both countries. The situation was also aggravated by another two incidents between the Peruvian citizens and the Spaniards.<sup>199</sup>

The United States position at the beginning of the conflict was strictly neutral. Seward tried to offer the mediation together with French diplomats [sic] in Lima early in 1864. The Foreign Minister Pacheco refused American attempts in Spain, since he still believed that the conflict would be settled peacefully. The occupation of Chincha Islands and worsening situation between Spain and Chile indicated that it was impossible. Seward, still mostly occupied with the domestic conflict against the South, tried to push Foreign Minister Lord Russell to use the British influence, arguing that the commerce and interests of Great Britain were

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<sup>198</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 310. Another problem was that Salazar was sent to Peru with the status of Royal Commissary, which was a colonial function, and not as the Minister Plenipotentiary. This fact infuriated Peruvian as well as Latin American public for it reminded of colonial times.

<sup>199</sup> Cortada, James W., *Spain and the American Civil War: Relations at Mid-century, 1855-1867*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1980, Internet source: Google Book Search, <http://books.google.com/books?id=21ALAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&sig=nic1DQOr04e4wc9zNvFedM9RRnw> , p. 94. The Vivanco-Pareja Treaty was signed on January 27, 1865, but the Peruvian government refused to ratify it, which, however, led to the fall of the President Juan Manuel Pezet. One of several incidents, which worsened relations, was that the Peruvian citizen refused to light up the cigarette to one Spaniard. Some street fights and the Spanish formal protest followed this conflict.

jeopardized. Seward at the beginning of the controversy instructed American Minister in London Adams in May 1864 with very conciliatory words: “The security, welfare and independence of the South American nations have heretofore as deeply interested Great Britain as they have the United States. Great Britain is equally with the United States a friend of Spain. I cannot doubt, theretofore, that her Majesty’s government will agree with this government in regarding with deep concern and apprehension the apparently imminent danger of a war between Spain and Peru. The latter power has invoked the good offices of the United States, and I have no doubt that she has, at the same time appealed to Great Britain. You will seek an occasion to converse with [...] Russell on the subject, and use your good offices, if they shall be accepted, in favor of conciliation upon terms consistent with justice and honor...”<sup>200</sup> France also wanted to prevent the eruption of the war because it wanted Spain’s full support in the invasion to Mexico. Thus the issue started to have wider implications, which meant that the British became more concerned about Spanish actions in Latin America and “delicate balance of power in the New World.”<sup>201</sup>

The seizure of Chincha Islands, however, gave Seward an opportunity to express more flatly American resentment with Spanish actions in Santo Domingo, Peru, and Chile, and also with French intervention in Mexico. The Latin American republics, he declared, “allege that several of the European states, which once had colonies here, are now seeking to reduce them again to the condition of dependencies. These apprehensions are not unlikely to be entertained by the whole people of the United States. The proceedings of Spain in Peru give them a color which is deeply to be regretted. Indeed, a general discontent, which the forbearance of the government is already manifest. Should the sentiment of this country demand a reconsideration of the policy of neutrality which this government has hitherto maintained, it is much to be feared that new complications might arise, which would not merely disturb the existing systems of

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<sup>200</sup> Seward to Adams, May 18, 1864, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches: France, United States Department of State, p. I: 896, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1864p1.p0906&isize=M>. It is necessary to remind to the reader that the relations between the United States and Great Britain were very tense over the British conduct of neutrality during the Civil War, especially over the affair of CSS Alabama.

<sup>201</sup> Cortada, James W., Spain and the American Civil War, p. 95.

commerce, but might endanger the general peace of nations. ...”<sup>202</sup> Dexter Perkins commented the language of the U.S. Secretary of State as of “genuine irritation, but of an irritation really quite superfluous.” He concurs that Spain had no design for territorial aggrandizement but that it was “pursuing a policy of prestige, as weak governments prone to do....”<sup>203</sup> On the other hand the position of the United States was much stronger in 1864 with the Civil War forthcoming towards Union’s victory. It is not necessary to remind that the Spanish adventure in Santo Domingo showed sound symptoms of a fiasco in the winter of 1864. Moreover, the Spanish Foreign Ministers Pacheco and his successor Llorente kept assuring vehemently the British and American politicians that Spain had no intention to acquire any territory in the Western Hemisphere, and as a gesture of conciliatoriness even considered American mediation in the peace talks.

Meanwhile the situation got even worse for Spain in Chile. The reception of Admiral Pinzon’s fleet in Chile before he left for Peru was very cordial. The situation worsened gravely, when the Chincha Islands were occupied, and when Admiral Pinzon was replaced by Admiral Pareja who hated Chile his whole life since his father died in 1813 during the Chilean wars of independence. The reason for escalation of the conflict was that the Chileans refused to allow the Spanish fleet to get supplies of coal with explanation that it could not be sold to a belligerent nation. Pareja did not accept this argument since two Peruvian steamers had recently left for Peru with weapons and Chilean volunteers. Not even such a skilled diplomat as Salvador de Tavira, Spanish Minister in Santiago, was able to moderate rapidly growing tensions. Tavira was eventually called to Spain and replaced by Pareja. Hotheaded Admiral immediately issued forty-eight-hours ultimatum asking an indemnity of three million reales, which resulted in the Chilean declaration of war on September 24, 1865.<sup>204</sup>

Militarily Chile was not ready for the war at all, and internationally the situation was not much better. Brazil as the monarchy was sympathetic with Spain, as well as Argentina, which considered the Spanish-Peruvian conflict as bilateral question and blamed Chile for getting involved in it. Other Andean countries,

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<sup>202</sup> Diplomatic Correspondence, 1864, IV, pp. 16-7, 23, quoted in: Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 313.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> Barros, Mario Van Buren, *Historia Diplomática de Chile*, pp. 247-48.

Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia were since the beginning of the war supporting Peru and Chile, but at the moment only formally with verbal declarations. European countries sympathized with Spain and the United States considered more important the problem of Mexico, Santo Domingo, and Peru, besides its ongoing internal conflict. Only Ministers in Ecuador and Peru, José Nicolas Hurtado y Domingo Santa Maria, achieved major success by signing alliances against Spain. Bolivia joined the anti-Spanish coalition subsequently.<sup>205</sup>

The progress of the war is not of great importance for this thesis. The military situation resulted in a stalemate since Pareja's fleet was not big enough to control the whole Pacific coast of Latin America. On the other hand Latin American countries didn't possess such a naval force to fight the Spanish on the sea. At the end Pareja was left with the blockade of major harbors of Valparaiso in Chile, and Callao in Peru without being able to conduct an invasion to the mainland. Moreover, the Chilean corvette *Esmeralda* scored at least a symbolic naval victory over Spanish schooner *Covadonga* in the "Battle" of Papudo on November 26, 1865.<sup>206</sup> After this naval fiasco was Pareja soon replaced by Casto Mendez Nunez who gave the authorities of the port of Valaparaiso a notification to evacuate the city and identify the churches and hospitals, because he decided to bombard the unguarded harbor. After launching 1,600 bombs, the city remained in ruins. There were no human casualties, but the financial loss was enormous. On top of it, among the most destroyed properties were warehouses of foreign, mainly British, merchants. This made the situation an international issue.<sup>207</sup>

British diplomats in London and Spain in accordance with French envoys made first attempts for mediation in the summer and fall of 1865. Ministers of both countries in Santiago were more informed than involved in the mediation. "In this sense, the war was regarded as a European rather than purely American question. It involved a European government and one whose domestic instability had long been a problem for European balance-of-power politics." Form of

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<sup>205</sup> The diplomatic mission of Chilean intellectual Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna was pure failure. Ibid, pp. 249-51.

<sup>206</sup> Scheina, Robert I., *Latin America's Wars: The Age of the Caudillo, 1791-1899*, Vol.I, Brassey's Inc., Washington D.C., 2003, Internet source: Google Book Search, [http://books.google.com/books?id=o-OVsN5SswPIC&pg=PA514&dq=the+last+conquistadores&ei=r9OuR5fgEpy8zAS7\\_eWdBg&hl=c&sig=JFVT1Q9IQDOVYc-AsabH\\_5iAQJI#PP1.M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=o-OVsN5SswPIC&pg=PA514&dq=the+last+conquistadores&ei=r9OuR5fgEpy8zAS7_eWdBg&hl=c&sig=JFVT1Q9IQDOVYc-AsabH_5iAQJI#PP1.M1), p. 337.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, pp. 337-8, and also Barros, Mario Van Buren, *Historia Diplomática de Chile*, pp. 252-3.

communication was also much easier in Europe alone than if the representatives in Chile were to be communicated. In December 1865 Spain accepted Anglo-French services but early in 1866 the news about Spanish naval losses arrived and the peace talks were suspended.<sup>208</sup> The British Minister in Santiago Taylour Thompson maintained traditional position of strict neutrality since the commerce, severely damaged at the beginning of the blockade of the port, was slowly restored to its original level. British merchants in Valparaiso were also warned beforehand that no government support would be given to them in case of destruction of their cargo since they were instructed to remove the stocks from warehouses in the harbor to safer locations. In case of any greater threat to British citizens, however, the considerable naval fleet under the command of Admiral Denman was present in the port of Valparaiso.<sup>209</sup>

The commander of American ships in the area was Commodore Rodgers, and it was a general public opinion in Chile that these two men would prevent Spanish admiral from bombarding the city, where both nations had significant number of its citizens and merchants. This was quite a big mistake since both naval leaders had no particular sympathies for each other, speaking nothing of strained relations between both countries because of the affiliation, which the British government showed towards the South in the recently finished American Civil War, and especially because of the naval Alabama claims issue. The American diplomats started to show more activity in mediation process with the Civil War's conclusion and also after it was getting clearer and clearer that the French will have to withdraw from the Mexican adventure. The government of Chile was willing to accept American mediation but the Spanish politicians from obvious reasons preferred Anglo-French good services. Seward had no objection to this but he insisted "that representations made by the United States alone, without concert with other power, are more in harmony with our own national

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<sup>208</sup> The fact that the Queen Isabel ruled Spain and that the weakness of its government was affecting stability in European politics caused that this relatively smaller international issue gained quite a big ear of the British government and even the Queen Victoria. See Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict. Anglo – American Diplomacy toward Latin America, 1865 – 1896*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh (PA), 1979, pp. 51-2 (Footnote 11).

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52.

character and institutions.” He should have added that they were also more in harmony with recent state of relations with both European powers.<sup>210</sup>

From the perspective of the diplomatic protocol it was Nelson who was a doyen of the diplomatic corps for he had the rank of an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary whereas Thompson was only in a position of chargé d'affaires. This meant that only Nelson could preside over the meetings held by the diplomatic corps in Santiago. Both the Chilean government and the Spanish admiral had to address the diplomatic corps through the American minister.<sup>211</sup> Nelson was trying to act as much neutral as he could, but there were clear signs that he sympathized with Chile. He demonstrated his attitude clearly in a speech on his departure from office on March 12, 1866, to which was presented also the Chilean president: “[The United States] cannot consistently consent to the permanent subjugation of any of the independent states of this continent to European powers, nor to the exercise of a protectorate over them, nor to any other direct political influence to control their policy or institutions.”<sup>212</sup> Nelson’s successor General Judson Kilpatrick thought about the Spanish-Chilean relation likewise. The problem was that Kilpatrick had no such diplomatic skills as Nelson. He was the Civil war general and was only thirty years of age.<sup>213</sup>

Diplomatic attempts of new American minister to prevent Spanish bombardment of Valparaiso were a disaster, and moreover, the image of the United States in Chile, and consequently in the rest of Latin America, suffered a big blow. Kilpatrick basically wanted to stop both parties from escalating the conflict by a joint military demonstration supported with diplomatic moderation on both sides. The intention of young American minister was good. However,

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<sup>210</sup> Seward to Thomas H. Nelson, December 5, 1865, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches: Vol. II (1866-67) Chili, United States Department of State, pp. 364, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=364>.

<sup>211</sup> Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>212</sup> Remarks of Mr. Nelson to the President of Chili on presenting his letter of recall, March 12, 1866, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Chili, United States Department of State, pp. 383-4, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=383>.

<sup>213</sup> Inexperience and very often inefficient quality of American diplomats had been yet another aspect influencing significantly U.S. foreign policy in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Very often the diplomatic posts were granted as a political merit. For the history of the Department of State see Plischke, Elmer, *U.S. Department of State. A Reference History*, Greenwood Press, Westport (CT), 1999.

neither the British commander Dennan nor Thompson was willing to violate orders from London and break Great Britain's neutrality. The Chilean government also looked with displeasure on Kilpatrick's visit of Spanish Admiral Mendez Nunez on March 27.<sup>214</sup> "In reality, both the Spanish admiral and the Chilean government resolutely rejected compromise and no amount of diplomatic activity by Kilpatrick and Commodore Rodgers could alter this. On the other hand, their strenuous exertions and the proximity of six American warships in the harbor no doubt raised Chilean hopes of intervention on their behalf. It was not therefore surprising that after the bombardment Kilpatrick noted that "cordiality" for the United States had been replaced by "ill-will"."<sup>215</sup> "Chili looked upon the United States as her best friend, and that friend has failed to assist her in her hour of trial."<sup>216</sup> Thomson counted the damage to neutral property, mostly British, at \$10,000,000 but as it was announced already in January, no official support for compensation would be given by the British government.

The Spanish squadron repeated bombardment also in Callao in May but with much less success since the Peruvian harbor was better defended than Valparaiso.<sup>217</sup> Thus ended military actions between the belligerents, although, the formal state of war lasted. Spain, badly hurt financially by the war, accepted American mediation in December 1866. However, thanks to Chilean reservations and the Spanish Revolution of 1868 the peace conference in Washington was not held until April 1871.<sup>218</sup>

"The war in the Pacific exemplified some of the issues faced by Spain and the United States in the 1860's. Madrid, for example, became deeply involved in Peruvian-Chilean difficulties out of a sense of outraged honor and by the actions of individuals who sometimes acted beyond the pale of their orders. ...These two

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<sup>214</sup> Also Thomson disapproved this visit since Kilpatrick didn't let know to other members of the diplomatic corps about his activity. Thomson to Clarendon, March 29, 1866, Parliamentary Papers, 76 (1866), quoted in: Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 55.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Kilpatrick to Seward, April 2, 1866, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Chili, United States Department of State, p. 408, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=408>.

<sup>217</sup> Cortada, James W., *Spain and the American Civil War*, p. 99.

<sup>218</sup> Armistice was signed on April 11, 1871 but the peace treaties between Spain and Peru were signed in April 1879, with Bolivia in August 1879, with Chile in June 1883, and with Ecuador in January 1885.

factors – overemphasis on national dignity and the independence of some Spanish officials – dictated to a large extent Spain’s unfortunate role in the Pacific... Moreover, Spain’s loss of cultural hegemony encouraged Cuban’s to consider their ties to Spain less relevant than ever before...

Officials in Washington faced the dual problem of European encroachment into American affairs and damage to her economic interests...Realizing that the role of a mediator, although a thankless one, provided him with an excellent opportunity to block further European involvement in Latin America, Seward found his work even more difficult when public opinion became a factor. Both governments mistrusted and misunderstood each other. Uncontrolled events, slow communications, and even poorly informed publics contributed to uncomfortable relations between Spain and the United States. When one added those factors in international relations which inevitably emerge during periods of political instability, as both Spain and the United States experienced in this decade, it was obvious that the tradition of diplomatic conflict could only continue.”<sup>219</sup>

## IV.II. War of Triple Alliance

Latin America since independence “had been rife with war” and during and after the American Civil War the conflicts had been particularly bloody and destructive. The War of Triple Alliance, pitting Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, against Paraguay, lasted from 1865 to 1870, claimed fifty thousand dead in Brazil, and wiped out almost the entire adult male population of Paraguay. “Rebellions, coup d’états, and civil wars were constantly erupting throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. To American eyes the region was a boiling cauldron of violence. One American senator colorfully described the Dominican Republic [and Latin America in general] as “a land of throes and convulsions ... a volcano of human passions and a river of human blood,” and this was the common view of all the lands south of the [American] border.”<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> On the progress of final negotiations look at *Ibid*, pp. 100-102.

<sup>220</sup> Remarks of Allen G. Thurman, *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41<sup>st</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sess., pt. I, p. 249, quoted in Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 308. See also Park, James William, *Latin American Underdevelopment: A History of Perspectives in the United States, 1870-1965*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1995, p. 29.

The War of Triple Alliance, also called the Paraguayan War, was one of the bloodiest wars Latin American countries ever fought among each other. It was also yet another conflict of wider regional extent of the era, in which the emerging United States got involved. The conflict is to be mentioned not only because it coincides with the period during and after the American Civil War, but also because it represents another step further in the ascent of the United States to a hegemonic position in the western hemisphere. Even though the proposal for mediation was refused by Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, it established an important precedent for the future role of the United States as the mediator and arbiter in conflicts of Latin American countries. The arbitration of the President Rutherford B. Hayes between Argentina and Paraguay, which formally ended the conflict in the late 1870's, can be seen as a "harbinger" for the U.S. role in the Venezuelan crisis of 1895.<sup>221</sup>

The progress of the war itself is extremely interesting but it is not the objective of this thesis. The commentary of Charles Leuchard describes the conflict with pregnancy:

"A five-year struggle, in which the very life of a tiny nation was numbed and stifled and in which occurred many of the inglorious phases of modern warfare – mutual charges and denials of wholesale atrocities and barbarities, violations of international law and the rights of neutrals, the infringement of the treaty rights of both combatants and non-combatants, the use of the newspaper press to influence the public opinion of people at home and abroad – was sufficient to attract the attention of the United States and other powers to the possibility of effecting a settlement of the difficulties."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Peterson, Harold F., "Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1932), pp. 2-17.

For more details on the War of the Triple Alliance see Leuchars, Chris, *To the Bitter End. Paraguay and the War of the Triple Alliance*, Greenwood Press, Westport (CT), 2002, Google Book Search, Internet source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=EJHIWOyIlgMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&sig=cp4Vu-r7isqL8VWifGLUmtEyBCg>, or Kraay Hendrik, Wingham Thomas (eds.), *I Die with My Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War, 1864-1870*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, London, 2004, Google Book Search, Internet source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=dAICUC2XQqMC&printsec=frontcover&lr=&hl=cs&sig=gOzPE0mFfro8OTfzNkJKWeldErE>.

<sup>222</sup> Peterson, Harold F., "Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1932), p. 2.

History of independent Paraguay before the war was the story of Dr. Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia and consequently the Lopez's family.<sup>223</sup> Francia and his successors Carlos Solano Lopez, and his son Francisco Solano Lopez, had created kind of hereditary caudillismo based on paternalistic despotism with the corporative-based economy, „almost a monarchy in disguise.”<sup>224</sup> The autarkical economy imposed by Francia at the early phase of Paraguayan independence was during the rule of both Lopez's modified after the fall of Juan Manuel Rosas in Argentina in 1852 and allowed opening of the rivers connecting Paraguay with the Atlantic Ocean. Government-led modernization provided mostly by British technicians, merchants, and money was planned, supported especially by Francisco Solano Lopez, as a fundamental platform for a massive military buildup. Lopez created the standing army of 28, 000 and attempted to establish in Latin American conditions a form of state resembling Prussia. Paraguay was supposed to be the last stronghold of tradition on the contrary to Argentine liberalism, and Brazilian monarchism and slavery. Paraguayan dictator was also an admirer of Napoleon III, and was dreaming of a South American empire of Lopez II.<sup>225</sup>

The last reason for the war was the invasion of Brazil to Uruguay and Argentine's refusal to allow a free passage to Paraguayan troops through the Misiones province. The final result of the war was absolutely disastrous for Paraguayan society and economy, and in the final stages it was the fight for pure survival of the nation. The end of military actions didn't come until after the Paraguayan president was killed in the Battle of Cerro Cora on March 1, 1870. Moderate estimations suggest that almost one half of the population of Paraguay died during the fighting and on diseases, most of them men. It took some hundred years to overcome the demographic collapse, not even mentioning the economic decay, which practically has been influencing Paraguay's progress until today.

The proposal for the United States mediation had several reasons. One of them was of course the bloody experience of the Civil War on American public. There was also a tendency of the United States to posture as the leader of the family of American republics against European monarchies. Other reasons were

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<sup>223</sup> Crow, John Armstrong, *The Epic of Latin America*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992, p. 559.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 562-3, and Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, p. 666.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 673, 670, Leuchars, Chris, *To the Bitter End*, p. 12.

more egoistic as Harold F. Peterson pertinently notes: “[There existed] perhaps the always present and ever ready desire to find an opportunity for an application of the intangible Monroe Doctrine; perhaps the feeling that the western hemisphere should be reserved as a sphere for American prestige in the minds of the Hispanic nations; perhaps the wish to be prepared for the time when commercial aggrandizement would become possible.”<sup>226</sup>

The first offer for mediation was contained in an instruction of William H. Seward to the American minister in Brazil J. Watson Webb dated October 10, 1866. Seward was stating, “that if any or all of the belligerents should distinctly intimate to this government a willingness to accept its good offices with a view to secure a peace that should be just and honorable to all parties, those good offices would be promptly exercised.” And he continued arguing that “the United States feels that, in a political sense, all republics and all American States are sufferers by wars on this continent which are either unnecessary or unreasonable in their beginning, or which are unnecessarily or unreasonably protracted.”<sup>227</sup> Webb’s view of the situation described in the dispatch from August 1866 clearly showed the growing tendency of American diplomats in Latin America to see the leading role of the United States in the western hemisphere as a necessity, which should be urged whether Latin American republics would accept it or not: “If the United States do not intervene by the offer of mediation, England and France most assuredly will from necessity do so. And against such friendly interference by them we of course could not object. Under existing circumstances, then, and where the “Monroe doctrine” has been virtually admitted by the withdrawal of the French troops from Mexico, it does appear to me that the United States, without setting up any claim in the premises, should indirectly assume that it is her right to interpose in all international conflicts on this continent to the full extent that interposition from other powers is admissible. We should impress all the American governments with a conviction that it is alike their interest and their duty to look to the United States for protection and advice; protection from

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<sup>226</sup> Peterson, Harold F., “*Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War*,” p. 4.

<sup>227</sup> Seward to Webb, October 10, 1866, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Brazil, United States Department of State, p. 326, Google Book Search, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=326>.

European interference, and friendly council and advice in regard to difficulties with their neighbors.”<sup>228</sup>

William H. Seward was great supporter of American commercial expansion, moreover, if it could be the expansion to the heart of a domain of the British hegemony in South America – the River Plate basin. He clearly stated that the U.S. diplomacy in the conflict was firmly connected with commercial interests in the region in his instruction to the American minister in Paraguay Charles A. Washburn: “The war between Paraguay and her adversaries has been watched from here with an interest which could not fail to be entertained from the material, moral, and political results involved, both to the parties and to this country. The region which is its seat, naturally one of the richest on the globe, had, until recently, been shut out from trade by the peculiar policy of the former chiefs of Paraguay, and by other well known causes. When this policy was ended by the treaties to which the United States was a party, opening the magnificent rivers in that quarter to intercourse abroad, we began to share in that intercourse to a degree which inspired, apparently, just hopes that its prosperity would rapidly augment. These hopes have been disappointed by the war referred to, which has now been so much protracted that the resources of the belligerents must be materially affected, even if they should make peace at once. It is deemed so desirable that tranquility should be restored there, that if either or all the parties should desire our good offices to that end, they would be promptly and cheerfully bestowed. You may so inform to the minister for foreign affairs of Paraguay, officially or otherwise, and appraise the department of the result.”<sup>229</sup> The government’s support of the commercial expansion had become one of the most significant characteristics of the Department of State’s philosophy in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid, p. 320, Internet source: <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02.p0394&isize=M>.

<sup>229</sup> Seward to Washburn, October 17, 1866, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Paraguay, United States Department of State, p. 611, Internet source: <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1866-67v02&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=611>.

<sup>230</sup> Pivotal advocates of this theory in American historiography are Walter LaFeber and William Appleman Williams. See LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire. An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY), London, 1963, and Williams, William Appleman, *Empire as a Way of Life. An Essay on the Causes and Character of America’s*

Seward's proposal for mediation was backed by the resolution of the House of Representatives from December 1866. U.S. ministers were circulated with a letter suggesting mediation in the Pacific and the Paraguayan Wars, proposing that the conference be held in Washington between the plenipotentiaries of Paraguay on one side and Brazil, Argentine, and Uruguay on the other. American delegate would preside over the talks without the right to vote. The Secretary of State's idea was that all decisions would have to be passed unanimously, and must have been ratified by all respective governments. An armistice would be placed meanwhile.<sup>231</sup>

The reception of this offer was quite mixed. Uruguay's government as well as the public strongly refused the proposal because it was "piqued" that the U.S. Secretary of State addressed the instruction only to ministers in Argentine, Brazil, and Paraguay. Reactions in Argentine were ambivalent. Part of the politicians and newspapers was willing to accept American mediation because they opposed Brazilian unmistakable leadership in the coalition. Another part of the political leaders was willing to accept Brazilian role in exchange for territorial gains in the Misiones and Gran Chaco provinces. Brazil was the leading opponent of the peace talks since it just finished preparations for sweeping military offense, which would "strike the final blow at Paraguayan resistance." The plan was to delay response to the American offer until final subjugation of the enemy, so the position of the coalition would be more favorable. On the other hand, Lopez, at the moment already under big military pressure was immediately ready to accept the mediation.<sup>232</sup>

American minister in Paraguay Washburn, who personally sided to Lopez, took the initiative in his hands and arrived to the camp of the Brazilian commander-in-chief Marquis de Caixas in February 1867. However, he found out that Brazil was willing to accept the offer to sit behind the table only if the conditions would include the resignation of Paraguayan president and his

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Present Predicament Along With a Few Thoughts About an Alternative, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York (NEW York), 1980.

<sup>231</sup> Seward to Asboth [minister in Argentine], December 20, 1866, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Argentine, United States Department of State, pp. 114-15, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1867-68v02.p0184&isize=M>.

<sup>232</sup> Peterson, Harold F., "Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War," p. 8.

departure from the country. The words of Marquise Caixas were direct. He started with notion of quite non-diplomatic attitude of American minister:

“Before answering your note of the 11<sup>th</sup> instant, which was handed to me by yourself, I deem it my duty to state how you came to this encampment, and what occurred at our interview.

Observing a parley signal within the enemy’s lines, I gave orders for inquiries about it, and learned it was sent by the minister of the United States of America near the republic of Paraguay, to ask an interview with me, without any authority from the government to which he was accredited. In such a case I could not refuse to receive you, accompanied by my chief of staff, at my headquarters....

I assure you the empire of Brazil and her allies will adhere to their firm resolve not to admit any negotiations tending to the conclusion of the war that do not exact the resignation of President Lopez and his departure from Paraguay.

