

ISLAND OF CUBA.

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MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN

*Reference to the Island of Cuba.*

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AUGUST 31, 1852.—Laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed.

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*To the House of Representatives :*

In answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives, requesting information relative to the policy of the government in regard to the island of Cuba, I transmit a report from the Department of State, and the documents by which it was accompanied.

WASHINGTON, July 13, 1852.

MILLARD FILLMORE.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, July 14, 1852.*

On the 4th of February last, a resolution of the House of Representatives, in the following words, was referred to this department:

“*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to communicate to this house, if not incompatible with the public interests, all instructions from the Department of State to the diplomatic agents of the United States abroad, not heretofore communicated to Congress, declaratory of, or relating to, the policy of the government of the United States in relation the island of Cuba.”

The papers mentioned in the subjoined list are accordingly respectfully submitted.

W. HUNTER,  
*Acting Secretary.*

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*List of papers accompanying the report of the Acting Secretary of State to the President, of the 14th of July, 1852.*

Mr. Forsyth to Mr. Adams, extracts, November 20, 1822.

The same to the same, extract, December 13, 1822.

Mr. Adams to Mr. Forsyth, extract, December 17, 1822.

Mr. Forsyth to Mr. Adams, extract, February 10, 1823.

Mr. Adams to Mr. Nelson, extract, April 28, 1823.

Mr. Appleton to Mr. Adams, extract, August 6, 1823.

The same to the same, extract, July 10, 1823.

Mr. Nelson to Mr. Clay, extract, July 10, 1825.

Mr. Clay to Mr. Everett, extract, April 27, 1825.

The same to the same, extract, April 13, 1826.

Mr. Everett to Mr. Clay, with enclosure, August 17, 1827.

The same to the same, extract, December 12, 1827.

Mr. Van Buren to Mr. Van Ness, extract, October 2, 1829.

The same to the same, extract, October 13, 1830.

Mr. Van Ness to Mr. Forsyth, extract, August 10, 1836.

The same to the same, extract, December 10, 1836.

Mr. Stevenson to Mr. Forsyth, June 16, 1837.

Mr. Eaton to Mr. Forsyth, extract, August 10, 1837.

Mr. Forsyth to Mr. Vail, extract, July 15, 1840.

Mr. Webster to Mr. Irving, extract, January 17, 1843.

The same to the same, extract, March 14, 1843.

Mr. Upshur to Mr. Irving, extract, January 9, 1844.

Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Saunders, extract, February 4, 1847.

The same to the same, extract, June 17, 1848.

Mr. Saunders to Mr. Buchanan, extract, July 29, 1848.

The same to the same, August 18, 1848.

The same to the same, November 17, 1848.

The same to the same, extract, December 14, 1848.

*John Forsyth to the Secretary of State.*

[Extracts.]

[No. 51.]

MADRID, November 20, 1822.

SIR: \* \* \* I understand that this government are under serious apprehensions lest Cuba should declare itself independent, and place itself under our protection; that they are informed a society of Free Masons in Philadelphia has connexion with a society of Free Masons in Havana, with the object, it is supposed, to hasten the declaration of independence. This, according to their usual mode of judging of our conduct, is thought to be known and countenanced by our government. The squadron sent to Havana by the British, the pressure upon Spain at this moment, when she has so much reason to dread the determination of the European Sovereigns, by Great Britain, all combine to show the necessity of watchfulness on our part, as to the designs of that power, and the probability of their accomplishment afforded by the present condition and attitude of this country. A commercial treaty between Spain and England is desirable to England, but it is not of sufficient importance to induce her to take up the gauntlet for Spain against the combined Sovereigns. It is not of sufficient importance to induce her to guaranty the loans of money Spain must have for the support of the constitutional system. What, then, is the object of the one party, and how far will necessity oblige the other party to assist in the accomplishment of it? England desires the weight of Spain as a European ally; 2dly, the benefit of the commerce of the Peninsula; 3dly, to become the mediator between Spain and the Spanish American governments; 4thly, the possession of Cuba, to give her the command of the Gulf of Mexico; 5thly, the communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans over the Isthmus of Darien; 6thly, Montevideo.

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That Great Britain has any fixed determination as to the 4th, 5th, and 6th objects, I will not pretend to affirm positively, but my impressions are strong that she has. If she has, the means of success are a guarantee of loans, taking a lien upon some or all of them as an eventual indemnity, or a purchase of them. The guarantee of Cuba against the designs of the United States would not be an unlikely mode of proceeding. The island, however, will be most reluctantly surrendered by Spain, and the population of the island itself is known to be hostile to any transfer to Great Britain.

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The commercial treaty opens the road to Great Britain to profit by the necessities of Spain. If the Congress do nothing decisive, I hope nothing of consequence will grow out of the determination to treat with England. Whatever may happen, I am here without power to do more than to give you notice of what may be done or intended. Without instructions, I can make no offers to this government in order to divert them from this course, nor [do] I perceive what offers we could [make that] in her present situation could induce Spain not to

pursue [it]; and we are here, I am constrained to say, not considered in the friendly light we ought to be considered by Spain.

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On the subject of Cuba I have taken all due pains indirectly to remove the apprehensions of the government. To several deputies of the Cortes, and to persons who I presumed would repeat what I said to the ministers, I have spoken of Cuba as a very desirable acquisition to any power, but that our interest required, as there was no prospect of its passing into our hands, that it should belong to Spain; that as English property, it would be infinitely injurious to us; as Colombian or Mexican, it would not but be hurtful. Independent of its formidable position, its slave population would make us anxious to keep the island out of the hands of governments which would be compelled, by their institutions, to make changes in it, extremely dangerous to the repose and prosperity of the southern States. In a conversation with one of the members of the political commission of the Cortes, I expressed a conviction that Spain would procure, by an immediate recognition of Colombia and Mexico, and the adoption of a liberal system of commerce, a guarantee of the island from Colombia, Mexico, and the United States; the three powers being equally interested to keep it in the hands of Spain, out of the hands of England, and of each other. He asked permission to speak of it to the ministers, which I gave him, provided he spoke of it to the ministers as a matter of opinion on a subject which had never been even named to me by my government.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*John Forsyth to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

[No. 53.]

"MADRID, December 13, 1822.

"SIR: \* \* \* I received a few days since a note from Mr. San Miguel, \* \* \* informing me that the Spanish squadron in the Gulf of Mexico was about to be reinforced. I supposed it probable that a similar note had been written to all the foreign ministers, but find that this was not the fact. My answer \* \* \* was written after ascertaining this. What the motive is for sending a naval reinforcement you may probably understand better than I do, having direct information from Havana. As far as we are informed here, a land force would be more useful for destroying the piracies of Cuba, and of breaking up their connexion with Havana. It is more probable the view is to protect Cuba, and to assist the government party against the Mexican and Colombian governments.

"Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, &c., &c., &c."

*Mr. Adams to Mr. Forsyth.*

[Extract.]

[SECRET.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, December 17, 1822.*

SIR: The present condition of the island of Cuba has excited much attention, and has become of deep interest to this Union. From the public despatch and other papers which you will receive with this, you will perceive the great and continued injuries which our commerce is suffering from pirates issuing from thence, the repeated demands made upon the authorities of the island for their suppression, and the exertions, but partially effectual, of our own naval force against them. There is another point of view, however, in which the condition of the island is yet more an object of concern. From various sources intimations have been received here that the British government have it in contemplation to obtain possession of the island. It is even asserted from sources to which some credit is due, that they have been for more than two years in secret negotiation with Spain for the cession of the island; and it is added that Spain, though disinclined to such an arrangement, might resist it with more firmness, if, for a limited period of time, she could obtain the joint guarantee of the United States and France, securing the island to herself.

There is reason, also, to believe that the future political condition of the island is a subject of much anxiety and of informal deliberations among its own inhabitants; that both France and Great Britain have political agents there observing the course of events, and perhaps endeavoring to give them different directions. The President has, therefore, determined to despatch to you a special messenger to deliver this letter; upon receipt of which, he wishes you to take such measures as may be adapted to obtain correct information, whether such a negotiation as has been above suggested is on foot between Spain and Great Britain; and if so, to communicate to the Spanish government, in a manner adapted to the delicacy of the case, the sentiments of this government in relation to this subject, which are favorable to the continuance of Cuba in its connexion with Spain.

JOHN FORSYTH,

*Minister Plenipotentiary U. S., Madrid.**John Forsyth to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

[No. 58.]

MADRID, *February 10, 1823.*

SIR: \* \* \* I reminded Mr. San Miguel that there were portions of the Spanish dominions whose vicinity to our territory rendered us deeply interested in their fate, naming particularly the island of Cuba; that, in the event of war with France, hostilities with Colombia and Mexico continuing, the situation of the island would be extremely crit-

ical. I requested, therefore, to be informed whether the local force in that island was sufficient to defend it against a sudden attack, and whether this government contemplated to increase its force in that quarter. He seemed, at first, to understand this as a sort of offer to protect the island; but, when he was made clearly to understand it, he said the local force was sufficient for the present; that the government would occupy itself immediately with that subject; that they relied *upon their own resources and upon us* for the security of the island. To this plain remark I could only reply that, without instructions, I could only speak of what I supposed to be the wishes of my government and believed to be the interest of the United States; that we desired no other neighbor in Cuba but Spain; that I felt confident the United States would do every thing in their power, consistent with their obligations, to prevent Cuba from being wrested from Spain; that he was no doubt aware that there could be no understanding between the two governments on this point without a reference to Washington. He said he was aware of that, and should, as soon as the question here, which was varying every moment, was settled, give instructions to the Spanish minister in the United States on this subject.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Mr. Adams to Mr. Nelson.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON,  
*April 28, 1823.*

In the war between France and Spain, now commencing, other interests, peculiarly ours, will, in all probability, be deeply involved. Whatever may be the issue of this war, as between those two European powers, it may be taken for granted that the dominion of Spain upon the American continents, north and south, is irrecoverably gone. But the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico still remain nominally, and so far really, dependent upon her, that she yet possesses the power of transferring her own dominion over them, together with the possession of them, to others. These islands, from their local position and natural appendages to the North American continent, and one of them, Cuba, almost in sight of our shores, from a multitude of considerations, has become an object of transcendent importance to the commercial and political interests of our Union. Its commanding position, with reference to the Gulf of Mexico and the West India seas; the character of its population; its situation midway between our southern coast and the island of St. Domingo; its safe and capacious harbor of the Havana, fronting a long line of our shores destitute of the same advantage; the nature of its productions and of its wants, furnishing the supplies and needing the returns of a commerce immensely profitable and mutually beneficial,—give it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared,

and little inferior to that which binds the different members of this Union together. Such, indeed, are, between the interests of that island and of this country, the geographical, commercial, moral, and political relations, formed by nature, gathering, in the process of time, and even now verging to maturity, that, in looking forward to the probable course of events, for the short period of half a century, it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our federal republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union itself. It is obvious, however, that for this event we are not yet prepared. Numerous and formidable objections to the extension of our territorial dominions beyond sea, present themselves to the first contemplation of the subject; obstacles to the system of policy by which alone that result can be compassed and maintained, are to be foreseen and surmounted, both from at home and abroad; but 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 connexion with Spain, and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only towards the North American Union, which, by the same law of nature, cannot cast her off from its bosom.

In any other state of things than that which springs from this incipient war between France and Spain, these considerations would be premature. They are now merely touched upon to illustrate the position that, in the war opening upon Europe, the United States have deep and important interests involved, peculiarly their own—the condition of Cuba cannot but depend upon the issue of this war. As an integral part of the Spanish territories, Cuba has been formally and solemnly invested with the liberties of the Spanish constitution. To destroy those liberties, and to restore in the stead of that constitution the dominion of the Bourbon race, is the avowed object of this new invasion of the Peninsula. There is too much reason to apprehend that, in Spain itself, this unhallowed purpose will be attended with immediate, or at least with temporary, success. The constitution of Spain will be demolished by the armies of the Holy Alliance, and the Spanish nation will again bow the neck to the yoke of bigotry and despotic sway. Whether the purposes of France or of her continental allies extend to the subjugation of the remaining Ultra-Marine possessions of Spain or not, has not yet been sufficiently disclosed. But to confine ourselves to that which immediately concerns us—the condition of the island of Cuba—we know that the republican spirit of freedom prevails among its inhabitants. The liberties of the constitution are to them rights in possession; nor is it to be presumed that they will be willing to surrender them because they may be extinguished by foreign violence in the parent country. As Spanish territory, the island will be liable to invasion from France during the war; and the only reasons for doubting whether the attempt will be made, are the probable incompetency of the French maritime force to effect the conquest, and the probability that its accomplishment would be resisted by Great Britain. In the mean time, and at all events, the condition of the island, in regard to that of its inhabitants, is a condition of great imminent and complicated danger; and without resorting to speculation upon what such a state of

things must produce upon a people so situated, we know that its approach has already had a powerful effect upon them, and that the question, what they are to do upon contingencies daily pressing upon them and ripening into reality, has for the last twelve months constantly excited their attention and stimulated them to action. Were the population of the island of one blood and color, there could be no doubt or hesitation with regard to the course which they would pursue, as dictated by their interests and their rights : the invasion of Spain by France would be the signal for *their* declaration of independence. That even in their present state it will be imposed upon them as a necessity, is not unlikely ; but among all their reflecting men it is admitted as a maxim fundamental to all deliberation upon their future condition, that they are not competent to a system of permanent self-dependence ; they must rely for the support of protection upon some force from without ; and in the event of the overthrow of the Spanish constitution, that support can no longer be expected from Spain—their only alternative of dependence must be upon Great Britain or upon the United States. Hitherto the wishes of this government have been that the connexion between Cuba and Spain should continue as it has existed for several years ; these wishes are known to the principal inhabitants of the island, and instructions, copies of which are now furnished you, were some months since transmitted to Mr. Forsyth, authorizing him in a suitable manner to communicate them to the Spanish government. These wishes still continue, so far as they can be indulged with a rational foresight of events beyond our control, but for which it is our duty to be prepared. If a government is to be imposed by foreign violence upon the Spanish nation, and the liberties which they have asserted by their constitution are to be crushed, it is neither to be expected nor desired that the people of Cuba, far from the reach of the oppressors of Spain, should submit to be governed by them. Should the cause of Spain herself issue more propitiously than from its present prospects can be anticipated, it is obvious that the trial through which she must pass at home, and the final loss of *all* her dominions on the American continents, will leave her unable to extend to the island of Cuba that protection necessary for its internal security and its outward defence.

Great Britain has formally withdrawn from the councils of the European alliance in regard to Spain ; she disapproves the war which they have sanctioned, and which is undertaken by France, and she avows her determination to defend Portugal against the application of the principles upon which the invasion of Spain raises its only pretence of right. To the war as it commences, she has declared her intention of remaining neutral ; but the spirit of the British nation is so strongly and with so much unanimity pronounced against France, their interests are so deeply involved in the issue, their national resentments and jealousies will be so forcibly stimulated by the progress of the war, whatever it may be, that, unless the conflict should be as short and the issue as decisive as that of which Italy was recently the scene, it is scarcely possible that the neutrality of Great Britain should be long maintained. The prospect is that she will be soon engaged on the side of Spain ; but in making common cause with her, it is not to be supposed that she will yield her assistance upon principles altogether disinterested and

gratuitous. As the price of her alliance, the two remaining islands of Spain in the West Indies present objects no longer of much possible value or benefit to Spain, but of such importance to Great Britain that it is impossible to suppose her indifferent to the acquisition of them.

