

MEXICAN AFFAIRS.

No. 1.—Correspondence of Mr. Corwin, United States minister, Mexico.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.....	Nov. 26, 1862.
Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward, (with two enclosures).....	Oct. 27, 1862.
Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.....	Nov. 19, 1862.
Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.....	Jan. 2, 1863.
Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.....	Jan. 8, 1863.
Same to same.....	Jan. 27, 1863.
Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.....	Feb. 25, 1863.
Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward, (with ten enclosures).....	March 11, 1863.
Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.....	April 18, 1863.
Same to same.....	May 22, 1863.
Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.....	April 16, 1863.
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Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.....	June 8, 1863.
Same to same.....	August 8, 1863.
Same to same, (with one enclosure).....	Dec. 23, 1863.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.

No. 61.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, November 26, 1862.

SIR: Your despatch of October 27 (No. 34) has been received. It presents, in a very brief yet a very comprehensive way, the political and military situation of Mexico.

Under date of the 24th instant I addressed you a despatch, (No. 61,) which was forwarded by the mail of yesterday, and for which you will please consider the present a substitute, the first of this number having been cancelled.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

THOMAS CORWIN, Esq.

Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.

[Extract.]

No. 34.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Mexico, October 27, 1862.

SIR: Since my last despatch, Buitron, a celebrated robber-chief, sent in his adhesion to the government, and has placed himself and about 600 men under the command of the proper military officers of the republic. General Comonfort is now here with 5,000 men, on his march to the main army at Puebla. General Doblado, late secretary of state, is in Guanajuato with about the same number of men, preparing to move to Puebla in time to meet the advance of the French troops upon that place.

On the 20th of this month congress was opened. The reply to the President's speech pledges the hearty co-operation of congress and its constituents

in all measures necessary to repel the invasion of the French. I see no indication of a party in this country favorable to intervention or invasion by the French, or any other foreign power.

The French troops are now moving from Vera Cruz to this city, by way of Jalapa. When all the troops now here, and those daily expected, are united, they can present an army of 25,000 men. Arrivals of either detachments are spoken of. If the invaders choose to attack Puebla, where the Mexican army is strongly fortified, about seventy miles from this city, the battle there will, if favorable to the French, enable them to take this city without any doubt. In the latter event, the government officials will leave with the archives and take up a position in some of the states where it will be most difficult for a military force to march and capture them. This state of things, it is believed, will only begin a war of two or three years' duration.

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Your obedient servant,

THOMAS CORWIN.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, &c.

Exhibit B—Despatch No. 34.

[Translation.]

MEXICO, October 3, 1862.

Mr. MINISTER: The undersigned, members of the diplomatic corps, present in the city of Mexico, have learned with regret of the arrest of several foreigners, to whom the Mexican authorities had given notice of the order to depart from the capital within forty-eight hours, with the view of betaking themselves out of the territory of the republic.

The undersigned would be pleased to believe that the government will not carry out a measure so severe without having evident proofs that these foreigners have committed hostile acts against the state, and that their presence in Mexico offers a real danger.

They hope, therefore, that the government of the republic will be pleased to communicate to them its final determination, reserving to themselves the making to it of ulterior and essential communications with respect to the same measure.

The undersigned have the honor to renew to his excellency the minister of foreign relations the assurance of their high consideration.

THOMAS CORWIN,
E. E. & M. P. of the U. S. A.

E. D. WAGNER.
FR'CO DE P. PASTOR.
AUGUSTE V. KINT DE ROODENBECK.
MANUEL NICHOLAS COPANCHO.
NARCISO DE P. MARTIN.

His Excellency Mr. JUAN ANTONIO DE LA FUENTE,
Minister of Foreign Relations, &c., &c.

Exhibit B 2—Despatch No. 34.

[Translation.]

NATIONAL PALACE,
Mexico, October 3, 1862.

The undersigned, minister of foreign relations of the Mexican republic, has received the joint note which their excellencies the members of the diplomatic corps present in the city of Mexico have done him the honor to address to him on this day, in reference to the order issued by the government of the president to arrest some foreigners, to make them depart from the capital within forty-eight hours, and to compel them to quit the Mexican territory.

Their excellencies add, that they are pleased to believe that the general government will not carry out this determination without having evident proofs that these foreigners have committed hostile acts against the state, and that their presence in Mexico was really dangerous. Finally, their excellencies manifest the desire that the government of the republic may communicate to them its resolution upon this question, reserving to themselves the transmission to it of their ulterior communications, essentially connected with the measure in question.