Grateful as the empire of Brazil and its allies may be to the republic of the United States for their wishes and efforts to end the war, they insist upon the execution of the above-mentioned clause, to which the pride of the respective nations is bound, because it has been so grossly insulted by the Paraguay government.“

At the end of the letter he returned to extraordinary way of Washburn’s arrival: „In thus answering your note, I leave it to your enlightened understanding to judge how improper it would be to allow your Excellency to visit my quarters whenever you pleased, to get information for your government.”<sup>233</sup>

The American proposal was unrealistic mostly for two reasons. First, the idea of holding the conference in Washington was absolutely unpractical. Possibilities of communication between the seat of negotiations and the respective countries in this era were still very limited. This prolongation would of course help mostly to Paraguayan president who would have more time to rebuild the badly hurt army. The leaders of the coalition of course didn’t want to allow this to happen. They fought the war besides the territorial and regional reasons, also on a point of honor, as it was so typical in the history of Latin American conflicts. It was, therefore, quite impossible to imagine that two countries of such hegemonic

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<sup>233</sup> Seward to Washburn, March 12, 1867, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1866-67) Paraguay, United States Department of State, p. 719, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1867-68v02.p0789&isize=M>.

ambitions as Argentine and Brazil would accept this arrogant offer openly demonstrating the attitude of the United States towards its “sister” republics so shortly after the country experienced bloody devastation of the Civil War.

This aspect is quite important for better understanding to the creation of American foreign policy principles in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before the Mexican-American War and the Civil War, the United States tried to play active role in the politics of the Western Hemisphere rather from the position of an alternative power to Great Britain. Also the U.S. diplomats were working more on day-to-day basis founded principally on the support to American commerce interests and protection of American merchants and citizens. In the era after the Civil War, however, this support slowly started to obtain more structuralized character. This process was very slow and gradual. Robert Beisner gives an excellent description of this period of transition and “discovery” of these newly organized fundamental premises of American foreign policy towards its southern neighbors in his book called *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900*, where he defines this change as a replacement of the “Old Paradigm” of the U.S. foreign policy by the “New Paradigm.”<sup>234</sup>

At this moment, however, Uruguay, Argentine, and Brazil refused the offer presented by the United States in March and April of 1867. Argentine’s Foreign Minister Rufino de Elizalde summed up reasons for the refusal: “In the most unjustifiable manner, without explanation or notice, the president of Paraguay, violating public faith and the practice that obtains among cultivated nations since a treaty existed by which in no case could war be declared without six months’ previous notice, invaded our territory by force and treachery, took possession of our war steamers, and committed the most unheard-of excesses against persons and property, to the extent of carrying off captive several respectable Argentine matrons, who were of meritorious officers, and who are still kept prisoners in his camp....The allied governments do not wage war against the Paraguayan nation, but against the government of General Don Francisco Solano

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<sup>234</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights (IL), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1986.

Lopez. From him has come the spontaneous and wanton aggression of the Argentine Republic, the Brazilian empire, and the Uruguay oriental republic...”<sup>235</sup>

The American minister in Buenos Aires proved a tradition of placement of inexperienced and indiscrete U.S. diplomats to posts of ministers and not only kept insisting on the necessity to accept his government’s offer, but also commented in quite offending manner Argentine domestic politics and the situation on the La Plata region in general. “One would hardly apply the adjective “diplomatic” to Asboth’s searching diagnosis of Argentina’s policies and its internal conditions.”<sup>236</sup> He went so far that the Argentine minister in Washington D.C. Bartolome Mitre y Vedia was instructed to present a formal complaint to Seward, and the Secretary of State himself had to temper Asboth’s activities. Mitre’s note to Seward contained long explanation of the background of the conflict, and with very frank words condemned Asboth’s commentaries on Argentine’s domestic policies: “In the fulfillment of his laudable duty, the Argentine government does not think the United States minister had any right to discuss the situation of the country, pictured by him in such gloomy colors, in his aforementioned note.”<sup>237</sup> Actions of Asboth and other U.S. diplomats in the region didn’t cause entirely the rejection of the mediation offer, but their tactlessness hurt the United States’ image in the region, and made Latin American leaders realize that the main goal of the governments in Washington was not to help the hemispheric sister republics, but to replace Great Britain and other European powers as the leading hegemonic element in the Western Hemisphere.

After this diplomatic affair the American offer for mediation was put on side for almost one year until January 1868, when J. Watson Webb presented it again to the government of Brazil, but on much more moderate conditions: “...the United States is neither tenacious of its own views nor jealous of the good offices of others. It belongs to the belligerent powers not only the terms of peace, but the

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<sup>235</sup> Elizade to Asboth, March 30, 1867, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1867-68) Argentine, United States Department of State, pp. 158-60, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1867-68v02.p0229&isize=M>.

<sup>236</sup> Peterson, Harold F., “*Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War*,” p. 12.

<sup>237</sup> Vedia to Seward, July 9, 1867, Washington D.C., Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1867-68) Argentine, United States Department of State, pp. 242-43, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1867-68v02.p0313&isize=M>.

forms which should be adopted to secure it.”<sup>238</sup> Webb’s mistake on the other hand was that he basically put all the blame for the war on Paraguay, which of course caused a strong reaction in Asunción and the United States again remained looking bad in the eyes of the Latin American public. The offer was also quite non-strategic at the moment for the coalition was finally showing its extremely bigger military and financial potential and the Paraguayan army was in deep defense. For these reasons the second American offer was again politely refused.

The American interest in the mediation for peace in the War of Triple Alliance has only episodic importance in the course of events happening in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Western Hemisphere. However, it shows several new aspects of U.S. foreign policy towards its southern Hispanic neighbors. The fact that American diplomats acted at some level from the position of force in the region so remote as La Plata, not even mentioning that it was until then the undisputable dominium of the British sphere of influence, was an entirely new concept. Very bad results of the initiative also made leaders in the State Department to reconsider the policy of placing of the diplomats to such posts as remuneration for political loyalty and good services.<sup>239</sup> It was just the beginning of this reflection, but the actions of Washburn, Asboth, or Webb clearly showed the importance of having experienced diplomatic corps. The episode also put light on general American interests in Latin America, as Harold Peterson sums up: “(1) the questionable and inept attitude of American ministers; (2) a possible commercial motive beneath an ostensible diplomatic move; (3) the desire to establish the principle of intervention in international disputes in South America; and (4) the wish to forestall European interposition.”<sup>240</sup> The rejection of the offer for mediation also showed that the influence of the United States in Latin America, even though it was growing substantially, had, especially in South America, still very clear limits. American influence in the Caribbean and the Central America was much more intensive, as could be seen in the case of the French intervention in Mexico in mid 1860’s, which is to be analyzed in the next chapter.

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<sup>238</sup> Webb to Joao Lustoza da Cunha Paranagua, January 27, 1868, Petropolis, Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches, Vol. II (1868-69) Brazil, United States Department of State, pp. 262-63, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1868-69v02.p0322&isize=M>.

<sup>239</sup> This would not happen in more substantial level until the mid 1890’s.

<sup>240</sup> Peterson, Harold F., “*Efforts of the United States to Mediate in the Paraguayan War*,” p. 17.

## **V. French Intervention in Mexico and the United States: American Opposition to the ‘Cactus Throne’ and the Monroe Doctrine Tested**<sup>241</sup>

The intervention of European powers – Great Britain, Spain, and France in Mexico was by far the most important foreign policy issue in Latin America for the State Department and the Secretary of State William F. Seward, while the Civil War was fought in the United States. There are several reasons for this assertion. The intervention, and consequent installation of Habsburg prince Maximilian as the Mexican Emperor, was directly influenced by the existence of the civil conflict between the Union and the Confederate States. Mexico since its independence had been in the focus of American foreign policy makers. Its internal instability and geographical “fate” to be one of the two states with which the United States shared the land frontier closely connected Mexican domestic as well as external problems with U.S. interests. U.S.-Mexican relations had intensified even more after the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, in which the entire present American Southwest was acquired. In total Mexico had lost between years 1845 and 1848 almost half of its territory.<sup>242</sup> Relations between the two nations during the 1850’s were mentioned in previous parts of this thesis. The most important outcome of the 1850’s U.S.-Mexican relations was the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, which had practically finished a creation of continental boundaries of the United States, if we exclude the purchase of Alaska in 1867.

Another reason, why the French Intervention in Mexico has been so important for the shaping of principles of the United States foreign policy, is that it was practically the only direct attempt of any of the first-rate European powers to reestablish monarchical system in one of the Latin American countries. The failure of this enterprise also signified a big symbolical victory for the idea of the

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<sup>241</sup> Miller, Robert Ryal, “*Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juarez during the French Intervention,*” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Ser., Vol. 63, No. 6. (1973), p. 5.

<sup>242</sup> For more information about Mexican-American relations before the war of 1848 see extensive works Rives George L., *The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, I-II.*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York (NY), 1913 or Pletcher, David M., *The Diplomacy of Annexation. Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia 1973.

Monroe Doctrine. As a matter of fact, it was on March 12, 1867, with the last French soldiers leaving Vera Cruz, when the principles of the fifth American president were finally accepted by European politicians, even though they had never admitted that, and in spite of the fact that Seward never used openly the doctrine's wording.<sup>243</sup>

American historian of the Monroe Doctrine Dexter Perkins summed up the significance of the results of the French Intervention and the failure of the Second Mexican Empire with these words: "The evacuation of Mexico by the French marks an epoch in the history of the Monroe Doctrine. The sharpest challenge ever made to the principles of 1823 had been completely defeated. The national sentiment of the people of the United States, and their growing attachment to the great dogma had been a potent, if not a decisive influence in frustrating the designs of a first-rate European power." And later he continues: "The historian who seeks to analyze, in the field of politics, the ruling thoughts and prejudices of a great people, will, in the case of America, always be drawn in fascinated curiosity to the dogma which Monroe enunciated which Polk endowed with new vitality which Seward vindicated, and which, as Maximilian laid down his life at Querétaro, was still to have before it so interesting and important future."<sup>244</sup>

Another historian analyzing the intervention pointed out the fact that it was the only attempt to re-establish European monarchy in the Western Hemisphere and that it had taken place during the American Civil War: "The armed invasion of Mexico by the French, however, is a striking case in point, which offers a good opportunity for the study of European attitude toward the jealous American doctrine, not only because this was the only thorough violation of the Monroe Doctrine, but also because it was instituted by a combination of the three European colonizing powers; England, France, and Spain. Moreover, it was no accident that the year 1861, when the United States was in the midst of a terrible civil struggle, was chosen for the only successful attempt ever made by a foreign state to plant a colony in America against the will of an Hispanic American state."<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, pp. 420-1.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 545-46, 548.

<sup>245</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., "*French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4. (Nov., 1921), pp. 677-689.

## V.I. War of the Reform and other Causes of the Intervention

Mexico, with some seventy presidents appointed between 1824 and 1858, had experienced during the first four decades of its independence a chronic political and internal instability. When General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was for the last time overthrown by the Liberal revolution, which started by the declaration of the Plan of Ayutla on March 1, 1854, the era of the so called *La Reforma* and consequent Mexican civil war, the War of the Reform (Guerra de la Reforma) had begun.<sup>246</sup>

The War of the Reform, which lasted from December 1857 to January 1861, bore all attributes typical for the struggle between the Liberals and Conservatives over the huge property, big privileges and power of the Catholic Church so often in 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin America. The Liberal Constitution adopted on February 12, 1857, deprived the Church of majority of its former privileges, secularized the education system and marriages, and confiscated a big portion of its property. This and other Liberal reforms caused a dissatisfaction not only of high members of the Catholic Church but also of conservative classes of Mexican society and high officers of the army, which were afraid that the next source of government's extra income would be their land and property.

The War of the Reform, which started after the *Pronunciamiento* of Tacubaya in December 1857, had deepened even more class differences within Mexican society, and caused that the war was very bloody even for Latin American standards. The Liberal government of Benito Juarez, former President of the Supreme Court, issued a set of even more radically liberal acts, called Reform Laws (*Leyes de la Reforma*), which won a support of low and middle classes, and therefore important source of new soldiers.<sup>247</sup> Moreover, in 1859 Juarez won a big psychological victory on the diplomatic field by being officially recognized by the United States administration of Abraham Lincoln. The War of

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<sup>246</sup> After he sold yet another piece of Mexican territory to the United States in Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

<sup>247</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vols. I-XI, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1984-1995, vol. III, From Independence to c. 1870, pp. 454-62.

the Reform ended with the President's triumphant return to Mexico City on the New Year of 1861. Mexico, however, obtained a symbolic nickname of "the Turkey of the New World." Santa Anna himself, when once asking France and England for help, "spoke bitterly of the betrayal of those powers that would support the Turks against the Russians but leave the Mexicans to be destroyed by the North Americans."<sup>248</sup>

The main problem of Mexico ever since its independence had been inveterate domestic political instability. Everlasting chain of revolutions, coup d'états, *pronunciamientos*, and new administrations, which were the main source of social and economical unrest, was characteristic throughout whole Latin America, and Mexico belonged among the most exemplary cases. Foreign merchants from Great Britain, France, Spain, or the United States belonged of course among the groups, which were worst of all stricken with financial losses brought on by internal disorder. One of the arguments the expansionists in the United States used most loudly for justifying the war with Mexico in the late 1840's were the financial claims of American citizens caused during the War of Independence in 1820's and domestic turmoil of the 1830's and 1840's. The history of Mexico's relations with European powers and the United States from the 1820's to the 1860's was "a sordid series of disputes over claims and defaulted promises to pay the foreign debt..." Mexican minister in Paris wrote in 1856 a commentary how Europeans viewed Mexicans "as a sorry group of people ... objects either of scorn or pity; who, incapable of governing ourselves and verging on social dissolution, require the hand of a foreigner, and a *strong hand* to escape from our condition of prostration."<sup>249</sup>

The existence of two governments, Liberal of Benito Juarez in Vera Cruz, and General Zuloaga in Mexico City, during the War of the Reform brought Mexico's finances to the point of bankruptcy. The Liberal government could quite well finance the army and other expenditures from the income coming from the collection of tariffs in the harbor of Vera Cruz and confiscations of the property of the Catholic Church. Conservative presidents, of which the most important were

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<sup>248</sup> Baker, Nancy A., "Monarchy in Mexico: Harebrained Scheme or Well-considered Prospect?", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 48, No. 1. (March, 1976), p. 52.

<sup>249</sup> Olaguibel to Luis de la Rosa, Reservado, Paris, June 30, 1856 in *Las Relaciones franco-mexicanas, 1823-1867*, ed. Luis Weckman, 2 vols. (Mexico, 1961), 2:179, no. 3766 quoted in *Ibid.*

Felix Zuloaga and Miguel Miramon, however, had been cut off the income of the principal Mexican port, and of course could not forcibly obtain money from the Church. Therefore, the only solution for the Conservatives was to search for loans from the Church and in Europe.<sup>250</sup>

When the Liberals finally entered the Mexico City and assumed the control over the majority of the country, the claims of England, France, Spain, and the United States reached astronomical sum of \$82,315,446. “So insufferable had become the outrages upon foreigners that the French and English ministers had loudly protested, and President Buchanan, in his last annual message, had recommended intervention on the part of the United States to obtain indemnity....Mexican finances were in ruins.”<sup>251</sup>

## **V.II. London Convention and the Tripartite Intervention**

When the War of the Reform ended Mexico’s financial situation was catastrophic. A combination of decades of political instability, loss of large and potentially very rich northern provinces in the war with the United States, and finally the bloody civil war with two simultaneously existing governments, brought Mexico to the state of bankruptcy. Therefore, when Benito Juarez finally entered the capital on January 1, 1861, his first and most important task was to secure government’s revenues and to solve financial problems. The Liberals were in very complicated position. Central Mexico was practically all under their control, but parts of more remote regions on the north and south were still

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<sup>250</sup> One of the most famous of these loans were the so called Jecker bonds, which totaled \$15,000,000, and which were given by Miramon’s government to a Swiss banker M. Jecker. For more information see Stevenson, Sara Yorke, Maximilian in Mexico. A Woman’s Reminiscences of the French Intervention 1862-1867, Chapter III.: M. De Saligny and M. Jecker, Project Gutenberg, Internet source: <http://infomotions.com/etexts/gutenberg/dirs/etext04/mxlmx10.htm>, or Bancroft, Frederick, “*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*,” Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 1. (March, 1896), p. 34. See also Bethell, Leslie (ed.), The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vols. I-XI, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1984-1995, Vol. III, From Independence to c. 1870, p. 461.

<sup>251</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, “*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*,” Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 1. (March, 1896), p. 30. For Buchanan’s Annual Message, where he claimed to temporarily acquire Sonora and other northern Mexican states see James Buchanan, Second Annual Message, December 6, 1858, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. V, p. 514.

experiencing a guerilla war conducted by the rests of the Conservative forces, often turned into groups of bandits. The production of mines and agricultural products for export was also badly hurt, so the income from tariffs had diminished as well. Further to this were added claims of European powers.

Juarez and his ministers decided that what the country needed at the moment was to improve its financial stability and government's revenues.<sup>252</sup> The only solution how to get out of the vicious circle of necessity to loan money from foreign creditors for payment of interests to others saw Juarez in temporary suspension of payments to European creditors, which took place on July 17, 1861.<sup>253</sup> The suspension was announced for the period of two years. In consequence the British and French ministers in Mexico, Sir Charles Wyke and Count Dubois de Saligny, suspended official relations with Mexico. The French Minister immediately notified his government that a joint action of both powers should be taken: "Sir Charles Wyke and I have envisaged the affair from the same viewpoint, and we have acted in complete accord. We do not doubt that the government of the Emperor and that of the Queen will agree upon the measures to be taken as promptly as possible in order to obtain satisfactory reparation for the new outrage. In our opinion, the first thing to be done is for us to seize the ports of Tampico and Vera Cruz.... In mentioning the entente to be established between France and England to chastise the faithless government, I have said nothing of Spain, which is also interested in the question, which has many just grievances to avenge, and which certainly ask nothing better than join us."<sup>254</sup>

Internal anarchy in Mexico had been mostly damaging a property of citizens of Great Britain, Spain, France, and the United States. Each of these countries found itself in different position in July 1861, had different motivations for taking an action, and had diverse views of the solution of the issue. British merchants and diplomats had been injured probably the worst of all.

Economic hegemony of Great Britain in Latin America in this era was still unquestionable. British investments in Mexico, especially to the mining industry,

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<sup>252</sup> During the period of 1821-1867 an average of government income was \$10,000,000 a year, whether the expenditures' average was \$17,000,000. Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vol. III, p. 449.

<sup>253</sup> Robertson, William Spence, "*The Tripartite Treaty of London*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2. (May, 1940), p. 168.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

loans of London financial houses as were the Rothschild's, or establishing of manufactures, went back to early years of the independence in 1820's. Besides economical injuries caused to British business interests, also the diplomatic representatives of the Queen had suffered from a robbery during the civil war, when the British Legation at Vera Cruz had been "seized and rifled" of a sum of £150,000 on November 16, 1860.<sup>255</sup>

However, in accordance with general philosophy of British policy towards Latin American governments, the politicians in London adopted a stance of intervening only with the aim to obtain indemnity for financial losses, not to interfere in the domestic politics of Mexico whatsoever. The policy of assertion that the economical interests are satisfied while following the policy of strict neutrality in internal political life was the fundamental principal of Great Britain in whole Latin America, and Mexico was no exception. This, however, didn't mean that some politicians in London weren't in favor of establishing of a stabile form of government in Mexico. For example the Prime Minister Lord Palmerston had no objections against installment of strong Conservative government, or even monarchy in Mexico. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Russell, had to tame his chief's activities since he realized that such project would have to be backed by European powers. This would of course be viewed in the United States as an attempt for 're-colonization' of one of the Western Hemisphere republics, and moreover the one, which had a common frontier and relations so interconnected with its northern neighbor, even though that the United States was in the middle of its own civil war. Russell was also of the opinion that the Mexican population would have not accepted the monarchy anymore.<sup>256</sup>

Spain was in a different position. Financial injuries of its citizens were also quite large, because ever since the Wars of Independence Spaniards were blamed for former mother country's mistreatment of its colony, and thus they became very often a target of attacks of Mexicans during the periods of internal anarchy. Politicians in Spain also had never abandoned the idea of re-installment of the Bourbon Prince in Mexico. It was described above that at the beginning of the

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<sup>255</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., "*French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4. (Nov., 1921), p. 678, or Bancroft, Frederick, "*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*," p. 30.

<sup>256</sup> Earl Russell's *Speeches and Dispatches*, vol. II, p. 484 quoted in *Ibid*, p. 31, or Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, pp. 370-374.

1860's Spain re-annexed Santo Domingo, and fought the war with Peru and Chile. Establishment of the Bourbon monarchy in Mexico would therefore, be just a continuation of a recovery of Spanish domain in Americas. However, when Napoleon III let the Queen Isabel know that Habsburg Prince Maximilian is the favorite candidate of the French Emperor, Spanish leaders lost interest in getting more involved in the intervention, and moved to the side of the British who were demanding only financial indemnity.<sup>257</sup>

From the four mentioned countries France had the least of claims to demand, of which some, as for example the Jecker bonds, were of quite controversial character. There were other motivations lying behind activities of French diplomats in Mexico, which, during the rule of Napoleon III, obtained official support. France had had an eye put on the course of events in the Western Hemisphere, especially the Caribbean basin and Central America, ever since it lost Canada in the war with Great Britain in 1763, and Haiti after the slave uprising at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>258</sup> French expansionists saw in Mexico, which at the beginning of its independence experienced a short rule of Emperor Augustin I, and where the internal anarchy caused by the never ending fight between the Liberals and the Conservatives, always helped to keep alive the idea of monarchism, an ideal field for projects to revive the French glory in Americas.<sup>259</sup> “Of all the European diplomats in Mexico, the French were the most disdainful of the Mexicans and in turn the most detested by them. Each successive French minister made himself so thoroughly objectionable with his imperious demands and/or monarchist views that his recall was urgently requested by the Mexican government; while the ministers themselves, also without exception, either threatened the use of force or, by rupturing diplomatic relations, contributed

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid, pp. 374-376 and Miller, Robert Ryal, “*Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juarez during the French Intervention in Mexico*,” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Ser., Vol. 6. (1973), p. 5.

<sup>258</sup> The so-called French and Indian War (1754-1763) was part of the conflict called the Seven Year's War, which took place in Europe. France had lost Haiti after the slave revolt on the island in 1803 and after Napoleon Bonaparte abandoned the idea to reestablish the French empire in North America by selling Louisiana to the United States. For basic information on these topics see e.g. Divine, Robert A. & Collective, *The American Story. Volume I: To 1877*, Pearson, Longman, New York (NY), 2005, pp. 105-107, 200-202.

<sup>259</sup> For more information on the concept of monarchism in Mexico see Baker, Nancy N., “*Monarchy in Mexico: Harebrained Scheme or Well-considered Prospect?*”, The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 48, No. 1. (Mar., 1976), pp. 51-68

to the exertion of force.” They also regarded Mexicans as “retarded children who needed a strong hand to guide them. “The Mexican like awards, they like titles, decorations, [and] frivolous pleasures...They do not know how to govern themselves, but they are docile and easy to govern,” wrote Baron Elisabeth Alleye de Cyprey in 1844 in urging his [sic] government to place a European prince in Mexico.”<sup>260</sup>

It is no surprise that the Emperor Napoleon III had similar imperial and geopolitical grandiose ideas about France’s role in the Western Hemisphere as his famous uncle. He closely observed the expansion of the United States in the 1840’s and its attempts in the 1950’s. A discovery of gold in California and consequent Gold Rush draw his attention, for there were supposedly even richer mines in Sonora and other northern Mexican provinces. Napoleon III was definitely the monarch with great visions. Seeing that the building of the Suez Canal by the Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps was advancing, he was more than willing to support such project, of course again realized by the French, in Central America. The Emperor himself, when he was younger, published an article about the merit and feasibility of building of the Nicaragua canal.<sup>261</sup>

Therefore, the control over Mexico with its Tehuantepec Isthmus was not against his mind. The French colony, or at least the French protectorate in Mexico, would also put an end to the American expansion in the region, because Napoleon feared that the United States would assume a complete control over Central America,<sup>262</sup> and consequently islands of the Caribbean, which would put in danger few last small but rich island-colonies of France in the Lesser Antilles and on the north coast of South America.<sup>263</sup> For purely propagandist purpose had served Napoleon’s idea of increasing of a unity among “Latin” races against Anglo-Saxon expansion, represented by Great Britain in Asia and Africa and the United States in Latin America. “Napoleon wished to oppose to the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race in America, as in Europe, a formidable union of Latin peoples; he began to see the need of an expedition from abroad to assist the realization of

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>261</sup> The article was named “*Canal de Nicaragua ou projet de jonction des océans Atlantique et Pacifique au moyen d’un canal*” and it was published in 1845.

<sup>262</sup> Frazer, Robert W., “*Latin-American Projects to Aid Mexico during the French Intervention,*” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3. (Aug., 1848), pp. 377-388.

<sup>263</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, pp. 366-7.

these policies....” He was also attacking principles of the Monroe Doctrine: “The Emperor had discerned all that the Monroe Doctrine contained of anti-Europeanism. He had seen that the declaration of the fifth President of the United States was nothing than a declaration of war on the Old World, and he wished to show America that Europe had taken up the challenge.”<sup>264</sup>

The injuries of American citizens were also of significant value. The interest of the U.S. foreign policy-makers in Mexican affairs was also mentioned. The particularity of the American position towards Mexican governments was of course influenced significantly by the Mexican-American War, the Gadsden Purchase, and other American attempts to acquire more territories, or to interfere in Mexican domestic politics. Therefore, the Buchanan, and then Lincoln administrations, had decided to maintain the policy of strict neutrality in respect to the domestic situation in Mexico during the Civil War, even though they sided to Benito Juarez’s Liberal government. When the three European powers started to discuss the intervention, they, upon the British government’s request, invited the United States to join them.<sup>265</sup>

Certain explanations of historians specialized on the Mexican Civil War and the French Intervention from the point of view of the ongoing internal conflict in the United States point out that the refusal of the United States to join the intervention was primarily caused by the fear of Lincoln and Seward from worsening of relations with France and Great Britain at the moment, when the Confederacy was still very successful on the battlefield and southern agents tried hard to obtain an official recognition by European states. However, this is not a complete picture. Lincoln’s first and foremost interest was the victory in the American Civil War, but he also expressed himself very clearly that the United States government had no objections to the intervention of the three allies against any Latin American country, if that had a serious financial debt, and was not capable of paying off even the interests. In spite of that he kept declaring clearly throughout the whole course of the Civil War his sympathies to Benito Juarez and opposition to the project of monarchy on the southern border of the United States.

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<sup>264</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., “*French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*,” p. 681.

<sup>265</sup> Robertson, William Spence, “*The Tripartite Treaty of London*,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2. (May, 1940), p. 178.