The motives of Great Britain for desiring the possession of Cuba are so obvious, especially since the independence of Mexico and the annexation of the Floridas to our Union; the internal condition of the island since the recent Spanish revolution, and the possibility of its continued dependence upon Spain, have been so precarious, the want of protection there, the power of affording it possessed by Great Britain, and the necessities of Spain to secure, by some equivalent, the support of Great Britain for herself, have formed a remarkable concurrence of predispositions to the transfer of Cuba, and during the last two years rumors have been multiplied that it was already consummated. We have been confidentially told, by indirect communication from the French government, that more than two years since Great Britain was negotiating with Spain for the cession of Cuba, and so eager in the pursuit as to have offered Gibraltar, and more, for it in exchange. There is reason to believe that, in this respect, the French government was misinformed; but neither is entire reliance to be placed on the declaration lately made by the present British Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the French government, and which, with precautions indicating distrust, has been also confidentially communicated to us, viz: that Great Britain would hold it disgraceful to avail herself of the distressed situation of Spain to obtain possession of any portion of her American colonies. The object of this declaration, and of the communication of it here, undoubtedly was to induce the belief that Great Britain entertained no purpose of obtaining the possession of Cuba; but these assurances were given with reference to a state of peace then still existing, and which it was the intention and hope of Great Britain to preserve. The condition of all the parties to them has since changed; and however indisposed the British government might be ungenerously to avail themselves of the distress of Spain to extort from her any remnant of her former possessions, they did not forbear to take advantage of it by order of reprisals given to two successive squadrons despatched to the West Indies, and stationed in the immediate proximity to the island of Cuba.

By measures thus vigorous and peremptory, they obtained from Spain an immediate revocation of the blockade which her generals had proclaimed on the coast of Terra Firma, and pledges of reparation for all the captures of British vessels made under cover of that military fiction. They obtained, also, an acknowledgment of many long-standing claims of British subjects upon the Spanish government, and promises of payment of them as a part of the national debt. The whole amount of them, however, as well as that of the reparation and indemnity promised for the capture of British property under the blockades of General Morales and by the Porto Rico privateers, yet exists, in the form of claims, and the whole mass of them now is acknowledged claim, for the satisfaction of which pledges have been given to be redeemed hereafter, and for which the island of Cuba may be the only indemnity in the power of Spain to grant, as it will undoubtedly be to Great Britain the most satisfactory indemnity which she could receive.

The war between France and Spain changes so totally the circumstances under which the declaration above mentioned of Mr. Canning was made, that it may, at its very outset, produce events, under which the possession of Cuba may be obtained by Great Britain, without even raising a reproach of intended deception against the British government for making it. An alliance between Great Britain and Spain may be one of the first fruits of this war. A guaranty of the island to Spain may be among the stipulations of that alliance; and, in the event either of a threatened attack upon the island by France, or of attempts on the part of the islanders to assume their independence, a resort to the temporary occupation of the Havana by British forces may be among the probable expedients through which it may be obtained, by concert, between Great Britain and Spain herself. It is not necessary to point out the numerous contingencies by which the transition from a temporary and fiduciary occupation to a permanent and proprietary possession may be effected.

The transfer of Cuba to Great Britain would be an event unpropitious to the interests of this Union. This opinion is so generally entertained, that even the groundless rumors that it was about to be accomplished, which have spread abroad, and are still teeming, may be traced to the deep and almost universal feeling of aversion to it, and to the alarm which the mere probability of its occurrence has stimulated. The question both of our right and of our power to prevent it, if necessary by force, already obtrudes itself upon our councils, and the administration is called upon, in the performance of its duties to the nation, at least to use all the means within its competency to guard against and forefend it.

It will be among the primary objects requiring your most earnest and unremitting attention, to ascertain and report to us every movement of negotiation between Spain and Great Britain upon this subject. We cannot, indeed, prescribe any special instructions in relation to it. We scarcely know where you will find the government of Spain upon your arrival in the country, nor can we foresee, with certainty, by whom it will be administered. Your credentials are addressed to Ferdinand, the King of Spain, under the constitution. You may find him under the guardianship of a Cortes, in the custody of an army of faith, or under the protection of the invaders of his country. So long as the *constitutional* government may continue to be administered in his name, your official intercourse will be with his ministers, and to them you will repeat, what Mr. Forsyth has been instructed to say, that the wishes of your government are that Cuba and Porto Rico may continue in connexion with independent and constitutional Spain. You will add that no countenance has been given by us to any projected plan of separation from Spain, which may have been formed in the island. This assurance becomes proper, as by a late despatch received from Mr. Forsyth, he intimates that the Spanish government have been informed that a revolution in Cuba was secretly preparing, fomented by communications between a society of Free Masons there and another of the same fraternity in Philadelphia. Of this we have no other knowledge; and the societies of Free Masons in this country are so little in the practice of using agency of a political nature on any occasion, that we think it most

probable the information of the Spanish government, in that respect, is unfounded. It is true that the Free Masons at the Havana have taken part of late in the politics of Cuba, and, so far as it is known to us, it has been an earnest and active part in favor of the countinuanee of their connexion with Spain. While disclaiming all disposition on our part either to obtain possession of Cuba or of Porto Rico ourselves, you will declare that the American government had no knowledge of the lawless expedition undertaken against the latter of those islands last summer.

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*Mr. J. J. Appleton to Mr. Adams.*

[Extract.]

CADIZ, August 6, 1823.

If no buyers for the new loan offer without security, the interest may be secured upon the revenue of the *island of Cuba*, which exceeds the ordinary expenditures of the island by about \$1,500,000; more than sufficient for the principal which remains to be disposed of. A member of the Cortes, high in the confidence of the government, and who has been constantly employed in the commission of "ways and means," came to see me yesterday with the formal object of inquiring whether a loan could be negotiated in the United States, mortgaged upon the proceeds of the customs of the Havana. He said that he was afraid that England, pursuing her policy to thwart all the financial operations of Spain, and to curtail thus her means of resistance, would prevent a negotiation of the "inscriptions;" and that Spain would thus become a victim of the reliance placed upon England. He was, therefore, anxious that Spain should look beyond England, and had thought that the United States, knowing best how to value the island of Cuba, would be most likely to engage in a speculation resting upon its revenues. He therefore desired me to tell him frankly whether the government of the United States would favor such a loan, if attempted. I answered that I could not tell what would be the success of an offer of this kind to the United States; that there were some shapes in which it would meet with great and perhaps insurmountable objections; that there were others where the difficulties would be less; that it appeared to me, however, to be a subject of so much importance to Spain at this moment, that I should be astonished if she did not take the necessary steps to ascertain distinctly what she could expect in reference to it. He asked me then what steps could be taken. I answered that I saw no other way but by sending to the United States a person possessing the entire confidence of this government, calculated to gain that of mine, and furnished with ample powers. He observed that he had thought of the same expedient, and that he thought the government was disposed to send a minister to the United States. Let one of your vessels of war, added he, come into this port, and I will insure his appointment; for he would then have the means of getting to his destination. I replied that I would let Mr. Nelson know what he had told me, that he might, if he found it practicable, send, under any pretext,

one of our vessels here; but that I feared it would be difficult to arrange the opportunity he desired, and should be sorry if the government waited for it, as in affairs of the importance of those in question despatch was everything. The gentleman with whom I had this conversation, though not friendly to England, has always felt the importance of securing her good will, if not her assistance, and has, in consequence, been one of the organs through which the Cortes have, if I may so say, conversed with the English minister and unaccredited but confidential *agents of Mr. Canning* at this court.

His coming to me, under such circumstances, has impressed me with the idea that there was but little hope of engaging England to enter in the speculation which he proposes to the United States. That she has been sounded on this or some analogous point, I have but little doubt; that she has been found cold and distant, in consequence of her engagements to other powers, and her little confidence in the stability of the government from which the overtures proceeded, is also not improbable. What, however, you may rely upon as certain is, that up to this day there has been nothing done involving the fate of the island of Cuba.

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*Mr. J. J. Appleton to Mr. Adams.*

[Extract.]

CADIZ, *July 10, 1823.*

SIR: The contents of the letter of which I herewith enclose a duplicate, are substantially confirmed by all that has come to my knowledge since it was written. I shall say nothing of the official declaration of England; they are documents which must long since have reached you. I have it, however, in my power to say, upon the best authority, that the sentiments she now professes in relation to acquisition of territory at the expense of Spain have not always been entertained by her. Mr. Quadra, now deputy of the Cortes, had, when minister of Ultra-Marine in the year 1820, distant overtures made to him for a cession of the eastern side of Cuba to England. These overtures were treated with great coldness, and it is supposed have not been repeated. This fact has been communicated to me in confidence by Mr. Gener, a deputy from the Havana, who, being a European by birth, has had more access to the secrets of the cabinet than his companions, and has lately received a distinguished proof of the respect in which he is held in being called to preside over the Cortes during an epoch of particular difficulty. This gentleman has, moreover, assured me that these overtures were the only ones that had ever come to his knowledge, though, before leaving Madrid, he had made it a subject of particular inquiry. The deputies of Cuba have, within a few days, written a letter to the provincial deputations, in which, after acquainting them with the events which have lately occurred here, express a hope that, if some of the worthy patriots who have sacrificed everything to support the liberties and independence of the Peninsula should be obliged to cross the Atlantic,

they will find an asylum in the island of Cuba. This letter is, as I am informed by one of the signers, intended to prepare the people of Cuba for the worst that can happen here. They suppose, and no doubt correctly, that the invasion of the mother country will elicit much speculation as to the future fate of the island among its inhabitants, and that the impulse which they have received in favor of independence will not now be easily repressed; they see calamities, therefore, brooding over their island. These deputies, who, in common with their colleagues, voted for the removal of the royal family to this place, are now declared traitors by the regency at Madrid, and will, if the cause of the constitution fails, be exposed to cruel persecutors. Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing that they should wish to insure themselves an asylum among their friends, and save their particular provinces from the despotism with which those of Europe are threatened. Great, however, as is their horror of despotism, it does not exceed their dread of becoming *independent* too soon. In their anxiety, they cast their eyes towards the United States, and inquire whether an arrangement could not be made for the protection of the island against the evils with which it is threatened in case things go badly here. Is there no remedy, say they, but holding again our necks to the yoke? Is there no alternative between despotism and the ruin that awaits us if, unsupported, we attempt to resist? I have not dared to suggest any, though I should suppose that the United States, or the United States and England jointly, might find one in a guarantee of the island to Spain, while in the enjoyment of the provincial government lately decreed for it by the Cortes. The present is the moment when such an arrangement might be made with Spain; all her influential men look to the chance of being driven from their country, and would probably rejoice in having it in their power to reconcile its best interests with their own safety. Should Mr. Nelson come provided with adequate instructions, he will arrive in the best possible moment to fix the fate of the island in the way that will best suit the interests of the United States.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Hugh Nelson to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

[No. 59.]

MADRID, *July 10, 1825.*

SIR: I have the honor to enclose a copy of my last note to the Secretary of State of his Catholic Majesty, in which, on his request, I state what I have been instructed to say to this government in reference to the aversion of the American government to see the island of Cuba pass into the hands of any other European power, and our disclaimer of all views on our part in reference to the same subject. This note was written on the request of the Secretary, and on his stating that it would extract from them an answer in writing on the application which I had made for the privilege of sending consuls to these islands. It has pro-

duced no such effect; and although I have called repeatedly in person and urged the subject, and have delayed my departure from Madrid some weeks on their request, I have only obtained a promise that it would soon be given. As I presumed, from its delay, that it would not probably be very favorable, I have concluded to leave it to my successor.

Hon. HENRY CLAY,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Don Francisco de Zea Bermudez to Mr. Nelson.*

[Translation.]

PALACE, July 12, 1825.

SIR: I had the honor of laying before the King, my august master, the note which you were pleased to address to me on the 22d ultimo. His Majesty has, with the greatest satisfaction, seen confirmed in it the friendly dispositions of your government, and, firmly persuaded of their continuance, will always take pleasure in responding to them with that faithfulness and noble frankness which are characteristic of him.

His Majesty has at no time thought of ceding to any power the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, and, so far from such a purpose, is firmly determined to keep them under the dominion and authority of his legitimate sovereignty.

This formal declaration will be satisfactory to the wishes of your government, as you have been pleased to state to me with respect to the intentions of Spain; and the equally explicit declaration which you make me, that the United States will not suffer, far less take part or afford this assistance to, any plan which, by means of expeditions or armaments, or of any other mode, is intended to foment internal discord in said islands, to disturb their tranquillity, or attempt their separation from the Spanish empire, has been in the highest degree grateful to the King, my master. Wherefore, his Majesty doubts not that your government, duly appreciating the just observations which I had the honor of making to you verbally, will particularly apply, with respect to the said possessions, all the amplitude necessary to the assurances and guarantees which you mention to me, and that in a faithful observance of the strictest neutrality it will be pleased to take the most prompt and efficacious measures to prevent the rebellious subjects of his Majesty in America from availing themselves of tortuous and secret means, in having, in the ports and on the coasts of the United States, armaments intended to harass the commerce of Spain in the American seas, to attack said islands, to introduce into them a revolution, or promote their separation from the mother country. His Majesty is still further persuaded that your government will immediately direct the proper means for uprooting these evils, as it cannot be ignorant that there have been, and now are, many cases in which, by eluding the laws of the country, there have been built, armed, and equipped, on account of, by the instigation and with the flags of, the self-styled governments of Mexico,

Colombia, and Buenos Ayres, in the ports of the United States, ships of war and privateers of individuals; that, frequently converted into pirates, they are employed in insulting and harassing not only the said islands and their commerce, but also the commerce and navigation of other nations.

When, therefore, by these and other securities, which the American government may judge fit and proper for their dignity and interests to give to Spain, the minds of the inhabitants of Cuba and Porto Rico are tranquilized respecting the injuries which they have suffered and the evils which they dread, then his Majesty will hasten to take into consideration the proposition which you have been pleased to make me, about the admission into them of consuls of the United States; you may be assured, sir, of the fidelity with which his Majesty will invariably respond to the testimonies of friendship which he receives from the United States, cheerfully concurring on his part to consolidate the harmony and good understanding between the two nations.

I avail myself of this occasion to express to you, sir, the value and esteem which the King, my master, has for you personally, for the frankness and good faith with which you have endeavored, during your residence at this court, to conciliate the interests of both powers; and, wishing you the most prosperous return to your country, I pray you, sir, to receive the assurances of my sincere good will and very distinguished consideration.

God preserve you many years.

Your most obedient, humble servant,

FRANCISCO DE ZEA BERMUDEZ.

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*Hugh Nelson to H. C. M. First Secretary of State.*

[With No. 59.]

MADRID, *June 22, 1825.*

The undersigned, minister plenipotentiary of the United States, has the honor to submit to his excellency a proposition in behalf of the government of the United States, for the admission of consuls into his Catholic Majesty's islands of Cuba and Porto Rico. The undersigned having presented to his excellency this proposal in conversation, now, by the request of his excellency, offers it in writing. His excellency having suggested, in the conference on this subject, the propriety, on the part of Spain, under existing circumstances, of asking some assurances, or pledges, to guard against the hazard of injury which might result from this measure, was informed by the undersigned that he was not authorized to give any assurances or pledges, but that when he was honored with the mission to Madrid, there then being in circulation rumors that some European power was negotiating with Spain for the transfer of these islands, he was authorized to declare to Spain the repugnance with which the United States would see these islands transferred to any other power; that they prefer to see the connexion between Spain and these islands continued, to their severance from Spain and junction to

any such power who might be desirous of acquiring these rich possessions; that whilst instructed not to conceal from Spain the repugnance of the United States to such transfer of these islands, he was authorized, unequivocally, to disclaim all views of aggrandizement, on their own part, in reference to these objects, and to declare the exemption of his government from all connivance at, or countenance of, internal dissension, or at expeditions, or equipments, having in view either the disturbance of the internal repose of these islands, or the dismemberment of the Spanish empire. The undersigned was also instructed to say that the government of the United States expected, from the friendship and good understanding subsisting between the two governments, that Spain would not conceal from them a measure of this sort, should they at any time contemplate the transfer of these islands, so contiguous to the territory of the United States. These instructions were only deemed necessary from the existence of the rumors alluded to, and from some insinuations which had been made by the representative of his Catholic Majesty in the United States, injurious to the good faith and honor of the United States, which it was presumed might have been laid before his Majesty's government, and might render these explanations proper. The undersigned has the honor to ask an answer to his proposals, and to tender to his excellency his distinguished consideration, and to subscribe himself his excellency's obedient, humble servant, &c.,

HUGH NELSON.