The undersigned, after having received the instructions from the president, hastens to reply to the points which he has just stated in the same terms employed by the honorable members of the diplomatic corps.

In truth, if the government hesitated for a moment in the full conviction, which it has, of having decreed upon good grounds this expulsion, it would avoid, indeed, the carrying of it into effect; in this respect the joint note does it justice; but the undersigned regrets very much that the presumption of uprightness in the general government should not extend to the time when it thought proper to adopt the measure which is referred to, but that it should only include the interval which may elapse between its adoption and its execution. And, nevertheless, that presumption *prima facie* would have been reasonable, because the opinion of justification is so in the resolutions which a legitimate authority takes in exercising its powers, until it is proved otherwise. But the undersigned would persuade himself that the omission, to which he has just referred, was not a deliberate one.

Recurring to the essential point of this affair, the undersigned must repeat in this note what he has already had the honor of saying verbally to some of the messieurs the ministers who have conferred with him privately and confidentially upon this affair, to wit, that the federal government, with good data examined with mature and calm deliberation, has entirely satisfied itself that the foreigners in question were violating, by their conduct, the neutrality to which they were subject, and that, for this reason, their residence in the country compromised seriously the public tranquillity, and even with some danger to their own persons.

By the constitution and laws of Mexico, the federal government is invested, at all times, with the authority of issuing a passport to, and to cause to leave the national territory, any foreigner not naturalized, whose continued residence it may deem prejudicial to the public order. This right of the government was of itself a duty in the present very critical situation. The action of the government had to be as prompt as the circumstances in which the republic finds itself are threatening, and repressing these excesses with measures proper even of the normal times, the government of the president has desired to show once more, as on so many others, that it exercises with moderation the right of the national defence, although there is being waged against Mexico a war equally unjust in its causes, as in its means and ends.

Thus, therefore, the definitive resolution of the government is, to carry into operation the measure to which the honorable members of the diplomatic corps refer.

The undersigned takes pleasure in reiterating to their excellencies the assurances of his high consideration.

JUAN ANTONIO DE LA FUENTE.

His Excellency Mr. THOMAS CORWIN,
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
of the U. S. of America, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.

[Extract.]

No. 36.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Mexico, November 19, 1862.

SIR: * * * * *

There are now about 42,000 French troops in Mexico. These are on their march from the Gulf coast to Puebla by two routes—one division by Jalapa, the other by Orizaba. It is, doubtless, their intention to concentrate their main army at the siege of Puebla. This latter is a strongly fortified city, about seventy miles from this city, and on the direct route from this to Vera Cruz. Military men suppose that the superior guns and engineering skill of the French will enable them to take Puebla. If this opinion shall be verified, then it is, I think, quite certain that this city will be quickly and easily captured, though every effort possible to a government so much in want of means as Mexico is now making to defend this capital. When the French army shall be in posses-

sion of this city, and command the entire road to Vera Cruz, I see no possibility of ending the war for one or two years, unless the French choose to treat with the present government. Mexico will obstinately adhere to her present position.

Within the last two weeks all intercourse between the Gulf and this city is forbidden by a decree of the supreme government, so that this despatch will go to Acapulco, on the Pacific, and from thence to New York by way of Panama.

I must beg the department hereafter (and until this decree shall be revoked, or the route to Vera Cruz opened by the French) to send duplicate despatches—one by way of Havana and Vera Cruz, and the other by way of Panama and Acapulco to this city.

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Your obedient servant,

THOS. CORWIN.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, &c., &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.

No. 64.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, January 2, 1863.

SIR: Your despatch of November 19 (No. 36) has been received. The information which it gives, concerning the military situation in Mexico, agrees with the intelligence we obtain through the press, and, as I think, with the understanding of that subject that is now accepted in Europe.

Affairs have remained unchanged, but not without prospect of change and improvement. For the moment, two opposing armies seem to be fixed on the banks of the Rappahannock. There will be, before long, a change there. Our iron-clad fleet is at last afloat, and it will, I think, be heard from soon. Our two western armies, as well as that of General Banks, at New Orleans, are becoming active.

The proclamation of the President adds a new and important element to the war. Its probable results are doubtless exaggerated by one portion of the people, but not more than they are underestimated by another. Assuming, as I believe, its policy to be an unchangeable one, it is not at all to be doubted that, sooner or later, it will find and reach a weakness in every nook and corner of the insurrectionary region. The very violence with which it will probably be met will, after a little, increase its efficiency.