Seward, therefore, instructed the ministers in Spain, France, and England that “the President does not feel himself at liberty to question, and he does not question, that the sovereigns represented have [the] undoubted right to decide for themselves the fact whether they have sustained grievances, and to resort to war with Mexico for the redress thereof, and have the right also to levy war severally or jointly.”<sup>266</sup>

The official reply of the United States on the invitation to join the intervention, where the Secretary of State expressed more in detail the reasons, why Lincoln administration would not take an action, came from Seward on December 4, 1861:

“It is true that the United States have on their part claims against Mexico. Meanwhile, after mature reflection, the President is convinced that it would be inopportune at the moment to actually seek to obtain satisfaction by adhering to the Convention. Among the reasons which have led to this decision are these: In the first place, the United States prefer, as far as is practicable, to hold to the traditional policy which has been their legacy from the father of their country; a policy of which experience has shown the happy effects, and which keeps them from forming alliances with foreign nations. In the second place, Mexico is a neighbor of the United States; her system of government resembles ours in many respects. The United States, then, have naturally benevolent sentiments for that Republic, and are interested in her security, her prosperity and her welfare.”<sup>267</sup> Seward also announced that the American government was willing to back Mexico financially, proposing to guarantee the interest on the Mexican debt.<sup>268</sup> This was rejected by the three powers because “the claims of European countries were too strong to be satisfied by guarantees.”<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, “*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (March. 1896), p. 33.

<sup>267</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., “*French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4. (Nov., 1921), p. 683, or Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 341.

<sup>268</sup> Schoonover, Thomas, “*Dollars over Dominion: United States Economic Interest in Mexico, 1861-1867*,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1. (Feb., 1976), pp. 24-26.

<sup>269</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., “*French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4. (Nov., 1921), p. 683.

### V.III. Intervention

The internal conflict in the United States was swiftly spreading throughout the summer and fall of 1861 and possibilities of Lincoln and Seward to maneuver among interests of principal European powers and Mexico were more and more limited. The most serious concern of both politicians at the moment was that the Confederation wouldn't be officially recognized by European powers. Therefore, the U.S. policy towards France, and most of all Great Britain, had to be very moderate even in the case of the intervention in Mexico. The possibility of recognition of the Confederacy by France for its support of the intervention and consequent installment of Maximilian on the Mexican throne remains a subject of historian's discussion until today. It seems to be logical that had Napoleon III formally recognized the Confederacy as an independent state, the government in Richmond would have no problem with establishing of the monarchy on its southern border. The Southern agent in Europe John Slidell offered twice to Napoleon III the help of the Confederacy to the French intervention forces in exchange for the recognition.<sup>270</sup> On the other hand the French feared to recognize the Confederacy so the Lincoln's administration would not put all its possible assistance to Juarez's government. "Juarez was seeking money and arms from Washington, and if he got them, Forey's army could be endangered. If Seward refused aid to Mexico for fear France would recognize the South, France was equally aware of the havoc Yankee arms could cause in Mexico, should Seward retaliate for and accepted Confederacy."<sup>271</sup> It is, therefore, possible to assert that the existence of the two internal conflicts, with European powers not fully acting jointly, created a stalemate, which of course finally benefited Lincoln and Benito Juarez. The possibility of cooperation between France, or Maximilian's Mexico, and the Confederacy ended, when the politicians in Richmond discovered intrigues of the French minister in Galveston who was proposing a separation of Texas from the South. "Not only did the Emperor Napoleon have the design of

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<sup>270</sup> Miller, Robert Ryal, "*Matias Romero: Mexican Minister to the United States during the Juarez-Maximilian Era*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 2. (May, 1965), p. 231.

<sup>271</sup> Hanna, Kathryn Abbey, "*The Roles of the South in the French Intervention in Mexico*," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 20, No. 1. (Feb., 1954), p. 9.

retaining Mexico as a colony, but he desired to see a buffer state of little strength separate his new colony from the Confederate States.<sup>272</sup>

It is necessary to mention that among the decisive elements also belonged the position of Great Britain, both towards the American Civil War, where it was following the policy of official non-recognition of the Confederacy, and the French activities in Mexico, where the government in London, as well as that of Spain, realized that France's intentions weren't quite the same as those stated in the London Convention. The treaty signed by the three countries on October 31, 1861,<sup>273</sup> declared as the main purpose of the intervention "a fulfillment of the obligations contracted by the Republic of Mexico."

The British and French representatives had disagreement already while drafting the text of the treaty, because London insisted on a written statement that the intervening parties would not interfere in the domestic political affairs of Mexico. The final version of the London Convention empowered in the Article I the commanders of the allied forces, not only to seize principal Mexican ports, but to conduct such further operations as they judge necessary to obtain the indemnity for financial damages and to secure lives of foreigners residing in Mexico. "All important was the fact that the parties agreed to the prohibition proposed by the English Government, namely that coercion should not be used to interfere in Mexico's domestic affairs, to acquire territory or special advantage, or to influence the Mexicans in choosing their form of government."<sup>274</sup>

Napoleon III agreed with the text of the London Convention only to calm down British complains and to have both other countries participating in the intervention. He hoped that the politicians in London would yield to his idea of installment of Maximilian, as the allied soldiers would advance towards Mexico City. First, who landed in Vera Cruz, was the Spanish fleet and the troops from Cuba under the command of a prominent leader of Spanish Liberals, General Prim y Prats. Smaller British squadron<sup>275</sup> and large French army arrived soon after.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Hoskins, Halford L., "French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition," p. 686. For overall information look at Hanna, Kathryn Abbey, "The Roles of the South in the French Intervention in Mexico," pp. 3-21.

<sup>273</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vol. III, p. 465.

<sup>274</sup> Robertson, William Spence, "The Tripartite Treaty of London," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2. (May, 1940), pp. 174-178.

<sup>275</sup> British contingent counted some seven hundred soldiers.

The British and Spanish commanders soon realized that the French commander, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, who was also made the commissioner of the Emperor, was given completely different instructions than those stated in the London Convention. A vagueness with which the Convention's Article V was written gave to the French the possibility of interpretation that if the Mexicans showed the wish to establish a stable form of government, the allies should assist them in doing so: "This interest ought to incline them to discourage attempts like that which I [French Foreign Minister Thouvenel] have just indicated, and you should not refuse them your encouragement and your moral support, if, because of the standing of the men who take the initiative in this movement and because of the sympathy which they receive from the mass of the population, they present a change of success in the establishment of such an order of things as would secure for the interests of foreign residents the protection and the guarantees of which they have been deprived up to the present." In secret verbal instructions given to Jurien by the Foreign Minister and the Emperor himself, he was to support a creation of the constituent assembly organized by the monarchical party in Mexico.<sup>277</sup> When the British allies complained about such plans, Thouvenel in the instructions to the French Minister in London Flahault dated March 7, 1862, argued that: "It has never been understood that the parties should submit to a reciprocal appreciation of their claims and that the reparations demanded by the dignity or the injured interests of one of the governments ought to be limited to those which would satisfy the two other parties....At the outset each power by itself was to determine what it was justified in claiming."<sup>278</sup>

The dissensions among the allies reached the climax soon after. At the conference, which took place in Orizaba on April 9, 1862, the Spanish and British commanders criticized, besides the above-mentioned policy, also the fact that the French allowed arrival of the Mexican Conservative leader, General Almonte, from exile. Spanish general Prim y Prats had a very irritating conversation with the French Minister in Mexico Saligny over the candidacy of Maximilian, and by

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<sup>276</sup>The British and French arrived on January 6 and 8, 1862.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, pp. 181-182.

<sup>278</sup> *Affaires étrangères, documents diplomatiques*, p. 165, quoted in Ibid p. 183.

the evening the withdrawal of the Spanish and British contingents was a reality.<sup>279</sup> Prim expressed his opinion on impossibility to establish the monarchy in Mexico, because of the low support of this concept in the country and the proximity of the United States, in the letter to Napoleon III from March 17, 1862. He also mentioned that the Spanish colonial rule “had left neither the interests of landed nobility, nor moral interests.” The Spanish Queen, who had lost interest in the affair after her son, or other relative, was excluded from the consideration as a potential candidate for the throne, fully supported Prim’s decision, even though he acted entirely without authorization.<sup>280</sup>

The Spanish claims were partly settled, and maybe even more importantly, the Spanish pride had been satisfied. The former mother country had suffered only losses and fiascos ever since the Wars of Independence of Latin American countries. Now the success of the first phase of the intervention, and the realist decision to withdraw, at least partially appeased Spanish honor. The participation in the intervention in Mexico was also the last direct Spanish attempt to spread its influence in Latin America. From now on governments in Madrid had focused only on maintaining its last colonies in Latin America, Cuba and Porto Rico. Great Britain was never fully enthusiastic about the idea of the intervention, and once the French showed that their intentions weren’t coinciding with the London Convention, they had no moral problem to leave former ally in Mexico to fulfill its fatal destiny.

The course of the French campaign is not relevant to this thesis. It is, however, necessary at least to mention that the intervention army faced a severe defense by smaller and much worse equipped Mexican troops. Psychologically by far the most important battle was the famous Battle of Puebla, which took place on May 5, 1862. Mexicans, under the command of General Ignacio Zaragoza, “humiliatingly defeated” the French army led by new commander, General Charles de Lorencez. Mexican forces pursued the withdrawing French all the way to Orizaba, and gained a one-year’s time for the Juarez administration. Famous

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<sup>279</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, pp. 383-384. Saligny accused Prim that he wanted the Mexican throne for himself, as did Augustin Iturbide in 1823.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 384-386.

*Cinco de Mayo* became one of the Mexican national holidays.<sup>281</sup> It took one entire year until the French troops were reinforced, and Puebla again surrendered on 17 May, 1863. The road to Mexico City was free and the Liberals knew it. Benito Juarez fled with his government two weeks later to San Luis Potosí. Later, at the worst moments of the fight against the French and Maximilian, he was forced to take a refuge in El Paso del Norte on the frontier with the United States.

Meanwhile the French followed Emperor Napoleon's orders and organized an Assembly of Notables, where 285 Mexican conservatives declared, after just two days of discussion, a restoration of monarchy with Maximilian as the candidate for the throne. On newly elected monarch's request, the "plebiscite" was organized in three states, which were under the French control. The plebiscite with overwhelming majority showed the "popular will" of the Mexican people to call for Austrian Archduke.<sup>282</sup> Maximilian solemnly accepted the crown in his beautiful seat, the Castle of Miramare in the Gulf of Trieste, on April 10, 1864. A convention between him and France was drawn, in which Maximilian agreed to pay all French claims, and the past and future cost of the intervention. Thus it was officially confirmed that Maximilian's rule "rested on the shoulders of the French troops."<sup>283</sup> This, however, definitely didn't come up to the mind of the new Mexican Emperor, whose "pious and sentimental" mind dreamed about creating of constitutional monarchy based on European liberal ideas. He didn't really care so much that those who installed him to the power, along with the French, were Mexican conservatives fighting for almost a decade with Liberals of Benito Juarez. Maximilian arrived in Mexico City in a brilliant fashion on June 2, 1864.<sup>284</sup>

A reception of the new ruler by Mexicans was not definitely such as Maximilian dreamed of. "Meanwhile, the French armies were advancing in Mexico. The invasion aroused genuine patriotic feelings in the country, not only among the liberals. It was not known at this point whether France was seeking to

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<sup>281</sup> Miller, Robert Ryal, *Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juarez during the French Intervention in Mexico*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Ser., Vol. 6. (1973), pp. 1-68.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid or Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 341.

<sup>283</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, *The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 1. (March. 1896), p. 35.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid or Hoskins, Halford L., *French Views of the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican Expedition*, p. 685.

help conservatives against liberals, or in fact trying to subjugate the country.... The issue was not liberalism against conservatism, as it had been in 1858-1860, but Mexican independence against conquest by a foreign power.” Among conservatives who offered their services to Juarez were for example Manuel Gonzalez (future president of Mexico 1880-1884) or Ignacio Comontfort (died on the battlefield in 1863).”<sup>285</sup>

Maximilian did his best to bring the Liberals on his side, for he was by heart true liberal as well, by forming the government consisted almost all of Liberals, and even drafting of very liberal constitution called the Provisional Statute of the Mexican Empire.<sup>286</sup> The Emperor, however, did not manage to gain the support of the Liberals, and lost the trust of the Church and the Conservatives. They kept supporting him more because it was a matter of pure survival of their power, privileges and property, than from being believers in his political steps. The government of Benito Juarez also had throughout the whole period of exile in the north of Mexico one big moral advantage. He was considered the one and only official representative of the Mexican people by the United States government, and the Secretary of State Seward called Maximilian in his correspondence “the so-called emperor of Mexico.”<sup>287</sup>

More of moral support was the declarations of other Latin American countries, especially Peru and Colombia. For example in January 1862 Don Manuel Nicolas Camacho, the minister of Peru to Mexico, proposed to Seward a Pan-American alliance to drive the French away.<sup>288</sup> Colombian general Tomas Mosquera went even further, and offered to raise the army of fifteen thousand men with the goal to fight the “second war of independence,” but none of such plans had been realized.<sup>289</sup> These activities show one quite interesting situation. The Latin American countries were calling for help of the United States to one of them in the name of the Monroe Doctrine and Pan-American principles more than two decades before the same idea became U.S. foreign policy reality. Seward and

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<sup>285</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vol. III, p. 466.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, p. 467.

<sup>287</sup> Miller, Robert Ryal, *Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juarez during the French Intervention in Mexico*,” p. 7.

<sup>288</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 461.

<sup>289</sup> Frazer, Robert W., *Latin-American Projects to Aid Mexico during the French Intervention*,” p. 234.

Lincoln weren't ready to lead such a movement at the moment of deep internal conflict, and therefore followed the policy of "wise restraint."<sup>290</sup> With the Civil War approaching to its conclusion, there arose also plans for joint action of the Confederate troops from western states in cooperation with the Union army. With such proposal came for example General Lew Wallace or Major General Francis Preston Blair, Jr., and they had received open support of General Ulysses S. Grant as well.<sup>291</sup>

## **V.IV. Fall of Maximilian and the Role of the United States**

It is generally agreed among historians of the era that the American Civil War coming to its end and growing problems of Napoleon III in Europe were the main causes of the failure of the project of the monarchy in Mexico under the Emperor Maximilian I. Julius W. Pratt summarizes importance of the development of domestic political situation in the United States with these words: "As the prospects of the Union victory over the Confederacy improved, vocal opinion in the North and in Washington became bolder in its assertion of the principles of Monroe against the French experiment in Mexico. ... That the fate of Maximilian's empire might hang upon the outcome of the Civil War in the United States was well enough realized in Paris and in Mexico City, and both imperial courts watched the progress of the war with deep concern."<sup>292</sup>

When the North started to win on the battlefields of the Civil War, also the voices in the Congress began to sound more often the Mexican issue. Seward and his allies were able to hold actions of the Senate but the House of Representatives, always more prone to follow the mood of the American public, started during the winter of 1864 to discuss the resolution drawn up by John A. Kasson and presented in the House by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Henry Winter Davis. The resolution was unanimously approved with one hundred

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<sup>290</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 458.

<sup>291</sup> Hanna, Kathryn Abbey, "*The Roles of the South in the French Intervention in Mexico*," pp. 16-17 or Miller, Robert Ryal, "*Matias Romero: Mexican Minister to the United States during the Juarez-Maximilian Era*," pp. 240-242.

<sup>292</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 342.

and nine Representatives voting aye and none opposing the resolution also thanks to very successful lobbying of the Mexican minister in United States Matias Romero.<sup>293</sup> The wording of the resolution clearly shows the shift in confidence of U.S. politicians realizing that it was basically just France to which they were addressing the resolution. It reads as follows: “The Congress of the United States are unwilling by silence to have the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the Republic of Mexico, and that they think fit to declare that it does not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government in America under auspices of any European power.”<sup>294</sup>

The course of the American Civil War was also closely observed in France. The French Parliament at the beginning of the intervention fully supported Napoleon III and his idea of establishment of the “balance of power” in the New World, the same as the British Foreign Minister of the 1820’s George Canning and his French colleague Francois Guizot had in mind. However, during the course of 1864 the Parliament started to show signs of impatience since the intervention obviously didn’t progress according to Emperor’s plans, and the victory of the Union in the American Civil War looked more and more only a matter of time.<sup>295</sup> The U.S. Secretary of State, however, hurried to assure the French government that the extravagant opinions entertained at the Capitol were “not in harmony with the policy of neutrality, forbearance and consideration which the president has so faithfully pursued.”<sup>296</sup>

The French minister of foreign affairs Drouyn de Lhuys indicated to his American counterpart already by the end of 1863 that should the United States early recognize the proposed empire in Mexico, such action would be agreeable to France and would hasten the withdrawal of her troops. “Seward’s answer must have been as unsatisfactory as it was adroit. He said that the United States were determined to err, if at all, on the side of strict neutrality in the war between

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<sup>293</sup> For thorough information on the Mexican minister see Robert Ryal, “*Matias Romero: Mexican Minister to the United States during the Juarez-Maximilian Era*,” pp. 228-245.

<sup>294</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 451.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 410-420.

<sup>296</sup> Dispatch of January 12, 1864 quoted in Bancroft, Frederick, “*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*,” p. 37.

France and Mexico; that they were still of the opinion that the permanent establishment of a foreign or monarchical government in Mexico would be found neither easy nor desirable; and that the United States could not do otherwise than leave the destinies of Mexico in the keeping of her own people, and recognize their sovereignty and independence in whatever form they themselves should choose.”<sup>297</sup>

Seward’s main goal was to keep France assured that the United States considered the intervention itself a legitimate step of one state to obtain financial indemnity for injuries caused to its citizens in another country. On the other hand he was very clear that the Lincoln administration considered Benito Juarez as the only representative of the Mexican people and that the Maximilian’s empire was not acceptable for the United States. At the point of the most fragile position of the Union in the international field caused by unsuccessful course of events on the battlefields of the Civil War he was ready to accept the idea of monarchy in Mexico, if the French forces would leave and the monarchy proved strong enough to be able to sustain its power. But even in this moment, Seward made himself absolutely clear that the United States would accept this status only because the American domestic situation was not favorable for following of an aggressive foreign policy. “But why should we gasconade about Mexico, when we are in a struggle for our national life?” he wrote to an intimate friend at Paris.<sup>298</sup>

The tone of Seward’s foreign policy started to change throughout the year 1864 and obtained much stronger form in 1865. Maximilian also started to see the situation of the Empire more realistically and, therefore, decided to ask for help from his monarchical relatives around Europe. The special envoy was sent to the court of his father-in-law, Leopold I of Belgium. However, the possibility of creation of some kind of new Quadruple Alliance or Holly Alliance, which would support the Mexican Emperor, failed completely. “Even Napoleon III was heartily sick of an adventure which had proved costly and unpopular in France and which was not meeting with the anticipated success.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Diplomatic Correspondence, 1863, 726 quoted in *Ibid*, p. 36.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>299</sup> E.C. Corti, *Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1929, pp. 498-501 quoted in Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 343.

The position of the Secretary of State became more and more difficult with the Union's victory over the Confederacy forthcoming and growing domestic pressure on the administration to take an action. It was already described that the Mexican issue started to be sounded in the U.S. Congress again. But for the moment being, much more important was that the Union Army leaders became anxious to intervene in Mexico and pressed in the Johnson and Seward to be permitted to help Juarez to drive the French invaders out of the country. Idea of a joint intervention of troops from both sides of American conflict was also mentioned. At the end of the Civil War, there were around 40,000 soldiers sent to the frontier of Texas with Mexico under the command of General Phillip Henry Sheridan who was "ready to invade Mexico as soon as the war sentiment of the army and of many of the politicians could overcome President Johnson's confidence in Seward's diplomacy. Sheridan's *Memoirs* show how bitterly he resented Seward's influence for peace."<sup>300</sup> The commanding leader of the Union Army, General Ulysses S. Grant, was also strongly in favor of taking of an action, and supported by the Mexican Minister in the United States Matias Romero, he kept actively proposing the idea of intervention to President Johnson.

At this delicate situation Seward fully showed how much experience he had acquired during the difficult years of the Civil War since he presented *Thoughts for President's Consideration*. The designated leader of the potential intervention army was named General John McAllister Schofield. The Secretary of State, however, correctly assumed that the withdrawal of the French army from Mexico was just a matter of time. He also realized how much the intervention would worsen American position in Europe and also in Mexico, less than two decades after the last American soldiers had left the Mexican soil. Seward, therefore, rather sent Schofield on a diplomatic mission to Paris. "Schofield accepted the mission to France, but he never did have a private interview with Napoleon, and he returned to Washington a year later having accomplished only what Seward had in mind – his absence from the United States. Romero and Grant were so angry with Seward's frustrating their plan for armed intervention in

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<sup>300</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, "*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*," p. 39.

Mexico that they attempted, secretly and unsuccessfully, to force him out of the cabinet.”<sup>301</sup>

The Secretary of State was at this point already certain that France would yield and withdraw its troops from Mexico, while he was having U.S. Army “war dogs” on a leash. His policy thus could become more aggressive and in the reply to French foreign minister Drouyn’s attempt to get assurance that if France would leave the United States would not take action to help Juarez he stated: “...the United States could not assume that the Emperor contemplates the establishment in Mexico, before withdrawing his forces, of the very institutions which constitute the material ground of the exceptions taken against his intervention by the United States. On the contrary, we understand him as announcing to us his immediate purpose to bring to an end the service of his armies in Mexico, and in good faith to fall back, without stipulation or condition on our part, upon the principle of non-intervention upon which he is henceforth agreed with the United States. We cannot understand his appeal to us for an assurance that we ourselves will abide by our own principles of non-intervention in any other sense than as the expression, in a friendly way, of his expectation that when the people of Mexico shall have been left absolutely free from the operation, effects and consequences of his own political and military intervention, we will ourselves respect their self-established sovereignty and independence. With these explanations I proceed to say that, in the opinion of the President France need not for a moment delay her promised withdrawal of military forces from Mexico, and her thought of putting the principle of non-intervention into full and complete practice in regard to Mexico, through any apprehension that the United States will prove unfaithful to the principles and policy which, on their behalf, it has been my duty to maintain in this now very lengthened correspondence.... Looking simply toward the point to which our attention has been steadily confined, the relief of the Mexican embarrassments without disturbing our relations with France, we shall gratified when the Emperor shall give to us, either through the channels of your

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<sup>301</sup> Robert Ryal, “*Matias Romero: Mexican Minister to the United States during the Juarez-Maximilian Era*,” p. 244.

esteemed correspondence or otherwise, definitive information of the time when French military operations may be expected to cease in Mexico.”<sup>302</sup>

Seward decided to go even further with his more aggressive foreign policy mainly for two logical reasons. He was at this moment already absolutely sure that there was no possibility how the French troops could stay indefinitely in Mexico and it was just a matter of time for Napoleon’s order to leave Mexico. At the same time he still needed to hold the Congressmen and war hawks in the United States in check. Therefore, it is no surprise that he assumed almost unacceptable diplomatic rhetoric towards the end of 1865. On December 16, Seward sent to French Foreign Minister a note, which could be considered as an ultimatum:

“It has been the President’s purpose that France should be respectfully informed upon two points, namely:

First. That the United States earnestly desire to continue to cultivate friendship with France.

Second. That this policy would be brought into imminent jeopardy, unless France could deem it consistent with her interest and honor to desist from the prosecution of armed intervention in Mexico, to overthrow the domestic republican government existing there, and to establish upon its ruins the foreign monarchy which has been attempted to be inaugurated in the capital of that country.”<sup>303</sup>

This statement was followed by rather flexible note of February 12, 1866, in which Seward directly asked the French troops to be withdrawn, but at the same time he did give Napoleon III the chance to maintain his face by stating that the United States would not intervene on the side of the Liberals. He did not have to lie in this, since he was sure that the support for Maximilian was weakening with every battle won by Liberal forces. Anyway, his words clearly describe the shift in the confidence the U.S. foreign policy makers gained since the end of the Civil War. Seward asked the French Emperor to provide “definitive information of the time when the French military operations may be expected to cease in Mexico.” And later on he continued sounding the principles of the

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<sup>302</sup> Diplomatic Correspondence, 1865, part 3, pp. 813-822.

<sup>303</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, “*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*,” p. 41.

Monroe Doctrine without naming it at all that "...the presence of European armies in Mexico, maintaining a European prince with imperial attributes, without her consent and against her will, is deemed a source of apprehension and danger, not alone to the United States, but also to all the independent and sovereign republican States founded on the American continent and its adjacent islands."<sup>304</sup>

Such rhetoric would definitely not threaten the French Emperor had he be in a strong position in France and Europe, but Napoleon III realized that the project was already dead and he was not willing to keep helping Maximilian just from the feeling of a monarchical unity. Therefore, it was no surprise for Seward, when in April 1866 the official organ of the French government *Le Moniteur* announced that the French troops would withdraw in three detachments starting in November 1866, and finishing in November 1867.<sup>305</sup> Maximilian thus lost the "shoulders" upon which his empire was build, and the Liberals, also thanks to supplies from private sources in the United States, started to regain one Mexican state after another.<sup>306</sup> The last hope of the Mexican emperor was to turn again to the Conservatives for support, but "after the departure of the French, it would once again be a war of Mexican conservatives against Mexican liberals. Maximilian appointed a conservative cabinet and welcomed the best conservative commander, Miramon, back to Mexico. Without knowing it, the conservatives and the Austrian archduke had sealed a death pact."<sup>307</sup> The unfortunate destiny of Maximilian I, the second Mexican Emperor, was fulfilled in Querétaro on April 19, 1867, where he was captured, court-martialed, and finally shot, along with generals Mejia and Miramon.<sup>308</sup>

It is quite legitimate to assume that the development of the Civil War in the United States strongly influenced the decision of Napoleon III to abandon his idea of European-backed monarchy in Mexico. The question whether the victory of the Union over the Confederate States was the most decisive element or not is

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<sup>304</sup> Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 343.

<sup>305</sup> In fact the evacuation of the French contingent was completed on March 12, 1867. Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1827-1867*, p. 538. Also see Bancroft, Frederick, "*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*," p. 41.

<sup>306</sup> For thorough information on American financial issues during the French intervention see Schoonover, Thomas, "*Dollars over Dominion: United States Economic Interest in Mexico, 1861-1867*," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1. (Feb., 1976), pp. 23-45.

<sup>307</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vol. III, p. 468.

<sup>308</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, "*The French in Mexico and the Monroe Doctrine*," p. 42.

of limited importance. But the unquestionable reality in 1865 and 1866 was that the United States came out of its worst domestic struggle, which cost some 600,000 human lives, reunited and powerful, with a formidable Army and Navy.<sup>309</sup> Things didn't go well for France in Europe either. Especially when in the battle of Sadowa in July of 1866, Prussia, the main rival of France in Germany, humiliated France's ally Austria. Thus became practically certain that France and Prussia would soon clash over hegemony in Germany and Central Europe. The military situation in Mexico had not shown any progress and the Liberals, receiving more and more military equipment and soldiers recruited from the American Civil War veterans, slowly started to take an initiative into their hands. The decision to withdraw French troops from Mexico and consequent fall of Maximilian could be seen as the combination of these conditions, but it is quite clear that the progress of the Civil War in the United States was the main cause, which initiated the chain of consequences leading to the execution of unfortunate Mexican Emperor.

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<sup>309</sup> Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 343.

