

would have asserted their rightful predominance over the elements to whose baleful sway the calamities of this war are due.

N. P. TRIST.

To their Excellencies Don JOSE J. HERRERA,  
DON BERNARDO COUTO, DON IGNACIO DE MORA  
Y VILLAMIL, and DON MIGUEL ATRISTAIN, *Com-  
missioners Plenipotentiary of the Mexican republic.*

NOTE.—*Mexico, October 28, 1847.*—During the present month a pamphlet has issued from the press of this capital, under the title, "*A communication upon the diplomatic conferences conducted in the house of Alfaro, between the plenipotentiary of the United States and those of Mexico, addressed to his excellency the governor of Jalisco: by Don Mariano Otero, LL. D., deputy from that State.*"

Señor Otero has an established reputation as one of the ablest and best informed statesmen of his country; and admissions proceeding from him in favor of the United States, require no corroboration to entitle them to be received as perfectly accurate. The following passage of his pamphlet contains admissions of this nature, constituting a striking confirmation of the correctness of the view above taken as to the true cause of the war; and it bears ample testimony, however unintentionally, to the extreme forbearance displayed by the United States. It is conclusive upon this point; and also as to the fact that the war *was begun by Mexico—begun by her supreme government, designedly and premeditatedly.* As to whether the annexation of Texas afforded, or did not afford, a just cause of war, this is a totally distinct question from the other. Justly or unjustly, the war was begun by the Mexican government. This is a matter of fact, about which there can be no dispute, except on the part of such as are totally misinformed on the subject, or of such as have no regard for truth. The object of the author, at the outset, is to show that, previously to the war, no claim had ever been set up by the United States to any portion of the territory of Mexico, save Texas. While intent upon impressing the reader with this fact, (and a most unquestionable one it is,) he says:

"In fact, the United States have never set up a claim to any other part of our territory, and they have admitted this by more than one act. Even after the independence and annexation of Texas, the Mexican authorities existed and were recognized in the border States of Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, and New Mexico. When the American government offered, in 1845, to adjust the present question in an amicable manner, they drew off their forces to Corpus Christi, *in order not to demand anything beyond the territory in dispute.* Shortly before, they had returned to the port of Monterey, in Upper California, and given satisfaction to the Mexican government for its occupation, by Captain Jones: they never disturbed New Mexico previously to the breaking out of hostilities—not even that part of it on the left bank of the river Bravo; and in spite of the pretensions of the first Texan Congress to the

northern bank of this river near its mouth, the American forces did not advance to it *until the war became inevitable, and then only as an army of observation.*"

Having thus conclusively established this first point, he proceeds to take the position which it was intended to support, to wit: that the United States, by proposing to acquire other Mexican territory besides Texas, have entirely changed the question between the two countries, and have given to the war the character of a war of conquest; thereby, as he says, (being blind to the flagrant contradiction between this assertion and the whole conglomeration of facts in which it stands imbedded,) disclosing what every one who observes the march of the American government has all along known to be the truth of the matter: that this conquest *was, from the beginning, what the United States were intent upon.* Blaming the Mexican government for having permitted the issue to be changed, he enters into an examination of the course pursued by it in the negotiation, beginning with a survey of the position occupied by Mexico at the moment when the commissioners first met. This review commences as follows:

"In fact, when once the question had been varied by the United States in the manner we have just seen, it became a matter of the deepest interest and moment to watch what attitude, what course, our policy assumed, to confront that of our neighbors; and this interest was the greater, *because of the policy which, for so many years, had been inviolably adhered to among us.* It is very natural, in times of civil discord, that parties, in order to obtain possession of power, should invoke the dearest interests, and pretend to hold the most generous resolves; and hence it arose that the war of Texas, the object of hope and fear to all well intentioned persons, was for a long time the cloak of the most inexcusable machinations. In the name of Texas, the nation was oppressed for many years by successive governments, destroyed by revolutions, and impoverished by enormous contributions. Every one of the governments that appeared upon the shifting scene promised to incorporate the usurped territory, but never attempted it; while, at the same time, Texas went on increasing in population, obtained her recognition from foreign governments, acquired every day new guarantees for her existence, and now showed the real reason for her rebellion; which was, and always had been, her annexation to the neighboring republic, the instigator and promoter of her separation. Re-conquest was then the only policy of our administration; and when, on the eve of annexation, an indisputably patriotic and upright Executive saw the Texas question in a new light; and, at the risk of its existence, with the rarest and most praiseworthy disinterestedness, endeavored to solve it in a wise manner, and secure the nationality of the republic by erecting Texas into a small independent nation, which, under the guarantee of other powers, should never be annexed to the United States, but should thus serve to maintain the balance of power on our continent, in the same manner as the nationality of Belgium put an end to the disputes which had so often deluged the fields of Europe with blood—even

this intention became a party weapon, and a motive for revolt: men of the most exalted worth were called traitors, and the government was overthrown. RE-CONQUEST *again became our policy.*" (This, be it noted, refers to a period after the admission of Texas had taken place.) "The military rebellion of San Luis gave rise to a government *pledged to resist all accommodation; which government* (although in its diplomatic conduct it pursued the same policy as the government it had overthrown, on account of that very policy) COMMENCED HOSTILITIES; and, under its fatal auspices, began this inconceivable and deplorable series of defeats.