I refrain from giving you information concerning the changing aspect of our foreign relations, because there is no certainty that, in the present condition of communication between this capital and the one in which you reside, my communications would be safe from visitation. I must be content, therefore, with saying that there is a manifest improvement of temper in Europe in regard to our unhappy controversy, and that with success of our armies, which may be reasonably expected, we shall probably encounter no foreign disturbance.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

THOMAS CORWIN, Esq.

Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.

[Extract.]

No. 37.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Mexico, January 8, 1863.

SIR: No act of the French government or troops has been known here, since my last despatch, whereby it can be certainly known what the ultimate designs of the Emperor are towards Mexico.

The French forces are moving towards Puebla, on the two lines of Jalapa and Orizaba. It is now quite certain that they will attack Puebla before they march upon the capital. The Mexican officers here express the opinion that Puebla cannot be taken by the present force moving against it, while it is certain that the tried and experienced commander of the French army, being well informed as to the defences of the place, has little, if any, doubt of success.

THOMAS CORWIN.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, &c.

Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.

No. 38.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Mexico, January 27, 1863.

SIR: Since the date of my last despatch the French forces have made a forward movement. It is said they have a large train of siege guns for the purpose of bombarding Puebla. They are now within about thirty miles of the latter city. Puebla is said to be strongly fortified, and is defended by about 20,000 men. We are led to suppose that General Forey is, in his own opinion, quite sure of success, since he proceeds with great caution, and so slowly, that some have supposed he wishes to reach this city without a decisive conflict with the Mexican troops.

I have been told that the government here have received information, official or otherwise, to the effect that our government has permitted the French to purchase mules and wagons for the use of their campaign here, and has denied to Mexico a like privilege. I have made no inquiry of the government here touching this rumor, nor has anything been said about it by the secretary of foreign affairs to me. It would be very necessary, if anything of this kind has been agitated at Washington, that I should have a copy of any letter to Mr. Romero on that subject. The Mexican cabinet are very suspicious of our partiality to the French. I wish to have in my possession, therefore, official information, which may give the true state of our dealings with both belligerents.

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS CORWIN.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Corwin.

No. 68.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, February 25, 1863.

SIR: Your despatch of the 27th ultimo (No. 38) has been received. The printed document herewith enclosed, Senate Executive No. 24, of the present session, contains correspondence upon the subject of the purchase in the

United States of munitions of war by the belligerents in Mexico, which will correctly inform you of the position taken by this government.

Besides the information thus disclosed, it is understood that the Secretary of War has since placed such a construction upon the executive order as to make it applicable to certain articles much needed by the French in the prosecution of their hostilities in Mexico.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

THOMAS CORWIN, Esq.

Mr. Corwin to Mr. Seward.

No. 39.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Mexico, March 11, 1863.

SIR: I have received your despatch No. 63, under date of December 19, 1862, accompanied by copies of the note of Mr. Romero, chargé d'affaires for Mexico, dated December 10, 1862, and your note in reply, dated December 15, 1862, copies of which, agreeably to your instructions, I have communicated to his excellency Mr. Fuente, secretary of foreign affairs for Mexico.

The correspondence between Mr. Romero and the United States, concerning the exportation of arms by Mexico, and that of wagons and mules from New York by French agents, for the use of the French army in Mexico, had, as I am informed, been transmitted to the state department of Mexico some time before the receipt of your despatch of December 19, 1862.

This correspondence and the decision of the American government on the points it involves has, I am sure, caused quite an unfriendly feeling in the minds of the Mexican cabinet towards the United States. The decision of our government is regarded here in the very light in which Mr. Romero has endeavored to place it—that is, as simply denying to Mexico rights which we concede to France; and from this postulate they easily reach the conclusion that our government has disregarded, to the prejudice of Mexico, those obligations which international law imposes upon neutral powers. However erroneous this view may be, I have no reason to expect that it will be changed. I have had no conference with the minister of foreign affairs on the subject, nor has he named it to me, either verbally or by written communication. As I regard your note to Mr. Romero as presenting all the reasons for the course our government has adopted, I shall not, of course, seek to transfer the controversy from Washington to this city, but shall use all proper means, on proper occasions, to satisfy the Mexican authorities of the propriety of the course my government has deemed it proper to take.

On the 9th day of February the Prussian minister, being about to leave Mexico, addressed to me a note, a copy of which I transmit herewith, requesting me to assume the protection of all French, Spanish, Prussian and Belgian subjects residing in Mexico.