## **VI. Quest for Naval Bases, Inter-oceanic Canal, and Hemispheric Hegemony: U.S. Foreign Policy towards Latin America in the 1870's and 1880's**

The end of the Civil War could be considered as the second birthday of the American nation. Or it may be more proper to say that with the General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, the final phase of the creation of the American nation was concluded. The enormous territorial expansion of the United States from 1783 to 1848 was dear-bought by the catastrophe of the bloody conflict over the institution of slavery. The problem of slavery, which was dividing the nation ever since the independence was resolved for good and the American nation was finally united under one national idea and the unquestionable command of the central government in Washington D.C. "As it happened, the America that emerged from the Civil War was more powerful and influential than ever before. Despite a destroyed South, a mammoth national debt, and ongoing political and sectional strife, the United States was a burgeoning giant and was recognized as such by observers in Europe, in Asia, and above all in Latin America and the Caribbean. By the end of the 1870's, despite the travails of depression, the United States was already among the richest countries in the world. Its population was booming, fed by masses of immigrants from Europe. Compared to the small, fragile republic that had struggled for survival a century earlier, America had become a great continental power."<sup>310</sup>

However this fact is clear to us, this definitely was not the case of all Americans of the late 1860's. The nation had to rebuild the South and connect it economically more tightly with the system of the North and the West, deal with the growing number of immigrants from Europe, and finally absorb the vast territory in the west part of the continent.<sup>311</sup> Therefore, the period from the mid 1860's to the beginning of the 1890's in the United States is mostly considered as

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<sup>310</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 301.

<sup>311</sup> Excellent source of information on the phenomenon of immigration in American history and its role in the settlement of the American West is Kraut, Alan M., *Huddled Masses: the Immigrant in American Society, 1800 – 1921*, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights (IL), 1982.

the epoch of “inward” tendency – the epoch, when the American nation had to settle domestic political, sectional, economical, and social problems of the postwar society. If this period is looked upon strictly from the perspective of the acquisition of new territory the 1870’s and 1880’s could be considered as ‘hungry years’ – except the purchase of the ‘Seward’s icebox’ or ‘Johnson’s Polar Bear Garden,’ as Alaska was called, in 1867,<sup>312</sup> and the acquisition of small inhabited Midway Island in the same year, its ‘inwardness’ is obvious. One can argue that the pre-Civil War period was from the perspective of the territorial expansion also “frustrating,” to use the term from the title of the chapter analyzing the 1850’s. But attempts of expansionists of the 1850’s were determined by the unsolved problem of the slavery. The post-war America was simply tired of the expansion and the never-ending presence of war, and needed time to “rest” before it was fit for an acquisition of yet more territory.

The exhaustion from the domestic conflict and the necessity to settle the West weren’t the only reasons for a reluctance of American society to support more enthusiastically territorial expansion. Even though the slavery was abolished, the problem of racism in the United States, including the North, was not stemmed off at all. As a matter of fact, the racial aspect in the U.S. foreign policy became one of the main arguments against a continuation of the territorial expansion after the Civil War since practically all territories being under consideration for the acquisition were situated to the south of the United States in the tropical climate and settled with the population of “darker” skin. Hand in hand with this had developed Anglo-Saxon racism sounding the difference between the protestant origin of the United States (however this is doubtful) and the catholic background of the population of the Caribbean and Latin America.<sup>313</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to think that the 1870’s and 1880’s were the period of non-activity of expansionists whatsoever. On the contrary, the unification of the nation, growing immigration from Europe, and settlement of the American West, caused strong anxiety for new type of expansion, which historian

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<sup>312</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 52.

<sup>313</sup> Excellent analysis of the racial aspect of U.S. foreign policy in the last third of 19<sup>th</sup> century is Love, Eric T., *Race over Empire. Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (NC), London, 2004. See also Kaplan, Amy, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA), London, 2002.

Frederick Merk pertinently called the “caribbeanized”, or “insular” expansion.<sup>314</sup> The settlement of the Oregon question with Great Britain in the mid 1840’s, the secession of new territory from Mexico after 1848, and the discovery of gold in California, started a mass immigration to the western parts of the North American continent. “These acquisitions greatly increased the importance of rapid transportation from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific and thus the value of a canal route linking the two more closely.”<sup>315</sup> After the conclusion of the Civil War and issuing of the Homestead Act by President Lincoln in May 1862, thousands of settlers started to move to the west. There were three possibilities how to get to the west coast of the United States in this era – on a boat around the South American continent, overland across the continent, or by boat and crossing Central America at one of its narrow isthmuses (Tehuantepec in Mexico, Nicaragua, or Panama).<sup>316</sup>

Therefore, the control of the region of Central America and a potential creation of the inter-oceanic canal became fundamental concerns of the U.S. foreign policy-makers in Washington. Closely connected with this issue was also American interest in obtaining naval bases in the Caribbean, which would help the United States to control its influence over Central America. The need for naval bases was strongly supported also by U.S. Navy and U.S. Army officers who saw their usefulness after the experience with the blockade of the South during the Civil War.<sup>317</sup> Among traditional aspects of American foreign policy belonged an effort to oppose to any encroachment of European powers in the Western Hemisphere. The concession for building of the inter-oceanic canal, given to the French naval officer Lucien Wyse who later sold it to famous constructor of the Suez Canal, Ferdinand de Lesseps, was a clear example of a thread of basic interests of the United States in the region.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, Knopf, New York (NY), 1966.

<sup>315</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 305.

<sup>316</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York (NY), London, 1974, pp. 12-14.

<sup>317</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 321.

<sup>318</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States. A History of U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London, 1998, pp. 153-4.

Newly had become one of the main reasons for the quest of more naval bases and insular post was a growing feeling of the need for opening of new markets, which would absorb a surplus of agricultural and manufacture production of the United States.<sup>319</sup> The father of such commercial expansion was the Secretary of State William H. Seward who initiated the quest for insular expansion in the Pacific Ocean since he realized a potential of the future commercial possibilities in China and Japan. The annexation of Midway and the purchase of Alaska were the few results of this visionary idea. Majority of successors of the great Secretary continued in pursuance of Seward's vision, even though the American public in the 1870's and 1880's wasn't in favor of such projects. There was also a practical aspect pertaining to the quest for building up the canal, and acquiring new naval bases, in respect to searching for new markets. It was for the first time in 1870, when the commercial cargo shipped by steamboats surpassed the cargo transferred by boats using the power of wind. So there had arisen an exigency to find shorter and cheaper routes to the Pacific coast of the United States and to Asia. Therefore, the inter-oceanic canal started to be an imminent foreign policy issue again, along with the need for naval bases, now required even more urgently for the storage of the coal.

Thus the period between the late 1860's and mid 1890's could be also viewed as the "years of preparation," as Walter LaFeber named this era in his book *The New Empire*.<sup>320</sup> "It was during these final three decades of the nineteenth century that U.S. citizens slowly developed the desire to acquire an overseas empire. This was different from the growth prior to the Civil War, when the United States had expanded by absorbing sparsely populated lands to the West...."<sup>321</sup> For these reasons this chapter will focus on three basic spheres of interest of the American foreign policy during the 1870' and 1880's. First, on the acquisition of the naval base in the Caribbean, especially on attempts to purchase

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<sup>319</sup> The leading historian proposing the idea of American expansion driven by the need to find new markets for agricultural over-production is William Appleman Williams. See for example Williams, William Appleman, *Empire as a Way of Life. An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament Along With a Few Thoughts About an Alternative*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York (NEW York), 1980, or Williams, William Appleman, (ed.), *From Colony to Empire. Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York (NY), London, Sydney, Toronto, 1972.

<sup>320</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-61.

<sup>321</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 78.

the Danish West Indies and attempts for the annexation of Santo Domingo,<sup>322</sup> second, on the development of the question of building of the inter-oceanic canal in Central America, and third, on attempts of the United States to mediate in several conflicts among Latin American states, as was in case of the boundary dispute between Mexico and Guatemala or the War of the Pacific between Peru and Bolivia against Chile, in which the United States still unsuccessfully tried to assume the role of the hemispheric leader.

## **VI.I. American Efforts to Obtain a Naval Base in the Caribbean: Danish West Indies, Santo Domingo, and Other Attempts**

The Secretary of Navy Gideon Welles remarked the need for naval base in the Caribbean in his annual report of 1865 arguing that such base was necessary for the protection of northern commerce and tracking of Confederate cruisers trying to trespass the blockade.<sup>323</sup> This was definitely a suggestion that perfectly fitted to a greater vision of the Secretary of State Seward of the role of the United States in the region. As it was described before, even though the Civil War was not yet over, Seward “saw more clearly than his contemporaries the inevitable deterioration of European influence in the region and sought to fill the vacuum with American power.”<sup>324</sup>

Therefore, when Denmark got in the middle of the 1860’s in serious troubles with its much stronger neighbor Prussia and its ally Austria, Seward sounded the possibility of purchasing of three small islands in the Danish West Indies – St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.<sup>325</sup> “Denmark was more friendly to the Federal government at Washington than almost any other country in Europe; it

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<sup>322</sup> To this period belongs also the question of the United States policy towards Spain and Cuba during the Ten Year War of 1868-1878. However, since this thesis is planned to culminate with the end of the Spanish-American War over Cuba as the symbol of American entrance among world powers, the Cuban question from 1868 to 1898 will be described separately in the last chapter.

<sup>323</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 321.

<sup>324</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, p. 145.

<sup>325</sup> St. Thomas contained for the conditions of tonnage of that time’s boats an excellent harbor Charlotte Amalie.

assumed the unique position of not recognizing the Confederate States as a belligerent power and granted many favors to the United States Navy at St. Thomas.”<sup>326</sup> On the other hand, Denmark was desperately seeking support of Great Britain in the conflict with Prussia and Austria over Schleswig and Holstein, so there existed the possibility of ceding these islands as a reward for the help in Europe.<sup>327</sup> Yet another interesting alternative came out as a result of the loss of Denmark in the conflict over Schleswig and Holstein. Certain correspondence from U.S. diplomats in Copenhagen and Elsinore sounded the suggestions of the Danish government to cede the islands to Austria instead of the mentioned regions in the southern Denmark.<sup>328</sup> This seemingly illogical transaction in fact had quite realistic background if we realize that at the same time the brother of Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph, Mexican Emperor Maximilian I., was already facing serious troubles in its newly established domain. Whether these islands would stay under Austria’s control, or be transferred to Mexico, it would definitely at least partially improve Maximilian’s chances.

For all these reasons Seward considered the purchase of Danish West Indies as the best solution for the United States, even though the islands themselves weren’t economically profitable. The Secretary of State conferred the purchase of the Danish West Indie for the first time with the minister of Denmark in Washington, General Waldemar Raasloff, early in 1865.<sup>329</sup> A year later Seward undertook the cruise “for his health” around the Caribbean, visiting the Danish West Indies, Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Cuba, which was the first such trip of any American Secretary of State.<sup>330</sup> After he returned to Washington, he presented to the Danish minister an offer to purchase the three main islands for \$5,000,000; but Denmark demanded \$10,000,000 for two islands with the condition that the inhabitants of the islands would vote for annexation in the plebiscite. The final treaty signed on October 24, 1867, agreed on the purchase of St. John and St.

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<sup>326</sup> Koht, Halvdan, “*The Origin of Seward’s Plan to Purchase the Danish West Indies*,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4. (Jul, 1945), p. 763.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 762.

<sup>329</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 17.

<sup>330</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 81.

Thomas with the necessity of consent of the inhabitants for a sum of \$7,500,000.<sup>331</sup>

The ratification in the Danish Parliament went smoothly and the King Christian IX signed the treaty soon after. The purchase, however, obtained very little support in the U.S. Congress and the public. The situation immediately after the end of the Civil War wasn't favorable to some extra expenditures of money so much needed for the reconstruction of the country badly damaged by five years of fighting. This was even more evident when being compared with just recently approved purchase of Alaska, which was also considered by the critiques of the administration unworthy for such a sum of money, but at least it was an immense territorial acquisition bought from Russia, which was taken as the most loyal European ally of the United States during the Civil War.<sup>332</sup> The nature also gave yet more arguments to opponents of the purchase, when an earthquake, consequent tsunami, and a hurricane, severely damaged the islands. Moreover, the U.S.S. *Monongahela*, present at the harbor Charlotte Amalie, was destroyed by the tidal wave. Therefore, it was no surprise, when the House of Representatives resolved on November 25, 1867: "That in the present financial condition of the country any further purchases of territory are inexpedient and this House will hold itself under no obligations to vote money to pay for any such purchases unless there is greater necessity for the same than now exists."<sup>333</sup> The Senate didn't even discuss the treaty - "although the Danish Minister in Washington did everything possible to encourage approval of the treaty during extensive public meetings, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously tabled it."<sup>334</sup>

The question of the purchase of Danish West Indies came up again in 1869 after the inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant to the office. In spite of Grant's

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<sup>331</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 322.

<sup>332</sup> Russia firmly backed the Union during the Civil War. Also the famous visit of the Russian Fleet in 1863 received much publicity in American newspapers and American public in the North considered this visit as a demonstration of Russia's support compared to the sympathies of Great Britain and France shown to the Confederacy. Later evidence shows that the visit was based on the opportunistic need of the Russian Navy to leave northern harbors, so the ice wouldn't seal the boats, which may be needed in case of war with Great Britain over the Polish uprising. This, however, the public in the United States didn't know at the moment, and it also doesn't attenuate the fact that Russia kept declaring its moral support to the Union case most clearly of all principal European powers. *Ibid*, p. 326.

<sup>333</sup> *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 792 (Nov. 25, 1867) quoted in Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 17.

<sup>334</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 46.

“grabbiness,”<sup>335</sup> and his anxiety to acquire some insular territory in the Caribbean, the President refused the acquisition since it was “one of Seward’s schemes.”<sup>336</sup>

The issue returned into consideration one more time in 1873 and 1874, when diplomatic correspondence to the Secretary Fish showed the rumor that Denmark was seeking an exchange of the islands for the part of Schleswig taken by Prussia in 1864. The purchase of Danish West Indies was not the issue-of-the-day, but “this did not mean that the administration was indifferent to the possible cession of the islands by Denmark to some other power. Indeed, it manifested what might almost be described as nervousness with regard to this possibility.” Fish instructed U.S. ministers in London, Berlin and Copenhagen that: “A report reaches here that Germany is in treaty with Denmark for the acquisition of her West India Islands, proposing to fulfill her existing treaty, and to cede North Schleswig. Inquire discreetly and ascertain the truth of the report. A transfer of the possession of those islands to another European Power could not be regarded with favor by this Government.”<sup>337</sup> This information turned out to be false. Similar rumors appeared again in the winter 1875 and 1876, but once more both, German and Danish governments denounced them. Danish West Indies eventually ended under U.S. control during the World War I in 1916, when Woodrow Wilson was at the office, and it was paradoxically again because of the fear that the imperial Germany would acquire them.<sup>338</sup>

The fear of U.S. governments of this period from the possibility of transferring of Caribbean islands among European powers became one of the characteristic aspects of the 1870’s. Especially Germany after 1870 was suspected several times for negotiating the acquisition of an insular colony in the Caribbean. In 1871 it was supposed to be Samaná Bay in Santo Domingo, where some role in it played probably the president Buenaventura Baez, who thus wanted to “galvanize” the United States into activity. However, even this time the American Minister in Great Britain Bancroft, after making inquiries in Berlin, could report

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<sup>335</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>336</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*, P. Smith, Gloucester (Mass.), 1966 [c1937], p. 26.

<sup>337</sup> Tansill, C. C., *The Purchase of the Danish West Indies* (Baltimore, 1932), p. 162 quoted in *Ibid*, p. 26.

<sup>338</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 46.

shortly to Washington: “Rumor untrue, utterly denied.”<sup>339</sup> Germany under the firm rule of the Chancellor Bismarck had no intentions to acquire colonies in the 1870’s, all the more in the Caribbean or Latin America. However, the kind of schizophrenia of U.S. administrations, especially during Ulysses S. Grant’s presidency with Hamilton Fish serving as the Secretary of State, kept having an ear to any kind of such information. Another came in 1874, when Germany was supposedly trying to secure the cession of Puerto Rico from Spain, which was immediately denied by the Spanish Foreign Minister in the discussion with U.S. Minister in Spain Caleb Cushing.

It is important to notice at this point, that though the United States in the 1870’s had not acquired any of islands in the Caribbean, it was mostly because of the domestic distaste of Americans to support such foreign policy. The Secretary of State Seward had in mind a vision of the Caribbean basin controlled by the United States from the whole chain of naval bases, and either his successor Hamilton Fish was opposed to the idea to the latter, even though he wasn’t so enthusiastic. However, as we could see above, when it came to the possibility of the transfer of the territory to another European power, the reaction of the United States was allergic. Nevertheless, the decade after the Civil War brought one quite important shift in the perception of the interests of the United States in the Caribbean by European countries.

The historically insignificant episode gives us a clear example. In 1869 the government of Sweden and Norway sounded the U.S. government on its willingness to purchase another of the Lesser Antilles islands, St. Barthelemy. Behind this inquiry was the offer of Italy to purchase the island from Sweden. The important detail here is that the Swedish government considered more logic to offer the island first to the United States, before it would even bargain with Italy. Even though nothing would come up of this episode, and the island was transferred to France in 1877 without even noticing Washington, for France presented the legal claim for the island, it indicated that European countries started to take the interests of the United States in the Caribbean as a legitimate

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<sup>339</sup>Tansill, C. C., *The Purchase of the Danish West Indies* (Baltimore, 1932), p. 155 quoted in Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*, p. 29.

position.<sup>340</sup> The fact that Sweden's logical outcome was to offer its colony in the West Indies rather to the United States than to Italy, because if it was otherwise, the government in Washington would strongly protest, clearly proves it.

The most important attempt to acquire insular territory in the Caribbean carried out by the United States in the 1870's was an effort of President Ulysses S. Grant to annex Santo Domingo. The proposals for the annexation of Santo Domingo had been considered already during the 1850's, but the struggle over slavery and the Civil War stopped them. The Secretary of State Seward on his "health" voyage around the Caribbean in 1866 visited also Santo Domingo, and after his return to Washington agreed "not simply to recognize the nation's independence, but also to begin the process of absorption."<sup>341</sup> Seward also had in mind, if the annexation would seem impossible to realize, the purchase or the lease of the naval harbor in Samaná Bay, and negotiated with both main Dominican political rivals José Maria Cabral and Buenaventura Baez. It was the annexation of Santo Domingo to which referred President Johnson in his Annual Message to the Congress in 1869, when he was in favor of "acquisition and incorporation into our Federal Union of the several adjacent continental and insular communities."<sup>342</sup> The House of Representatives, however, defeated two resolutions proposing a protectorate over Haiti and Santo Domingo and another that proposed annexation of Santo Domingo itself. Thus the great visionary Secretary of State left the office without fulfilling one of his expansionist dreams.

Nevertheless, the question of the annexation of Santo Domingo dominated the U.S. foreign policy of the first term of President Ulysses S. Grant. "On the Dominican side, the scheme was nothing more or less than an expedient on the part of the unsavory Buenaventura Baez to maintain himself in power. On the American side it was accepted by Grant with a degree of naïveté rarely equaled by an American President, and supported by Fish with a loyalty which can only be explained as the price paid for persuading Grant to neutrality in the Cuban business."<sup>343</sup> Grant who experienced in 1852 on his way to California hardship of the prolongation of traveling through Central America was convinced that the

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-15, 33.

<sup>341</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 81.

<sup>342</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 323.

<sup>343</sup> Perkins, Dexter, *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*, p. 15.

United States needed the inter-oceanic canal to secure the progress of its settlement on the Pacific coast. Among people who strongly supported this idea was the Senator from California Cornelius Cole. As former military chief of the Union Army, Grant gladly gave ear to appeals of the Navy officers as were for example Commodore Daniel Ammen for the acquisition of the naval base so much needed during the Civil War. Grant had also an ear for merchants with commercial interests on the island like Peter J. Sullivan, former minister to Colombia, William L. Cazneau, Joseph W. Fabens, or the New York financial house Spofford, Tileston and Co., which started the steamship line to Santo Domingo. “Grant became convinced that the Caribbean country was essential to the United States, and for several months he was obsessed with a burning desire to acquire it.”<sup>344</sup>

Therefore, the President decided to send his White House aide, Brigadier General Orville E. Babcock, as a special envoy to investigate the possibility of the annexation of the island and to gather information about the disposition of the Dominican people toward the United States. Babcock, without being authorized to do so, returned to Washington in September 1869 with a memorandum providing two alternatives: 1) annexation, with the assumption by the United States of the Dominican foreign debt to the amount of \$1,500,000; 2) purchase of Samaná Bay for \$2,000,000. The Secretary of State Fish and other members of the cabinet weren’t very enthusiastic about such offer, and thus Grant sent Babcock to negotiate new treaty, this time with official authorization. Babcock returned with an official treaty, which counted with full incorporation of Santo Domingo on the basis of statehood into the Union. If the treaty would not be acceptable, Babcock negotiated the lease of Samaná Bay for fifty years for the sum of \$150,000.<sup>345</sup>

“Grant accepted the annexation treaty and lobbied aggressively for it, exerting all his influence on individual senators to win their votes.”<sup>346</sup> President’s obstinacy was worthwhile his military personality. “He walked to Charles Sumner’s house one evening to solicit the Senator’s help, he lobbied personally in the Capitol, he authorized the negotiation of an additional article extending the

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<sup>344</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 51.

<sup>345</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 323.

<sup>346</sup> Dulles, Foster Rhea, *Prelude to World Power*, p. 58.

ratification date, he demanded the Attorney General's resignation in order to curry favor with Senators whom that official had antagonized, and he welcomed several moves by Fish supporting the treaty. But all his efforts came to nothing. Sumner, still chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, threw his great influence against the treaty, and on June 30, 1870, the Senate defeated it decisively."<sup>347</sup> Nothing had changed even after the special commission, created for the investigation of the issue, made a favorable report.

It is worth mentioning that one of the main arguments of the opponents of the annexation like Sumner, or Senator Carl Schurz, was racial question. Sumner argued that "the island of Santo Domingo, situated in tropical waters, and occupied by another race, of another color, never can become a permanent possession of the United States...Already by a higher statue is that island set apart to the colored race. It is theirs by right of possession, by their sweat and blood mingling with the soil, by tropical position, by its burning sun, and by unalterable laws of climate."<sup>348</sup> Carl Schurz who later on became the leader of anti-expansionist movement reminded his colleagues that "if you incorporate those tropical countries with the Republic of the United States, you will have to incorporate their people too...do not touch a scheme like this; do not trifle with that which may poison the future of this great nation, beware of the tropics."<sup>349</sup>

Historian Lars Schoultz summarizes the rejection of the annexation of Santo Domingo in 1870 with these words: "With that said [Schurz's words], an immensely significant moment in the history of U.S. – Latin American relations occurred: buried with the Dominican annexation treaty was the process of expansion through absorption. Since that moment in 1870, a consensus has existed in the United States that it is inadvisable to expand the nation's boundaries

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<sup>347</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 52. The result of the vote was 28:28, which meant that the support by far didn't reach the majority of two thirds of votes.

<sup>348</sup> *Congressional Globe*, 21 December 1870, pp. 225-231 in Foner, Philip S., Richard C. Winchester, (ed.), *The Anti-Imperialist Reader. A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States. Volume I. From the Mexican War to the Election of 1900*, Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., New York, London, 1984, pp. 62-63.

<sup>349</sup> Bancroft, Frederick, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Charles Schurz*, 6 vols., G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1913, vol. 2, pp. 71-122 and 177-252 quoted in Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 83. See also Love, Eric T., *Race over Empire. Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900*, Chapter 2, pp. 27-73 and Foner, Philip S., Richard C. Winchester, (ed.), *The Anti-Imperialist Reader*, pp. 62-66.

if it entails the addition of Latin Americans to the Union. The single exception, Puerto Rico, was just that – an exception – and one that virtually everyone in Washington still hopes will never be repeated.”<sup>350</sup> Similar arguments would be again heard from the same anti-imperialists in the late 1890’s, but this time not heeded.

## **VI.II. Isthmian Canal Question in the 1870’s and 1880’s**

When Grant as a young U.S. Army captain traveled to California in 1852, he complained about the conditions of the voyage and the delay when crossing the Isthmus of Panama: “I wondered how any person could live many months in Aspinwall [now Colón], and wondered still more why any one tried ... we were delayed six weeks. About one-seventh of those who left New York harbor with the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July now lay buried on the Isthmus of Panama.”<sup>351</sup> Personal experience of President Grant with distressful voyage across Central America played important role in his interest in the inter-oceanic canal issue throughout the whole time in office. The question of creation of the canal had been one the principal concerns of U.S. foreign policy since independence, and obtained fundamental importance after the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848.<sup>352</sup>

The canal question was revived already by the Andrew Johnson’s administration, respectively by the Secretary of State Seward. A construction of the water route across Central America was an integral part of the greater vision of the United States role in Latin America and Asia, which Seward attempted to realize. The commercial expansion to Asian and Latin American markets needed more feasible access to ports in the Pacific Ocean. The progress of newly acquired western coast of the United States also essentially depended on faster connection with the financial and commercial centers in the Northwest.

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<sup>350</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 83.

<sup>351</sup> U. S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 2 vols. (N.Y.: Charles L. Webster, 1892), vol. 1, pp. 195, 198, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 153 or see Opatrný, Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, Mladá Fronta, Praha 1979, p. 55.

<sup>352</sup> See *Ibid*, pp. 13-24.

Practically all administrations from Johnson to the second term of Grover Cleveland had tried to resolve the question of canal in Central America with different “degrees of enthusiasm,” but for various reasons the final solution didn’t come until after the Spanish-American War of 1898, respectively the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>353</sup> Of these reasons the most important were the reluctance of American public to support expansionism in the situation of domestic recovery after the Civil War, technical difficulties of such project, and political instability in the region of Central America. From the international point of view probably the most important restraint for the canal under U.S. solely influence was the existence of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 with Great Britain. Violation of the treaty from American side would give Great Britain free hand in Central America and especially the region of Mosquito Coast, which directly adjoined with one of the possible isthmian routes.

Due to activities of Spain in Santo Domingo and France in Mexico during the 1860’s, politicians in Washington were sensitive to any kind of European activities in the Caribbean and Latin America. Therefore, even though Seward realized that the creation of the canal was at the moment practically impossible, he tried to secure it to be under the control of the United States by treaties and conventions with countries, where possible canal routes could exist. In 1864 he negotiated the treaty with Honduras, and in 1868 a convention with Nicaragua.<sup>354</sup> Seward started to support the idea of an “American” canal after the meeting with a New York-based group of businessmen, which formed the Isthmus Canal Company in September 1868. First discussion with Colombian representatives, however, weren’t successful, so Seward sent to Bogota a special envoy, General Caleb Cushing. “It would seem that the Government of the United States must attach great importance to this question from its selection of a man of such prominence as General Cushing to conduct the negotiations,” commented the British minister in Colombia.<sup>355</sup> The treaty was negotiated very quickly and Cushing returned to Washington in February 1869. However, the Congress just recently almost impeached President Johnson so the lame-duck administration

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<sup>353</sup> Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 85.