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*Mr. Clay to Mr. Everett.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, April 27, 1825.*

Besides the preceding objects, to which your attention will be directed, others of great interest will also claim it. Of these, that of the highest importance is the present war between Spain and her former colonies on this continent. The President wishes you to bring this subject, in the most conciliatory manner possible, before the Spanish government; it would be as unnecessary as unprofitable to look to the past, except for the purpose of guiding future conduct. True wisdom dictates that Spain, without indulging in unavailing regrets on account of what she has irretrievably lost, should employ the means of retrieving what she may yet preserve from the wreck of her former possessions. The war upon the continent is, in fact, at an end, and not a solitary foot of land from the western limit of the United States to Cape Horn owns her sway, not a bayonet in all that vast extent remains to sustain her cause, and the Peninsula is utterly incompetent to replace those armies which have been vanquished and annihilated by the victorious forces of the new republics. What possible object, then, can remain to Spain to protract a war which she can no longer maintain, and to the conclusion of which, in form, there is only wanting the recognition of the new governments by treaties of peace? If there were

left the most distant prospect of her reconquering her continental provinces which have achieved their independence, there might be a motive for her perseverance. But every expectation of such reconquest, it is manifest, must be perfectly chimerical; if she can entertain no rational hope to recover what has been forced from her grasp, is there not great danger of her losing what she yet but feebly holds? It should be borne in mind that the armies of the new States, flushed with victory, have no longer employment on the continent; and yet, whilst the war continues, if it be only in name, they cannot be disbanded without a disregard of all the maxims of just precaution. To what object, then, will the new republics direct their powerful and victorious armies? They have a common interest and a common enemy; and let it be supposed that that enemy, weak and exhausted as he is, refuses to make peace, will they not strike wherever they can reach? and from the proximity and great value of Cuba and Porto Rico, is it not to be anticipated that they will aim, and aim a successful blow, too, at those Spanish islands? Whilst they would operate from without, means would doubtless be at the same time employed to stimulate the population within to a revolt; and that the disposition exists among the inhabitants to a considerable extent to throw off the Spanish authority, is well known. It is due to the United States to declare, that they have constantly declined to give any countenance to that disposition.

It is not, then, for the new republics that the President wishes you to urge upon Spain the expediency of concluding the war; their interest is probably on the side of its continuance, if any nation can ever have an interest in a state of war. But it is for Spain herself, for the cause of humanity, for the general repose of the world, that you are required, with all the delicacy which belongs to the subject, to use every topic of persuasion to impress upon the councils of Spain the propriety, by a formal pacification, of terminating the war; and as the views and policy of the United States in regard to those islands may possibly have some influence, you are authorized frankly and fully to disclose them. The United States are satisfied with the present condition of those islands in the hands of Spain, and with their ports open to our commerce as they are now open; this government desires no political change of that condition. The population itself of the islands is incompetent at present, from its composition and its amount, to maintain self-government. The maritime force of the neighboring republics of Mexico and Colombia is not now, nor is it likely shortly to be, adequate to the protection of those islands if the conquest of them were effected. The United States would entertain constant apprehensions of their passing from their possession to that of some less friendly sovereignty; and of all the European powers, this country prefers that Cuba and Porto Rico should remain dependent on Spain. If the war should continue between Spain and the new republics, and those islands should become the object and the theatre of it, their fortunes have such a connexion with the prosperity of the United States, that they could not be indifferent spectators; and the possible contingencies of such a protracted war might bring upon the government of the United States duties and obligations, the performance of which, however painful it

should be, they might not be at liberty to decline. A subsidiary consideration in favor of peace deserving some weight, is that, as the war has been the parent cause of the shocking piracies in the West Indies, its termination would be probably followed by their cessation; and thus the government of Spain, by one act, would fulfil the double obligation under which it lies to foreign governments, of repressing enormities, the perpetrators of which find refuge, if not succor, in Spanish territory, and that to the Spanish nation itself of promoting its real interests.

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*Mr. Clay to Mr. Everett.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, April 13, 1826.*

On the twentieth day of last December I addressed a note to each of the ministers from Colombia and Mexico, a copy of which is now forwarded, for the purpose of prevailing upon their respective governments to suspend any expedition which both or either of them might be fitting out against the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico. The President considered the suspension might have a favorable effect upon the cause of peace, and it was also recommended by other considerations. We have not yet been officially informed of the result of the application, but it was made under auspicious circumstances, and there is reason to believe that it will be attended with the desired effect. You will avail yourself of this measure to impress upon Spain the propriety of putting an end to the war, and urge it as a new proof of the friendly dispositions of this government. In respect to Cuba and Porto Rico, there can be little doubt, if the war were once ended, that they would be safe in the possession of Spain; they would at least be secure from foreign attacks, and all ideas of independence which the inhabitants may entertain would cease with the cessation of the state of war which has excited them. Great Britain is fully aware that the United States could not consent to her occupation of those islands under any contingencies whatever. France, as you will see by the annexed correspondence with Mr. Brown and with the French government, also well knows that we could not see with indifference her acquisition of those islands; and the forbearance of the United States in regard to them may be fully relied on from their known justice, from their patience and moderation heretofore exhibited, and from their established pacific policy. If the acquisition of Cuba were desirable to the United States, there is believed to be no reasonable prospect of effecting at this conjuncture that object; and, if there were any, the frankness of their diplomacy, which has induced the President freely and fully to disclose our views both to Great Britain and France, forbids absolutely any movement whatever at this time with such a purpose. This condition of the great maritime powers (the United States, Great Britain, and France) is almost equivalent to an absolute guaranty of the islands to Spain; but we can enter into no stipulations by treaty to guaranty them, and the President therefore ap-

proves your having explicitly communicated to Spain that we could contract no engagement to guaranty them. You will continue to decline any proposal to that effect, should any such hereafter be made.

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*Mr. A. H. Everett to the Secretary of State.*

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

MADRID, August 17, 1827.

SIR: The enclosed copy of a confidential despatch addressed to the Minister of State, by the Conde de la Alcadia, Spanish minister at London, was handed me to-day by a private friend, and may be depended on as authentic. As the communication was made to me in the strictest confidence, and as the document is in itself unsuitable for the press, I take the liberty of transmitting it to you—for the President's information—in the form of a private letter, and request that it may not be placed on the public files of the Department of State.

In this letter the Spanish minister informs his government of a plan conceived by that of England, and already in a state of partial execution, for effecting a revolution in the Canary islands and in Cuba. The sources from which the Count de la Alcadia derived his knowledge upon the subject are, as you will perceive, of the most respectable character, and such as leave no doubt of the facts. The object seems to be, to establish the British influence in these islands—in the end, probably, to obtain territorial possession of them; and the cover of a spontaneous declaration of independence by the inhabitants is to be employed in order, as is expressly stated, to avoid awakening the jealousy of the government of the United States.

I have thought it of high importance to give you the earliest information of these proceedings; and, wishing to send off the paper by the French courier that leaves town to-night, I have no time at present to add any further remarks. The President will perceive at once the bearing of these projects upon the interest of the United States, and will judge what measures it may be proper to adopt for the purpose of defeating them, or counteracting their effects. If any should be resolved on in which my concurrence may be wanted, you will, of course, favor me with the necessary instructions. In the mean time I shall endeavor to collect all the information on the subject that is accessible here, and shall give you notice of any other circumstances that may come to my knowledge.

It is rather singular that the Duke of Wellington should have made known to the Spanish minister a plan formed and acted on while he was himself a member of the cabinet. The fact was probably owing to the strong feelings of disgust and bitterness with which he has been inspired by the late change in the administration. It is also rather singular that Mr. Salmon himself should have made no communications to me upon a project which is certainly not indifferent to the United States, and in regard to which he might naturally expect that their co-operation would be useful to Spain. Upon this point, and others connected with the sub-

ject, I shall hereafter submit to your consideration some additional remarks.

I am, with great respect, sir, your very faithful and obedient servant,  
A. H. EVERETT.

*Translation of a private despatch addressed by the Spanish Minister at London to the Minister of State.*

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

LONDON, June 1, 1827.

MOST EXCELLENT SIR: I deem it my duty to give you notice, for the information of the King, our lord, that this government despatched a frigate some time ago to the Canary islands, with commissioners on board, who were instructed to ascertain whether any preparations were making there for an expedition to America, and also the state of defence of those islands, and the dispositions of the inhabitants. The result of these inquiries was that the said islands were in a wholly defenceless situation, provided with few troops, and those disaffected and ready for any innovation.

The frigate then proceeded to the Havana, where the commissioners found many persons disposed to revolt; but in consequence of the large military force stationed there, and the strength of the fortifications, they considered it impossible to take possession of the island without the co-operation of the authorities and the army. In consequence of the information thus obtained, measures have been taken in both these islands to prepare the public opinion, by means of emissaries, in favor of England, to the end that the inhabitants may be brought to declare themselves independent, and to solicit the protection of the British. The latter are prepared to assist them, and will in this way avoid any collision with the United States. The whole operation has been undertaken and is to be conducted in concert with the revolutionists resident here (at London) and in the islands, who have designated a Spanish general, now at this place, to take the command of the Havana when the occasion shall require it.

The Duke of Wellington communicated to me the above information, which is also confirmed by an intimation which he gave to Brigadier General Don Francisco Armentecos, when this officer took leave of him to go to the Havana. The Duke then advised him, if he should discover any symptoms of disaffection in the authorities, to give immediate notice to the King, as it would be a grievous thing for his Majesty to lose the Havana.

I have thought it my duty to make these circumstances known to your excellency. God keep you many years.

EL CONDE DE LA ALCUDIA.

His Excellency the FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE.

*Mr. A. H. Everett to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

[No. 3, CONFIDENTIAL.]

MADRID, *December 12, 1827.*

SIR: I have intended, ever since I received the information respecting the British intrigue for revolutionizing the island of Cuba and the Canaries, to communicate with this government upon the subject at the earliest favorable opportunity. The unsettled state of the administration for some time after, and then the departure of the King and the only effective minister for Catalonia, together with the urgent character of their occupations in that quarter, rendered it of course inexpedient for the time to direct their attention to any other affairs, however in themselves important. I should probably have adjourned the matter until after the King's return, which is expected about the middle of January, had not the government recently shown a disposition to terminate at once the negotiation respecting indemnities. It struck me that a free communication with the minister, upon the subject alluded to, would naturally produce a more friendly and confidential feeling towards the United States, which might possibly have a favorable effect upon the decision of this question. In the conversations which I have recently had with Mr. Salmon, I have accordingly taken occasion to suggest, without of course mentioning from what quarter the information had been received, that the government of the United States had reason to suppose that the British government had organized a plan for revolutionizing the islands; and I inquired of him whether this government had any knowledge of the proceedings. Mr. Salmon seemed a little surprised at the tenor of my remarks, but replied that this government had in fact received information some months ago that the British government had sent out a frigate to the Canaries and to Cuba, for the purpose of reconnoitring the state of the preparations for defence at those islands, and of establishing relations with such discontented persons as might be found there. He had heard nothing respecting the results of this expedition, and believed that thus far everything was tranquil and secure. The government, he said, placed great dependence on the fidelity and efficiency of the troops at Cuba, which they believed were quite competent to secure the island against any hostile enterprise, foreign or domestic.

I then mentioned to Mr. Salmon, that according to the information which the government of the United States had received, the object of the plan was to place the islands under the protection of Great Britain; but that the form of a declaration of independence was to be adopted, in order to avoid awakening the jealousy of the United States; that the United States would not, of course, be deceived by this artifice; that they could not view with indifference these movements of the British government, considering it, as they did, as a settled principle that the island must in no event pass into the possession of, or under the protection of, any European power other than Spain; that it was not their desire to derive any accession of territory, or other direct advantage, from the part which they might be compelled to take in the affairs of Cuba, by the result of this intrigue; but, on the contrary, to

employ their influence, should it be necessary, in the manner most agreeable to the wishes and the interest of his Majesty; and I intimated to him that the moment seemed to be favorable for a more full and free communication of intentions and opinions respecting the state of this island, and of the American colonies in general, than had yet taken place between the two powers. I suggested to him, at the same time, that it would, in my opinion, contribute materially to the establishment of a good understanding between them, (so desirable, on every account, at the present moment,) if his Majesty's government would consent to arrange immediately, to the satisfaction of the United States, the several questions now under negotiation. Mr. Salmon appeared to be a good deal interested in what I said upon the subject, and requested me to give him a note of the principal particulars, that he might be able to make them known with precision to the other ministers. I have accordingly prepared a short confidential memorandum upon the subject, which I shall hand him the next time I see him, and of which a copy is herewith transmitted. No results can be expected from these communications in reference to the more general subject of the colonies, or even of the island of Cuba, until after the return of the King and Mr. Calomarde. If they have any immediate effect, it can only be upon the decision of the minor matters in negotiation between the two governments, and especially the indemnity question. On this latter point I am not at all sanguine, but have considered it my duty to try the chance.

HON. HENRY CLAY, *Secretary of State.*

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*Confidential memorandum for the Secretary of State.*

MADRID, December 10, 1827.

The government of the United States have been informed, and that of his Catholic Majesty cannot of course be ignorant, of the movements commenced a few months ago by the British ministry, in conjunction with the Spanish refugees in London, and now in a course of execution, for the purpose of revolutionizing the island of Cuba and the Canaries. The strong contrast between these proceedings and those of the government of the United States in the same quarter, which have been made known to his Majesty and met his approbation, will serve, it is hoped, to enlighten the councils of Spain in regard to some important points in her foreign policy.

In the papers which have been transmitted to the government of the United States in regard to this subject, it is expressly stated, on the authority of some of the highest personages in Great Britain, that the main object of the plan is to place the islands in question under the protection of that power, but that the form of a declaration of independence will be adopted in order to avoid awakening the jealousy of the United States. The United States will, of course, not be duped by this artifice; and it is impossible for them to view with indifference these movements of the British government, considering it, as they do, as a settled principle that the island of Cuba must in no event, and

under no pretext, pass into the possession of, or under the protection of, any European power other than Spain. It is not their desire to derive any accession of territory or other direct advantage from the part which they may be compelled to take by the results of this intrigue, and they are anxious, on the contrary, to employ their influence, as far as the occasion may render it necessary, in the way most agreeable to the wishes and interest of his Catholic Majesty.

It appears to the government of the United States that, at this crisis in the colonial affairs of Spain, a more full and confidential communication of opinions and intentions between the two powers, in regard to these islands and to the general subject of American politics, would be of material advantage to both.

It also appears to that government that a satisfactory arrangement of several important questions, which have been for some time past in a course of negotiation between them, would have, under the present circumstances, a particularly favorable effect upon the state of their relations. A comparison of the treatment extended by Spain to the United States and to some other foreign powers, in regard to a number of interesting points, would seem to show that the policy pursued by his Majesty's government is not precisely such as might naturally be expected.

1. The French government have had, for three or four years past, a consul at the Havana, and his Catholic Majesty is bound by treaty to admit a consul for the United States in all the ports in his dominions where such an agent is admitted for any foreign power. It is now more than two years since the United States have been soliciting in vain the fulfilment of this explicit and formal contract. In the mean time the British government have, under the name of commissioners for attending to the execution of the slave-trade convention, two acknowledged political agents at the Havana. One of them (Mr. Kirby) was a particular friend of the late Mr. Canning, enjoys the confidence of his government, and is doubtless the manager of the present intrigue for revolutionizing the island. The United States, whose wish and policy it is to sustain the King's rights and the existing state of things, are not allowed to have an acknowledged agent on the spot.

