

It would be idle to speculate about the probable result of a combined Mexican-Colombian expedition against Cuba. Although Spain had then been conquered on land, she was, of course, stronger on sea than were some of her former colonies, as some of them had not a regular navy, and this would have been a great advantage to her if a naval war had been contemplated by Mexico and Colombia; but such was not the case. It was intended to collect a large land force, send it from a convenient point on the mainland to Cuba, and land it there, the assistance of the natives being, of course, counted upon in the fight for independence. The landing of such a force would probably have been an easy task.¹

When the Government of the United States learned of the proposed plan of the Mexican and Colombian Governments for the liberation of Cuba, Mr. Clay, Secretary of State of the United States, wrote to the Mexican and Colombian Ministers at Washington, on December 20, 1825, requesting that their respective Governments should suspend any expedition that they might be preparing against the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, on the ground that the United States could under no circumstances permit them to fall under the sovereignty of England, that they could not be indifferent to the islands passing into the possession of France, and that, therefore, the only solution of the question was to leave the islands in possession of Spain.²

work was discovered and their leaders shot, as stated by Mr. Ballou in the passage that I have just quoted.

¹ Senator Money says, regarding the naval forces of Mexico and Colombia, "It was not believed that Colombia or Mexico, separately or jointly, without navies and without resources, would be able to hold the island against the adverse contention of either France or Great Britain." To be sure the navies of Mexico and Colombia could not compete, either separately or jointly, against that of England or of France, but neither Mexico nor Colombia contemplated being drawn into a maritime war with those countries about Cuba. Had they been notified by England or France that such would be the result, they would have given up that expedition, as they did on the notification of the United States. Mexico and Colombia thought that they had the necessary navy and army armaments to invade Cuba and hold it, and the navy necessary to carry their troops.

² Senator Money expressed the opinion that the interposition of the United States in the case of Cuba was "really of the most vital service to Mexico and the other Republics, as it made Spain feel the necessity of terminating the war with the colonies already gone from her, in order to secure Cuba and Porto Rico that remained to her." As a matter of fact, Spain, far from changing her attitude of hostility towards Mexico after Mexico had, in 1826, given up her expedition to Cuba, sent in 1829 an armed expedition against Mexico, under General Barradas for the purpose of reconquering that country, which landed at Tampico as I have already stated.

Senator Money understood that in my remarks I considered Mr. Clay's action in this case unfriendly towards Mexico. He certainly misunderstood me, as far from expressing that opinion, on the contrary, I sincerely believe that Mr. Clay was a great friend of the Spanish-American Republics. The object of my paper was to mention a fact, without commenting on it in any manner whatsoever.

A copy of this communication was sent by Mr. Clay to Mr. Everett, United States Minister at Madrid, with a despatch dated at Washington, April 3, 1826, from which I have taken this information. In that despatch Mr. Clay stated that the United States Government thought that England was at the bottom of the scheme to liberate Cuba, and that, if Cuba were once independent from Spain, she would finally become an English colony or a State under French protection.¹

I have not read the letter addressed by Mr. Clay to the Mexican Minister at Washington, nor could I, if it were in my possession, make use of it in this paper, without the consent of the Mexican Government. But although the only official document I have seen is Mr. Clay's letter to Mr. Everett, I have no doubt that Mr. Clay had other reasons besides those stated in that letter for the request made by him to the Mexican and Colombian Governments, but what those reasons were must remain a matter of surmise. In my opinion, one of them was that the United States Government believed that if Cuba were once independent, or were annexed to Mexico or Colombia, slavery would be abolished in that island, a step which would have been in conflict with the policy of the United States, then governed by the slave power, and which, therefore, naturally supported slavery. The question of slavery was then at the bottom of every important move in the United States, foreign and domestic, and it colored or discolored all her important transactions.² Perhaps the idea of acquiring, at some future time, the island of Cuba was another reason which dictated Mr. Clay's action.

¹ The following is a translation into English of the Spanish translation of Mr. Clay's letter to Mr. Everett, published in March, 1897, by *El Monitor*, of the City of Mexico. It being a re-translation, of course it cannot have the identical wording of the original:

" WASHINGTON, April 13, 1826.

" I addressed on the 20th of December last a note to the Ministers of Colombia and Mexico, copy whereof I enclose, for the purpose of inducing their respective governments to suspend any expedition which they might be preparing either individually or collectively against the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico.

" Great Britain is firmly convinced that the United States will never consent that those islands should belong to England, no matter what might be the consequences of such policy. France is also aware that we would not be indifferent to her obtaining the possession of said islands.

" This situation of the great maritime powers (the United States, Great Britain, and France), is nearly equivalent to an absolute guarantee of the possession of those islands in favor of Spain, but it is impossible to enter into any agreement by treaty, guaranteeing such possession, and the President wishes you should let the Spanish government know that we cannot bind ourselves to any obligation whatever, looking to such guarantee. You must continue to decline any such proposition for that purpose, if any such is presented."