<sup>354</sup> The United States didn’t claim any special canal rights in case of the creation of the canal in this convention. *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>355</sup> Bunch to Stanley, no. 2, January 16, 1869, F.O. 55/248 quoted in *Ibid*, p. 93.

didn't obtain any support, especially when the public was indifferent to such a proposal. The U.S. Senate never voted the treaty and even the Colombian Senate defeated it. The importance of the treaty lies in the fact that the proposal was that even if the canal were constructed and operated by the United States government, the funding of the project would come from private sources. The principal of government support for private activities in the creation of the canal prevailed until the late 1890's.

The rejection of the treaty by Colombia so incensed representatives of Panama that they threatened to secede.<sup>356</sup> Thus when Ulysses S. Grant entered the office it seemed that the situation was favorable for further negotiations. The President named as new minister to Colombia his long-time friend General Stephen A. Hurlbut who opened discussions with the Colombian government in November 1869 and thanks to his aggressive diplomacy new treaty, which reaffirmed the terms of the previous agreement, was signed in January 1870. This treaty, however, had the same result as the first one. The Colombian Senate ratified it but with seventeen amendments, which made the treaty practically unacceptable for the United States. Moreover, the first reports of surveys in the Darien region didn't show much enthusiasm for practicability of building of the canal in Panama.

Besides these aspects directly connected with the issue, there were others influencing the negative decision of the Congress. On May 10, 1869, the first transcontinental railroad across the United States was completed, therefore, the need for the canal as a means of transportation to the west coast of the country diminished. At the same time there aroused friction between the Grant administration and the Senate over the question of the annexation of Santo Domingo. President's obsession for the annexation of Santo Domingo was described earlier, so it was no surprise that other issues of considerable much more importance for the United States as the canal treaty or Cuban rebellion were pushed back. It is necessary to add that the Secretary of State Fish rather didn't force these issues too much because he knew that it would just incense his hardheaded president.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 61.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 60-1 or Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, pp. 92-5.

Seward and after him Fish also closely monitored the progress of the construction of the Suez Canal, which was finally opened in 1869, because it gave significant commercial advantage to European merchants in the competition for Asian markets. Also the fact that the canal was build with the French government backing the company of Ferdinand de Lesseps and thus practically controlled the transit raised the attention of politicians in Washington.<sup>358</sup> The reason for this was that U.S. foreign policy-makers desired the existence of similar canal in Central America under the control of the United States. However, there existed consent that it was better for the United States to have no canal than the canal under the control of France or Great Britain. On the other hand the philosophy of politicians in London was that the hegemony of Royal Navy on the world seas and existence of British colonies around the whole world didn't call for a canal in Central America. On the contrary, the status quo definitely served to the British commerce in the competition with the United States, and when Central America is considered, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 gave Great Britain for the moment enough guarantees for keeping of its position in the region. "Although both the Foreign Office and the Admiralty regarded a Central American canal as impractical, they could not completely rule out its ultimate completion. The implication of exclusive control by the United States over such communications could therefore directly affect British interests should a canal ever prove practical. These interests were to be safeguarded by an instruction to Thornton [British Minister in the United States] to remind Seward of the stipulations of Article 8 of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, by which Britain and the United States disclaimed any such exclusive rights."<sup>359</sup> Such practice the Foreign Office kept following practically until the end of 1880's.

Even though the Santo Domingo issue dominated to President Grant's agenda, and in spite of negative reception of the two treaties negotiated with Colombia, the administration didn't lose interest in the canal question entirely. Since it was clear that the creation of the canal was impossible for the moment, its

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<sup>358</sup> Great Britain purchased a share of the ruler of Egypt Isma'il Pasha worth £4,000,000 in 1875 and even though France remained the main shareholder, the Convention of Constantinople of 1888 declared Great Britain responsible for the protection of the canal, which was to be formally a neutral zone.

<sup>359</sup> F.O. to Thornton, January 30, 1869, F.O. 55/248 quoted in Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 96.

focus turned more towards the search for the most practicable location of the canal. Several surveys were sent to the region before 1872, but with the creation of the Interoceanic Canal Commission under the chairmanship of Admiral Daniel Ammen the scientific research obtained solid form.<sup>360</sup> The Commission ultimately narrowed a choosing between the Panama and Nicaragua variants in spite of the fact that both had significant technical and political obstacles. The Panama route was less popular because an experience with negotiations with Colombian governments wasn't positive. The Nicaragua route was considered more feasible for the Nicaraguan government was willing to negotiate the treaty with the United States so the influence of Great Britain and its control of Mosquito Coast would be diminished. The problem of the Nicaraguan variant was that the San Juan River, which thanks to its character very often changed the course of its stream, lied on the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and both governments claimed it as national territory.<sup>361</sup> This state of things fully suited to the Secretary Fish because he showed less and less enthusiasm for active policy in the canal issue realizing that it was more an abstract issue since financial and technical aspects of the construction of such canal weren't in hands of private sources, and when the government support was impossible. He was also conformed to the situation because there didn't exist any real danger that some European power would take initiative, especially when Great Britain had no interest in changing of principles of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. This position of Fish was clearly demonstrated, when the Secretary disavowed new treaty negotiated by Minister Hurlbut with Colombia in 1872.<sup>362</sup>

Final report of the Commission wasn't ready until the second half of 1875 and its conclusion, which recommended Lull's route, was presented to Grant on February 2, 1876. As the second most feasible variant was chosen the Panama route but it was suggested that this variant would come up about one third more

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<sup>360</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 330. One of the first reports studied by the Commission was the recommendation of Edward P. Lull who suggested the variant using San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, which had become the favorite American route for the next two decades. Opatrný Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, Mladá Fronta, Praha 1979, p. 60.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>362</sup> Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 98. Hurlbut's successor, William L. Scruggs, was instructed by Fish to avoid discussion of the canal question. See Scruggs to Fish, no. 74, November 17, 1874, RG 59, Colombia, Dispatches, 29, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 237 (Note 85).

expensive.<sup>363</sup> The most important recommendation of the Commission for the moment being was that the canal should be facilitated if all nations intending to use it would join together to guarantee its neutrality and protection. The proposed route also adjoined Costa Rican territory and therefore the negotiations with that government were to be included.<sup>364</sup>

The position of Great Britain wasn't encouraging because the Foreign Office stood firmly on the principles of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and the treaty signed with Nicaragua in 1860. Negotiations with Nicaraguan and Costa Rican governments proved to be as difficult as with Colombia.<sup>365</sup> It is necessary to add that the year 1876 was the election year in the United States and therefore the decision-making capacity of the administration was lowered. The proposal of the treaty wasn't acceptable neither for Costa Rican nor Nicaraguan governments, which was especially opposing the fact that the canal zone would be practically excepted from its jurisdiction.<sup>366</sup> Thus the conclusion of ten years of negotiations during the final years of Johnson's and the two terms of Grant's administrations were two non-ratified treaties and thousands of pages of documentation, which eventually recommended the route suggested by Lull even before the Commission was established. But the most significant result of the 1870's was that the government of the United States officially abandoned the idea of "American" canal for the internationalized inter-oceanic route. This could have happened only because none of the European governments showed real interest in building such canal.

The situation changed radically at the moment, when the French private company directed by the famous constructor of the Suez Canal Ferdinand de Lesseps obtained the concession for the construction of the canal in the Colombian province of Panama. Julius W. Pratt accurately described the situation, when he wrote that: "While the United States deliberated, however, Europeans began to make the dirt fly."<sup>367</sup> The Colombian government for some time

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<sup>363</sup> Opatrný Josef, Průplav dvou oceánů, pp. 62-3.

<sup>364</sup> Smith, Joseph, Illusions of Conflict, p. 99.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>366</sup> For more information about negotiations with diplomats Peralta (Costa Rica) and Cárdenas look at Opatrný Josef, Průplav dvou oceánů, pp. 63-5.

<sup>367</sup> Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, p. 330.

observed with displeasure that the Commission officially recommended the Nicaraguan route. So when the opportunity to grant the concession to the French army officer Lucien Wyse appeared, politicians in Bogota quickly used it. Moreover, by giving the concession for the construction to the European company was seen as a reprisal for American refusal. In 1875 the congress of the French Geographical Society was held in Paris. As a result of this congress the *Société Civile International du Canal Interocéanique* was founded, which had the goal to survey most feasible route for the canal. A year later French army officer Lucien Napoleon Bonaparte Wyse started the research. “He did that and more, obtaining a concession from the Colombian government to build and operate a canal across the isthmus of Panama.”<sup>368</sup>

In 1879 Ferdinand de Lesseps became the director of the French Geographical Society. Lesseps invited hundred and fifty canal-specialists to the international conference, which started on May 15, 1879. Besides the official purposes – to select the best canal route and to make technical recommendations regarding the construction, the conference aimed to generate proper publicity to the project so the construction bonds could be sold easier. The United States representatives, Daniel Ammen and Ancieto G. Menocal, belonged among the few participants who favored the Nicaraguan route.<sup>369</sup> When the participants voted on May 29, 1879, only eight of them was against the route proposed by Wyse and Lesseps and seventy-four candidates supported the idea.<sup>370</sup> The *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique du Panama* was created soon after the conference adjourned, and the concession from Colombian government was bought from Wyse for \$10,000,000. “All this came as something of a shock to officials in Washington, who had assumed that any Central American canal would be built by private U.S. capital, aided perhaps by a formal understanding between

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<sup>368</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, pp. 153-4 and Opatrný Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>369</sup> Menocal was the U.S. Navy engineer and close friend of Ammen who became involved in a number of surveys in the Isthmus. He was the biggest supporter of the Nicaraguan route. Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, pp. 100, 237. Also see Parks, E. Taylor, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1935, Chapter XXII, pp. 351-362 (pages partly missing), Internet source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=NG6kyaHzgnQC&printsec=frontcover&sig=ACfU3U1Vhydka pyeMUotQNz-yEwMVI2UyA#PRA1-PR16,M1>.

<sup>370</sup> It is clear that almost a half of the experts participating on the conference abstained from the voting or simply wasn't present. Opatrný Josef, *Průplav dvou oceánů*, pp. 70-1.

the U.S. government and the Central American state of Washington's choice. True, the efforts to date had been unsuccessful, but U.S. officials believed that it was just a matter of time until acceptable arrangements could be made and U.S. entrepreneurs could set to work, probably in Nicaragua. Now, however, the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes was chagrined to discover that a smooth-talking Frenchman had invited Washington's backup date to the prom and, even worse, that Colombia accepted."<sup>371</sup>

Lesseps was well aware of the strong opposition to the project in the United States. Therefore after the official inauguration of the construction and few weeks of banquets and celebrations, Lesseps's first visit was to the United States, where he tried to convince the American politicians and the public that the canal was purely "private property of all nationalities" and repeatedly invited U.S. citizens to invest in the project, which he saw as an especially appropriate opportunity for those "who strive after the works of peace and of progress, in which the United States are especially preeminent."<sup>372</sup> Lesseps was received by President Hayes, testified before a House Select Committee on Interoceanic Canals, and made a tour around the country lecturing in New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago. He also planned to establish an American advisory board on to his organization, and the chairmanship wasn't offered to anybody less important than to former President Grant who was, however, stout supporter of the Nicaragua route, and also stood as a head of the rival Nicaragua Company. The position was later offered to the Secretary of Navy from Hayes's cabinet, R. W. Thompson, who accepted with the annual salary of \$25,000. When this became known, Thompson resigned on the post. "American financial agents were chosen, and some \$1,500,000 were spent for the promotion of the company through bankers, politicians, and editors, but also to little avail."<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 154.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>373</sup> Parks, E. Taylor, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*, p. 364, Internet source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=NG6kyaHzgnQC&printsec=frontcover&sig=ACfU3U1VhydkapyeMUotQNZ-yEwMVI2UyA#PRA1-PR16.M1>. Grant's and Ammen's Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua soon got in financial problems because the economical crisis in the United States deepened, and in September 1884 lapsed its concession. The company was revived by other group of investors in 1889 and the works on the canal in Nicaragua continued for three more years until the crisis of 1893 definitely buried it. Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 64-5, or Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 155.

Despite the fact that the French government vehemently assured the United States that it had no intention of becoming involved in the affairs of the isthmus, President Hayes and his Secretary of State William M. Evarts elected very strong rhetoric to let the European countries and Colombia know that the inter-oceanic canal in Central America was its fundamental foreign policy concern.<sup>374</sup> Hayes expressed his view in a special message sent to the Congress on March, 8, 1880: “The true policy of the United States as to a canal across any part of the Isthmus is either a canal under American control, or no canal. We cannot allow the geographical relations of the North American continent to be essentially changed. European control of this thoroughfare between the different parts of the United States is wholly inadmissible.”<sup>375</sup> Also Evarts in the instruction to newly appointed Minister in Colombia Ernest Dichman protested against the Colombian concession to the Lesseps’ company and asked the government of Colombia for timely information about any proposed new concessions. Evarts concluded that: “This government cannot consider itself excluded by any arrangement between other powers or individuals to which it is not a party, from a direct interest, and if necessary, a positive supervision and interposition in the execution of any project, which by completing an interoceanic connection...would materially affect its commercial interests, change the territorial relations of its own sovereignty and impose upon it the necessity of a foreign policy, which...had been hitherto sedulously avoided.”<sup>376</sup>

The Colombian Minister in Washington entered in certain negotiations with Evert’s advisor William H. Trescot in January 1881 regarding possible modification of the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846, but both these talks and other demands were faced with defiance in Bogota. After the departure of the Minister Santo Domingo Vila, no Colombian representative was sent to

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<sup>374</sup> For selection of Rutherford B. Hayes’ speeches see Bishop, Arthur, (ed.), Rutherford B. Hayes, Chronology – Documents – Biographical Aids, Oceana Publications, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1969.

<sup>375</sup> Rutherford B. Hayes to the Senate and the House of Representatives, March, 8, 1880, Special Messages, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. VII, pp. 585-86. Also Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes, vol. 5, p. 587-9 quoted in Smith, Joseph, Illusions of Conflict, p. 102.

<sup>376</sup> Evarts to Dichman, (107) April 19, 1880, Inst. Col, XVII, 153-65 quoted in Parks, E. Taylor, Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934, p. 365, Google Book Search, Internet source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=NG6kyaHzgnQC&printsec=frontcover&sig=ACfU3U1Vhydka pyeMUotQNz-yEwMVI2UyA#PRA1-PR16.M1>.

Washington until 1884, which further indicated Colombia's disinclination to negotiate a canal treaty with the United States. "The Panama project was going ahead in spite of the American attitude and, furthermore, without American competition, for neither the administration nor Congress had given endorsement or financial backing for the alternative American canal schemes."<sup>377</sup>

Thus the administration of James A. Garfield, and after his assassination of Chester A. Arthur, inherited the situation, when the United States had to accept the construction of the canal in Panama by the French private company, and when the government of Colombia wasn't showing much enthusiasm for cooperation with Washington.<sup>378</sup> Moreover, Colombia and Costa Rica started in the spring of 1881 negotiations for a boundary dispute and were considering the arbitration of the King of Belgium, and if he wouldn't be willing to arbitrate the King of Spain or the President of Argentina. This was a clear message to the United States since the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty made the United States the guarantor of neutrality of the Isthmus and therefore entitled it to know of any territorial changes in the area. The Secretary Blaine declared that his government would not be bound by the decision of any arbiter chosen without American approval. Both Belgian and Spanish governments refused to arbitrate and despite the anger of Colombia and Costa Rica, Blaine "effectively killed the negotiations."<sup>379</sup>

New policy endorsed by the Secretary Blaine was expressed in the circular letter, sent to all of the United States European legations in June 1881. The basis of U.S. foreign policy was the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty and the responsibility of the United States to maintain the neutrality of the isthmus. Any kind of private venture with non-American capital would not be interfered, nor did the United States seek exclusive privileges for its shipping. Thus the policy of the United States in the early 1880's became that the world's commerce should be free in the Panama Isthmus. However, the political interests of the United States in the region were of the highest concern because of the need to secure the progress of the states on the Pacific coast. European powers had no interest in declaring of any

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<sup>377</sup> Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 103, Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (CO), London, 2001, p. 43.

<sup>378</sup> For more information and documents on short Garfield Presidency see Furer, Howard B., (ed.), James A. Garfield, Chester A. Arthur. *Chronology – Documents – Biographical Aids*, Oceana Publications, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1970.

<sup>379</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, pp. 44-5.

kind of joint protection over the canal and Great Britain, which had the biggest interest in Central America, kept announcing that the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was the pillar of its policy in the region and that there was no way around it. Blaine attempted to push the Foreign Office to modify or even abrogate the treaty but with no success.<sup>380</sup>

Blaine's successor in the office Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, appointed by President Arthur in December 1881, turned to the policy of securing the exclusive rights of the United States in Nicaragua arguing that the Interoceanic Commission's recommendation from 1876 was the Nicaraguan route anyway. It is interesting that even de Lesseps, seeing that he would not find support for his canal and that the American government and public were hostile towards his project, suggested that Americans construct their own canal. "I should be well satisfied with such a course, for every new highway is a step forward."<sup>381</sup> Therefore, when the attempts for modification of the status and conditions of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Great Britain failed, the Arthur administration, after protracted discussions, signed a canal treaty with the Nicaraguan government on December 1, 1884.

The Frelinghuysen-Zavala treaty gave the United States a protectorate over the canal strip should it be completed within ten years. The President emphasized, besides the political benefits of the canal, also the contribution of such treaty to American commerce in a special message from December 10, 1884: "From a purely commercial point of view the completion of such a waterway opens a most favorable prospect for the future of our country. The nations of the Pacific coast of South America will by its means be brought into close connection with our Gulf States. The relation of those American countries to the United States is that of a natural market, from which the want of direct communication has hitherto practically excluded us. ...It will bring the European grain markets of demand within easy distance of our Pacific States, and will give to the manufacturers on the Atlantic seaboard economical access to the cities of China, thus breaking down the barrier which separates the principal manufacturing center of the United States from the markets of the vast population of Asia, and placing the eastern

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid, pp. 46-53.

<sup>381</sup> Ferdinand de Lesseps, *The Interoceanic Canal*, North American review, 130 (1880): 8 quoted in Smith, Joseph, *Illusions of Conflict*, p. 105.

States of the Union for all purposes of trade midway between Europe and Asia.”<sup>382</sup> The provisions for governmental construction and for a permanent entangling alliance with Nicaragua were also included in the treaty, but Arthur endeavored to inveigle the Senate into approving the treaty by holding out alluring trade prospects.<sup>383</sup>

The Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty, however, was signed just few days after the Republican Party lost first elections since 1860, and was driven out from the White House. The treaty “was greeted with marked ambivalence in Washington, for although it granted the United States access to the isthmus, it also converted Nicaragua into a formal U.S. protectorate, and, of course, it obviously violated the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Great Britain. For that reason the Senate refused to consider it and decided to leave the decision on the new-coming administration of Grover Cleveland.<sup>384</sup> New President, however, was of a completely different opinion on the expansion of political and territorial control of the United States in the Caribbean, Latin America or the Pacific. “A stubborn, courageous, but provincial person, Cleveland concerned himself little with foreign policy, his views about which were shaped mainly by his moralistic abhorrence of imperialism and by his belief in a purer America as contrasted with an irredeemable Old World.”<sup>385</sup>

Concerning the construction of the canal and the Grant-Hayes policy of unilateral control of it, Cleveland expressed his opinion in the First Annual Message:

“My immediate predecessor caused to be negotiated with Nicaragua a treaty for the construction, by and at the sole cost of the United States, of a canal through Nicaragua territory, and laid it before the Senate. Pending the action of that body thereon, I withdrew the treaty for reexamination....

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<sup>382</sup> Chester A. Arthur to the Senate of the United States, December 10, 1884, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. VIII, pp. 256-60.

<sup>383</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, p. 65.

<sup>384</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>385</sup> Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 65-6. For selection of Grover Cleveland’s public papers see Vexler, Joseph I., (ed.), *Grover Cleveland. Chronology – Documents – Biographical Aids*, Oceana Publications, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1968.

Maintaining, as I do, the tenets of a line of precedents from Washington's day, which proscribe entangling alliances with foreign states, I do not favor a policy of acquisition of new and distant territory or the incorporation of remote interests with our own....

Whatever highway may be constructed across the barrier dividing the two greatest maritime areas of the world must be for the world's benefit – a trust for mankind, to be removed from the chance of domination by any single power, nor become a point of invitation for hostilities or a prize for warlike ambition. An engagement combining the construction, ownership, and operation of such a work by this Government, with the foreign state whose responsibilities and rights we would share is, in my judgment, inconsistent with such dedication to universal and neutral use, and would, moreover, entail measures for its realization beyond the scope of our national polity or present means.”<sup>386</sup> Grover Cleveland with Thomas F. Bayard as the Secretary of State maintained this policy throughout his first term in the office in spite of the fact that the de Lesseps company went into bankruptcy in 1889.<sup>387</sup>

On the other hand the Republicans incorporated in their election campaign of 1888 the need to oppose extension of foreign influence in Central America, and immediately after the victory of Benjamin Harrison, the newly appointed President in his inaugural speech announced that none of European countries should dominate the canal. “It is so manifestly incompatible with those precautions for our peace and safety which all the great powers habitually observe and enforce in matters affecting them that a shorter waterway between our eastern and western seaboard should be dominated by any European Government that we may confidently expect that such a purpose will not be entertained by any friendly power.”<sup>388</sup> The strong rhetoric of new administration may have had some

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<sup>386</sup> Grover Cleveland, First Annual Message, December 8, 1885, Washington D.C., Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers, Vol. VIII, pp. 227-8.

<sup>387</sup> For foreign policy of Thomas F. Bayard in detail see Tansill, Charles, Callan, The Foreign Policy of Thomas F. Bayard, Fordham University Press, New York (NY), 1940

<sup>388</sup> Inaugural Address of Benjamin Harrison, March 4, 1889, The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Internet source: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/harris.htm>. For more reading, speeches, and published statements of Benjamin Harrison see Sievers, Harry J., (ed.), Benjamin Harrison. Chronology – Documents – Biographical Aids, Oceana Publications, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1969.

influence on the French decision to suspend the works on the canal, which was announced on May 15, 1889.<sup>389</sup>

The bankruptcy of the French company and smaller attention of European powers to issues of the Western Hemisphere in the late 1880's and early 1890's<sup>390</sup> caused that even though the Harrison administration had strong expansionist tendencies, its policy was rather moderate. There were two principal reasons for this; first the failure of the French project clearly showed that the completion of the construction was practically impossible when financed from private sources. Thus the U.S. government could feel safe from new European private projects and was satisfied with restraining European governments from taking initiative in the finalization of the canal. The economical and internal situation in the United States wasn't favorable either for the government backup of the construction. It would take over a decade for such moment, which came after the Spanish-American War and acquisition of Philippines in 1898. Second main reason for taking more leisure approach in the canal question was that the Harrison administration, with James G. Blaine once more the Secretary of State, revived the idea of the Pan-American conference and the aggressive policy in Central America would definitely diminish chances for realization of such project.

### **VI.III. Other U.S. Foreign Policy Issues in the 1880's**

In the previous parts of this chapter the two most important foreign policy issues of the United States towards Latin America were described – the efforts to acquire naval bases in the Caribbean and to secure the construction of the inter-oceanic canal under American control. But in spite of the fact that the administrations of Presidents Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, and the first term of Grover Cleveland are considered as less significant in terms of U.S. foreign policy successes in the Western Hemisphere, some fundamental changes had been started in this era, which allowed the revival of expansionism in the second half of the 1890's. No wonder that historian of this era named his book with the title

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<sup>389</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 157.

<sup>390</sup> Great Britain, France, Germany, or Russia were much more occupied with the 'scramble for Africa' or the situation in Asia.

*Awkward Years*.<sup>391</sup> He reviews that “the real importance of the 1880’s, in diplomacy as in the history of American business, labor, and agriculture, is that the decade formed a bridge between the problems of the Civil War and Reconstruction and those of the tempestuous *fin de siècle*. In the field of foreign affairs the “manifest destiny” spirit of the 1850’s, which Seward and Grant had kept alive after the war, was now combined with new forces, reshaping public opinion and subjecting officials to irresistible pressures. After the quiet administration of President Rutherford B. Hayes – the “dead center” in the history of foreign relations between 1865 and 1898 – the State Department and Congress became more and more active in adapting American foreign policy to changing conditions (by trial and error) and thereby prepared the country in some measure for the imperialism and internationalism of Theodore Roosevelt. One of the forces which helped to alter policy was an increased concern for American prestige.”<sup>392</sup>

Probably the most important concerns of the 1880’s U.S. foreign policy is not directly connected with the objective of this thesis. The American Secretaries of State from William M. Evarts to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen became more and more occupied with enforcing of U.S. interests not only in traditional areas such as the Caribbean, Central, and South America, but also in the Pacific and Asia, and in the case of Congo Conference in Berlin also in Africa. The United States intermeddled with other European powers, now including Imperial Germany, in Japan, China, Hawaii, Samoa or Congo. These issues don’t, however, fall within the scope of this thesis, besides the fact that they were of course indirectly connected with the growing American political and economical interests around the world, of which still the most important, however, was the Western Hemisphere.<sup>393</sup>

The topics, which will be described now, clearly demonstrate yet another new aspect in the U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, and that was that the

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<sup>391</sup> Pletcher, David M., *Awkward Years, American Foreign Relations under Garfield and Arthur*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (IL), 1962.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>393</sup> For the United States foreign policy in Asia, Hawaii, Samoa or Africa see for example Pratt, A History of the United States Foreign Policy, pp. 330-32, 361-67, 373-74, Pletcher, David M., *Awkward Years, American Foreign Relations Under Garfield and Arthur*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (IL), 1962, pp. 195-234, 308-329, or Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York (NY), London, 1974, pp. 67-84, 107-22, 177-94.

United States mainly for economic reasons but also from the perspective of the “hemispheric leadership” begun to consider the entire Latin America as its privileged sphere of influence. The American attempts and their failure to mediate in the war of Spain against Chile and Peru, and the War of Triple Alliance were analyzed earlier in this thesis. Their importance vested mainly in the fact that they can be considered as a direct reaction on the attempt of European nation to enforce its will against the republics of the Western Hemisphere in the case of the Pacific War, and as the first “test” of the potentiality to play the role of an arbiter in the case of La Plata conflict. The issues of the 1880’s – the boundary conflict between Mexico and Guatemala and the War of the Pacific between Chile on one side, against Peru and Bolivia on the other, indicate yet another step towards the moment in the late 1890’s, when the United States firmly grasped the role of the hemispheric leader.<sup>394</sup> Its ambiguous results, however, proved that the northern republic had not acquired enough “respect” yet, which definitely wasn’t the case after the War with Spain in 1898.