2. Depredations were committed several years ago by naval and other officers of his Catholic Majesty, doubtless against his orders, at the same time and place, and under precisely the same circumstances, upon the rights and property of British subjects and of citizens of the United States. The matter was immediately arranged with the British government by an amicable convention; and for the purpose of settling the business in detail the negotiation has been several times resumed, and is at this moment actually going on at London. The proposition for a similar arrangement, which was made about the same time, by the United States, has not yet been formally answered; and there is reason to suppose, from some late informal communications of the Secretary of State, that the answer, which is now in preparation, will amount to a positive refusal to entertain the claim.

3. All foreign ships pay in the ports of the Peninsula a tonnage duty of one real per ton, excepting those of the United States, which pay twenty reals. A proposition, made by the minister of the United States

in the name of his government nearly two years ago, to treat on this subject, remains unanswered. A specific proposal, subsequently submitted, for an amicable arrangement of the question in a different way, has been declined, and the minister has lately been privately informed that the Board of Duties have it in contemplation to raise, instead of diminishing, the tonnage duty on the vessels of the United States, leaving it as it is as regards all others. The effect of this distinction is to drive their vessels from the ports of Spain to Gibraltar, whence their cargoes are smuggled into his Majesty's dominions.

4. The foreign trade with Cuba is burdened with enormous duties of tonnage and impost not enforced in the Peninsula. As nine-tenths of this trade are in the hands of the United States, the discrimination operates as if directed entirely against their commerce. Under a more liberal system the island would flourish as much more than it does now, as it does now more than it did under the old colonial monopoly.

It would be as difficult, perhaps, to reconcile these different modes of proceeding in regard to different powers with any correct view of the policy of Spain, as with the dictates of good faith and justice towards the United States. A revision of this chapter in the foreign relations of the kingdom could hardly fail to promote the amicable concert between the two governments which is so very desirable at the present crisis.

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*Notes of a conversation of Mr. Everett with Mr. Zea, communicated with his despatch No. 7, of 25th September, 1825, to Mr. Clay, Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

Our relations with the island of Cuba having been particularly alluded to by the minister, (Zea Bermudez,) I thought it a proper occasion to express to him my regret that the King had not acceded to the proposition made by Mr. Nelson for the formal recognition of our commercial agents at that island and at Porto Rico in the character of consuls. He repeated to me, in answer, the same remarks in substance as are contained in his last note addressed to Mr. Nelson. He said that, although Spain was willing, as far as possible, to overlook and keep out of sight, in all her relations with us, the unpleasant circumstance of our recognition of the independence of the colonies, yet that she did not think it politic to admit into any of the American possessions an authorized public agent of a power which openly avowed the policy of encouraging the separation of these possessions from the mother country; that our ministers and consuls on the continent were constantly holding a language favorable to the insurgents; that our consuls in the islands would no doubt do the same; and that if they were formally recognised, there would be no means of preventing them; but that at present the authorities would have the right, if the consuls conducted themselves imprudently, to proceed against them in the usual forms of law. He added, that the admission of French consuls was a favor granted to a power which had rendered them essential services, and

that it could not be surprising to us if they were disposed to do something more for a nation thus situated, than for one that stood only on the common footing of other friendly nations; that the refusal was not a measure directed invidiously against us in particular, but that it was extended in like manner to all other powers except France, and in particular to England. I told him that we had no intention to ask favors of his Majesty's or any other government, and that we did not consider the free admission of our consuls at all in that light, and that we viewed it as a thing equally advantageous to both parties, since any measure tending to place our commerce with these islands on a better footing was at least of equal, not to say much greater, importance to them than to us, inasmuch as this commerce formed only a fifteenth or twentieth part of our whole trade, while it amounted to nearly three-fourths of theirs; that we stood, on this account, in a different situation from any other power, not excepting England, whose trade with the islands was much less considerable than ours. I added, that we nevertheless did not consider the matter as being of any very great consequence, and were not disposed to magnify it into more importance than it really possessed.

He then said, as he had done in his note to Mr. Nelson, that the King would perhaps be disposed to concede this point if the United States would furnish any pledges or guarantees, by way of security, respecting their future relations with the islands. I replied that I did not distinctly understand the nature of the pledges he appeared to contemplate; that the American government had given to the world the example of a uniform observation of the rules of justice, good faith, and humanity, in all their past policy, which were, perhaps, the best assurances that could be had of the correctness of their future proceedings; and that I should be glad to learn what sort of pledges the King desired. He said that perhaps we might be willing to guaranty to them, by treaty, the possession of the islands. I replied, that engagements of this kind were inconsistent with the standing rules of our foreign policy, which was no other, according to the just and forcible expression of one of our Presidents, than "peace and friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none;" that, independently of this objection, the value of the object was inadequate to the price demanded for it; that such a guarantee might place us, at any moment, under the necessity of going to war, and that the people of the United States would not be content to fight upon the question whether their representative at the Havana should be called a commercial agent or a consul. He then said that perhaps a law like the one he had suggested before, requiring bonds to be given by all ship-owners that their ships were not intended to act against friendly powers, would be looked upon as a sufficient consideration. In answer to this, I repeated, in part, the objections which I had started before to this proposition, and told him that I should probably send him a written answer to the last note which he had addressed to Mr. Nelson on this subject.

*Mr. Van Buren to Mr. Van Ness.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, October 2, 1829.*

One of the considerations which the ministers of the United States who preceded you at the court of his Catholic Majesty were advised to press upon his government, as an inducement for him to terminate the contest with his late colonies, is the preservation of his insular possessions in the West Indies, which still constitute a part of the Spanish monarchy. Cuba and Porto Rico, occupying, as they do, a most important geographical position, have been viewed by the neighboring States of Mexico and Colombia as military and naval arsenals, which would at all times furnish Spain with the means of threatening their commerce, and even of endangering their political existence. Looking with a jealous eye upon these last remnants of Spanish power in America, these two States had once united their forces; and their arm, raised to strike a blow which, if successful, would forever have extinguished Spanish influence in that quarter of the globe, was arrested chiefly by the timely interposition of this government, which, in a friendly spirit towards Spain, and for the interests of general commerce, thus assisted in preserving to his Catholic Majesty these invaluable portions of his colonial possessions.

The government of the United States has always looked with the deepest interest upon the fate of those islands, but particularly of Cuba. Its geographical position, which places it almost in sight of our southern shores, and, as it were, gives it the command of the Gulf of Mexico and the West India seas, its safe and capacious harbors, its rich productions, the exchange of which, for our surplus agricultural products and manufactures, constitutes one of the most extensive and valuable branches of our foreign trade, render it of the utmost importance to the United States that no change should take place in its condition which might injuriously affect our political and commercial standing in that quarter. Other considerations, connected with a certain class of our population, make it the interest of the southern section of the Union that no attempt should be made in that island to throw off the yoke of Spanish dependence, the first effect of which would be the sudden emancipation of a numerous slave population, the result of which could not but be very sensibly felt upon the adjacent shores of the United States. On the other hand, the wisdom which induced the Spanish government to relax in its colonial system, and to adopt with regard to those islands a more liberal policy, which opened their ports to general commerce, has been so far satisfactory in the view of the United States as, in addition to other considerations, to induce this government to desire that their possession should not be transferred from the Spanish crown to any other power. In conformity with this desire, the ministers of the United States at Madrid have, from time to time, been instructed attentively to watch the course of events and the secret springs of European diplomacy, which, from information received from various quarters, this government had reason to suspect had been put in motion

to effect the transfer of the possession of Cuba to the powerful allies of Spain. It had been intimated at one time that the armed interference of France in the affairs of that country would extend over her insular possessions, and that a military occupation of Cuba was to take place for the alleged purpose of protecting it against foreign invasion or internal revolutionary movements. A similar design was imputed to the government of Great Britain, and it was stated that in both cases a continuance of the occupation of the island was to constitute, in the hands of either of those powers, a guarantee for the payment of heavy indemnities claimed by France, on the one hand, to cover the expenses of her armies of occupation, and by Great Britain, on the other, to compensate her subjects for spoliation alleged to have been committed upon their commerce. The arrangements entered into by Spain with those two powers, by means of treaties of a recent date, and providing for the payment of those indemnities, although removing the pretext upon which the occupation of Cuba would have been justified, are not believed entirely to obviate the possibility of its eventually being effected. The government of the United States considers as a much stronger pledge of its continuance under the dominion of Spain the considerable military and naval armaments which have recently been added to the ordinary means of defence in that island, and which are supposed fully adequate for its protection against any attempt on the part of foreign powers, and for the suppression of any insurrectionary movement on that of its inhabitants. Notwithstanding these apparent securities for the maintenance of the Spanish authority in the island of Cuba, as it is not impossible that Spain, in her present embarrassed and dependent situation, might be induced to yield her assent to a temporary occupation of it, as a pledge for the fulfilment of her engagements, or to part with her right of property in it for other considerations, affording immediate relief in the hour of her distress, it is the wish of the President that the same watchfulness which had engaged the attention of your predecessors in relation to this subject should be continued during your administration of the affairs of the legation of the United States at Madrid, and that you should take special care to keep this department informed of every occurrence whose tendency, direct or indirect, might, in your judgment, bring about any change in the present condition of the island of Cuba.

Your predecessors, who had been repeatedly instructed to that effect, have availed themselves of every fit opportunity to make the wishes and policy of the United States with regard to the Spanish islands fully known to the government of his Catholic Majesty, whom you will find, already possessed of every information which you will have it in your power to communicate upon this head; but it is not improbable that the same inquisitiveness which has hitherto been manifested on the part of that government in relation to it, may again be evinced by the Spanish ministers, who, affecting to construe the avowed anxiousness of the United States into a determination not to suffer the possession of Cuba to pass into the hands of other powers, have inquired how far this government would go in sustaining that determination. Should similar inquiries be made of you by the ministers of his Catholic Majesty, you are authorized to say that the long-established and well-known policy

of the United States, which forbids their entangling themselves in the concerns of other nations, and which permits their physical force to be used only for the defence of their political rights and the protection of the persons and property of their citizens, equally forbids their public agents to enter into positive engagements, the performance of which would require the employment of means which the people have retained in their own hands; but that this government has every reason to believe that the same influence which once averted the blow ready to fall upon the Spanish islands would again be found effectual on the recurrence of similar events; and that the high preponderance in American affairs of the United States as a great naval power, the influence which they must at all times command as a great commercial nation, in all questions involving the interests of the general commerce of this hemisphere, would render their consent an essential preliminary to the execution of any project calculated so vitally to affect the general concerns of all the nations in any degree engaged in the commerce of America. The knowledge you possess of the public sentiment of this country in regard to Cuba will enable you to speak with confidence and effect of the probable consequences that might be expected from the communication of that sentiment to Congress, in the event of any contemplated change in the present political condition of that island.

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*Mr. Van Buren to Mr. Van Ness.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, October 13, 1830.*

This government has also been given to understand that, if Spain should persevere in the assertion of a hopeless claim to dominion over her former colonies, they will feel it to be their duty, as well as their interest, to attack her colonial possessions in our vicinity, Cuba and Porto Rico. Your general instructions are full upon the subject of the interest which the United States take in the fate of those islands, and particularly of the former; they inform you that we are content that Cuba should remain as it now is, but could not consent to its transfer to any European power. Motives of reasonable state policy render it more desirable to us that it should remain subject to Spain rather than to either of the South American States. Those motives will readily present themselves to your mind; they are principally founded upon an apprehension that, if possessed by the latter, it would, in the present state of things, be in greater danger of becoming subject to some European power, than in its present condition. Although such are our own wishes and true interests, the President does not see on what ground he would be justified in interfering with any attempts which the South American States might think it for their interest, in the prosecution of a defensive war, to make upon the islands in question. If, indeed, an attempt should be made to disturb them, by putting arms in the hands of one portion of their population to destroy another, and

which in its influence would endanger the peace of a portion of the United States, the case might be different. Against such an attempt, the United States (being informed that it was in contemplation) have already protested and warmly remonstrated, in their communications last summer with the government of Mexico; but the information lately communicated to us in this regard was accompanied by a solemn assurance that no such measures will, in any event, be resorted to; and that the contest, if forced upon them, will be carried on, on their part, with strict reference to the established rules of civilized warfare.

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*Mr. Van Ness to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

[No. 124.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Madrid, August 10, 1836.*

SIR: \* \* \* A person who has good means of information, has this moment informed me that the agents from the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, now in Madrid, as well as other persons from there, have secretly aided in promoting the late disorders and changes here, for the purpose of facilitating the declaration and establishment of the independence of those islands. It is said to be believed by them that such a state of anarchy and confusion will exist here, that the accomplishment of their purpose will be an easy task; and I understand it to be their object to have the attempt made very soon. I cannot answer for the truth of this, but the importance of the subject, as it regards the United States, has induced me not to lose a moment in giving you the information.

HON. JOHN FORSYTH,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Mr. Van Ness to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

MADRID, *December 10, 1836.*

SIR: About twenty days ago I observed a piece in one of the principal newspapers of this city, relating to the island of Cuba, in which was stated a falsehood with regard to the President of the United States, which I thought called for a prompt and official denial and contradiction; especially as Mr. Calutrava, not having been in any political office until August last, and probably never having seen the President's last message, might be induced, together with many others now in office, to believe the statement alluded to. I therefore addressed to the editor of the paper, in which the statement had appeared, the following letter, and which I afterwards procured republished in the official Gazette of this city:

“LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
Madrid, November 23, 1836.

“*To the Editors of the Revista Nacional:*

“In your paper of the 19th instant, in an article under the head of ‘Independence,’ treating of the island of Cuba, I have observed, in addition to various unfounded insinuations, the following statement:

“‘There is yet another fact of the gravest importance which fortifies the proofs of the designs to attempt independence. We refer to the last discourse (message) pronounced by the President of the United States to the Congress. In it is asserted, clearly enough, the absolute impossibility that the island of Cuba can continue united to the Metropolis, (mother country,) and the day of its emancipation is announced to be near at hand. The publicity given to this document, so far from being, in our opinion, prejudicial, we consider it useful, for reasons so obvious, that it would be trifling with the good sense of our readers to enumerate them; and as the divulging of it is not a fable, it may with reason be called an infamous calumny.’

“If this were one of the ordinary articles which frequently appear in the public papers of Madrid, abounding with error and injustice as it regards the United States, I should not have considered it necessary, and perhaps not even proper, to take notice of it; but as it contains a direct and positive assertion, that the President of the United States has made a public and official declaration of a nature injurious to the rights of her Catholic Majesty, and characterized that declaration as an infamous calumny, I deem it my duty, as the representative of those States at this court, to make a public and formal contradiction of the charge contained in the above extract. The President *did not* in his last annual message to Congress, nor in any other which I have seen, speak of the probability of a separation of the island of Cuba from the Spanish crown; nor has he even, in any manner, alluded to the question of such separation. Not only is it contrary to the truth that the President has made any suggestion of the kind imputed to him, but it may be asserted with the utmost confidence, that the United States have a peculiar interest in the preservation of Cuba to Spain, and that their desires in this respect are in perfect accordance with their interests. If any proof of this were wanting, other than the nature and circumstances of the case themselves afford, it might be found in the fact that the government of the United States, on at least one occasion, has contributed to avoid a blow, which, but for its friendly intervention, might have injuriously, if not fatally, affected the jurisdiction of Spain over that island. But I have said enough, since my object was merely to expose the want of foundation for the charge which has called forth this communication.

“I have the honor to remain your obedient servant,

“C. P. VAN NESS.”