"The government installed by the national movement of 1846 could not do otherwise than continue that war;" (the war, that is to say, commenced by Paredes,) "and without its having been discussed, either then or before, on what terms an honorable peace might be brought about, it has been assumed as a basis, that Mexico should listen to no proposals until our arms should drive back the Americans BEYOND THE SABINE."

Here, then, besides the testimony which the facts adduced by the writer (for a totally different purpose) bear to the anxiety evinced by the United States to avoid a rupture, we have an explicit acknowledgment, *First*, that after the admission of Texas as one of the States of our Union, the "re-conquest" of that State "again became the policy" openly avowed by the Mexican government. *Secondly*, that the government of Paredes, which, by a successful military rebellion, supplanted the Herrera administration, came in "pledged to resist ALL accommodation." *Thirdly*, that this government "commenced hostilities." *Fourthly*, that the "war" so commenced had for its object to "drive back the Americans beyond the Sabine." *Fifthly*, that after the Paredes usurpation had been overthrown, this continued still to be the object of the war, and the Mexican government assumed as its basis of action, that no proposals for peace should be listened to until this object should be effected.

The writer says, at the commencement of the foregoing extract, that the United States "drew off their forces to Corpus Christi, in order not to demand anything beyond the territory in dispute." Although these words involve an acknowledgment of the extreme moderation and caution with which the American government proceeded, they convey exceedingly vague and incorrect ideas, and place in an altogether confused and false light the question between the two countries which has given rise to this war. They imply that there was a certain "territory in dispute," and that this territory was the country between the Sabine and the Nueces, (to the exclusion of that lying between the latter river and the Bravo. Now, *this was not at all the character of the question.* So far as Mexico was concerned, she made no such acknowledgment: her position was that of a refusal to acknowledge that Texas had become incorporated into the American Union; she peremptorily claimed the whole country, from the Bravo to the Sabine, as Mexican territory. On the other hand, the United States made no such acknowledgment either. What they acknowledged was, that Texas

having once constituted one of the States of the Mexican republic, from which she had separated herself, and against which she had established her independence by war, claiming a certain boundary, and having now become one of the United States of America, still claiming that same boundary—which claim constituted, therefore, an open question—it was indispensable that this question should be settled between the United States and Mexico. This is the position which was occupied by the United States; and they asked that this question might be settled.

It is true, that *previously to the war between Texas and Mexico, which had given to Texas* (as it had given to Mexico likewise) *the right to insist upon a change of boundary*, as the condition to peace, the boundary between Texas and the adjoining states of the Mexican republic had been (as was generally understood) different from the one now claimed by her. And it is true, likewise, that the right to insist upon or to waive this alleged change of her boundary having been transferred to the United States, the American government did afford to Mexico and to the world the proof of moderation referred to by Señor Otero; but his statement of which ought to have been differently framed. To be accurate and consistent with the true nature of the case, it should have been, in substance, as follows: *The duty of settling the boundary between the Texan and Mexican republics having, in consequence of the admission of the former as one of the United States of America, devolved upon the American government; and it being generally understood that the boundary asserted by Texas embraced a portion of territory (that bordering on the east bank of the Bravo) which had not been included within her limits when she constituted part of the Mexican republic, and before the war waged against her, in consequence of her separating herself, upon the subversion of its constitution and the submission of the rest of the country to military usurpation and despotism—under these circumstances, the American government, actuated by the most earnest wish to avoid a collision with Mexico, abstained from occupying that disputable portion of territory "until the war became inevitable:" in other words, until, by repelling advances towards an amicable arrangement, which the United States persevered in to an extent that would have been altogether incompatible with self-respect, had the opposite party been a nation from which anything could be feared, and by many other conclusive proofs of its inflexibility in adhering to the determination which it had proclaimed to "reincorporate Texas," and never to sheath the sword until "the Americans should have been driven back beyond the Sabine," the Mexican government left to the United States no possible course save that of retiring behind the Sabine, or of repelling the "hostilities" which Mexico, true to her threat, soon after "commenced."*