### **VI.III.I. Boundary Dispute between Mexico and Guatemala, 1880-1882**

The boundary question between Mexico of Porfirio Diaz and Guatemala of Justo Rufino Barrios in the early 1880’s was of smaller significance in the course of events leading toward the revival of expansionism of the late 1890’s. However, it is connected indirectly to the question of inter-oceanic canal in Central America, the role of the United States in the region, and the growing American economic interests in Latin America. The dispute over the region in the southwestern corner of the Mexican state of Chiapas called Soconusco, and in broader sense over the entire state of Chiapas, had its roots in the very beginning of the existence of independent republics in Central America in the early 1820’s. Chiapas was originally a part of the new state called the United Provinces of Central America, but after the plebiscite taken in 1824 the inhabitants of the region decided to join

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<sup>394</sup> The consequent conflict between Chile and the United States in the early 1890’s caused by the interference in the Chilean civil war and the *Baltimore* incident of 1891 will be described in the next chapter.

the newly established republic of Mexico. The United Provinces of Central America were dissolved in 1839, but Guatemala, the strongest and most populated state of the region, kept the question of the authority over the province alive. Moreover, the boundary in the Soconusco region was not clearly defined which gave to the government of Liberal president Justo Rufino Barrios a chance to reopen the dispute and go almost into the war with Mexico in 1880 and 1881.

The actual rupture started, when in September of 1880 several hundred Guatemalan raiders attacked the town of Soconusco, of which some were captured, and after being investigated, confessed that the President Rufino Barrios was informed about their action and gave it his approval. The Mexican government of President Manuel Gonzales declared that in the event of another attack it “will find itself obliged...to dictate all the measures it believes appropriate to preserve the tranquility of the State of Chiapas,” and that respectable military force was ordered to the border with Guatemala.<sup>395</sup>

The United States got directly involved in the dispute, when the Minister of Guatemala in Washington Arturo Ubico asked officially President Hayes for mediation. The Secretary of State Evarts, and especially his successor James G. Blaine, was interested in the issue for several reasons. Justo Rufino Barrios, in power from 1873, was after a long time first strong president in one of the Central American states who renewed the old idea of unification of small republics of the region in one centralized state. That was definitely idea, which Blaine supported, because a stable and centralized larger Central American state would be easier to deal with for the concession for the construction of the inter-oceanic canal.

Rufino Barrios was well aware of the American interest in such project, and immediately started to sound the possibility of American backing in the dispute with Mexico in exchange for the concession in Nicaragua in case that the unification process would be successful. Another reason for Blaine’s support was that stronger Central America, connected with the United States by some kind of alliance, would create better “balance of power” in the region, and both bigger countries, Mexico and Colombia, would be therefore easier to negotiate with. Among the most important aspects for Blaine’s support also played the fact that such scenario would fundamentally undermine the influence of Great Britain in

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<sup>395</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (CO), London, 2001, pp. 21-2.

the region, and in a broader sense this would help the United States to assume the role of the hemispheric leader. This would also perfectly fit into the Secretary's vision of an economic expansion of the United States at expense of Great Britain. "Blaine's commitment to United States trade domination of Latin America dovetailed with his hatred of Great Britain, America's chief commercial competitor, as well as his desire to increase the international prestige of the United States."<sup>396</sup> Moreover, Rufino Barrios mentioned the possibility of ceding naval bases in Soconusco or in Ocos Bay in exchange for support.<sup>397</sup>

For these reasons the Secretary Blaine considered the question with interest, provided with positive information by the U.S. Minister in Guatemala Cornelius A. Logan. But even Logan was careful in recommending backing of Guatemala too openly because, according to his reports, the position of Rufino Barrios was quite strong, when he was present at the capital. However, in the event of war with Mexico, which would most likely begin, the opposition was ready to unite its forces during the absence of the president in the capital. Another very important factor was that even though Guatemala was the strongest Central American country, the unification efforts didn't have very positive reception in other countries of the region. Moreover, Mexico clearly declared that its intentions weren't expansionist, but that it was ready to oppose militarily Guatemala's attacks across the border or further unification efforts in Central America. Also the U.S. economic interests in Mexico were growing substantially during the Diaz era, and older problems like border raids of bandits, marauders, and Indians crossing the frontier to Mexico to hide from the U.S. Army were more or less settled by 1880.<sup>398</sup> In that year for example huge railroad concessions were given to American companies, and their lobbying in the Congress against any steps,

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<sup>396</sup> Dobson, John M., *America's Ascent. The United States Becomes a Great Power, 1880-1914*, Northern Illinois University Press, De Kalb (IL), 1978, p. 30.

<sup>397</sup> Plesur, Milton, *America's Outward Thrust. Approaches to Foreign Affairs, 1865 – 1890*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb (IL), 1971, pp. 161-3. The exchange of naval bases on the Pacific coast of Soconusco was soon abandoned because they weren't fit for large ships and it was clear that the Mexican government would never accept it.

<sup>398</sup> More information about extremely interesting history of the U.S. – Mexico border see e.g. Martínez, Oscar J., *U.S. - Mexico Borderlands. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Scholarly Resources, Wilmington (DE), 1996.

which would jeopardize their investments, was loudly heard.<sup>399</sup> The question was also the position of Great Britain for its interest in Mosquitia and Central America in general.

Therefore, when President Garfield finally died, and Chester A. Arthur assumed the office, he looked for the Secretary more “congenial to himself,” and the choice fell on Frederick T. Frelinghuysen.<sup>400</sup> Both, the President and the Secretary of State, were much more “cautious and balanced” in their foreign policy, and withdrew the support of Rufino Barrios, who in the spring of 1882 personally visited Washington to try to change Arthur’s opinion. Seeing no more support from the U.S. government he moderated his position and shortly after negotiated preliminary treaty with Mexican Minister Matias Romero, which was officially signed in September 1882 in Mexico City.

A significance of this smaller foreign policy issue and the role of James G. Blaine in it are described pertinently by David Healy:

“By encouraging Barrios and his representatives to expect strong U.S. backing, Blaine had undoubtedly contributed to the boundary crisis and delayed its settlement. He had greatly overestimated the influence of the United States in Mexico. ...

However counterproductive, Blaine’s actions in this case demonstrated his deep interest in a future isthmian canal and his abiding suspicion of the European powers, which he feared would find an occasion to interfere on the isthmus. ...At the very outset of his diplomatic career, Blaine had already fixed on ambitious goals: the general acceptance of arbitration to settle inter-American disputes, the abandonment of territorial conquest in the hemisphere and the recognition of the United States as the ultimate arbiter of peace and guardian of republican principles in the Americas. He sought, in sum, a peaceful and stable Latin America that looked to Washington for guidance and protection.”<sup>401</sup> The Secretary of State had never realized completely any of these goals, but his role lies in

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<sup>399</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, pp. 316-17. See also Raat, William D., *Mexico and the United States*, University of Georgia Press, Athens (GE), 1992, Chapter 5, pp. 79-101.

<sup>400</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 345.

<sup>401</sup> Healy, David, *James G. Blaine and Latin America*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (CO), London, 2001, pp. 38-9.

connecting of the visions of William H. Seward, the expansion of the 1890's, and policies of Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **VI.III.II. U.S. Mediation Effort in the War of the Pacific**

Blaine attempted to play such a role also in simultaneously escalating conflict between Chile and Peru and Bolivia, but with even less success. Milton Plesur described it as a “pitiful story of blundering diplomacy,” and Perry Belmont, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee commented the event that “the treatment of the question arising of the ...war between Chili and Peru and Bolivia...contrived ... to gamble away the moral influence of the United States in South America, and to discredit American diplomacy throughout the world, but [also had opened] the way to a direct European interference in South America.”<sup>402</sup>

The causes of the War of the Pacific lay in the very beginning of the independence of the three republics involved. The boundaries among the new countries were declared vaguely and drawn with not much of interest on either side since everybody considered the Desert of Atacama worthless to fight for. However, when the rich deposits of guano and nitrates were found there, which were used in Europe and elsewhere as a fertilizer and valued with gold, the tensions started to grow.

The course of the war is not in the focus of this thesis, but it is necessary to mention that the immediate cause of the conflict was the quarrel over concessions and taxes in the Bolivian border region of Antofagasta between Chile and Bolivia, which previously entered in a “secret” alliance with Peru.<sup>403</sup> Bolivia was the weakest of the three countries and thus the war soon became more or less the conflict between Chile and Peru. Because of the geographic and climatic conditions on the Pacific coast, the war was from its beginning determined to be decided by the superior naval power, and because Chile possessed small but

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<sup>402</sup> Plesur, Milton, *America's Outward Thrust. Approaches to Foreign Affairs, 1865 – 1890*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb (IL), 1971, pp. 158-59.

<sup>403</sup> Pletcher, David M., *Awkward Years*, pp. 40-1.

modern navy, it quickly occupied the southern provinces of Peru, Arica and Tacna, and on January 16, 1881, Chilean fleet captured the capital of Peru Lima.<sup>404</sup>

Even though the war started while William M. Evarts was at the office, he stayed practically inactive, and declared just vague willingness to mediate, which was not reflected by any of the participating countries.<sup>405</sup> The United States got deeply involved in the conflict because of the Secretary Blaine, who later claimed that the war was in fact motivated by British economic interests in the nitrate and guano business, and since he was well known for being Anglophobe, he used this conflict as an attempt to replace Great Britain in the position of hegemonic power in Latin America. He made himself clear declaring: “It is a perfect mistake to speak of this as a Chilean war on Peru. It is an English war on Peru, with Chili [sic] as the instrument, and I take the responsibility of that assertion. Chili would never have gone into this war one inch but for her backing by English capital...”<sup>406</sup> In this position Blaine expressed his belief that the Western Hemisphere should be asserted for the U.S. supremacy over European influence, and that the United States should play the role of natural leader of the New World. Eventually he failed completely in managing the U.S. diplomacy and “the War of the Pacific provided him with the opportunity to fall flatly on his face.”<sup>407</sup> On the other hand this lecture was very useful for him later on, when he was dealing with Latin American delegations during the first Pan-American conference in 1889. Another important aspect is that in spite of the diplomatic fiasco, the United States confirmed that it would act unilaterally in the issues of the Western Hemisphere.

The War of the Pacific was an extremely important experience for the U.S. foreign policy-makers also because it showed how important role played the appointment of competent diplomats and their coordination with the State Department. Both U.S. ministers, General Hugh J. Kilpatrick in Chile, and

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<sup>404</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, pp. 54-64.

<sup>405</sup> Evarts to Christiancy, Department of State, Washington, December 26, 1879, in Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches: Peru, United States Department of State, No. 523, p. 824, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS188081v01.p0924&isize=M>.

<sup>406</sup> U.S. Congress, House, 47<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., 1882, H. Rept. 1790, p. 217 quoted in Pletcher, David M., Awkward Years, p. 42.

<sup>407</sup> Dobson, John M., America’s Ascent, pp. 30-1.

especially Stephen J. Hurlbut in Peru, fundamentally mishandled the crisis and their behavior profoundly injured the image of the United States in respective countries and in Latin America in general.<sup>408</sup> “By late September, when Garfield died, American diplomacy in the War of the Pacific was getting out of control. The contradictory advice, which Hurlbut and Kilpatrick had given at Lima and Santiago, respectively, had encouraged Peruvian resistance and Chilean intransigence, rather than promoting a settlement. In particular, Hurlbut’s indiscreet pronouncements had aroused general bewilderment and suspicion as to American intentions.”<sup>409</sup>

It is necessary to assert that the responsibility for this result fully goes on the account of James G. Blaine, who, as the Secretary of State should have more closely followed the conduct of work of his Ministers in Chile and Peru. “The War of the Pacific...did not directly affect American interests, but it seemed to offer the United States an opportunity to enhance its prestige and set a precedent of hemispheric leadership by helping the combatants to restore peace. Blaine undertook what he thought was judicious intervention, but, hampered by incompetent agents and by his own lack of attention to details, he bungled the delicate operation and brought down on himself a storm of criticism in Latin America, Europe, and at home.”<sup>410</sup> When Blaine finally realized his mistake and sent an experienced diplomat William H. Trescot, accompanied by his own son, Walker Blaine Jr., to solve the crisis, the death of James Garfield and taking up of the office by Chester A. Arthur, signified that he had to resign. The new Secretary of State Frelinghuysen literally “buried” the mission.

In the middle of March 1882 Trescot finally gave up, when yet more attacks on Blaine caused the Congressional investigation and publishing of all progress reports written by American ministers in both countries. “Trescot finally poured out his feelings...declaring that the State Department had thrown away all chances of saving Tacna and Arica for Peru. “Get me home at the earliest

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<sup>408</sup> Both Ministers died during the crisis. Newly appointed Cornelius A. Logan (former Minister to Guatemala) in Chile and James R. Partridge did not handle the situation with more success, especially because the Minister in Lima several times exceeded his instructions.

<sup>409</sup> Pletcher, David M., *Awkward Years*, p. 58

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

practicable moment. I can't stand this much longer," he concluded."<sup>411</sup> The special envoy summed up on his way home, stopping for the last diplomatic attempt in Peru in May 1882, why the negotiations could not progress any more: "...the reason which induces the hesitation of Chili is that she believes that, so long as the Peruvians are convinced that the United States will finally intervene, they never will negotiate in earnest."<sup>412</sup>

The situation was solved with no assistance of the United States whatsoever, when the domestic turmoil in Peru, caused by the conflict, brought to power General Miguel Iglesias, who realizing that the very existence of the country was at stake, signed the treaty with Chile on October 20, 1883, ceding the province of Tarapacá to Chile permanently, and Tacna and Arica for ten years after which the plebiscite should be held to decide in which country the provinces would be incorporated.

The U.S. attempt to mediate in the Pacific War can definitely be considered a diplomatic failure of the Secretary of State Blaine. He "prompted by his desire to establish an American beachhead against British influence, wanted to intervene for Peru without *seeming* to intervene – one of the most difficult of diplomatic tricks, requiring a far steadier hand than his." Besides the wrong assumption of the possibilities of U.S. foreign policy, he completely failed in management of the State Department and his own subordinates. "If Blaine, on coming to office, had sent the realistic Trescot as sole envoy to both countries, he might have ended the war with credit to the United States and himself." The complete failure of the attempt, however, doesn't fall only on his head. "If Frelinghuysen had given Trescot adequate support during the winter of 1882, much could still have been saved," sums up correctly David Pletcher.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Trescot to Bancroft Davis, Valparaiso, March 16, 1882, Davis Papers, XXXI quoted in *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>412</sup> Trescot to Frelinghuysen, June 5, 1882, Washington D.C., in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches: Chili [Chile]*, pp. 103-5, United States Department of State, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS188081v01.p0924&isize=M>.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid*, p. 101.

It is necessary to add also that Blaine, “the Plumed Knight,” belonged for many years among the leading politicians of the Republican Party,<sup>414</sup> and therefore, he had numerous political enemies waiting to use his mistakes and failures with much more lust than it was usual with other Secretaries of State of the era. Blaine also personally took the course of the U.S. mediation in the War of the Pacific as a very important experience, and when his idea of the Pan-American conference was finally realized, he proved to be a tactful host and skillful compromiser. He was also going to have to deal one more time with the conflict between Chile and the United States while being for the second time in office at the beginning of 1890’s, but as it will be described in the next chapter, his personal tragedy would diminish his role in this incident.

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<sup>414</sup> Blaine obtained the Republican candidacy for Presidency in 1884 and lost to Grover Cleveland with a very small margin. See Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Internet source: <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/index.html>.

## **VII. Expansionism of the 1890's: the United States**

### **Becoming Hemispheric Leader**

The United States had experienced the second upheaval of expansionist movement during the last decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, its character was quite different from that of the late 1840's. The main result of the Spanish – American War of 1898 was that the expansion of the United States obtained “insular character.”<sup>415</sup> Acquisition of Porto Rico, Philippines, and creation of protectorate over Cuba, which was independent only formally, signified a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy. Victory in the “splendid little war” over one of the European powers, even though the weakest one, confirmed to the American nation that the time had come for grasping the leadership in the Western Hemisphere, and that this was to happen whether with consensus of other Latin American republics and European countries or not. The nation finally proved to itself what the numbers and economic statistics had been indicating for some time already. The United States became close to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century the biggest producer of the manufactured and agricultural products in the world, which along with unceasing flow immigrants from Europe signified unprecedented economic growth. This rampant boom was signified by almost cyclical periodicity of economical crises, which Walter LaFeber comments: “it was truly twenty years of boom hidden in twenty years of crisis.”<sup>416</sup> Thus, when yet another economic crisis, the most severe of the post-Civil War era, hit the country in 1893, among the solutions mostly discussed in the United States emerged the need to find new foreign markets, where the surplus of U.S. economy would be sold.

Another profoundly significant new aspect was brought to the surface with the expansion of the late 1890's. The United States, driven by the feeling of necessity to participate in the benefits from the opening of Asian markets, by the acquisition of Philippines entered among the group of imperial powers, in which critiques of this policy saw that basic principles of the very reason of existence of

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<sup>415</sup> Merk, Frederick, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, Chapter XI, pp. 228-61.

<sup>416</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, p. 9. See also Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., *The Cycles of American History*, Chapters 2, 3, 7, and 9. See also Eckler, A. Ross, “*A Measure of the Severity of Depressions, 1873-1932*,” *The Review of Economic Statistics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (May, 1933), pp. 75-81

the country were downtrodden.<sup>417</sup> By winning the war with Spain, the United States obtained finally a long time desired insular territory in the Caribbean in the form of annexation of Porto Rico and creating of the protectorate over Cuba. On the other hand the image of the northern republic was badly hurt in the eyes of its hemispheric “sisters” since Porto Ricans weren’t given the status equal to other American citizens, and since the independence of Cuba was just a fiction, which was eventually formalized in the Platt Amendment of 1901, not even mentioning that the Philippines after suppression of the uprising early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were given the status of the colony.<sup>418</sup>

It has been discussed by American commentators and later on by historians practically ever since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whether the expansion of the late 1890’s was a historical ‘aberration’ and ‘break with the past,’ or a ‘logical climax’ of the development of the United States after the Civil War.<sup>419</sup> Today majority of historians agree that the Spanish – American War and its result was a combination of various economical and domestic factors such as the economic crisis of 1893, settling of the American West and disappearance of the phenomenon of the ‘frontier’ as was presented by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1890,<sup>420</sup> growing economic power of the United States and the pressure to search for new markets in Latin America and Asia. From the perspective of the U.S. foreign policy the economical aspect was definitely essential in the decision-making of administrations of Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland and William McKinley. On the other hand governmental support of the economic expansion was just the ‘tip of the iceberg.’ Below this tip laid much broader background of growing maturity and “deliberateness” of the U.S. foreign policy, which had begun after the Civil War. Therefore, from this point of view, the result of the

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<sup>417</sup> For thorough source on anti-expansionist movement reading see Foner, Philip S., Richard C. Winchester, (ed.), *The Anti-Imperialist Reader. A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States. Volume I. From the Mexican War to the Election of 1900*, Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., New York, London, 1984. For racial aspect of the annexation of Philippines see Love, Eric T., *Race over Empire. Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900*, Chapter 5, pp. 159-96.

<sup>418</sup> For more information about the question of the annexation of Philippines see Love, Eric T., *Race over Empire. Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900*.

<sup>419</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 13-24.

<sup>420</sup> Turner, Frederick J., *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, New York: Irvington, 1993 (c1893).

Spanish – American War looks more like a confirmation for the U.S. governments and the American nation that the United States finally had the strength to fulfill a “mission” to become the leading nation of the Hemisphere, and consequently of the world.

The Spanish – American War of 1898 for the purpose of this thesis symbolizes more a conclusion of the process, which had last throughout the whole second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, therefore the course of the Second War for Cuban Independence between 1895 and 1898 and the consequent Spanish – American War is not going to be a primary focus of this final chapter. It is more important to view it as the last piece in the chain of foreign policy events between 1848 and 1898, which shows clear signs of “logical relationship.” Therefore, first will be described shortly events, which could be seen as last steps, which the United States had to do to realize and confirm its self-confidence necessary for the assumption of the hegemonic role in the hemisphere.

These events were the Pan-American Conference of 1889-1890, which laid foundations for new principle of hemispheric unity, which would be put to work especially in the late 1930’s, during the World War II, and partly throughout the Cold War. As second issue will be mentioned shortly a conduct of U.S. foreign policy during the Chilean civil war and consequent crisis with the United States in 1891,<sup>421</sup> where the Harrison administration came forward with the policy of power with the objective to secure the U.S. interests and to show clearly to other Latin American republics and Great Britain that the United States was ready to assume the role of the arbiter in the hemispheric issues. This was clearly expressed in the last event, which will be described in this chapter – the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895. The boundary question between Venezuela and Great Britain plays in my opinion at least similar importance from the perspective of the formation of the U.S. foreign policy and confidence as the Spanish – American War, because it was a breakthrough moment, when Great Britain conceded the hegemonic position in the Western Hemisphere to the United States. From this point of view, the Spanish – American War represents more a conclusion of more profound and broader process, which had started after the Civil War.

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<sup>421</sup> The role of the United States in the Brazilian Naval Revolt of 1893-1894 was of practically the same character, so it will be just mentioned here and not described more thoroughly. For more details see LaFeber, Walter, “*United States Depression Diplomacy and the Brazilian Revolution, 1893-1894*,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (February, 1960), pp. 107-118.

## VII.I. Pan-American Conference, 1889-1890

The Pan-American Conference, which took place in Washington D.C. from October 2, 1889, to April 27, 1890, has significance for this thesis for several reasons. Its importance for the formation of the U.S. foreign policy lies in both its short-term and the long-term consequences. Its contemporaries viewed the immediate result of the Conference with ambivalent feelings since practically none of its principal objectives was agreed upon by the participating delegations. On the other hand just the fact that, except delegations from Santo Domingo and Canada,<sup>422</sup> all hemispheric countries attended the Conference must be viewed as an impressive achievement, especially if we realize that for example Chile had just recently humiliated Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific, or that the Brazilian Empire was falling and turning into the republic. Most of all the Conference should be considered as the ‘bridge’ connecting the era of William H. Seward and the tumultuous decade of 1890’s. Not surprisingly the Secretary of State James G. Blaine, who was the “chief agent in reviving the Pan-American idea,” first presented by Henry Clay,<sup>423</sup> was from all chiefs of the State Department most devoted bearer of the vision of U.S. economic and political expansion in Latin America and Asia proposed by Seward.<sup>424</sup> The long-term results of the Conference lay in the set up of a precedent of meetings of the Western Hemisphere countries with the objective to settle mutual problems, which will during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century become a custom every four or five years.<sup>425</sup> Very important new theoretical factor of this conference was that it created a forum, where the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century purely idea of the United States, were in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century accepted as the “continentalized” Monroe Doctrine, which was especially clear during the World War I and World War II.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Canadian delegates weren’t invited.

<sup>423</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 307.

<sup>424</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 345. See also Curtis, Wilgus, A., “*James G. Blaine and the Pan American Movement*,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 5 (1922), pp. 662-708.

<sup>425</sup> The exceptions were the two World Wars.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid*, p. 347.

The revival of the idea of the conference of Western Hemisphere countries with an objective to solve conflict situations among each other had its origin in the early 1880's. James G. Blaine, being for nine months the Secretary of State in the Garfield administration, proposed this project and sent the invitation for such a meeting, where primarily the problem of the conflict between Chile, Peru and Bolivia was to be discussed. At this moment Blaine had in mind just this objective.<sup>427</sup> However, the assassination of James Garfield and misconduct of the diplomacy in the Chilean crisis led to the resignation of Blaine, and new Secretary Frelinghuysen withdrew the invitation as the majority of other foreign policy proposals of his predecessor.<sup>428</sup> Nevertheless, the situation had slowly changed during the 1880's because voices calling for more governmental support to commercial expansion in Latin America were heard more and more, especially when such projects as the construction of the inter-oceanic canal in Panama got in the hands of European companies and not American.<sup>429</sup>

In the summer of 1884 the U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the commission, led by William Eleroy Curtis, which had the goal to report on the prospects of the U.S. commerce in Latin America. In 1886 Curtis testified in front of a congressional committee that Europe practically supplanted the United States from the commerce of South America. This opinion was confirmed by the reports of various U.S. Ministers in the region, of which the most extensive was one hundred pages long analysis of the Minister in Uruguay and Paraguay John E. Bacon from January 1888. In this report Bacon pointed out that the European trade with Latin America amounted \$700,000,000 and that for example in 1883 only one American ship entered Montevideo, as against to 407 British, 231 French, 209 German, and 90 Italian. As the most feasible remedy Bacon suggested that the United States abolish duties on primary produce of Latin America and he also proposed the construction of an international American railway.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, p. 142.

<sup>428</sup> See Bastert, Russell H., "*Diplomatic Reversal: Frelinghuysen's Opposition to Blaine's Pan-American Policy in 1882*," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (March, 1956), pp. 653-671.

<sup>429</sup> For more information on the economic aspect of the U.S. expansion in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century see Pletcher, David M., *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865-1900*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1997.

<sup>430</sup> Bacon to Bayard, January 11, 1888, U.S. Department of States, Paraguay and Uruguay, National Archives, Washington D.C., quoted in Grenville, John A. S., Young, George B., *Politics*,

Towards the end of the 1880's the support for calling of a conference, which would discuss economic, transportation, but also arbitration and other political issues became bipartisan, however, with much stronger enthusiasm on the side of the Republican Party. In 1888 President Cleveland gave up and instructed the Secretary Bayard to send an invitation to all Latin American republics for the conference, which would meet in the fall of 1889. At that moment new Republican administration of Benjamin Harrison with James G. Blaine one more time as the Secretary of State was at the office, so the old dream of Blaine's to preside over the Pan-American conference became a reality. He summed up his view of the situation and of the proper U.S. foreign and economic policy towards Latin America few years before the conference took place this way:

“Threescore years have passed. The power of the Republic in many directions has grown beyond all anticipation, but we have relatively lost ground in some great fields of enterprise. We have added thousands of miles to our ocean front, but our foreign commerce is relatively less, and from ardent friendship with Spanish America we have drifted into indifference if not into coldness. It is but one step further to reach a condition of positive unfriendliness, which may end in what would be equivalent to a commercial alliance against us. Already one of the most dangerous of movements – that of a European guarantee and guardianship of the Interoceanic canal – is suggested and urged upon foreign Powers by representatives of a South-American country. If these tendencies are to be averted, if Spanish-American friendship is to be regained, if the commercial empire that legitimately belongs to us is to be ours, we must not lie idle and witness its transfer to other.”<sup>431</sup>

We have seen in the previous chapter that Blaine's conduct of the Latin American issues in the early 1880's was very unsuccessful, and it will be described soon that his conduct of the Chilean crisis was also unfortunate, even though this time it was strongly influenced because his health and mental condition which was rapidly worsening after a death of his children. Therefore his Pan-American efforts are often considered as quixotical, especially since there were so few immediate results of the conference. At the opening session of the

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Strategy, and American Diplomacy. Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873 – 1917, Yale University Press, New Haven (CT) and London, 1966, pp. 78-80.

<sup>431</sup> James G. Blaine, *Political Discussions, Legislative, Diplomatic and Popular 1856-1886*, Norwich (CT), Henry Bill, 1887, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 90-1.

conference Blaine expressed a hope that sense of unity would resolve all future differences and conflicts:

“We believe that friendship, avowed with candor and maintained with good faith, will remove from American States the necessity of guarding boundary lines between themselves with fortifications and military force.