When the *Revista* published my letter, it was done in a way not to call much attention; and the direction to that paper at the head was left out, so as to afford the inference that it might have originally been addressed to some other paper; and, consequently, that some other

paper might have promulgated the falsehood. I therefore took the communication to the director of the official paper, (*Gazette*,) and requested him to publish it in its original state, which he promised me to do. Two days afterwards, I received an intimation from a person employed in the *Gazette* office, that my communication had been carried to Mr. Calutrava, and was for the present retained by him; and, further, that he, Calutrava, had expressed himself in terms of dissatisfaction with the President. I immediately went to see Mr. Calutrava, carrying with me the President's last message; and I began by telling him of the statement I had seen in the *Revista*, and of my contradiction; but adding that my letter had been so badly published in the *Revista*, that I had carried it to the *Gazette* office, where they had promised to insert it, but for some reason or other had not yet done it; and that as the *Gazette* was the official paper of the government, I hoped that he would direct the insertion of my letter. He answered that the *Gazette* was a private establishment, but received a certain sum from the government for the insertion of official documents and acts. Upon which I told him that I had understood that communications sent to the *Gazette* were generally first laid before the ministers, to which he replied that it was a mistake. I then offered to show him the President's message, which I held in my hand, and to point him to that part relating to Spain, and to the island of Cuba; but he declined looking at it, saying, that if he had entertained any doubt about the matter, my word was sufficient to satisfy him. After some further explanations by me about this subject, he sent for the first officer (chief clerk) of his department; and on his appearance, he said to him: "Was there not something said the other day about a letter from the minister of the United States to the *Gazette*?" To which the clerk replied: "Yes, there was one." "Where is it?" asked the minister. "It is returned, with directions for its publication," answered the other. "It appears, then," said the minister to me, "that it has been sent here, and has already been directed to be published." The result was somewhat inconsistent with what he had before said to me; but I was satisfied; and he expressing himself equally so, I left him. There has been no attempt to contradict, or lessen the force of my article, and it was well published in the *Gazette*.

In regard to the situation of things in the island of Cuba, it already appears that my late warnings to you have been well founded and seasonable. It is well known here that General Lorenzo, who commands at St. Jago de Cuba, has proclaimed and sustains the constitution of 1812, in defiance of the orders of the Captain General at the Havana, Tacon; and some assert that the negro question is mixing with the political one. The government observes silence. I have not seen the minister for some days, on account of his being closely occupied during these days in the Cortes. I think it will be very difficult to keep down the island of Cuba in the existing state of the government here, and also from the manner in which they are draining and anticipating the resources of the island. They commenced upon the plan of paying the dividends due upon the foreign debt, the 1st of November, by issuing to the creditors bonds upon the treasury of Cuba, bearing five per cent. interest, and payable in four annual instalments, when, at the

same time, they had already drawn largely in advance upon the treasury. It was found, however, that the plan would not go down; and after a few of the Cuban bonds had been sent into the market, this government disavowed the arrangement made by its agent, and adopted the plan of giving obligations directly upon the royal treasury here, and also bearing 5 per cent. interest, but payable in six and twelve months. Had the first arrangement been carried into effect, it would have operated like a mortgage of Cuba to foreigners, mostly English; and as it is, her revenues are well pledged always in advance, since it is the most important resource remaining in the power of this government to raise money upon. How long Cuba herself will bear this mode of anticipating and pledging, not to say draining, may be considered quite uncertain. But in another view, no person can doubt the bad results with regard to that island, from the changes and revolutions which are taking place in the mother country. In the first place, *here* is established a constitution, and one of very democratic tendency for a monarchy, while in the *neighborhood* of the island are several independent States, who, like herself, have been colonies of Spain, and whose independence is at this moment about being formally confirmed by Spain; and, in the second place, to Cuba is obstinately refused either the one or the other of these privileges, so that she has to remain in a state of colonial bondage, and bearing the burden of sustaining in the mother country those principles of liberty the application of which to her is denied. Under all the foregoing circumstances, then, it will be seen in due time whether my predictions will prove correct. I had forgotten in its place to add, that if Carlos should succeed here, the question might be considered quite doubtful whether the island would consent to pass to what might be called another government. I have conversed with Mr. Calutrava once, or twice on this subject since he has been minister, and found him incredulous as to any danger. He believes that the fear of the negroes is worth an army of 100,000 men, and that it will prevent the whites from making any revolutionary attempts. One thing is certain: this government can send no force from Spain to oppose any attempt that may be made on the island. If what is there be insufficient, there will be no remedy.

Hon. J. FORSYTH,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Mr. Stevenson to Mr. Forsyth.*

[No. 28.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*London, June 16, 1837.*

SIR: I have the honor of communicating to you, confidentially, the result of an interview I have lately had with Lord Palmerston, on a subject of a very delicate and interesting character.

You have doubtless seen, both in the English and French newspapers, the various speculations which have appeared on the subject of a large Spanish loan, supposed to have been made by a banker in Paris,

upon condition that France or England would give some guarantee connected with the islands of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines. Having received information, from sources that I could rely on, that propositions from the government of Madrid had actually been made for a loan of six millions of pounds sterling, and that agents had been sent to Paris and London for the purpose of consummating the loan and negotiating with the two governments on the subject of the guarantee, I deemed it my duty to take an early opportunity of having an informal conversation with Lord Palmerston, and accordingly, last week, asked an interview for that purpose, the result of which I now communicate.

I stated to Lord Palmerston that the object of my visit was to converse with him, unofficially and confidentially, upon the subject of this Spanish loan, and that I hoped, if he felt any delicacy on the subject, he would frankly say so. His lordship at once said that there was not the slightest objection to the course I proposed, and that he would hear with pleasure anything I might be disposed to communicate.

I opened the subject by stating that I presumed he had seen the publications with which the French and English papers had been filled, on the subject of this loan. That I had good reason for believing that propositions had been made, both to France and Great Britain, for the purpose of some guarantee connected with the island of Cuba and Porto Rico. That, in the absence of instructions from my government, and ignorant of what his Majesty's government had done, or might be disposed to do, in relation to the matter, I felt it to be my duty to take the earliest opportunity of placing his lordship in possession of what I knew to be the views of my government, on the subject of these islands, and of reminding him of the course it had heretofore felt itself justified in taking in relation to the subject. I proceeded to give a brief explanation of the geographical relation of these islands to the United States, and the consequences that would be likely to follow their separation from the dominion of Spain. That the possession of Cuba by a great maritime power would be little else than the establishment of a fortress at the mouth of the Mississippi, commanding both the Gulf of Mexico and Florida, and, consequently, the whole trade of the western States, besides deeply affecting the interests and tranquillity of the southern portion of the Union. That, under such circumstances, it was not to be expected (if the subject was even now for the first time agitated) that the United States could remain indifferent to the destiny of Cuba, or its separation from Spain. I remarked, however, that the question was not a new one, and referred to the course of our government, heretofore, on the subject. I reminded his lordship of the declaration made by our minister to the French government, in the year 1826, "*that the United States could not see with indifference Porto Rico and Cuba pass from Spain into the possession of any other power.*" That France, at that time, so far from complaining of this course, as a breach of neutral duty or interference with the concerns of other nations, acquiesced in it. I referred, also, to the proceedings which took place in Mexico, in 1825-6, between the agent of Great Britain and the minister of the United States, in which he identified himself in the

communications received and made on the appearance of a French fleet in those seas. That these views of our government were made known, at the time, to the Russian government, and, by it, to all the courts of Europe.

Under such circumstances, I felt justified in saying frankly to his lordship that it was impossible that the United States could acquiesce in the *transfer of Cuba from the dominion of Spain to any of the great maritime powers of Europe*; that of the right of the United States to interfere in relation to these islands I presumed there could be little doubt; that whilst the general rule of international law which forbids the interference of one State in the affairs of another was freely admitted, there were yet *exceptions to the rule, in relation to the laws of defence and self-preservation*, which all nations acknowledged, and that the present was precisely such a case; that in this view, and with a sincere desire to guard against possible difficulties, I deemed it proper to say what I had, and hoped his lordship would receive it in the spirit in which it was offered.

Lord Palmerston in reply said very little. He assured me that he understood and appreciated the motives which had produced the interview. He said that the government of Spain was no doubt desirous to terminate their civil wars, and he seemed to think that it could only be done by a large loan of money; that efforts had been made for that purpose in the manner supposed, but on *what terms the loan had been proposed, or whether they had been successful or not, he did not say*, nor did I think it proper to inquire. His lordship admitted that propositions had been made to Great Britain on the subject of the loan, (the nature of which he did not state,) but he said that they had been declined by his Majesty's government. He remarked, however, at the same time, that the consent of Parliament was necessary to the fulfilment of any pledge of the character supposed, and that, under the present state of things, there would be very little probability of any such consent being given. This remark was made in a way that left me at liberty to draw my own conclusions as to what the government here might have been disposed to do, if the consent of Parliament could have been obtained. It is proper, also, that I should state, that having expressed in the course of conversation my impression that the course and policy of France could not, I thought, be mistaken, and that I had reason to believe that she would not for a moment listen to the application which had been made to her on the subject, Lord Palmerston remarked that considerations of that nature could not be permitted to influence the conduct of Great Britain; that in deciding all such questions, his Majesty's government could not listen to the opinions and views of any foreign government, but must decide for itself.

This remark was made by his lordship in good temper, but its tendency was too obvious to be mistaken. I replied to it, by stating that my remark, to which his was an answer, was entirely incidental, and merely intended to show that the opinions of France in relation to Cuba had undergone no change since the year 1825-6, but were in accord with those of the United States. To this Lord Palmerston said nothing.

As there seemed to be no desire on the part of his lordship to continue the conversation, and having accomplished what I had intended, I forbore to press the subject, and the interview closed.

It is proper, however, to state, that the language and manner of Lord Palmerston were in the highest degree conciliatory, though evidently *more marked* than usual.

You will see that I took care to guard against misconstruction or commitment of our government, by expressly stating at the outset that I was neither instructed or authorized to say anything on the subject, but was acting solely on my own responsibility. I need not say that I shall feel gratified if the course which I have taken shall meet the approbation of the President.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. STEVENSON.

JOHN FORSYTH, Esq.,  
*Secretary of State, Washington.*

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*John H. Eaton to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION, MADRID,

*August 10, 1837.*

SIR: \* \* \* \* Many rumors have spread concerning a commercial treaty between England and Spain, a lien obtained upon Cuba, &c., &c. Nothing of this sort can now be done but with the assent of the Cortes. The elections are in progress, and the *two Chambers* of Spain, for the first time, will assemble in November. Should any treaty be made, before these assembled bodies it will come up for consideration and approval.

The English minister at this court, Mr. Villiers, is a frank, urbane, and qualified man for his position. With his business I, of course, can have nothing to do; but in conversation, merely, I have taken occasion to express a hope that his government would not attempt to obtain the possession of Cuba; and not for the reason that the United States desired or wished it as an appendage of their territory, but because I felt satisfied that it would occasion war between the two countries. His reply was, "England does not desire its possession." In a former letter, I suggested the propriety of our government making some official communication upon this important subject through our minister at London, whereby the British government might be estopped to say, in the future, that in acquiring Cuba she had not anticipated any objections from us.

Very respectfully,

JNO. H. EATON.

JNO. FORSYTH, Esq., &c., &c.

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*Mr. Forsyth to Mr. Vail.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, July 15, 1840.*

The United States have long looked with no slight degree of solicitude to the political condition of the island of Cuba. Its proximity to our

shores, the extent of its commerce with us, and the similarity of its domestic institutions with those prevailing in portions of our own country, combine to forbid that we should look with indifference upon any occurrences connected with the fate of that island. The Spanish government has often been apprized of the wishes of the United States that no other than Spanish domination should be exercised over it, and scarcely need be told that our policy in that respect has undergone no change. For fear, however, that the subject should be lost sight of in the frequent changes or modifications of the Spanish cabinet, it is important that you do not allow any person who may be called to a share in the councils of the Spanish government to be ignorant or forgetful of our views: these continue what they have always been, and such as you will find them fully stated in the correspondence and archives of the legation. There are, however, considerations which, in addition, will claim your attention; it is surmised, and by many believed, that Great Britain has designs upon the island. If such be the case, pretexts will not be wanting for measures calculated to open the way to the realization of such designs. Spanish liabilities are to a great extent held by British subjects, and their government have, it is believed, claims upon that of Spain. As a guarantee for both, the resources of Cuba afford a tempting prize, towards which British views have several times been directed. Let such a guarantee be once given, and its realization or enforcement might lead to a military occupation at some point of the island. Again, Spain and England are by treaty bound to certain proceedings for the suppression of the African slave trade, and a mixed commission sits at Havana to enforce sundry stipulations in the treaty. The practical operation of the system is known to be nearly nugatory; for, whether with or without the connivance or knowledge of the British commissioners, the fact that the slave trade is carried on in Cuba to a great extent, in violation of the Anglo-Spanish alliance to prevent it, is notorious and undisguised. England may think herself to have, under the treaty, a right to call upon Spain for a faithful and efficient performance of the obligations contracted under it; and in case of an avowal by Spain of her inability to comply, it might be apprehended that England would enforce compliance by means which would eventually affect the territorial rights of her ally to the island of Cuba, or undertake to perform her obligations under the treaty on receiving guarantees or equivalents calculated to lead to an increase of her influence and power in that quarter. Whether attempted to be brought about by one or the other of the means alluded to, or by any other process, the United States can never permit it. The Spanish government is to bear in mind this fixed resolution on our part, and be given to understand that it is taken upon long and mature deliberation, and at all costs, to govern the conduct of the United States. You will understand the tact and delicacy which are to regulate the communications you may have to make to the Spanish government on this subject: they are not to be volunteered, nor made in writing, unless in case of necessity, but in informal and confidential conversations with the members of the government you are to endeavor fully to acquaint them with our views. Should you have reason to suspect any design on the part of Spain to transfer voluntarily her title to the island, whether of ownership or

possession, and whether permanent or temporary, to Great Britain or any other power, you will distinctly state that the United States will prevent it at all hazards, as they will any foreign military occupation for any pretext whatsoever. And you are authorized to assure the Spanish government, that in case of any attempt, from whatever quarter, to wrest from her this portion of her territory, she may securely depend upon the military and naval resources of the United States to aid her in preserving or recovering it. It is believed that the means of preventing such an attempt, or of disconcerting all designs that may lead to it, lie within the reach of the Spanish government: the readiest which occur to us is to deprive England of all real motive, and even of the remotest pretence, for interference on her part in the affairs of Cuba, by a scrupulous performance of all the obligations Spain may have contracted towards her, either of a pecuniary character, or as connected with the existing agreements between the two nations in relation to the slave trade. No proper opportunity of which you can avail yourself, without incurring the risk of being thought officious, should be allowed to escape you, to let the Spanish government be fully informed of the views we entertain with regard to the island, as set forth in these instructions, and in the others on file in the legation. And you will hold yourself in readiness, should the occasion arise formally to protest, in the name of your government, against any act, whether of Spain herself or of any other power, likely to lead to a transfer of her territorial right to the island of Cuba, or to the military occupation of it by the forces of any other nation.

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*Mr. Webster to Mr. Irving.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, January 17, 1843.*

I have the honor to transmit a copy of a private and confidential letter addressed by this department, on the 14th instant, to Mr. Robert B. Campbell, consul of the United States at Havana. It was drawn forth by information recently communicated to the department from a source so reputable that it could not fail to awaken some concern. The archives of your legation will show you that the subject of supposed designs upon the island of Cuba by the British government is by no means new, and you will also find that the apprehension of such a project has not been unattended to by the Spanish government. It was, accordingly, in view of what had already passed, and what had recently transpired, calculated to excite anxiety on the part of this government, in regard to its relations with what is to us the most interesting portion of the Spanish empire, that it was thought expedient to give your predecessor special directions about it, which you will see in the instructions to him from this department, dated on the 15th July, 1840, and numbered 2. To these instructions you are now particularly referred, as well as to a confidential despatch from Mr. Vail (numbered 10,) of the 15th January, 1841, detailing what passed in a conference with M. De Ferrers, at that time

Minister of Foreign Affairs at Madrid, from which you will learn the views and the ground taken by this government, which it never can relinquish. From the perusal of these documents, you will at once perceive the necessity or propriety of carefully reviewing those instructions, and acting upon them in the mode that you may conceive most judicious for the purpose of again pointing the attention of the Spanish government to the alleged precariousness of the tenure by which Spain is supposed to hold her possessions in this quarter, and to obtain for your government the best intelligence which is in any way connected with the subject.