Stated in some such way as this, the incident referred to by Señor Otero would have stood in its true light, and would not have been attended with the effect of conveying confused and false notions in regard to the nature of the momentous question to which it appertains; a question which, on the part of Mexico, according to Señor

Otero's own irrefragable showing, was used by the men who have wantonly sported with the destinies of their country, like any other commonplace and hackneyed topic of party slang, for the mere end of obtaining possession of the government and getting themselves into office. What the end is, which lies behind this one, (save in the case of a few most honorable exceptions,) is unfortunately but too notorious. Unless public opinion in Mexico be altogether at fault; unless the settled conviction upon this point, universally entertained by all classes of men—by the purest and most upright of her citizens, as well as by the most impure and unprincipled—and habitually referred to by all, as the explanation of all things, rests upon no other foundation than airy dreams;—unless this be the case, this end of all other ends could not fail to be strikingly exemplified by the final history of those “enormous contributions,” for which, as Señor Otero (whilst ardent with his invective against the cupidity and rapacity of the American people) informs us, the “reconquest of Texas” was made the pretext; and by which “the nation (Mexican) was impoverished.” If that history were known, or rather if it were *published*, (for such things are here covered with but a thin veil, when covered at all,) it would, when taken in connexion with Señor Otero's account of the progress of the Texan question, disclose to the amazed world the fact that this war, with its countless train of evils to the parties, and with the incalculable detriment which it brings upon neutrals, is at bottom due to one thing, and to this one thing alone: the reckless ardor with which the factions that unhappy Mexico has so long been a prey to, have habituated themselves to pursue that which, to their philosophy, is the supreme good—to wit, the felicity of engendering and fondling “enormous contributions.”

N. P. T.

[No. 20.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,  
Mexico, November 7, 1847.

SIR: Referring to my No. 19, a duplicate of which is herein enclosed, I have the honor now to transmit a copy and translation of the reply of Señor Rosa, under date the 31st ultimo, to my note of the 20th.

Although, as will be perceived, Señor Rosa states that my communication leaves but little hope of the possibility of re-establishing peace, but little, if any, importance is to be attached to expressions of this kind, coming from those who labor under the misfortune of having to conduct the affairs of this country. It is a mere manner of style, which they are compelled to use in self-defence, and which they must employ all the same, whatever may be the dispositions or the intentions really entertained by them. In the present instance the prospect of a treaty is, I know, very good, so far as this depends upon the party by which the present administration has been built up. On this point (that of at once accepting our terms) the tone of the “Razonador,” particularly, (and other

papers also,) is as undisguised as possible, and no less urgent, and it speaks the real sentiments of the peace party; sentiments which will take the shape of acts, if such a thing be within the bounds of possibility. Strong hopes are entertained at this moment that it is so. If it prove otherwise, this will not be owing to any lack of inclination or of exertions on their part, but to the success of the efforts making by the puros to defeat them. These, although absolutely irreconcilable foes to Santa Anna, are now acting in concert with the Santanistas, (as they would act in concert with *any* faction, a union with whom for the occasion might be necessary to promote the object which they now have in view, as a means to the great end that I explained in my No. 18,) forming with them, what, in a letter from Queretaro, under date the 4th instant, contained in to-day's “Monitor,” is called the “Puro-Santanista league,” which opened its batteries against the government on the 4th instant, charging it with remissness in pushing the war. This assault ended with a resolution calling upon the ministry to appear and inform the House what measure it had adopted with reference to the war; which resolution was rejected by a vote of fifty odd against twenty-five. I received, three days since, positive information of there being (by the then latest accounts) forty-four votes which could be counted upon for peace. The alacrity now shown by the members of the puro party in hurrying to the scene of action, indicates that they have become impressed with the necessity of bringing up all their forces. From the leading editorial in the last “Razonador,” which accompanies this, it will be perceived that the object which governs their movements is no longer a secret. Whether the indignation with which the Razonador speaks of it be genuine, is very questionable. At any rate it would, I doubt not, quickly subside, if matters took a turn to render this expedient; that is, if our country gave the word. The letter referred to says, also, that one of the members of Santa Anna's recent cabinet stated that General Mora, one of the commissioners that met me, and now minister of war, *had agreed to make peace*; (meaning on the terms of our projet, and referring to that time.)

The express by which this is to go (a private one) I did not hear of until this evening, and I must now close.

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

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
Secretary of State.

[Translation.]

QUERETARO, October 31, 1847.

The undersigned, minister of foreign relations of the Mexican republic, has had the honor to receive the note, under date the 20th ultimo, addressed to him by his excellency Nicholas Trist, commis-