We believe that standing armies, beyond those which are needful for public order and the safety of internal administration, should be unknown on both American continents.

We believe that friendship and not force, the spirit of just law and not the violence of the mob, should be the recognized rule of administration between American nations and in American nations.”<sup>432</sup>

This idea was of course of quite abstract character; however, behind it was Blaine’s goal to gain sympathy of Latin American countries towards the United States through tightening of commercial connection and exclusion of European influence. “Blaine wanted to improve friendship with the Latin American nations so he could increase access to their markets. But he also wanted to increase American commerce in the hemisphere so that he could foster regional prosperity, strengthen Latin-American friendship, and make the United States the arbiter of hemispheric affairs. He wanted to keep European influence out so that American influence would predominate.”<sup>433</sup>

But besides the institutionalization of the principle of arbitration, majority of the topics for negotiation were efforts to promote the trade and communication – creation of an American customs union and unified customs regulations, improvement of transportation and communications, adoption of common silver coin, or common system of weights and measures.<sup>434</sup> That the promotion of trade and commerce was considered by many politicians and businessmen in the United States as the main objective of the Pan-American conference is clear from the fact that the U.S. delegation consisted practically entirely from major businessmen, led by Andrew Carnegie who, along with William Eleroy Curtis, organized six-weeks trip by train around major industrial centers of the Northwest and Midwest.

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>433</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 314.

<sup>434</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 346.

“Traveling six thousand miles in luxurious special train, the group endured an exhausting schedule of dinners, speeches, and visits.”<sup>435</sup>

Working sessions were held from November 11, 1889, to April 19, 1890, and as was mentioned before, the results were disappointing. Customs union was voted down, and instead the non-binding reciprocity endorsement was signed. The institution of arbitration with many compromises was signed, but never ratified by any of the participating governments. As for the silver coin, even the U.S. delegation was strongly divided since the question of bi-metal versus silver coin system belonged among the most crucial domestic problems in the United States in the early 1890's. Common weights and measures, or common customs regulations were also strongly opposed, especially by delegates of Argentina and Chile. So the few successful outcomes of the conference were agreement to build up an American railroad, which was to be surveyed by international commission, and sponsored by the U.S. private capital. This success, however, also went in vain after the 1893 economic crisis hit with the biggest severity since the Civil War the United States economy.

At the moment of smaller importance, but throughout the time one of the most important results of the conference were the creation of an inter-American bank, and most of all of the International Bureau of American Republics, which would later become the Union of American Republics (1910) and eventually the Organization of American States (1948). Secretary Blaine summed up the results of the conference with a statement, which to his contemporaries seemed more as a prophecy, and which they attributed to his worsening physical and psychological condition:<sup>436</sup> “Time will define and heighten the estimate of your work; experience will confirm our present faith; final results will be your vindication and your triumph.... We hold up this new Magna Charta, which abolishes war and

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<sup>435</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, p. 149.

<sup>436</sup> Blaine's son, Walker Blaine Jr. who was accompanying William H. Trescot on his mission to Peru and Chile in the early 1880's, and the eldest daughter died suddenly within two weeks in January and February 1890. Since that moment until the resignation in June 1892 the Secretary of State was spending more time off work. Mainly President Harrison conducted the U.S. foreign policy during this period with assistance of long-time Assistant Secretary of State Alvey A. Adee. See Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, p. 150, or Dobson, John M., America's Ascent, p. 27.

substitutes arbitration between the American Republics, as the first and greatest fruit of the International American Conference.”<sup>437</sup>

From the perspective of this thesis the results of the Pan-American conference of 1889-1890 show a clear interest of the U.S. governments, whether Democratic (Cleveland) or Republican (Harrison and later McKinley) in the commercial expansion to Latin America. Thus the conference could be viewed as the first infallible proof of a shift in the U.S. foreign policy towards deliberate and organized governmental support of the American export. Therefore, the assumption arises that, if the initial activity in promotion of the U.S. commercial expansion was not originated by the U.S. government, it is definitely secure to suggest that the accusation of critiques of the administration of William McKinley that the expansion of the late 1890's was caused by the pressure of business and export circles was not based on reality. Ever since the end of the 1880's every U.S. government wittingly and in an organized manner promoted commercial expansion to Latin America and Asia.

## VII.II. Chilean Crisis of 1891

The Chilean crisis of 1891 is mentioned here because it can serve as an example of growing confidence of the United States in dealing with Latin American affairs since the early 1890's. Moreover, it clearly shows this shift because it can be compared with the complete fiasco of the U.S. efforts to mediate in the War of the Pacific a decade ago. The conduct of the crisis is also directly connected with the large U.S. Navy build up, which was initiated in the 1880's under the command of Admiral Stephen B. Luce, and after 1890 theoretically justified by Captain, and later Rear Admiral, Alfred Thayer Mahan.<sup>438</sup> With the

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<sup>437</sup> Healy, David, James G. Blaine and Latin America, p. 156.

<sup>438</sup> Grenville, John A. S., Young, George B., Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy. Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873 – 1917, Chapter 1, pp. 1-39. See also Seager, Robert, II, “*Ten Years Before Mahan: The Unofficial Case for the New Navy, 1880-1890*,” The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 40, No. 3 (December, 1953), pp. 491-512. Mahan's most significant book, which influenced the U.S. naval build up, but which was even earlier than in the United States recognized in Europe, especially in Great Britain and Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, was *The Significance of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. For more details see Mahan, Alfred T., The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783, The Project Gutenberg eBook, Internet source: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13529/13529-h/13529-h.htm>. For general information on expansionism of Alfred T. Mahan see Rodríguez Díaz, María Del Rosario, El Destino Manifiesto.

1890's coming, throughout which the United States experienced growing activity of governments in searching for new markets in Latin America and Asia, securing of the inter-oceanic canal, and efforts to acquire naval bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean, the importance of the naval power became one of the principal domestic and foreign policy issues. "This fascination with naval construction was symptomatic of a growing United States interest in foreign relations and opportunities in the 1890's. Seizing colonies, expanding trade, digging a canal, even fighting a war began to appeal to the American people."<sup>439</sup>

During the crisis with Chile in 1891, or in the domestic conflict in Brazil in 1893, the United States for the first time used the policy of demonstration of naval and military power for enforcing of its interests. It was not like this just few years before. When the domestic anarchy again burst in Haiti in August 1888, and the leader of one of the fighting factions, General Hyppolite who controlled the north of the island, announced that he was willing to cede or lease the harbor of le Môle St. Nicolas in exchange for the U.S. support, the administration of Grover Cleveland remained strictly neutral. However, new President Harrison, known for his willingness to obtain a naval base in the Caribbean, indirectly helped Hyppolite to gain the upper hand by refusing to recognize a naval blockade proclaimed by Hyppolite's rival, General Légitime. After Hyppolite's victory, first black Minister in American history, Frederick Douglas, was sent to negotiate the treaty in November 1889, soon followed by the Rear Admiral Bancroft Gherardi. But to a surprise of both envoys, who had quarreled between each other since the arrival of Gherardi, and Harrison as well,<sup>440</sup> Haitian government called the negotiation off. "In April, as the negotiations collapsed, the United States had five naval vessels in Haitian waters and two more on the way, but Haiti called the bluff and did not give in."<sup>441</sup> At this moment Harrison didn't use the newly acquired naval power yet.

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El Pensamiento expansionista de Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1890-1914, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Editorial Porrúa, México, 2003.

<sup>439</sup> Dobson, John M., *America's Ascent*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>440</sup> Blaine was at this moment partly out of office for health reasons.

<sup>441</sup> Socolofsky, Homer E., Spetter, Allan B., *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence (KA), 1987, pp. 127-8. For the correspondence to the State Department and mutual disagreements of both envoys see *Foreign Relations of the United States, Instructions and Despatches: Haiti, 1891*, United States Department of State, pp. 521-535, Internet source:

The crisis with Chile, which had been deepening since the U.S. mediation efforts in the early 1880's, and which escalated in 1891 with several incidents, including the *Itata* and *Baltimore* incidents, was quite different case. The biggest difference from the Haitian affair was that James G. Blaine for the last time returned to the office in October 1891. His personal interest in the solution of the Chilean conflict came from the fact that it was mostly his misconduct of the situation during the War of the Pacific that the United States suffered such serious diplomatic defeat. This time he was also backed fully by much more aggressive President, Benjamin Harrison, whom a historian of his presidency described with these words: "Harrison has been described, without exception, as vigorous, firm, belligerent, militant, and chauvinistic in the conduct of foreign policy. Clearly, the president stimulated the national self-assertion that led the United States inevitably toward the dramatic events of 1898."<sup>442</sup>

In 1890 the U.S. Minister to Chile was Patrick Egan, who was one of the leaders of the American Irish movement, and therefore Harrison and Blaine could be sure that he would promote U.S. interests against the British with vigorousness natural to people of his nation. However, in spite of the expectations, he was not as much anti-Chilean as he was anti-British, when he arrived to Santiago. The problem was that in the domestic quarrel between President and the Congress, he openly sided to President Jose Manuel Balmaceda. Thus when Balmaceda was overthrown after the battle of Placillo on August 28, he and his family took asylum in the American legation, where the President few days later committed a suicide.<sup>443</sup>

The position of the United States was poisoned even before the unfortunate Balmaceda shot himself. Several other incidents annoyed relations with Congressionalist party. First of all it was an incident of the schooner *Itata*, which was intercepted by U.S. ships near Iquique in northern Chile with a cargo of five thousand rifles and two million rounds of ammunition bought, as would

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<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=article&did=FRUS.FRUS189091V01.I0018&isize=M>.

<sup>442</sup> Socolofsky, Homer E., Spetter, Allan B., *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison*, p. 126.

<sup>443</sup> Grenville, John A. S., Young, George B., *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*, pp. 95-97.

later be judged, legally in the United States by the Congressionalist rebels.<sup>444</sup> This widely published incident badly injured the image of the United States in Chile and Latin America because it openly sided to Balmaceda in purely internal conflict, where it should stay strictly neutral.<sup>445</sup> Other incidents, which aggravated the relation between the two governments, were first, cutting of the insurgent's international telegraph line by the U.S.-based Central and South American Telegraph Company because the rebels refused to use its transfer station near Iquique, and second, leak of a telegraph information sent by the commander of U.S.S. *San Francisco* that the Congressionalist troops were landing north of Valparaiso to the hands of pro-Balmaceda newspapers, which announced the news as the "trustworthy news brought us by the war-ship *San Francisco*."<sup>446</sup>

The last and most severe conflict occurred on October 16, 1891, when 117 sailors from the U.S.S. *Baltimore*, who had at that time permit to go on the shore given by Captain Winfield Scott Schley, got into violent conflict with local mob in Valparaiso. A quarrel broke out in the True Blue Saloon in the shady part of Valparaiso between two drunken sailors and a Chilean, who spit in the face of one of the Americans. When the fight started, a rumor spread that the Chilean was killed and the two sailors were attacked and stabbed. One of the sailors escaped but the other was killed and supposedly also shot by a policeman who appeared at the scene. The riot immediately spread throughout the whole city and at the end of the day two American sailors were dead and seventeen seriously wounded.<sup>447</sup> Later investigation suggested that the attack was pre-planned but not even the American version was blaming the Chilean government of any role in it, including the action of local police. "It may have been preplanned in the waterfront saloons, as Schley believed, but there was no evidence of official complicity except for the alleged participation of the local police. It appeared to most Chileans that the police had simply followed their usual tactics in a riot, roughing up and jailing people from all sides until the rioters dispersed. To them it was a sailors', no more;

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<sup>444</sup> Osgood, Hardy, "*The Itata Incident*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (May, 1922), pp. 195-226.

<sup>445</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid*, p. 101.

<sup>447</sup> Schley to Tracy, October 17 and 23, 1891, House Doc. 91, 293-300, quoted in Healy, David, *James G. Blaine and Latin America*, p. 215.

larger than usual,<sup>448</sup> set off by the prevailing anti-American sentiment, and involving mostly drunken sailors and low-class locals in a disreputable part of the city. Captain Schley was later accused that he let the sailors on the shore in spite of the hostile atmosphere in the harbor, but he consulted Valparaiso's police commissioner, who saw no reason why U.S. sailors should not go ashore, and even after this assertion, Schley waited for three more weeks before granting liberty. However, the insistence of the U.S. Captain that his men were sober and organized was very hard to defend.<sup>449</sup>

President Harrison, fully backed by the Secretary of Navy Tracy, viewed the attack as not as attack on *Baltimore's* men personally, but as on sailors of the United States. Minister Egan was instructed to ask for an explanation of "an apparent expression of unfriendliness toward this government which might put in peril the maintenance of amicable relations between the two countries." If the investigation was to prove that the attack was aiming at American soldiers, the U.S. government expected prompt and full reparation. President Harrison brought the issue to a head by giving it a special attention in his Annual Message to the U.S. Congress, where he used very aggressive rhetoric, which clearly demonstrated his willingness to go even further in the enforcing of the U.S. interests and will.

"On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October an event occurred in Valparaiso so serious and tragic in its circumstances and results as to very justly excite the indignation of our people and to call for prompt and decided action on the part of this Government....

An investigation of the affair was promptly made by a board of officers of the *Baltimore*, and their report shows that these assaults were unprovoked, that our men were conducting themselves in a peaceable and orderly manner, and that some of the police of the city took part in the assault and used their weapons with fatal effect, while a few others, with some well-disposed citizens, endeavored to protect our men....

So far as I have yet been able to learn no other explanation of this bloody work has been suggested than that it had its origin in hostility to these men as

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<sup>448</sup> Supposedly up to a thousand people were involved in the mêlée.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid, pp. 216-7.

sailors of the United States, wearing the uniform of their Government, and not in any individual act of personal animosity. The attention of the Chilean Government was at once called to this affair ... accompanied by a request to be advised of any other or qualifying facts in the possession of the Chilean Government that might tend to relieve this affair of the appearance of an insult to this Government. The Chilean Government was also advised that if such qualifying facts did not exist this Government would confidently expect full and prompt reparation.”<sup>450</sup>

Strong annual message of President Harrison prompted Foreign Minister of Chile Manuel Antonio Matta to respond in the Chilean Congress with similarly aggressive and inflammatory message, where the Harrison’s message and the report of the Secretary of Navy Tracy, were charged to be “erroneous or deliberately incorrect.”<sup>451</sup> The Minister of Chile in Washington Pedro Montt, and brother of the Chilean President Jorge Montt, presented to the States Department highly edited version of Matta’s note, which did not mention directly President Harrison, and referred only to “official documents that were open to the charge of inaccuracy in some essential particulars.”<sup>452</sup> President Jorge Montt soon after this diplomatic escalation, and on the advice from his brother, replaced Matta by much more conciliatory Luis Pereira, who immediately attempted to settle the dispute. On January 8, 1892, Montt sent to Blaine very conciliatory note stating: “I have also received special instructions to state to the Government of the United States that the Government of Chile has felt very sincere regret for the unfortunate events which occurred in Valparaiso on the 16 of October...and the frank desires for American cordiality which my Government entertains have led it to cordially

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<sup>450</sup> Annual Message to Congress, Benjamin Harrison, December 9, 1891, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1891-1892, United States Department of State, pp. viii-ix, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS189192.p0035&isize=M>. For thorough information on Egan’s reports to Blaine, and his correspondence with Chilean Foreign Minister Matta see Ibid, pp. 194-352, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS189192.p0300&isize=M>.

<sup>451</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 104.

<sup>452</sup> Montt to Blaine, 11 December, 1891, *Message of the President of the United States Respecting the Relations with Chile, together with the Diplomatic Correspondence*, House Exec. Doc. No. 91, 52d Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., 1892, pp. 208-209, quoted in Ibid.

deplore the aforesaid disturbance and to do everything in its power toward the trial and punishment of the guilty parties.”<sup>453</sup>

Harrison, however, was ready to go to war and asked for a public withdrawal of Matta’s message to Chilean Congress. He instructed Egan that he had been “directed by the President to say that if the offensive parts of the dispatch of the 11<sup>th</sup> December are not at once withdrawn, and a suitable apology offered, with the same publicity that was given to the offensive expressions, he will have no other course open to him except to terminate diplomatic relations with the Government of Chile.”<sup>454</sup> Chile then gave up and after few more offensive messages from Harrison and conciliatory from Pereira and Montt, Chile agreed to pay \$75,000 to the families of the two dead soldiers as well as those who were injured.

The prosecution of the Chilean crisis was strongly influenced by the personal conduct of the affair by President Harrison and from other perspective also by the Secretary Blaine (health problems). The *Baltimore* and other incidents, which almost caused the war with Chile, were in reality of insignificant importance in the course international of events. However, we should view it from a broader perspective as a conclusion of yet another phase of the evolution of the feeling of confidence and strength, which the American nation started to rebuild after the terrible experience of the Civil War. The huge naval build up of the 1880’s had created a demand for using this new means of enforcing of U.S. foreign policy and commercial interests. “By the early 1890s the United States was flexing its muscles, intending to force others to recognize it as a great power. Had the United States actually stumbled into a war with Chile and won (an outcome by no means certain given the Chilean navy’s experience and equipment), it clearly would have established American supremacy throughout the Western Hemisphere. Instead, that supremacy remained unproven until 1898.”<sup>455</sup>

The decision not to enforce the will of the United States during the Haitian civil war in 1889 and 1890, when the long-time desired naval base was at stake,

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<sup>453</sup> Montt to Blaine, Washington, January 8, 1892, Foreign Relations of the United States, Chile, 1891-1892, United States Department of State, pp. 344-5, Internet source: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS189192.p0450&isize=M>.

<sup>454</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 105.

<sup>455</sup> Dobson, John M., *America’s Ascent*, p. 50.

and on the other hand almost a declaration of war with Chile over the “drunken brawl,” show that the United States foreign policy was experiencing rapid shift towards more aggressive attitude towards Latin America. This was confirmed during the domestic conflict in Brazil in 1893 and 1894, when the United States used the naval power of U.S.S. *Detroit* for protection of American merchant ship delivering the goods to the port of Rio de Janeiro against the threat of the rebelling Brazilian naval officers who proclaimed a blockade of the Brazilian coast, but which the United States following the policy of strict neutrality considered illegal.<sup>456</sup> This smaller event is important for one reason. It took place during the administration of Grover Cleveland, who was again elected President in 1893. As it was mentioned before, Cleveland was opposed to any kind of territorial expansion from the bottom of his heart, which he proved, when he buried the annexation of Hawaii. However, he, and his two Secretaries of State, Walter Q. Gresham and Richard Olney, were firm supporters of promoting U.S. commercial interests and political influence in Latin America. Example of this conviction Cleveland gave in a way he conducted the crisis between Venezuela and Great Britain in 1895, after which the United States clearly assumed the role of the hemispheric arbiter and changed Great Britain in the position of the most important hemispheric power. The behavior of the United States during the Venezuelan crisis was clearly influenced by an experience taken from above mentioned conflicts on Haiti, in Chile, and Brazil.

### **VII.III. Venezuelan Crisis of 1895**

The Venezuelan Crisis of 1895 is for the purpose of this thesis of maybe even bigger importance than the outcome of the Spanish – American War, which took place three years later. This statement comes from one basic premise that in the Battles of Manila and Santiago the United States militarily humiliated one of the European powers but Spain at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> already had lost much of its former power throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by the mid 1890’s it was just a shadow of the once most powerful colonial power in the Western Hemisphere. On the other hand, Great Britain was at that moment still

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

unquestionable master of the world's oceans, and even though it showed signs of economic decay, its economic position in international commerce and finances was still unshaken. Historian Robert Beisner compares this diplomatic conflict between the United States and Great Britain over supremacy in Latin America to a similar incident with France, which took place in Fashoda in 1898, where the control over Eastern and Central Africa was at stake.<sup>457</sup>

As it is quite clear from this opening assumption, the principal cause of the Venezuela crisis of 1895 wasn't the actual boundary dispute between Venezuela and the Empire's colony of British Guyana, which had dragged throughout the entire second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That was just a "catalyst" through which the United States manifested to itself and Europe that the time had come to assume the undisputable leadership in the hemispheric affairs. "In some respect the bellicose attitude of the administration followed logically as the culmination of ideas and processes that stretched back to the immediate post-Civil War period." The Venezuelan crisis signified in the terminology of Robert Beisner coming of the "new paradigm" in the U.S. foreign policy, where the Secretary of State Richard Olney played the role of the deliverer of new position of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. "Olney was a *fin de siècle* policy-maker who adopted Mahan's plea for an "outward-looking" foreign policy."<sup>458</sup>

On the other hand President Grover Cleveland was known for his opposition to the territorial expansion. In his first term he stated this very bluntly: "Maintaining, as I do, the tenets of a line of precedents from Washington's day, which proscribe entangling alliances with foreign states, I do not favor a policy of acquisition of new and distant territory or the incorporation of remote interests with our own."<sup>459</sup> He was personally opposed to any open aggressive expression towards Latin America or Great Britain, but the domestic events of the early 1890's such as the depression of 1893, fight over the silver coin standard, or withdrawal of the annexation of Hawaii pushed members of his own Democratic

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<sup>457</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, p. 243.

<sup>458</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, pp. 162, 156. Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, p. 72.

<sup>459</sup> Grover Cleveland, *First Annual Message, December 8, 1885*, Washington D.C., Richardson, A *Compilation of the Messages and Papers*, Vol. VIII, p. 327.

Party to call on the President for more assertive foreign policy.<sup>460</sup> Therefore it was paradoxically Grover Cleveland who delivered a tremendous shift of U.S. foreign policy, which was of at least the same importance as the one resulting of the aftermath of the Spanish – American War, which in this perspective could be viewed more like a conclusion or ‘climax’ of the dramatic change started in the early 1890’s.<sup>461</sup>

The background of the boundary dispute and the course of the controversy will be mentioned here only very shortly because it serves for the purpose of this thesis only as the “theatre” for the description of the formation of the United States policy. Great Britain acquired former Dutch settlements in 1814 during the Napoleonic Wars and created there a colony later called British Guyana. Venezuela finally obtained its independence from Spain, still as part of Great Colombia, in 1822.<sup>462</sup> Ever since that moment, the boundary between the two territories had become a trouble. In 1840 the British government sent surveyor Robert Herman Schomburgk to mark the western frontier of the British Guyana, to which Venezuela immediately protested that it was unilateral decision of the government in London. None of several protests was answered, but in the agreement from 1850 both parties decided that neither of them would occupy the disputed territory. Thus the situation remained unchanged until the mid 1870’s, when supposedly large deposits of gold were found in the region.<sup>463</sup>

In 1876 Venezuela’s Minister in Washington sent to the Secretary of State Hamilton Fish a note asking the United States for help in the name of the Monroe

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<sup>460</sup> For more information about domestic political, economic and social development of the United States of that era see Morgan, H. Wayne, *The Gilded Age*. Revised and Enlarged Edition, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse (NY), 1970 (First Edition 1963), or Cashman, Sean Dennis, *America in the Gilded Age. From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, New York University Press, New York (NY) & London, 1988.

<sup>461</sup> For more information and the discussion about Cleveland’s role in the Venezuelan crisis see Blake, Nelson M., “*The Background of Cleveland’s Venezuelan Policy*,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (January, 1942), pp. 259-277, LaFeber, Walter, “*The Background of Cleveland’s Venezuelan Policy: A Reinterpretation*,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (July, 1961), pp. 947-967, or Mathews, Joseph J., “*Informal Diplomacy in the Venezuelan Crisis of 1896*,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (September, 1963), pp. 195-212.

<sup>462</sup> Spain recognized Venezuela in 1845 in the frontiers of the former Captaincy-General of Venezuela, which was very vague definition, as well as the British one.

<sup>463</sup> The largest gold nugget ever found until then, weighing 500 ounces, was found in the disputed region. Later on gold mines Yuruari became also claimed by both parties. Dobson, John M., *America’s Ascent*, p. 75, LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, Chapter VI, p. 242.

Doctrine. However, the note arrived at the moment, when Grant's administration was about to leave the White House. Similar attempt was made in the early 1880's but neither Secretary Evarts nor James G. Blaine considered such problem worth of deeper study. First Secretary of State who offered "the good offices of the United States to promote an amicable settlement" was in 1886 Thomas F. Bayard, during Cleveland's first term, but Great Britain politely refused.<sup>464</sup> When Great Britain refused to evacuate British settlers from the contested territory, Venezuela suspended diplomatic relations with London early in 1887. Some further attempts were made by Venezuela in 1889, when it asked the United States for help with the resumption of the diplomatic relations, but Blaine was occupied with the Pan-American conference and meanwhile the relations were restored through Venezuelan Minister in Paris. "From Hayes to Harrison, then, Venezuela had solicited the support of every Secretary of State since the mid-1870's. Even though the United States had at times been responsive, it had never permitted the dispute to become a significant issue of U.S. foreign policy. There was no single reason for this reluctance to become involved; rather, it reflected several aspects of U.S. foreign policy, including a general post-Civil War focus on domestic issues."<sup>465</sup>

In 1894, however, the situation was quite different. Besides the domestic problems caused by the Panic of 1893, bipartisan quarrel over the silver and gold standard, or the McKinley Tariff of 1890, which resulted in 1894 in one of the worst defeats in history of U.S. Congressional elections, the United States experienced what some politicians sensed as another wave of European expansion in Latin America. British activity during the Brazilian Naval Revolt and conflict over the telegraph station on the island of Trinidad with Brazil, French problems also with Brazil caused by a vague boundary definition of French Guyana, yet another boundary dispute between Great Britain and Nicaragua and consequent temporal seizure of the city of Corinto on the Misquito Coast, or the revolt of independentist movement in Cuba, all these events were in the eyes of critiques of

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<sup>464</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, pp. 107-110.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

the Cleveland administration from both parties permitted by weak U.S. foreign policy.<sup>466</sup>

Therefore Cleveland in accordance with the Secretary of State Gresham and after his death with Richard Olney decided that the dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain was the right foreign policy issue on which the United States should demonstrate its right to be the only decisive arbitrator in affairs of the Western Hemisphere. From that moment on “the Cleveland administration adhered almost fanatically to the arbitration solution.”<sup>467</sup> It is necessary to mention that the domestic political and economic situation was skillfully used by William L. Scruggs, former U.S. Minister in Venezuela and now paid agent of the Venezuelan government, who perfectly combined the domestic frustrated mood of the American public with playing on the traditional fear of European aggression in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>468</sup> “Cleveland was not alone in thinking that insatiable European powers were taking dangerous liberties in the backyard of the United States.” Nevertheless, it is possible to assume that the Venezuelan claim itself was of insignificant importance to politicians in Washington.<sup>469</sup>

By choosing Richard Olney as the successor of Gresham President Cleveland clearly announced to his critiques that U.S. foreign policy would become much more aggressive because former Attorney General who became famous for breaking down the Pullman strike was noted for not having a big gap between words and action. “The new Secretary of State soon demonstrated that he intended to handle the nation’s foreign relations with the same sledgehammer subtlety...”<sup>470</sup> Famous Olney’s note, which would later become considered as the declaration of the so called Olney Doctrine, was dated July 20, 1895.<sup>471</sup> Olney in

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<sup>466</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, Chapter VI.