² Senator Money understood my remarks about Mr. Clay's reasons to recommend the governments of Mexico and Colombia not to carry out their intended expedition to liberate Cuba, as impeaching President John Quincy Adams and Mr. Clay of insincerity, which idea did not at all enter my mind. Both President John Quincy Adams and Mr.

In fact, the United States Government could not have acted in any other manner than it did in this case, for the simple reason that it had committed itself to follow that course. This fact appears very clearly in the following extract from a note by Mr. Richard Henry Dana, to paragraph 68, page 106, Chapter II. of Part II., of *Wheaton's Elements of International Law*, Boston edition of 1866, which shows at the same time that the people of Cuba, far from being entirely satisfied with the Spanish rule, desired their emancipation from the mother-country, at the time when the other American colonies of Spain had either already accomplished their independence or were fighting for it:

"The people of Cuba, already divided between the parties of the King and the Cortes, and terrified by symptoms of slave insurrections, had among them large numbers who, dissatisfied with Spanish rule, looked to other powers for protection—some to Great Britain, but far the larger part to the United States. About September, 1822, the latter party sent a secret agent to confer with President Monroe. They declared that if the United States Government would promise them protection, and ultimate admission into the Union, a revolution would be made to throw off the Spanish authority, of the success of which they had no doubt. While this proposition was before Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, he received an unofficial and circuitous communication from the French Minister, asserting that his Government had positive information of the design of Great Britain to take possession of Cuba. The American Government replied to the Cuban deputation that the friendly relations of the United States with Spain did not permit us to promise countenance or protection to insurrectional movements, and advised the people of Cuba to adhere to their Spanish allegiance; at the same time informing them that an attempt upon Cuba by either Great Britain or France would place the relations of Cuba with the United States in a very different position. Mr. Rush was instructed to inform Mr. Canning that the United States could not see with indifference the possession of Cuba by any European power other than Spain, and to inform him of the rumors that had reached the Cabinet. Mr. Canning disavowed emphatically all intention on the part of Great Britain to take possession of Cuba, but avowed her determination not to see with indifference its occupation by either France or the United States, and proposed an understanding between the British, French, and American Governments, without any formal convention, that Cuba should be left in the quiet possession of Spain. This was assented to by Mr. Monroe; but he had no communication with France on the subject, leaving that to the management of Great Britain."

Clay may have had many other reasons to take that course, but the only ones expressed in an official communication are those that I mentioned, and I ventured to add others which I thought might have been in their minds, although I only presented them as a surmise on my part, without vouching for their correctness. Senator Money mentions in support of his assertion that slavery had no connection with this case, and the fact that President John Quincy Adams was an anti-slavery man, which is quite correct; but Mr. Clay was a Southern man, and President Adams's administration was the result of a compromise which precluded his supporting a policy affecting so directly the slavery question in the United States, then the leading one in this country. Senator Money asserts that Mr. Clay avowed other reasons besides those stated in his letter to Mr. Everett, but I have been unable to find any statement of such reasons in an official document.

The fact that the slavery question had some influence in this case, notwithstanding that President John Quincy Adams was an anti-slavery man, appears also stated in the following extract from a note of Mr. Dana's on the Monroe Doctrine appended to *Wheaton's Elements of International Law*, above quoted, paragraph 68, page 111, Chapter II., Part II.:

"The slave-holding interest was clearly looking to Cuba, not only as an addition to its political power in the Union, but to prevent abolition of slavery there by some other power; and it is known that Mr. Adams had a noticeable leaning in favor of its importance to us in a military and commercial view."

The question of the independence of Cuba was considered in the American Congress which met at Panama in 1826, and the idea of sending an armed expedition to liberate that island was abandoned on account of the opposition of the Government of the United States, as appeared from a communication from Mr. Poinsett, United States Minister to Mexico, to Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, dated September 23, 1826,¹ the United States Government recognized that the request made to the Mexican and Colombian Governments resulted in the abandonment of the expedition, will be seen from the following extracts from a communication addressed by Mr. Clay to Baron de Maltitz, Russian *Chargé d'Affaires* in Washington, on December 23, 1826, which shows also that up to that date the United States Government discountenanced any attempt to wrest from Spain the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico:

"The wishes of the United States in regard to Cuba and Porto Rico remain unchanged. They desire no disturbance of the possessions of Spain, believing it most compatible with the interests and harmony of all the great powers. They would see any such disturbance, at the instance and by the arms of any power, with great regret. The new States have hitherto forbore, and that principally in deference to the declared desire of the United States and Russia, to attack those islands. Whilst, on the other hand, Spain, instead of listening to the counsels of peace and moderation which the hopelessness of the war alone ought to have inspired, has sent forth from the port of Havana a formidable fleet for the manifest purpose of invasion, or other hostile operations, against the territories of some of the new States. It was dispersed and disabled in a storm; but neither the frowns of Providence, the distractions at home, nor the disasters which await her in a further prosecution of the war, appear yet to have awakened that unfortunate monarchy to a sense of the absolute necessity of terminating the existing hostilities.