On the withdrawal of the French legation from Mexico, the duty of protecting the foreigners above named was committed to Baron Wagner, the Prussian minister. I thought proper, at that time, to decline the office and duties proposed, for the reasons assigned in my note to the Prussian minister under date of the 16th of February, a copy of which I send you herewith.

On the 18th day of February I received from Baron Wagner another note, a copy of which I also enclose, proposing to commit the protection of the resident subjects of the four powers named above to the whole foreign diplomatic corps remaining here. This note was dated the day before the departure of

Baron Wagner, and was not received by me until the next morning, and after he had left the city. I deemed it proper, in compliance with his request, to inform the other members of the corps now here of it, and ask their opinion as to the course proper to be adopted by us. I have received notes on the subject from the diplomatic representatives of the republics of Ecuador and Peru, and also from the consul general of Venezuela, copies of which are herewith transmitted. It will be observed that, at this time, no European power is represented here by any agent above the rank of consul, nor have any of the American republics a diplomatic representative here, except the United States and the three governments named above. Whilst I entertain no doubt that I might have accepted the powers proposed to be conferred upon me by the Prussian minister, without giving any just cause of offence to the government of Mexico, I thought such a step on my part imprudent, under existing circumstances, unless the request to do so should first be made, through the proper channels, to the President of the United States, and his approval obtained and transmitted to me; I also entertain as little doubt that the diplomatic corps, collectively, or any one of them, might, in a proper case, and in a respectful manner, interpose to protect the rights of any foreigner, without any express power given by the government to whom the allegiance of such foreigner might be due. This, it seems to me, would be my duty, since the same course of proceeding pursued towards a Prussian or Belgian subject resident here would, under like circumstances, be adopted towards a citizen of the United States residing here.

It will be seen by the copy of a letter from the state department of Mexico, under date of December 4, 1861, which is forwarded with this despatch, that when the French minister, on withdrawal from Mexico, committed the protection of the French and Spanish subjects in Mexico to the minister of Prussia, the Mexican government accepted and approved that arrangement. It is notorious that the Prussian minister has exercised that power, without objection, up to the time of his withdrawing the Prussian legation, on the 18th of February, 1863.

On the 24th of February, 1863, and before I had informed the Mexican government of the correspondence of Baron Wagner with myself and the diplomatic corps, I received the note, a copy of which is enclosed, from Mr. Fuente. To this I have, on the 7th day of March, 1863, given a reply, a copy of which is herewith transmitted. I shall act in conformity with the principles laid down in that note till otherwise instructed. I beg the early attention of the State Department to this whole subject. I have stated the reasons by which I was guided in declining the protection of the subjects of the four powers, as proposed by the Prussian minister, and have forwarded the opinions of the several members of the diplomatic corps respecting the collective protection of those subjects, as required by the note of Mr. Wagner of the 17th of February, 1863, upon all of which I ask the opinion of the President, and such instructions as may be deemed necessary for the regulation of my future action.

The French forces are concentrated at a point about five miles from Puebla, but as late as yesterday had made no attack upon that city, nor had they made any forward movement in the direction of this place. I think, from all I can learn, that the Mexican army is quite confident of victory should Puebla be attacked.

I am your obedient servant,

THOMAS CORWIN.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.

[Exhibit accompanying despatch No. 39.]

MARCH 11, 1863.

A.

1. Note of Prussian minister, requesting protection of the American legation for Prussia, French, Spanish, and Belgian subjects resident in Mexico.
2. Reply to the same.
3. Note of the Prussian minister, placing said subjects under the protection of the diplomatic corps generally, and the American minister, as its dean, particularly.
4. Note of American minister, calling a meeting of the diplomatic corps, to consider the request of the Prussian minister.
5. Reply of chargé d'affaires of Peru.
6. Reply of chargé d'affaires of Ecuador.
7. Reply of the consul and confidential agent of Venezuela.

B.

1. Communication from minister of foreign affairs of Mexico, protesting against the acceptance of the powers proposed to be conferred by the Prussian minister upon the diplomatic corps.
2. Reply of the American minister.

C.

Reply of the official mayor of the department of foreign affairs of Mexico to note of the Prussian minister, informing the department that he had taken under his protection the French, Spanish, Italian, and Swiss subjects, resident in Mexico.

A 1, No. 39.

Mr. Wagner to Mr. Corwin.

PRUSSIAN LEGATION, Mexico, February 9, 1863.

SIR: Having solicited a temporary leave of absence, and my government having granted me permission to leave Mexico, I intend to start in a few days for Berlin.