<sup>467</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, p. 154.

<sup>468</sup> Grenville, John A. S., Young, George B., *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy. Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873 – 1917*, Chapter 5, *The Diplomat as Propagandist: William Lindsay Scruggs, Agent of Venezuela*.

<sup>469</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, p. 115.

<sup>470</sup> Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 115.

<sup>471</sup> For thorough information on the diplomatic correspondence during the Venezuelan Crisis see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1891-1892*, United States Department of State, Great Britain, pp. 542-757 (the Olney’s note is on pp. 542-576), Internet source:

this instruction to Minister in London Bayard, which was intended for British Foreign Minister Lord Salisbury, basically asserted that the United States had the right to exclude extrahemispheric powers from Latin America and had the exclusive right to hemispheric hegemony. He based these demands on the specific explanation and definition of the Monroe Doctrine and on the growing political and economic strength of the United States; such argumentation would also become known as the Olney Corollary to Monroe Doctrine.<sup>472</sup>

“Not only did Olney resort to harsh language in demanding international arbitration of the boundary line but he backed his argument with variations of the Monroe Doctrine that must have sent the fifth president spinning in his grave...in a message that ranks as one of the greatest bombshells ever tossed into the halls of Congress.” Thus commented the Olney’s ‘twenty-inch gun’ note Robert Beisner, and Robert Kagan continues: “Two decades of “soft words and tactful language,” Olney believed, had “undermined respect for the United States” in Britain and throughout the Western Hemisphere.... In his lawyerly fashion he assembled what amounted to be a ten-thousand-word legal brief on Venezuelan matter that would, however, be remembered for only one sentence: “Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition.””<sup>473</sup>

Lord Salisbury made Cleveland and Olney wait for four months for a reply, which when it finally arrived in December 1895,<sup>474</sup> was of similar aggressive wording, and completely refused Olney’s argumentation saying that: “The

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<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=article&did=FRUS.FRUS1895P1.I0019&isize=M>.

<sup>472</sup> Young, George B., “*Intervention under the Monroe Doctrine: the Olney Corollary*,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (June, 1942), p. 247-280.

<sup>473</sup> Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 110-11, Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 369.

<sup>474</sup> Salisbury’s reply was dated November 26, 1895, but U.S. Minister in London and former Secretary of State Bayard postponed sending of the note so it would arrive to Washington after the Annual Message of Cleveland. Thus Bayard prevented that the harsh reaction of the President would hamper the relation even more. Grenville, John A. S., Young, George B., *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy. Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873 – 1917*, p. 166. The Salisbury’s note was also sent to the British Minister in Washington Pauncefote, Foreign Office, November 26, 1895, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1891-1892*, United States Department of State, Great Britain, pp. 563-576, Internet source:

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1895p1.p0623&isize=M>.

Government of the United States is not entitled to affirm as a universal proposition, with reference to a number of independent States for whose conduct it assumes no responsibility, that its interests are necessarily concerned in whatever may befall those States simply because they are situated in the Western Hemisphere.” He also simply rejected U.S. demand for international dispute because “the British Empire and the Republic of Venezuela are neighbors, and they have differed for some time past, and continue to differ, as to the line by which their dominions are separated. It is controversy with which the United States have no apparent practical concern.”

“Of all the offenses that Great Britain could have given, none could have been more grave than Salisbury’s summary dismissal of the legitimacy of the Monroe Doctrine. Britain in effect had flicked the chip off the Cleveland administration shoulder, so now there could be no backing down.”<sup>475</sup> At this moment Cleveland assumed the hard-line position and the question became from the dispute over the boundary between Venezuela and Great Britain, to the U.S.-British debate over the boundary and more importantly over the hegemony in Latin America. The President replied by sending of a very strong special message to Congress on December 17, 1895, in which he defended the right of the United States to dictate the conditions of the arbitration because the U.S. commercial interests and the protection of the American system of government was concerned, and at the same message he asked for approval to create a commission to determine the boundary, which he was given unanimously.<sup>476</sup> “This was an emphatic definition of the Monroe Doctrine as a doctrine of self-interest.”<sup>477</sup> Cleveland’s December message represents the peak moment of the crisis, when even the American public, quite apathetic and concerned mostly by domestic economical crisis, accepted the possibility of war with Great Britain. The Anglophobic reaction of the public in the United States was an indication of the hysteria, which would burst out during the war with Spain.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> *British Parliamentary Papers, volume 15: United States of America* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1964), pp. 877, 885, quoted in Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, pp. 115-6.

<sup>476</sup> May, Ernest R., *Imperial Democracy. The Emergence of America As a Great Power*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York (NY), London, 1961, p. 42.

<sup>477</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, p. 268.

<sup>478</sup> Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean*, p. 158. Beisner, Robert L., *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865 – 1900*, p. 111.

However, at the same time moderate voices on both sides of the Atlantic started to smooth the escalated situation. The most distinguished expert on international law in the United States, John Bassett Moore, opposed Olney's argumentation, most of all the right of the United States to dictate the arbitration. "We have arbitrated boundary disputes so has Great Britain, but never, so far as I am informed, where a line had not previously been agreed upon by direct negotiation. Governments are not in the habit of resigning their functions so completely into the hands of arbitrators to say, 'We have no boundaries; make some for us.'"<sup>479</sup> Thomas F. Bayard, the Minister in London, was also working very intensively to calm down emotions, and blamed fully Venezuela for the escalation of the controversy.

Meanwhile also the British government ruled out Salisbury's recommendation to continue with the aggressive rhetoric, and on January 11, 1896, Lord Playfair, a friend of Thomas Bayard, presented to U.S. Minister a proposition for the conference among the United States and European countries holding colonies in the Western Hemisphere about the Monroe Doctrine, and at the same time announced that Great Britain would agree with the arbitration under the certain guarantee that long-term settlers were not to be evicted from their homes on the territory incorporated into Venezuela. Olney at once rejected the conference, and Great Britain, by withdrawing this demand without any protests, practically accepted U.S. hegemonic position in the Western Hemisphere affairs. Therefore, in the dispute over the right to play the role of the arbiter in the hemispheric conflicts was given to the United States with Great Britain saving its face for it was given concessions in the arbitration itself.<sup>480</sup>

The negotiations were from that moment on advancing with much less tension and higher speed, even though there were some disagreements. The "Proposed Treaty between Venezuela and Great Britain for Settlement of Venezuela Boundary Question, as agreed upon Great Britain and the United States," later on known as Olney-Pauncefote Treaty, signed on November 12,

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<sup>479</sup> John Bassett Moore to William L. Wilson, 10 December 1895, Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States*, p. 117.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 119-23.

1896.<sup>481</sup> It established an arbitral commission with absolutely no participation from the Venezuelan side, which was after one more round of negotiations and some further amendments, “appeased” with the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court being named as a Venezuelan Commissioner. When the commission and its rules were established, the arbitration tribunal met in January 1899 and already on October 3, 1899, it announced its verdict. Except the important southern edge of the Orinoco River delta, nearly all contested territory was given to Great Britain.<sup>482</sup>

Success, which the United States accomplished by the outcome of the Venezuela Crisis of 1895, was from a big part possible because of the involvement of Great Britain in other parts of the world, which the Foreign Office considered of bigger importance for the Empire. The Middle East, Northern Africa, China, Afghanistan, or India, these were all British spheres of influence and Latin America in comparison with them belonged among those with less significance. One of the most decisive moments for the change of British policy at the beginning of 1896 was the telegraph of German Emperor Wilhelm II from January 3, in which he congratulated to President of separatist Transvaal Republic Stephanus Johannes P. Kruger for dispelling of the raid organized by Leander Starr Jameson, which eventually led to the Second Boer War. Great Britain considered colonies in South Africa important enough that it gave up Venezuela dispute for securing of the friendship of the United States in case of war with Imperial Germany.<sup>483</sup>

Moreover, politicians in London realized that the two Anglo-Saxon powers should work together not only in the Western Hemisphere, where the United States were granted a free hand in political affairs, but where Great Britain still economically played the “first fiddle.” But the relatively smooth settlement of the Venezuela crisis led to establishment of an informal alliance between the two countries, which would later on be called the “Great Rapprochement.”<sup>484</sup> Such coalition had strengthened throughout the whole Pre-World War I era, and as we

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<sup>481</sup> Blake, Nelson M., “*The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897*,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (January, 1942), pp. 228-243.

<sup>482</sup> LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, pp. 270-82.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.* May, Ernest R., *Imperial Democracy*, p. 46.

<sup>484</sup> See Burton, David H., *British-American Diplomacy, 1895 – 1917. Early Years of the Special Relationship*, Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar (FL), 1999.

experience even today, it has last until the present day.<sup>485</sup> However, the United States, by being granted the role of the unquestionable leader of the Western Hemisphere, also assumed much bigger responsibility in the hemispheric affairs. Or at least it was believed so in Washington when the second Cuban war of independence started in 1895, which eventually caused consequent conflict between the United States and Spain.

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

## VIII. Transition Concluded: the United States in 1898

“The outbreak of the Spanish – American War launched the United States into a new phase of its history, therefore, marked by greatly increased international power, influence, and involvement, with all the moral and ethical complexities in such a role... But the war was not only a departure: it was also a culmination, the not-illogical result of all that had come before it. It was the product of unfolding historical events and forces reaching back to before the founding of the nation... It was the product of a universalist ideology as articulated in the Declaration of Independence. It reflected Americans’ view of themselves, stretching back to the nation’s founding, as the advance guard of civilization, leading the way against backward and barbaric nations and empires. It derived from the American experience of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and especially from the experience of the Civil War, that great, bloody moral crusade that so many Americans of the late nineteenth century used as their model of “selfless” war on behalf of “humanity” and “civilization.” It grew out of old and potent American ambitions, articulated by Hamilton and Jefferson, Monroe and Madison, Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, to make the United States the “arbiter” of the Western Hemisphere, the defender of the “sister republics” against the pernicious influences of Europe, and the leader of an American system. It was fueled by the growth of military power, which shifted perceptions both of interest and of honor and of what could and could not be tolerated in the American sphere of influence. The Spanish – American War was, in short, an expression of who the American people were and what they had made of their nation.”<sup>486</sup>

I mentioned this lengthy conclusion of Robert Kagan’s book because it quite pertinently expresses my own opinion about the significance of the Spanish – American War of 1898 for the formation of the United States foreign policy. It also anticipates and indicates the form, which I decided to use for finishing of this thesis. The main objective of this dissertation was to describe the *process* of transformation and *formation* of the United States foreign policy throughout the

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<sup>486</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, p. 366.

second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The course of events, which started with the armed revolt of Cuban insurgents in February 1895 and concluded by the peace Treaty of Paris between the United States and Spain, signed on December, 10, 1898, therefore, represents just the final ‘act’ of this over a hundred years-long evolution, which brought the American nation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century among the leading world nations. For that reason it is more important to focus on covering and description of long-term causality of the culmination of this process.

During my investigation and studies I have passed through over forty books, publications, and articles focusing on all possible aspects of the expansionist upheaval of the late 1890’s. The causes and consequences of the Spanish – American War belong among the most analyzed historical periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S. history. Books, which interested me the most for the purpose of this thesis were those setting the Spanish – American War into a broader view, horizontal and vertical, of the U.S. foreign policy of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this I mean that to give this dissertation the right meaning and correct conclusion, events between the years 1895 and 1898 have to be viewed more as the last piece in the ‘mosaic’ or ‘puzzle’ giving us thus full picture of the logic of transformation of the United States. The American nation, and along with it its foreign policy, from being the weak and timid young republic coming out of its fight for independence at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had transferred throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the self-confident leader of the Western Hemisphere, the real ‘Colossus of the North.’ The main objective of this thesis was to give an account of the ‘path,’ which the United States had to undergo during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially in the period after the Civil War. Therefore, to analyze here more deeply the Spanish – American War itself would put us in danger that the extreme extension and complexity of this topic would allow the *process* to be ‘lost in translation.’ However, it is necessary to mention at least basic features of this decisive moment of American history.

As it was mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, events that occurred during the early 1890’s were fundamentally important for the outcome of the second half of the decade. The unprecedented economical growth, boosted by unending multitude of immigrants from Europe, and tumultuous domestic political situation in the post-Civil War era, established environment, which was towards the 1890’s more and more reflecting international position of the United

States. Events like the construction of the inter-oceanic canal, Pan-American conference, or the Venezuelan crisis, if we take into account mainly the Western Hemisphere issues, because newly of importance were becoming issues like the annexation of Hawaii, opening of markets in Asia, or course of events in far-away Samoa and Congo, helped to create in the American public an “outward-looking” atmosphere. Simply said, the United States started to realize that its geographical isolation didn’t ban it from the course of world affairs, especially since it had grown economically so much during the last thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus in the mid-1890’s we can observe a mingling combination of growing conviction about the necessity to assume the leading role in affairs of its unstable southern neighbors. That meant not only economical necessity, which was driven by the need to search for new markets, where the surplus of American overproducing economy would be exported, and which was accentuated by the depression of 1893, but also a feeling of a ‘mission’ to help, protect, and educate nations of Latin America, so they could one day enjoy the benefits of the American system. When Great Britain left the United States alone as the hegemonic power of the hemisphere after the Venezuelan Crisis, it also bestowed the United States, or the Americans at least thought so, a responsibility for the happiness of the “sister” republics of the hemisphere.

Therefore, when yet another Cuban revolt started early in 1895, politicians and the public in the United States had insistent calling to resolve the rapidly worsening situation on the island, which eventually led to the ‘humanitarian war’ for help to “America’s Armenia.”<sup>487</sup> “The War with Spain was itself not the product of an expansionist urge in the United States, but of a distressing situation in Cuba that became intolerable to American sentiment.”<sup>488</sup> Moreover, it was so because Cuba had been a center-point of U.S. foreign policy ever since the days of John Quincy Adams. Because of Spain’s misgovernment throughout the entire last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century events like the Ten Year’s War between 1868 and 1878, and other smaller revolts and uprisings in 1878-1880, 1883, 1885, 1892, or 1893 had kept practically every post-Civil War U.S. administration occupied with Cuban issue.

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid, and May, Ernest R., *Imperial Democracy*, p. 70.

<sup>488</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 374.

This fact was also intensified by growing economical interests of the United States in Cuba and therefore claims of U.S. citizens whose interests were harmed by the drawn-out conflicts.<sup>489</sup> The economical aspect of the Cuban issue was essential. The United States became during this period practically one and only importer of production of Cuban sugar and tobacco. “By the 1880’s, the three islands [besides Cuba also Porto Rico and Santo Domingo] were selling virtually all their sugar to the United States, dealing with one sole firm in the market, the American Sugar Refining Co.; their sugar was shipped in U.S. vessels; the sugar prices were fixed by the New York Produce Exchange; island planters and millowners got their market prices and production estimates from Willet & Grey, in news items reported by Associated Press and carried by the Western Union. Without direct investment in lands or mills the economic annexation of the three islands was under way...”<sup>490</sup> The trade between Cuba and the United States amounted up to \$100,000,000 during the good years, however the ongoing conflict, which started in 1895 diminished sugar crop from 1,050,000 tons in 1894 to 200,000 in 1896, and tobacco from 450,000 to 50,000 bales. However it is necessary to add that the American business circles were among the last of the influential groups that started to support the intervention on the island throughout the course of 1898, because the leaders of the Wall Street were afraid that the U.S. economy, which just had begun its way up to recover from the worst economic crisis of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be hit by inflation, and that the war with Spain would hurt the maritime trade.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> On the Ten Year’s War see e.g. Smith, Joseph, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and Pacific, 1895 – 1902*, Longman, London & New York (NY), 1994, pp. 3-10, or Campbell, Charles S., *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 53-7.

<sup>490</sup> Bethell, Leslie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, pp. 187-207. For the course of event on the island until the outbreak of the war see *Ibid*, pp. 229-42.

<sup>491</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 374-76. One of the domestic issues that significantly influenced the course of events on the island was the Wilson-Mills Tariff of 1894 badly hurting export of Cuban sugar by re-imposing a duty upon raw sugar from abroad. Historians discuss involvement of the U.S. business cycles in the burst of the expansionist upheaval thoroughly. For more information and other opinions see for example Pratt, Julius W., *Expansionists of 1898. The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Island*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore (MD), 1936, LaFeber, Walter, *The New Empire*, pp. 159-196, Williams, William Appleman, *Empire as a Way of Life. An Essay on the Causes and Character of America’s Present Predicament Along With a Few Thoughts About an Alternative*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York (NEW York), 1980, or Pratt, Julius W., “*American Business and the Spanish-American War*,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (May, 1934), pp.163-201.

Much more important for the formation of the American public opinion, however, was the humanitarian and religious sentiment. Readers in the United States were for the first time in American history informed by journalists ‘on the spot,’ sent to Cuba by “yellow press” tycoons William Randolph Hearst (*New York Journal*) and Joseph Pulitzer (*New York World*) to report about barbarities of Captain General Valeriano Weiler, who in February 1896 inaugurated the system of ‘reconcentration’ policy to cut the insurgents off supplies of food and other commissary.<sup>492</sup> “The demand for intervention, which would almost inevitably involve war with Spain, arose plainly from humanitarian rather than from economic considerations...As far as the American public was concerned, intervention, if it came should be intervention for *Cuba libre* – for a Cuba free and independent, not a Cuba transformed from a colony of Spain to a colony of the United States.”<sup>493</sup>

Thus a combination of this feeling of the need to help Cubans, especially after the “yellow press” brought news of a ruthless ferocity with which the war for independence was waged by both sides, and incapacity of the Spanish government to convince Cleveland and after him McKinley<sup>494</sup> that it was able to solve the situation on the island, aggravated by a series of three sudden and unfortunate incidents that occurred in February and March of 1898, brought the United States

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<sup>492</sup> For more information about the American public opinion during the Spanish – American War see Wilkerson, Marcus M., *Public Opinion and the Spanish-American War. A Study in War Propaganda*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge (LA), 1932, Auxier, George W., “*Middle Western Newspapers and the Spanish-American War, 1895-1898*,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (March, 1940), pp. 523-534, or Quint, Howard H., “*American Socialists and the Spanish-American War*,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (summer, 1958), pp. 131-141. For the course of the Cuban war of independence see out of many publication e.g. Foner, Philip S., *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism*, Volume I: 1895 – 1898, Volume II: 1898 – 1902, Monthly Review Press, New York (NY) & London, 1972, Volume I, or Smith, Joseph, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and Pacific, 1895 – 1902*, Longman, London & New York (NY), 1994, pp. 1-28. For political aspect of the conflict between the United States and Spain see e.g. Offner, John L., *An Unwanted War. The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain Over Cuba, 1895 – 1898*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (NC) & London, 1992, which focuses primarily on the bilateral diplomacy between both countries.

<sup>493</sup> Pratt, *A History of the United States Foreign Policy*, p. 376.

<sup>494</sup> William McKinley was, when entering to the White House, strongly refusing any kind of American involvement or intervention, and he tried to solve the situation without having to go to war until the spring of 1898. For detailed understanding of McKinley’s position see his public speeches related to the Spanish – American War, Richardson, James D., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents. William McKinley, Messages, Proclamations, and Executive Orders Relating to the Spanish – American War*, Hard Press, (Year and Place of Publication are not stated.)

and Spain to the war, which resulted in the fast victory of the northern republic and ended Spanish colonial presence in the Western Hemisphere.

These three very important events were – publishing of the private letter of the Spanish Minister in Washington Dupuy de Lôme on February 9, 1898, in American newspapers, in which he described President McKinley as a “weak” politician and a “popularity-hunter,” the destruction of USS *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, for which the public opinion in the United States blamed Spain, even though the later investigations showed no proof of this, and the report related to the situation of the “desolation, distress, misery and starvation” of the *reconcentrados* on Cuba presented by Senator Redfield Proctor of Vermont on March 17. Especially Proctor’s speech had profound effect on the shift of the American public opinion and the President’s as well because he was before the visit of the island in opposition to the intervention. But when he presented his observations to fellow Congressmen with his typical “calm and unimpassioned language,” it “made their blood boil.”<sup>495</sup> From that point it was just a matter of time, when the war would come, because Spain was not capable of fulfilling demands of the United States, even though McKinley put all possible effort to prevent the escalation of the conflict into the war. Moreover, the Cuban insurgents, supported by growing pro-Cuban feelings of the American public, refused any other solution than the complete independence. So when the declaration of war was issued by Spain on April 24, with the United States answering the next day,<sup>496</sup> the ‘humanitarian war’ driven primarily by the feeling of sorrow with suffering of the Cuban people, not even the most optimistic expansionist politicians in Washington as Theodore Roosevelt would expect that the United States would acquire colonial empire some eight thousand miles off its Pacific shores before the Christmas of the same year.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> For more information about these decisive events, which led to the declaration of the war see Smith, Angel, Dávila-Cox, Emma, (eds.), *The Crisis of 1898. Colonial Redistribution and Nationalist Mobilization*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, St. Martin’s Press, Inc., New York (NY), 1999, pp. 18-64, Offner, John L., *An Unwanted War*, pp. 111-27, Foner, Philip S., *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism*, Volume I, pp. 230-53, or for interesting personal account of the destruction of *Maine* written by its Captain, Charles D. Sigsbee see *Personal Narrative of the “Maine,”* By Her Commander, Captain Charles Dwight Sigsbee, U.S.N., Second Paper: The Explosion, Internet source: link missing.

<sup>496</sup> The date was retroactively set on April 21, 1898.

<sup>497</sup> Kagan, Robert, *Dangerous Nation*, pp. 374-416.

The humanitarian feeling of the American public brings forward two aspects coming from experience that the American had made during the period after the Civil War. The anti-imperialist feeling combined with reluctance to get involved with racially, culturally, and religiously different Hispanic element had loud and powerful supporters.<sup>498</sup> Second, and for the purpose of this thesis more important, was the deeper current of thinking of American people who, thanks to the experience they had received since the war with Mexico, were opposed to acquisition of Cuba or other territories.

This statement sounds a bit strange since in several months from this moment the United States would acquire from Spain Porto Rico and Philippines, but these acquisitions possessed certain aspects, which Cuba didn't. In case of Porto Rico it seems safe to suggest that its importance was much less significant for it had always been considered a 'poor' relative of both other larger Caribbean islands, Cuba and Hispaniola. From this point of view we could consider the annexation of this island similar to acquisition of other smaller insular territories in the Pacific. More pertinently said, the racial aspect in case of Porto Rico and the natural opposition of Americans to the acquisition of more territories didn't prevail against the immediate result of the war. Simply said, the Americans were reluctant to return the island to the country, with which they just fought the war, and as we have seen in the previous parts of the thesis, the possibility of letting some other European power to take hold of the island was also unacceptable. I also dare say that the argument that the acquisition of Porto Rico was influenced primarily by the interest to have an insular base in the Caribbean for easier control of the future canal in Central America is not valid because the United States had become an unquestionable hegemon of the Western Hemisphere already since the Venezuelan Crisis, not mentioning that Cuba was to become a protectorate of the United States. Americans also saw much smaller population of Porto Rico as more fit for consequent assimilation to the American system.

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<sup>498</sup> For more information about anti-imperialist movement and racial aspect see e.g. Beisner, Robert L., *Twelve Against Empire. The Anti-Imperialists, 1898 – 1900*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York (NY), London, 1968, Foner, Philip S., Richard C. Winchester, (ed.), *The Anti-Imperialist Reader. A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States. Volume I. From the Mexican War to the Election of 1900*, Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., New York, London, 1984, or Gleijeses, Piero, "1898: the opposition to the Spanish-American war." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Nov 2003 v35 i4 pp. 681-719 [c], Cambridge University Press.

This was, however, not the case of a distant archipelago of Philippines, which the United States occupied after Commodore George Dewey destroyed the Spanish Pacific fleet near Manila.<sup>499</sup> Eight million Filipinos with a powerful independent movement led by Emilio Aguinaldo were hardly to be considered by regular Americans ‘fit’ for becoming citizens of the United States. On the other hand President McKinley and U.S. emissaries at the peace conference in Paris were facing completely new situation, in which the United States occurred after the swift victory over Spain.<sup>500</sup>

It was practically impossible for the U.S. administration to return Philippines back to Spain, which was so weakened by the war that it would very likely signify another long and bloody war for independence, this time with the Filipino insurgents. That, however, the United States couldn’t let happen because other European powers – Great Britain, France, Russia, and newly also Imperial Germany were at this moment partitioning not only Africa, but also China, which was severely hurt after the war with Japan in 1895. Thus even though McKinley was personally opposed to the idea of acquisition of such distant territory, which would also place the United States among other imperialistic powers, the economic and most of all geopolitical importance of Philippines prevailed over the reluctance to possess such unstable “dependency” so far away from the shores of the continental United States.

I pointed out to one of the most important of the results of the Peace conference in Paris just to show that the ‘illogical aberration,’ as some commentators had seen the acquisition of Porto Rico and Philippines was just a consequence of the chain of events, which started with the Proclamation of Montecristi of March 1895 declared by José Martí in far-away coast of Cuba. The

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<sup>499</sup> Smith, Joseph, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and Pacific, 1895 – 1902*, pp. 77-97, 175-86, 188-209, Love, Eric T., *Race over Empire. Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900*, pp. 159-196, or articles Bailey, Thomas A., “*Dewey and the Germans at Manila Bay*,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (October, 1939), pp. 59-81, Eyre, James K., Jr., “*Russia and the American Acquisition of the Philippines*,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XXVIII (1942), pp. 539-562.

<sup>500</sup> For the text of the Peace Treaty of Paris and the diplomatic correspondence between the United States and Spain before and during the conflict see *Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain*, Message from the President of the United States, transmitting A Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain, Signed at the City of Paris on December 10, 1898, Doc. No. 62, Part 1, 55<sup>th</sup> Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sess., Washington, January 4, 1899, and *Spanish Diplomatic Correspondence and Documents, 1896-1900*, Presented to the Cortes by the Minister of States, Government Printing Office, Washington 1905.

annexation of Midway in 1867 and now of Hawaii, Guam, and Philippines from the point of view of this thesis represent just logical continuation of the long-term process of shift from principal of isolation as it was declared by George Washington in his famous Farewell Address, towards an “outward” tendency in the economically and politically globalized world. The acquisition of the Pacific Coast after the Mexican – American War in 1848 thus represents the beginning of a ‘chain reaction.’ Then this chain reaction from the “simple logic” continued with growing need to control the inter-oceanic transportation route in Central America, and therefore also in the necessity to obtain naval bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean and it culminated in the acquisition of a territory so distant geographically, culturally, racially and politically that it seemed to many Americans as if it was in the opposition to fundamental principles of the very existence of the United States. This, however, doesn’t diminish the clear logic of such course of events, which we have the luck to observe from the historical distance, and which we can pursue throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. Therefore, it is quite just statement to say that by the Peace Treaty of Paris the United States finally joined the world. Using the phrase from the subtitle of this thesis, the American eagle finally grew up and matured, and consequently flew out of its nest.

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