Whether recent reports are, or are not, unfounded or exaggerated, it is nevertheless highly desirable that you should sound the government of Spain, in order that the United States may know its sentiments and purposes with the same certainty and distinctness, that those of the United States have been so unreservedly and so repeatedly made known to it.

A copy of my letter to the consul has just been placed by me in the hands of the Chevalier D'Argaiz, minister of Spain, in Washington.

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[Private and confidential.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, January 14, 1843.*

SIR: A communication, from a highly respectable source, has just been received at this department, which purports to contain information of so serious a nature, in regard to the present condition of the island of Cuba, that the President has come to the conclusion that it is expedient to lose no time in ascertaining, if practicable, how far the real facts of the case may correspond with the representations. The name of the individual from whom these accounts have come is, for good reasons, withheld. It is sufficient to say that they come from the island, and have been transmitted from thence by a person of high standing, whose statements, as we are told by those who know the source, are believed to be entitled to as much consideration as those of any individual in Cuba. Acting under this belief, and influenced by the consideration that this government has frequently received intimations from various quarters in regard to Cuba, which give a color of probability to the statements which have thus been recently received, the President has instructed me to make this communication to you, to call your attention to the matter, and to desire you to transmit all the information you possess, or can obtain, in regard to it.

The necessity of absolute secrecy in everything that relates to the inquiries you are directed to make, and in the transmission of their result to your government, has obliged us to send to Havana a special messenger, who will take charge of, and deliver to you in person, this letter, and who will be directed to remain with you for some short time to afford you opportunity to prepare a reply, and to impart all the intelligence which may be within your reach.

It is proper, however, to apprise you that it is highly desirable that there should be as little detention as possible, as the President is ex-

ceedingly anxious to be well informed upon the subject at the earliest practicable moment.

The messenger is unacquainted with the contents of this letter, and it is not necessary or desirable that the subject of this correspondence should be in any way made known to him. The amount of the information which has been received is this: the writer represents himself as bound in honor not to reveal what he has made known to his correspondent in the United States, to the local authorities of Cuba, for reasons which can only be guessed at.

His statements, confirmed as they appear to be in some particulars by various recent occurrences of a public character, with which you cannot but be familiar, are considered as entitled at least to serious attention, and to call for immediate examination and inquiry.

It is represented that the situation of Cuba is at this moment in the highest degree dangerous and critical, and that Great Britain has resolved upon its ruin; that Spain does not, or will not, see this intention, and that the authorities of the island are utterly incompetent to meet the crisis; that although, according to the treaty of 1817, the slave-trade ought not to have been carried on by any subject of Spain, it has, nevertheless, been continued in full vigor up to the year 1841, notwithstanding the incessant remonstrances of the British government, which was better informed, it is said, from month to month, of everything that took place in the island, than the Captain General himself. It is alleged that the British ministry and abolition societies, finding themselves foiled or eluded by the colonial and the home governments, have therefore resolved, not, perhaps, without secretly congratulating themselves upon the obstinacy of Spain, upon accomplishing their object in a different method by the total and immediate ruin of the island. Their agents are said to be now there in great numbers, offering independence to the creoles, on condition that they will unite with the colored people in effecting a general emancipation of the slaves, and in converting the government into a *black military republic*, under British protection. The British abolitionists reckon on the naval force of their government stationed at Jamaica and elsewhere, and are said to have offered two large steamships-of-war, and to have proposed to the Venezuelan general, Marino, who resides at Kingston, Jamaica, to take the command of an invading army. This is to be seconded, as is suggested, by an insurrection of the slaves and free men of color, supported by the white creoles.

If this scheme should succeed, the influence of Britain in this quarter, it is remarked, will be unlimited. With 600,000 blacks in Cuba, and 800,000 in her West India islands, she will, it is said, strike a death-blow at the existence of slavery in the United States. Intrenched at Havana and San Antonio, ports as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, she will be able to close the two entrances to the Gulf of Mexico, and even to prevent the free passage of the commerce of the United States over the Bahama banks, and through the Florida channel.

The local authorities are believed not to be entirely ignorant of the perils which environ them, but are regarded as so torpid as not to be competent to understand the extent and imminency of those perils, nor the policy by which Great Britain is guided.

The wealthy planters are described as equally blind to the great danger in which they stand of losing their property. They go on, it is said, as usual, buying negroes, clamoring for the continuation of the trade, and denouncing as seditious persons, and friends of Great Britain, the few who resist the importation of slaves, and encourage the immigration of free whites.

The writer points to the census of the population of the island, taken by authority, and just published, of which he encloses a copy; and from the proportion between the different colors, he infers the probability that the white creoles will be able to preserve their rights in the future *Ethiopico Cuban Republic*; and as to the Spaniards, he presumes that they will leave the island at once. The writer very naturally supposes that the United States must feel a deep solicitude upon a subject which so nearly concerns their own interests and tranquillity. He seems anxious that public opinion in this country should be formed upon it and properly directed, and does not hesitate to express the opinion that *the mass of the white population of Cuba, in easy circumstances, including the Spaniards, prefer, and will always prefer, the flag of the United States to that of England.*

In thus communicating to you the substance of the statements of this writer, you will distinctly understand that your government neither adopts nor rejects his speculations. It is with his statement of supposed facts that it concerns itself; and it is expected that you will examine and report upon them, with scrupulous care, and with as much promptness as strict secrecy and discretion will permit; and the whole of the statements is now imparted to you, not to limit, but to guide and direct the inquiries you are called upon to make in so delicate a matter. It is quite obvious that any attempt on the part of England to employ force in Cuba, for any purpose, would bring on a war, involving, possibly, all Europe, as well as the United States; and as she can hardly fail to see this, and probably does not desire it, there may be reason to doubt the accuracy of the information we have received, to the extent to which it proceeds. But many causes of excitement and alarm exist, and the great magnitude of the subject makes it the duty of the government of the United States to disregard no intimations of such intended proceedings, which bear the least aspect of probability.

The Spanish government has long been in possession of the policy and wishes of this government in regard to Cuba, which have never changed, and has been repeatedly told that the United States never would permit the occupation of that island by British agents or forces upon any pretext whatsoever; and that in the event of any attempt to wrest it from her, she might securely rely upon the whole naval and military resources of this country, to aid her in preserving or recovering it.

A copy of this letter will be immediately transmitted to the American minister at Madrid, that he may make such use of the information it contains as circumstances may appear to require.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

ROBERT B. CAMPBELL, Esq.,

U. S. Consul at Havana.

*Mr. Webster to Mr. Irving.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, March 14, 1843.*

A reply to the confidential letter from this department, of 11th January, to the consul at Havana, a copy of which was sent to you in my despatch No. 11, has been received. From the reply, it would seem that as far as the consul knew or could obtain intelligence upon the subject from the authorities of the island and from other sources, the information which has been received here is, as was supposed, greatly exaggerated. Enough, however, of danger and alarm still exists in that quarter to render caution and vigilance, on the part of this government, indispensably necessary.

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*Mr. Upshur to Mr. Irving.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, January 9, 1844.*

The delicate nature of our relations with Spain in regard to the island of Cuba, taken in connexion with the supposed designs of another power upon that territory, renders it necessary that this government should exercise a sleepless vigilance in watching over the rights of Spain in that quarter, in a matter that so nearly concerns her own interests and security. You will, therefore, lose no time in endeavoring to ascertain the present views and feelings of the Spanish government upon this important point, and communicate to your own all the information you can obtain in regard to it. It is necessary that Spain should be duly impressed with the importance of such a crisis as late events have led this government to apprehend as altogether probable and near at hand, and it is still more necessary that this government should be prepared to act with a perfect understanding of the whole subject with reference to its own safety and interests. In the event that Spain shall so far yield to the pressure upon her as to concede to Great Britain any control over Cuba, the fact will necessarily have an important influence over the policy of this government. It is difficult to give you any positive instructions upon this subject, and you are therefore left to your own discretion as to what you shall say, and to whom. It may be advisable to confer confidentially with some of the friends of the Chevalier D'Argaiz, who are represented to have influence, and to whom, therefore, it may be politic to impart the feelings and wishes of this government on the occasion. My only object is to obtain full and accurate information in regard to every movement which England may make with reference to Cuba, whether designed to obtain a transfer of that island to herself, or to obtain a control over the policy of Spain in regard to it, or to affect the institution of African slavery now existing

there. The modes in which you may acquire this information are submitted to your discretion.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. P. UPSHUR.

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*Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Saunders.*

[Extract.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, February 4, 1847.*

The enclosed paper, marked "extract," is a copy of one received from Mr. Yulee, Senator from Florida, who states certain particulars in regard to the writer of the letter from which the "extract" is made, showing that he has enjoyed very peculiar opportunities for becoming well informed upon the subject. Mr. Yulee says, in conclusion, that he is "of opinion that the information he gives is deserving the attention of this government." It would seem scarcely within the bounds of possibility, that any consideration which could possibly be offered by Spain could operate as an effectual inducement with Great Britain to relinquish Gibraltar. A knowledge of the views of Mr. Yulee's correspondent, even although they should be erroneous in this particular, may, however, prove useful to you.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

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*Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Saunders.*

[Extract.]

[No. 21.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, June 17, 1848.*

SIR: By direction of the President, I now call your attention to the present condition and future prospects of Cuba. The fate of this island must ever be deeply interesting to the people of the United States. We are content that it shall continue to be a colony of Spain. Whilst in her possession we have nothing to apprehend. Besides, we are bound to her by the ties of ancient friendship, and we sincerely desire to render these perpetual.

But we can never consent that this island shall become a colony of any other European power. In the possession of Great Britain, or any strong naval power, it might prove ruinous both to our domestic and foreign commerce, and even endanger the union of the States. The highest and first duty of every independent nation is to provide for its own safety; and, acting upon this principle, we should be compelled to resist the acquisition of Cuba by any powerful maritime State, with all the means which Providence has placed at our command.

Cuba is almost within sight of the coast of Florida, situated between that State and the peninsula of Yucatan, and possessing the deep, capacious and impregnable fortified harbor of the Havana. If this island were under the dominion of Great Britain, she could command both the inlets to the Gulf of Mexico. She would thus be enabled, in time of war, effectively to blockade the mouth of the Mississippi, and to deprive all the western States of this Union, as well as those within the gulf, teeming as they are with an industrious and enterprising population, of a foreign market for their immense productions. But this is not the worst: she could also destroy the commerce by sea between our ports on the gulf and our Atlantic ports, a commerce of nearly as great a value as the whole of our foreign trade. Is there any reason to believe that Great Britain desires to acquire the island of Cuba? We know that it has been her uniform policy, throughout her past history, to seize upon every valuable commercial point throughout the world, whenever circumstances have placed this in her power. And what point so valuable as the island of Cuba?

The United States are the chief commercial rival of Great Britain; our tonnage at the present moment is nearly equal to hers, and it will be greater, within a brief period, if nothing should occur to arrest our progress. Of what vast importance would it, then, be to her to obtain the possession of an island from which she could at any time destroy a very large portion both of our foreign and coasting trade? Besides, she well knows that if Cuba were in our possession, her West India islands would be rendered comparatively valueless. From the extent and fertility of this island, and from the energy and industry of our people, we should soon be able to supply the markets of the world with tropical productions, at a cheaper rate than these could be raised in any of her possessions.

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But let me present another view of the subject. If Cuba were annexed to the United States, we should not only be relieved from the apprehensions which we can never cease to feel for our own safety and the security of our commerce, whilst it shall remain in its present condition, but human foresight cannot anticipate the beneficial consequences which would result to every portion of our Union.

This can never become a local question. With suitable fortifications at the Tortugas, and in possession of the strongly fortified harbor of Havana as a naval station on the opposite coast of Cuba, we could command the outlet of the Gulf of Mexico, between the peninsula of Florida and that island. This would afford ample security both to the foreign and coasting trade of the western and southern States, which seek a market for their surplus productions through the ports on the gulf.

2. Under the government of the United States, Cuba would become the richest and most fertile island, of the same extent, throughout the world. According to McGregor's Commercial Regulations and his Commercial Statistics, "in 1830, of the 468,523 caballerias of thirty-two English acres of land, which compose the whole territory, 38,276 were under sugar, coffee, tobacco, garden and fruit cultivation, and 9,734 in grazing grounds and in unfelled woods, belonging to sugar

and coffee estates." It thus appears that in 1830 less than one-twelfth of the whole island was under cultivation. The same author says: "We have no accounts of the present extent of cultivation in Cuba; but by comparing the value of exportable produce of 1830 with that of 1842, and by various estimates, we consider it probable that the lands under sugar, coffee, tobacco and gardens, may fairly be estimated at 54,000 caballerias, or 1,728,000 acres." According to this estimate, between one-eighth and one-ninth, only, of the whole island, was under cultivation in 1842. The author proceeds: "If we compare this extent with the remaining vast area of the fertile soils of Cuba which are still uncultivated, and the produce which the whole island at present yields, it can scarcely be an exaggeration to say that Europe might draw as much coffee and sugar from Cuba alone as the quantity already consumed." Mr. McGregor states the aggregate population of Cuba in the year 1841 to have been only 1,007,624; but from the data which have just been presented, it may fairly be inferred that the island is capable of sustaining in comfort a population of ten millions of inhabitants. Were Cuba a portion of the United States, it would be difficult to estimate the amount of breadstuffs, rice, cotton, and other agricultural as well as manufacturing and mechanical productions; of lumber, of the produce of our fisheries, and of other articles which would find a market in that island, in exchange for their coffee, sugar, tobacco, and other productions. This would go on increasing with the increase of its population and the development of its resources, and all portions of the Union would be benefited by the trade.

Desirable, however, as the possession of this island may be to the United States, we would not acquire it except by the free will of Spain. Any acquisition not sanctioned by justice and honor, would be too dearly purchased. While such is the determination of the President, it is supposed that the present relations between Cuba and Spain might incline the Spanish government to cede the island to the United States, upon the payment of a fair and full consideration. We have received information from various sources, both official and unofficial, that among the creoles of Cuba there has long existed a deep-rooted hostility to Spanish dominion. The revolutions which are rapidly succeeding each other throughout the world, have inspired the Cubans with an ardent and irrepressible desire to achieve their independence. Indeed, we are informed by the consul of the United States at the Havana, that "there appears every probability that the island will soon be in a state of civil war." He also states that "efforts are now being made to raise money for that purpose in the United States, and there will be attempts to induce a few of the volunteer regiments now in Mexico to obtain their discharge and join in the revolution."

I need scarcely inform you that the government of the United States has had no agency whatever in exciting the spirit of disaffection among the Cubans. Very far from it. A short time after we received this information from our consul, I addressed a despatch to him, of which I transmit you a copy, dated on the 9th instant, from which you will perceive that I have warned him to keep a watchful guard both upon his words and actions, so as to avoid even the least suspicion that he had

encouraged the Cubans to rise in insurrection against the Spanish government. I stated also that the relations between Spain and the United States had long been of the most friendly character, and both honor and duty required that we should take no part in the struggle which he seemed to think was impending. I informed him that it would certainly become the duty of this government to use all proper means to prevent any of our volunteer regiments now in Mexico from violating the neutrality of the country by joining in the proposed civil war of the Cubans against Spain. Since the date of my despatch to him, this duty has been performed. The Secretary of War, by command of the President, on the day following, (June 10,) addressed an order to our commanding general in Mexico, and also to the officer having charge of the embarkation of our troops at Vera Cruz, (of which I transmit you a copy,) directing each of them to use all proper measures to counteract any such plan if one should be on foot, and instructing them "to give orders that the transports on which the troops may embark proceed directly to the United States, and in no event to touch at any place in Cuba." The consul, in his despatch to me, also stated that, if the revolution is attempted and succeeds, immediate application would be made to the United States for annexation; but he did not seem to think that it would be successful, and probably would not be undertaken without the aid of American troops. To this portion of the despatch I replied—knowing the ardent desire of the Cubans to be annexed to our Union—that I thought it would not be "difficult to predict that an unsuccessful rising would delay, if it should not defeat, the annexation of the island to the United States," and I assured him that the aid of our volunteer troops could not be obtained.