Your excellency is aware that the protection not only of the German, but also of the French, Spanish, and Belgian subjects, has been confided to this legation.

I trust that during my absence the Prussian, Spanish, and Belgian consular authorities will be able to afford all due protection to their respective countrymen, as they have already done on many occasions; and whilst I hope that their intercession in favor of the interests confided to them will avoid the necessity of often troubling your excellency, still I beg, at the same time, to take the liberty of recommending them, in case of need, to the kind and more effective protection of the United States legation, confident, as I am, that your excellency will be pleased to grant to the above-mentioned consulates, as well as to the French residents who may appeal to your excellency, such aid and assistance as may be possible under the present critical circumstances.

The French consul, M. Morineau, having left Mexico with the imperial legation, M. Farine had previously been appointed his substitute, in order to take charge of the consular archives and to keep the civil register of marriages, births, &c., &c. The Mexican government had, at the time, been informed of this circumstance.

I have the honor to remain, with the highest consideration, sir, your excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

E. DE WAGNER.

Hon. THOMAS CORWIN, &c., &c.

A 2, No. 39.

*Mr. Corwin to Mr. Wagner.*LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Mexico, February 16, 1863.

SIR: The undersigned has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's note, under date of the 9th instant, asking the undersigned to extend the diplomatic protection of the

United States government to the French, Prussian, Spanish, and Belgian subjects resident in Mexico. The undersigned has given to the subject of your excellency's request his earnest attention, and is compelled, under existing circumstances, to decline the acceptance of the duties and responsibilities which a compliance with your excellency's request would impose upon him. Were such request addressed to the cabinet at Washington, and its objects approved, and proper instructions given to the undersigned, he should then, and only then, deem it proper for him, in obedience to such instructions, to discharge, to the best of his ability, the duties they might impose. The undersigned has not, at this time and place, the means of searching for precedents, but his memory furnishes him with no instance where a minister of the United States has, under circumstances like the present, assumed to extend diplomatic protection to foreign citizens, resident within the territories of the government to which he is accredited, without express instructions to do so from the President of the United States. In regard to the proposed protection of the subjects of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the French, there are reasons for the course the undersigned has adopted, which might not apply with equal force to the other nationalities specified in your excellency's note. The French empire and Mexico are at war. Between these two belligerent powers the government of the United States occupies a purely neutral position. Should the government of the United States assume the right and duty of protecting the subjects of one of the belligerent powers against the supposed wrongs to be inflicted upon them by the government of the other, it is easy to foresee that cases might arise which would tend strongly to disturb these peaceful relations with one or both the belligerents, which it is the object of perfect neutrality to preserve inviolate.

I have the honor, also, to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's note of the 13th instant, relating to this subject, and enclosing correspondence relating thereto between your excellency and the minister of foreign relations for Mexico. The undersigned finds nothing in this last note and accompanying papers which, in his judgment, should affect the conclusion which he had come to in relation to the proposition contained in your excellency's note of the 9th instant.

I avail myself of this (probably the last that may ever occur) occasion to renew to your excellency the assurance of my esteem.

THOMAS CORWIN.

His Excellency BARON E. D. WAGNER,
Minister of Prussia, Mexico.

A 3, No. 39.

[Translation.]

MEXICO, February 17, 1863.

MR. ENVOY: Your excellency having considered it your duty, by your note of to-day, to refuse the protection I had solicited in favor of Prussian subjects, and Germans, French, Spanish, and Belgians, resident in Mexico, I now find myself under the necessity of placing these foreigners under the friendly protection of the diplomatic corps, convinced that all its members, were it only from a sense of humanity, would not refuse, under the grave circumstances which may present themselves, their aid and good offices to the many foreigners whose governments have not at this time representatives in Mexico.

I pray your excellency will have the kindness to inform the representatives of the other American republics, who are now at this capital, of the very pressing instances I make to the diplomatic corps, and each of its members in particular, to lend their assistance in favoring protection to foreigners who may address them directly, or to your excellency as their dean.

As neither your excellency nor your colleagues will certainly ever ask anything unjust from the Mexican government, the latter has as much interest as the other American States, that it cannot be said that foreigners are intentionally abandoned to the discretion of the government, and without any diplomatic protection. I appeal, then, once more with earnestness, and in the most formal manner, to the feelings of humanity of your excellency, and of the other members of the diplomatic corps, in recommending the foreigners above mentioned to their special protection.

Please accept, Mr. Envoy, the assurance of my high consideration,

E. DE WAGNER.

Hon. THOMAS CORWIN,
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, and
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Mexico.