Thus you will perceive with what scrupulous fidelity we have performed the duties of neutrality and friendship towards Spain. It is our anxious hope that a rising may not be attempted in Cuba; but if this should unfortunately occur, the government of the United States will have performed their whole duty towards a friendly power.

Should the government of Spain feel disposed to part with the island of Cuba, the question, what should we offer for it? would then arise. In deciding this question, it will be important to ascertain, 1st. What net revenue it yields at the present moment to the royal treasury, after deducting all the expenditure incurred on its account; and, 2d. What net revenue would it yield to the government of the United States in its present condition?

The first inquiry I have no means of answering with accuracy. McCulloch, in his *Gazetteer*, states "that the whole revenues of the island, at an average of the five years ending with 1837, amounted to \$8,945,581 per year;" and it is stated in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* for October, 1845, that the revenue for the year 1844 amounted to \$10,490,252 87½. Since 1844 we have no information on the subject in the department, upon which reliance can be placed. Mr. Calderon informs me that the Spanish treasury at Madrid have never received from Cuba in any one year a sum exceeding \$2,000,000. In answer to an inquiry, how the remainder of the revenue was expended, he stated that it was appropriated to defray the expense of its colonial government, and to pay and

support the troops and maintain the vessels of war necessary for its defence and security.

It will occur to you that if Spain should cede Cuba to the United States, she would at once relieve herself from a great part, if not the whole of this civil, military and naval expenditure. In this view of the subject, it would seem that the sum of \$50,000,000 would be an ample pecuniary indemnity to Spain for the loss of the island.

2d. What net revenue would it yield to the government of the United States at the present moment?

In estimating the amount of this revenue, we must mainly rely upon two sources—duties on imports, and the proceeds of the public lands.

Of the average revenue of \$8,945,581 for the five years ending with 1837, McCulloch states that “the maritime duties formed 61 per cent.; the internal taxes  $22\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.; the ecclesiastical deductions  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.; the personal deductions  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.; the miscellaneous revenues  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and the casual revenues  $10\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.” Now it is manifest that if Cuba were in the possession of the United States, the people would be relieved from the greater part if not the whole of these contributions, with the exception of the maritime duties. Besides, a considerable proportion of these maritime duties are levied upon exports which the constitution of the United States would forbid.

But the important inquiry on this branch of the subject is, what amount of duties could we collect in the island? and this must depend upon the amount of the imports.

This we can ascertain for many years up, till 1844 inclusive, from the tables published annually by the Intendente of the island. The following tabular statement, extracted from Hunt’s Magazine, is doubtless correct:

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Imports.</i>	<i>Exports.</i>
1840.....	\$24,700,189 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ .....	\$25,941,783 37 $\frac{1}{2}$
1841.....	25,081,408 50.....	26,774,614 56 $\frac{1}{4}$
1842.....	24,637,527 25.....	26,684,701 00
1843.....	23,422,096 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ .....	25,029,792 62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1844.....	25,056,231 06 $\frac{1}{4}$ .....	25,426,591 18 $\frac{3}{4}$

Admitting that these imports have increased to \$26,000,000 since 1844, and estimating the average rate of our duties under the existing tariff at 25 per cent., which the Secretary of the Treasury informs me is correct within a small fraction, the revenue from imports would amount to \$6,500,000; but, from this sum must be deducted that portion of it which arises from productions of the United States imported into Cuba. The total value of these during the year ending the 30th June, 1846, according to the books of our custom-house, was \$4,713-966. Estimating for their increased value at the custom-houses in Cuba, in consequence of freight and other charges, it would approximate the truth to state that one-fifth of the imports into Cuba consists of American productions. Then, in order to show what revenue we would derive from imports into Cuba, we must deduct one-fifth from \$6,500,000, and the balance remaining, \$5,200,000, would be the amount.

It may be remarked, however, that our acquisition of the island

would doubtless considerably increase the annual military and naval expenditures of the United States. But these calculations all refer to Cuba in its present condition. Were it a possession of the United States, its population and industry, and consequently its exports, would rapidly increase, and produce proportionally increased imports. Indeed, it is highly probable that during the very first year the duties would amount to a sum not less than \$6,000,000.

In regard to the quantity of public lands still remaining in Cuba the department does not possess accurate information. From all that we have learned, it is believed that the crown of Spain has already granted by far the greater portion of the whole territory of the island to individuals. We need not, therefore, calculate upon deriving much revenue from this source. Upon the whole, the President would not hesitate to stipulate for the payment of ———, in convenient instalments, for a cession of the island of Cuba, if it could not be procured for a less sum.

The apprehensions which existed for many years after the origin of this government, that the extension of our federal system would endanger the Union, seem to have passed away. Experience has proved that this system of confederated republics, under which the federal government has charge of interests common to the whole, whilst local governments watch over the concerns of the respective States, is capable of almost indefinite extension, with increasing strength. This, however, is always subject to the qualification that the mass of the population must be of our own race, or must have been educated in the school of civil and religious liberty. With this qualification, the more we increase the number of confederated States, the greater will be the strength and security of the Union, because the more dependent for their mutual interests will the several parts be upon the whole, and the whole upon the several parts. It is true that of the 418,291 white inhabitants which Cuba contained in 1841, a very large proportion is of the Spanish race: still, many of our citizens have settled on the island, and some of them are large holders of property. Under our government it would speedily be *Americanized*, as Louisiana has been. Within the boundaries of such a federal system alone can a trade exempt from duties and absolutely free be enjoyed. With the possession of Cuba we should have throughout the Union a free trade on a more extended scale than any which the world has ever witnessed, arousing an energy and activity of competition which would result in a most rapid improvement in all that contributes to the welfare and happiness of the human race. What State would forego the advantages of this vast free trade with all her sisters, and place herself in lonely isolation? But the acquisition of Cuba would greatly strengthen our bond of union. Its possession would secure to all the States within the valley of the Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico free access to the ocean; but this security could only be preserved whilst the ship-building and navigating States of the Atlantic shall furnish a navy sufficient to keep open the outlets from the gulf to the ocean. Cuba, justly appreciating the advantages of annexation, is now ready to rush into our arms. Once admitted, she would be entirely dependent for her prosperity, and even existence, upon her connexion with the Union, whilst the rapidly increasing trade between

her and the other States would shed its blessings and its benefits over the whole. Such a state of mutual dependence, resulting from the very nature of things, the world has never witnessed. This is what will insure the perpetuity of our Union.

With all these considerations in view, the President believes that the crisis has arrived when an effort should be made to purchase the island of Cuba from Spain, and he has determined to intrust you with the performance of this most delicate and important duty. The attempt should be made, in the first instance, in a confidential conversation with the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs; a written offer might produce an absolute refusal in writing, which would embarrass us hereafter in the acquisition of the island. Besides, from the incessant changes in the Spanish cabinet and policy, our desire to make the purchase might thus be made known in an official form to foreign governments, and arouse their jealousy and active opposition. Indeed, even if the present cabinet should think favorably of the proposition, they might be greatly embarrassed by having it placed on record; for in that event it would almost certainly, through some channel, reach the opposition and become the subject of discussion in the Cortes. Such delicate negotiations, at least in their incipient stages, ought always to be conducted in confidential conversation, and with the utmost secrecy and despatch.

At your interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs you might introduce the subject by referring to the present distracted condition of Cuba, and the danger which exists that the population will make an attempt to accomplish a revolution. This must be well known to the Spanish government. In order to convince him of the good faith and friendship towards Spain with which this government has acted, you might read to him the first part of my despatch to General Campbell, and the order issued by the Secretary of War to the commanding general in Mexico and to the officer having charge of the embarkation of our troops at Vera Cruz. You may then touch delicately upon the danger that Spain may lose Cuba by a revolution in the island, or that it may be wrested from her by Great Britain, should a rupture take place between the two countries arising out of the dismissal of Sir Henry Bulwer, and be retained to pay the Spanish debt due to the British bond-holders. You might assure him that, whilst this government is entirely satisfied that Cuba shall remain under the dominion of Spain, we should in any event resist its acquisition by any other nation. And finally, you might inform him that, under all these circumstances, the President had arrived at the conclusion that Spain might be willing to transfer the island to the United States for a fair and full consideration. You might cite as a precedent the cession of Louisiana to this country by Napoleon, under somewhat similar circumstances, when he was at the zenith of his power and glory. I have merely presented these topics in their natural order, and you can fill up the outline from the information communicated in this despatch, as well as from your own knowledge of the subject. Should the Minister for Foreign Affairs lend a favorable ear to your proposition, then the question of the consideration to be paid would arise, and you have been furnished with information in this despatch which will enable you to discuss that question. In justice to Mr. Calderon I ought here to observe, that whilst

giving me the information before stated, in regard to the net amount of revenue from Cuba which reached Old Spain, he had not then, and has not now, the most remote idea of our intention to make an attempt to purchase the island.

The President would be willing to stipulate for the payment of one hundred millions of dollars. This, however, is the maximum price; and if Spain should be willing to sell, you will use your best efforts to purchase it at a rate as much below that sum as practicable. In case you should be able to conclude a treaty, you may adopt as your model, so far as the same may be applicable, the two conventions of April 30, 1803, between France and the United States, for the sale and purchase of Louisiana. The seventh and eighth articles of the first of these conventions ought, if possible, to be omitted; still, if this should be indispensable to the accomplishment of the object, articles similar to them may be retained.

I transmit you a full power to conclude such a treaty.

You will be careful to make a full and faithful report to this department of all the conversations and proceedings on this subject between yourself and the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs. Should you succeed in accomplishing the object, you will associate your name with a most important and beneficial measure for the glory and prosperity of your country.

Yours, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS, Esq.

P. S.—You will send your despatches on the subject of this despatch by a special messenger to our consul at Liverpool, and draw upon the department for the expense, unless you can transmit them by a trusty person. They may be directed to the President. You may probably have occasion, in relation to this subject, to use the cipher of the legation.

[No. 22.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, July 7, 1848.*

SIR: With reference to the instructions to you of the 17th ultimo, (No. 21) I will thank you to substitute the following paragraph for that beginning with the words, "In regard to the public lands of Cuba:"

In regard to the quantity of public lands still remaining in Cuba, the department does not possess accurate information. From all that we have learned, it is believed that the Crown of Spain has already granted by far the greater portion of the whole territory of the island to individuals. We need not, therefore, calculate upon deriving much revenue from this source.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS, Esq.

*Mr. Saunders to Mr. Buchanan.*

[Extracts.]

[No. 37.]

LA GRANJA, July 29, 1848.

SIR: I had the honor to receive, by the hands of Mr. Sawyer, on the 24th instant, despatch No. 21, enclosing copies of a letter from the department to Mr. Campbell, and of a confidential order from the Secretary of War to Major General Butler, all relating to matters in Cuba, together with a special commission from the President, authorizing me to enter into negotiations for the cession of that island to the United States.

In acknowledging the receipt of these papers, I beg to express to the President my deep obligations for this distinguished mark of confidence in confiding to me so important and delicate a commission, and at the same time to express to you my thanks for the very full and valuable information you have given me in your despatch. I shall not fail to avail myself freely of its suggestions, facts and arguments, in any negotiation I may have on the subject.

As I am directed to make a full and faithful report to the department of everything which may transpire in connexion with the subject, I have thought it advisable to avail myself of your directions to engage a special messenger to carry this communication as far as Liverpool, and to make it as full as I can at this time, so that, in any future despatch I may refer to it in a way you will understand, without, at the same time, risking anything by a miscarriage.

There are difficulties which surround the subject, which meet us at the threshold, and which it is proper I should explain, that you may be the better prepared to judge as to the course I may find it necessary to pursue in the business. In the first place, I am not a little embarrassed as to the person to whom I should first open the subject.

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I have also heard from another source, that the Duke of Sotomayor was unfriendly to the United States. I have not myself discovered any feeling of the kind. On the contrary, he always speaks with pride of his grandfather, Governor McKean, and with respect of our country. General Narvaez, the president of the council, is a bold, fearless man, the soul of the cabinet. \* \* \* \* \* Yet he is difficult of approach, and might not like the responsibility of having the subject in the first instance broached to him. Another difficulty, and, as I fear, an insurmountable one, is the influence of the Queen Mother. She has great control over her daughter, and is feared by the ministry, and I suspect would most decidedly object to the cession. She has considerable investments in Cuba, from which she derives great profits.

These investments are loudly complained of by the people of Havana, as interfering with their private matters, and such as the Queen Mother should not intermeddle with—such as gaslight companies, and other associations, in a small way. She could only be silenced by a prospect of gain, or indemnity for her loss; but at this stage of the business, it is not necessary she should know anything about it, unless

the minister should see fit to consult her. I have already intimated to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs my wish to have a private interview with him, and received an answer, through his secretary, that he was confined to his chamber by a severe attack of the gout, but would see me so soon as he was able to attend to business. Whether I shall ask an audience of General Narvaez will depend on my meeting with a favorable opportunity for doing so.

At this stage of my report, I heard there was likely to be a change in the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I deemed it prudent to see General Narvaez, and ascertain the truth of the rumor. He readily informed me the health of the Duke of Sotomayor rendered it necessary for him to retire, and that Mr. Pidal would take his place. I at once decided to ask a private interview of General Narvaez, and to make to him my communication in regard to Cuba. He, without hesitation, acceded to my request, if it should be my pleasure to make any communication to him.

It was arranged I should call the next day, when he would receive me at an early hour. I accordingly called at the hour appointed, and opened the conversation by stating the information which had been given by Mr. Campbell relative to the threatened insurrection in the Havana; your instructions to our consul as to the caution to be used in his words and actions, to avoid even the suspicion of encouraging the insurgents; and the positive order of the Secretary of War to Major General Butler to prevent any attempt on the part of the volunteers in their return from Mexico from stopping at the Havana. He expressed himself as thankful for the information; as entirely satisfied with the conduct of our government; and requested me to express *muchas gracias*, many thanks, to the President for his course in the business. He further said they had their difficulties to contend with, both in Cuba and at home; but should always look with confidence to our great country, from the friendly relations which had so long existed between Spain and the United States.

He requested to be furnished with copies of your answer and of the Secretary's order. I promised to give him a copy of the order to General Butler, and of so much of your letter as referred to the subject; with the understanding that the information given by Mr. Campbell was not to be used in any way to excite prejudices against him as our consul.

I considered this a favorable moment to introduce the subject which had been the peculiar object of my visit. I began by saying: "His excellency would allow me to advert to another matter in regard to the island of Cuba, which, though one of delicacy, was of great importance to us, and I trusted he would receive my communication in the same friendly spirit in which it was made." He replied it would afford him much pleasure to hear anything I might have to say. I continued: "His excellency was fully aware of the very deep interest which the United States felt in everything connected with the present condition and future prospects of Cuba; its position, its great importance to our commerce, the condition of a portion of its population, were well calculated to increase the interest we felt in its fate." He expressed his full assent to all of this. I said, "that whilst the President and our people

were perfectly content that it should remain a colony of Spain, and did not by any means desire to change that relation, several events had recently taken place well calculated to excite our fears, and to create some alarm on the subject. I should content myself by referring him to a few of them.

"The recent revolution in France, and the order by its provisional government for the immediate emancipation of the slaves in the French islands, and the fatal consequences which had followed, had produced great anxiety in the United States as to its effects on the Spanish islands. He would doubtless recollect the speech of Lord George Bentick, at the last session of Parliament, on the subject of the Spanish bondholders, and of the reply of Lord Palmerston, asserting the right of the British government to wage war against Spain for the recovery of these debts whenever it might deem it expedient." His excellency very emphatically signified his recollection of these speeches. "These circumstances, in connexion with the recent suspension of all diplomatic intercourse between the two governments, had added to the anxiety of the United States as to the condition of Cuba. They had led the President to believe the time had arrived when it was prudent for him to give to the minister at this court authority to treat on the subject of Cuba, if it should be the pleasure of Her Catholic Majesty to enter into such a negotiation. I had been honored by the President with a special commission for this purpose; a fact which I had been directed to communicate to the government of Her Majesty in confidence, and which, from the respect I entertained towards his excellency, had induced me to make it known to him." He said in reply, "That he received the information with much pleasure; that whilst he should consider it as confidential, it might be best that the Minister of State should be made acquainted with it; that he enjoyed his full confidence, and might be implicitly confided in." I rejoined: "I did not doubt on that score; but had thought, from the nature of the subject, as the Minister of State was just about to enter upon the duties of his office, it was most proper to make the communication to his excellency."

Here our conference ended. As you will see, I was somewhat guarded in the latter part of my expressions, and that the minister was not very explicit in his reply. He evidently was pleased with the communication. He was not only courteous and respectful, but manifested the greatest attention and interest during the whole of the conversation. I deemed it most prudent not to use the word "cession," and am not exactly certain that he understood me as being authorized to treat for the cession, or merely for the security of Cuba. At all events, I did not think it politic, at this stage of the business, to be more explicit, or to press the matter further. I have opened the subject, apprized him of my authority, and can hereafter advert to the subject as circumstances may justify. I am well satisfied nothing will induce the Spanish government to part with Cuba but the apprehension of a successful revolution in the island, or the fear of its seizure by England. The national pride and character of these people would not induce them readily to give up on the first point. I have reason to know the government are not without their fears on the latter point. As I learn, private letters from England give them to understand that Lord

Palmerston is disposed to give them trouble, and that the bond-holders are pressing that something decisive should be done in their behalf. If the government shall entertain any serious fears in regard to the matter, they would likely open the subject, and thus enable me to bring forward a formal proposition to treat for a cession. I deem it, therefore, the better policy to suffer the thing to rest as it is for the present. The court will remain here for some weeks, when I shall have the opportunity of meeting the ministers in an informal way, without attracting that attention which our official visits in Madrid would likely excite. Besides, I can, at my discretion, as the matter now stands, renew the subject with the new Secretary, which I shall most certainly do should I discover the least grounds to suspect that they are laboring under any misapprehension as to my conversation with General Narvaez.

Mr. Pidal belongs to the French party—is strongly prejudiced against the English, and will warmly second General Narvaez on that point. He was Secretary of War at the time of the Queen's marriage—is the brother-in-law of Mon, who was the Minister of Finance at the time, and the great co-laborer of Count Bresson in support of the Montpensier marriage. Still he is strongly Spanish in his feelings and character, and not likely to join in promoting an act calculated to shock the national pride. On the other hand, he is a bold, rough, independent man, and would fearlessly carry out any measure he might undertake. Of the Queen Mother I have already spoken, so that you have a pretty accurate idea of the persons with whom I have to deal, and of the probability of success. You will naturally inquire if the state of the finances is to have no effect on the question. With an empty treasury and the expenses daily increasing—with the credit of the government so far reduced as to be driven to the necessity of resorting to a forced loan to raise the small sum of five millions, one would suppose such a state of things as this would be the first consideration with those charged with the administration of the government. But, unfortunately, such is the desperate state of the finances, and of the public debt, that all seem to despair of correcting them. The foreign debt is estimated at four hundred millions of dollars, of which the agent of the English creditors claims two hundred and fifty millions. Of the domestic debt, what is the amount, no one seems to know: 'tis said even the government keeps no account of it; or if it does, will not let it be known. It is stated at three hundred millions three per cent., exchangeable for certain kinds of public property. Mr. Henderson is still at Madrid, acting as agent of the bond-holders, and boasts of occasionally receiving a note of promise from General Narvaez. The fact is, I expect he is merely kept there for appearances. I do not see how they can well meet the heavy demands on the treasury, even if so disposed. Certainly they cannot, without that radical reform which no ministry has the resolution to undertake. The average receipts for the last four or five years have been sixty-five millions of dollars, and the expenditures seventy millions. The army is computed at one hundred and fifty thousand in the Peninsula, fifteen or twenty thousand for Cuba, and fifteen thousand for the other colonies. As

matters now stand, when the country is governed by the bayonet, there is little prospect of a reduction.

The government places a much higher estimate on the revenues of Cuba than you seem to calculate. They place it at twelve millions of dollars, and after deducting the expenses of the civil and military, claim for the treasury six millions. Besides this, the orders or rents on the treasury, pay to the navy, and employment to persons who would be entitled to retiring pensions at home, together with the profits from the flour monopoly, make, according to the estimate here, some fifteen or twenty millions annually. I doubt, therefore, if we have anything to calculate on from a financial view of the question. Hence my conclusion that nothing short of necessity, arising from their fears as to the consequences, will force them to act.

Allow me now to present the view I ventured to hint at some short time since. In Mr. Forsyth's instructions to Mr. Vail—15th July, 1840, No. 2—is to be found the following very strong language: "You are authorized to assure the Spanish government, that in case of any attempt, from whatever quarter, to wrest from her this portion of her territory, (Cuba,) she may securely depend upon the military and naval resources of the United States to aid her in preserving or recovering it." This assurance was accordingly given by Mr. Vail, and again repeated by Mr. Irving, under his instructions from Mr. Webster. With this guarantee for the safety of the island, the Spanish government has rested in perfect security. At the time of Mr. Bulwer's dismissal, when the public apprehended a rupture with England, it was a common remark at the *Puerta del Sol*—the great theatre for political discussion—"that the United States would aid us in the protection of Cuba." Now, whilst I would not formally withdraw this assurance, I suggest the propriety of changing our tone by saying, "In a war between Spain and England the United States might feel greatly embarrassed, from her friendly relations with England; that she is not only our ally, with whom we are at peace, but with whom, at present, we have the most intimate commercial relations; that whatever we may think of her colonial policy, in the extension of her commerce and for the advancement of her manufactures, the United States would feel great reluctance in an open rupture with her at this time: besides, she might claim from us the same neutrality in a war with Spain as she had observed in our late contest with Mexico." This language might do good; and, as I think, could do us no harm. And whatever might be our secret resolution—that under no circumstances could we allow Cuba to come under the control of England—still it might be as well for us to keep this resolution to ourselves.

In my interviews hereafter with the minister I shall venture to present this view of the subject, as a reason why we should greatly prefer the purchase of Cuba to any interference to prevent its falling into the power of England.

I have thus given you a full account of what has taken place since the reception of your despatch—of the difficulties which surround the subject, of my prospects, and of the course I design to pursue in regard to this interesting subject. I feel highly flattered in having confided to me a trust in whose successful execution I should connect

my name with one of the most important events in our diplomatic history.

I am, sir, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. M. SAUNDERS.

JAMES BUCHANAN, Esq.,

*Secretary of State.*

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*Mr. Saunders to Mr. Buchanan.*

[No. 38.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Madrid, August 18, 1848.*

SIR: I reached here this morning from La Granja, and was somewhat surprised to find the gentleman who had engaged to carry my despatch to Liverpool had not yet left, but expects to do so to-night. It is perhaps as well, as it enables me to add information on the subject of a more definite character. On the 15th instant I had an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which I was more explicit in my communication, and he more candid in his reply. I repeated the interest which the United States felt in the present and future condition of Cuba, and the belief of the President that possibly the existing state of things might render it desirable for her Majesty to enter into negotiations on the subject. He said he had been informed by General Narvaez of the nature of my communication to him, and of my authority; that, if I wished to press the matter further at this time, he should like to hear whether I proposed to treat for the cession of Cuba to the United States, or for its security to Spain; and, in the event of a difficulty with England, whether Spain could rely for any aid from the United States. I answered that it was from the fear of a difficulty with England, and the threat on her part to seize on Cuba, which had, in part, induced the President to give me the special authority he had done at present; that, as his excellency would see, an open rupture between Spain and England—the allies of the United States—might greatly embarrass her as to the part which she, as a neutral, might find it necessary to take: that, whilst self-preservation and the interest of her commerce might prevent her from remaining passive in the event of any pressing danger, she would greatly prefer a direct purchase of Cuba, to involving herself in a war with England on that account. He said he fully understood our difficulty; that, from the present state of things, he did not anticipate anything of the kind; that it was but candid in him to say, he could not hold out any prospect at present of a cession; that possibly time might bring it about. Cuba was reported to them as being secure, but there was no telling how long it might remain so. He was pleased to receive my communication; should treat it as entirely confidential; and if anything should occur to produce a different state of things, he should not fail to inform me of it.

The above is, in substance, what transpired. I did not deem it prudent to urge the matter further at this time, but shall not fail to keep myself fully informed of everything which may occur, and should I see the least prospect of success, shall, of course, avail myself of it.

You may possibly see in the English papers some reference to the

relations with Spain, and the anxiety on the part of the latter to have these matters accommodated. I doubt if this be so. At least, I am certain General Narvaez has manifested no anxiety on the subject. Señor Mon has just come into the cabinet as Minister of Finance. He is the brother-in-law of the Minister of State; is the peculiar friend and partisan of Christina; is reported an honest man, and, from his character, is likely to improve the moneyed matters of the country. The calculation is, that he and Narvaez may not continue to act very long with much harmony. I doubt if he is likely to contribute anything to my success in regard to Cuba. I have received from the Minister of State the note, a copy of which I enclose, inviting me, as you will see, to be present at the accouchement of the Duchess of Montpensier. As I found most of the diplomatic corps intended going, I deemed it proper for me to accept, and shall go off within a few days. This may seem rather a ridiculous matter to us, but, as you know, is considered a necessary ceremony among the regal families of Europe. I have been given to understand my prompt acceptance was quite gratifying, both to the Queen and her mother. I trust, therefore, in the absence of any direct instructions, the President will approve of my course.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

R. M. SAUNDERS.

JAMES BUCHANAN, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

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*Mr. Saunders to Mr. Buchanan.*

[No. 42.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

*Madrid, November 17, 1848.*

SIR: There appeared in the New York Herald of the 20th October, a letter purporting to be from a Madrid correspondent, and to have been written by an American. It reflects in no very polite terms on this legation, and refers to negotiations which the writer assumes as pending for the cession of Cuba to the United States. These statements, with the editorial of the Herald, have been copied into the English and French papers, and, as you will see from the enclosed articles, have been noticed by the press here. I deemed it proper to call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to assure him the matter had found its way into the press without any authority from anything done or said on the part of myself or the secretary of this legation. He said he had no suspicion of anything of that kind, but supposed it a trick of the newspaper editors, or of some one, for the purpose of mischief; that it was somewhat annoying, as it was calculated to produce a bad effect in their colonies. I assured him I had taken steps to have the matter set right at home, and to find out, if I could, the author of the letter. He expressed himself as satisfied, and the matter dropped. You will see, from the articles enclosed, the spirit in which the question of the cession is received, and the feeling of the public on the subject. It is certain they regard Cuba as their most precious gem, and nothing short of extreme necessity will ever induce them to part with it. There are

some statements in the publication which I feel called upon to notice. It is utterly untrue that I have ever found it necessary to consult any one unconnected with the legation, in my intercourse with the government. On the contrary, most of the secretaries of foreign affairs since my being here have spoken English, and I have at no time been embarrassed on that account, as the Under-Secretary is a good English scholar. So the statement does great injustice to Mr. Sawyer, as he is a good French scholar, speaks it well, and is fully qualified to converse in and to translate the Spanish. I regret to say, these references, with other allusions in the letter, have excited my suspicions as to the author. In this I may be mistaken. I deem it proper to inform you, as the letter refers to negotiations which the writer says took place during the mission of my predecessor, I felt at liberty to write to Mr. Irving, requesting him to say to Mr. Bennett the statements in the letter were false, and to endeavor, if practicable, to find out its author. You can, therefore, if you should see fit, communicate direct with Mr. Irving, or await his answer to my letter. If my suspicions as to the author of the letter shall prove to be well-founded, he certainly deserves to be exposed; if unfounded, then it will give me pleasure to have them removed.

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I have had no encouragement to renew the subject in regard to Cuba; so far as I have been able to collect the opinion of the public, it is against a cession, and I do not think the present ministry could or would venture on such a step; both Pidal and Mon are against it, and Narvaez says nothing.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

R. M. SAUNDERS.

JAMES BUCHANAN, Esq.,  
*Secretary of State.*

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*Mr. Saunders to Mr. Buchanan.*

[Extract]

[No. 43.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Madrid, December 14, 1848.*

SIR:

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As I considered this a favorable opportunity to renew the subject, I remarked to the minister he must excuse me for again calling his attention to the matter of the cession of Cuba; that an impression had been produced in the United States, in consequence of some recent publications on the subject, that Spain might be induced to make the transfer, if terms sufficiently liberal should be offered; and I desired to know if he was willing to hear anything further on the question. He answered, he had understood, from our former conversations on the subject, that I had not been instructed to make any direct proposition for the cession, but was authorized to enter into negotiations whenever it

might please her Majesty to signify her wish to do so. In the mean time, the President was satisfied to suffer things to remain as they were, so long as Cuba should continue under the dominion of Spain. With this understanding, my communication had been well received, and was entirely satisfactory; that, so understanding me, he had felt authorized to give a direct denial to the publications to which I had referred, and had so instructed the different agents of the government; that he wished the matter thus to stand, as it would enable him to give, in a satisfactory way, any explanations which might be demanded by the Cortes. I replied he had correctly understood me; and I had so reported to my government, and had since received the President's approval of my course; that I did not now design to make any proposition, as I had received no new instructions; but my object was a simple inquiry, to enable me to learn and to state whether any terms, however liberal, would induce her Majesty to make the cession. He answered, he fully appreciated my motives, as he had seen the statement in the papers, and could answer most positively, "that it was more than any minister dare, to entertain any such proposition; 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." I replied, I was happy to find he understood my motives, and after his positive and candid avowal, I certainly should not again renew the subject, unless I should be specially invited to do so. I was fully aware of this being an unpleasant subject with the ministry; that they had been much annoyed by the recent publications; but as I had heard from private sources that an improper impression had been produced in the United States, in consequence of the articles in the New York Herald, and that I had been charged with inefficiency in failing to press the matter with sufficient energy; and as I was anxious to vindicate myself against such an imputation, and to justify the confidence reposed in me by the President, I felt authorized to renew the conversation, which ended in a way, as I think, to the satisfaction of the minister. I had made it my business to inquire, in a private way, from those I knew to be friendly to the annexation of Cuba to the United States, what they thought to be the public feeling on the subject, and they have uniformly given the same answer; and that was, that the nation would not sanction the measure; that the general belief was, whatever sum might be paid for the cession, it would not go to the relief of the nation, but would be seized upon by those who might happen to be in power. And these remarks were always made under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, as the individuals were most anxious to conceal the fact that they were friendly to annexation.

I flatter myself the President will not disapprove of what I have felt myself called upon to do, as the matter is now placed beyond all misapprehension, and will be fully understood in future. I might, indeed, have manifested a more active and zealous importunity; but it would have been that pressing importunity, alike wanting in dignity and unauthorized by usage, and which certainly was not becoming a question of this character. I was satisfied a direct proposition would have been met with a flat rejection, and might have left a bad impression; whereas the communication was well received, and may, in the end, produce

a good effect. For the present, I am well convinced such is the temper and feeling of the nation in regard to the matter, that it would not have been within the power of the most skilful diplomatist to have commanded success; and it is because of my conviction that nothing is to be effected on either of these important subjects, that I am most anxious to close my mission and to return to my own country. And, as this is likely to be the last communication which I shall have the honor to make you on this interesting subject, I avail myself of the occasion to renew to the President my grateful acknowledgments for the high confidence reposed in me, and to express my deep regret that it has not been in my power to add to the other important matters which have marked his administration as one of the most distinguished in the annals of our country.

I remain, sir, with high respect and esteem, your obedient servant,  
R. M. SAUNDERS.

JAMES BUCHANAN, Esq.,  
*Secretary of State.*