"Although the Government of the United States is extremely unwilling to see any attempt made, from any quarter, to wrest from Spain the possession of those islands, and may yet continue their exertions to prevent it, the undersigned is constrained in frankness to repeat what has already been communicated to the Government of Russia, that if Spain shall still unnecessarily prolong the war and drive the new States to the necessity of conquering peace in Cuba and Porto Rico, the Government

¹ *American State Papers*, Series of Foreign Relations, vol. vi., p. 361.

of the United States could not justly interpose unless a character should be given to the war of the invasion, which would render it, in reference to their own duties and interests improper that they should remain neutral spectators."

*The Monroe Doctrine.*¹—President Monroe's famous message of December 2, 1823, in which he announced the American continental policy bearing his name, was, of course, issued almost two years after he had recognized, in his message of March 8, 1822, the independence of the American colonies of Spain. But that recognition was then only theoretical, as the United States neither sent to nor received from those countries any representative until some years later.

In that year, 1823, two specific dangers threatened the Western

¹ I cannot be expected in this paper more than merely to mention the Monroe Doctrine, its scope and objects, and the way in which it originated. There is perhaps no other American question upon which there has been so wide a difference of opinion as the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine. Some American statesmen have restricted it very materially, while others have given to it a very large extent. But the fact remains that Congress has not sanctioned it by any legislative act, unless such a character be given to the act passed on December 21, 1895, making an appropriation for a commission to examine and report on the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana. The policy of the different administrations has also varied very materially in so far as the application of that doctrine is concerned. In the case of the seizure of Corinto, by British men-of-war, in March, 1895, as a preliminary step to coerce Nicaragua to pay an indemnity of \$75,000 to Mr. Hatch, British Consular agent at Bluefields, for his imprisonment, the Monroe Doctrine was interpreted in a restricted way, while in the case of the boundary dispute between England, on behalf of British Guiana and Venezuela, the application given to it by President Cleveland was very wide. If later I shall have the time and opportunity to do so, I may undertake to make a review of the Monroe Doctrine and its applications, for the benefit of the Spanish-American readers, who are not entirely familiar with the same and somewhat bewildered at the widely different views prevailing here on that subject.

Senator Money misunderstood my remarks about the Monroe doctrine, as he thought that I said that it was of no material advantage to the new Republics, and did not give them any moral support. My remarks about the Monroe doctrine were only elementary, and were intended specially to make plain to the American Republics, its meaning and scope where in some cases it is misunderstood, being construed into a policy which has for its object the final absorption by the United States of all the American Republics. If the paragraph of my paper referring to this point is carefully read, it will be seen that my assertion to the effect that the recognition by the United States of the independence of the Spanish colonies in America was only theoretical, because it was not followed immediately by the appointment of official representatives from the United States to the new nations, referred to Mr. Monroe's message of March 8, 1822, in which he announced such recognition, and not to his message of December 2, 1823. All his remarks which bear on the subject of the Monroe doctrine are, therefore, irrelevant. I am perfectly aware of the importance and transcendence that the policy enunciated by President Monroe in his last-named message, generally called the Monroe Doctrine, had on the fate of the American nations, and I certainly do not try to belittle or depreciate it in any manner whatever.

Hemisphere. The northwest boundary between the United States and Canada had not then been determined, and the territory in dispute had not been occupied or even fully explored. Russia, by formal proclamation in 1821, had set up a claim to territory along the Pacific coast as far south as the fifty-first parallel, and had given unmistakable signs of her intention to plant a Russian colony within the disputed territory. The movement was alarming to Great Britain as well as to the United States.

The other cause of alarm was that the Metternich-Bourbon reaction had set in, and there was good reason to fear that an attempt was about to be made to resubjugate the Spanish-American colonies. This fear found ample justification in the attitude of the "holy alliance," formed immediately after the downfall of Napoleon, by Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France, for the avowed object of protecting the Catholic religion and the Divine Right of Kings. This Alliance was offered for signature to all the monarchs of Europe except the Pope and the Sultan. Of all the powers, Great Britain alone declined to join in the Alliance, but under the leadership of Metternich this combination proceeded with its reactionary work.¹ In 1821 it sent an Austrian army into Italy to prevent the adoption of a constitution at Naples, and two years later it threw a French army into Spain to suppress a popular movement in behalf of the free constitution of 1812 and to reinstate the Bourbon dynasty. Having thus put under its heel all opposition in Europe, the Alliance proposed a congress to consider the subjugation of the revolted Spanish colonies in America, and the re-establishment of Spanish authority in the Western Hemisphere. Before matters were far advanced, the design became known to Great Britain, and word concerning it was at once sent by the British Minister to the Government of the United States. President Monroe immediately consulted Jefferson and Madison, as well as his Cabinet, of whom John Quincy Adams and Calhoun were the most prominent members. All agreed that the matter was of such momentous interest as to justify a

¹ I think it is an historical fact that Mr. George Canning, the Prime Minister of England in 1823, suggested to the United States a policy which culminated in the Monroe Doctrine, in the shape of an understanding between Great Britain and the United States to prevent the interference of the holy alliance on the part of the Spanish colonies of America. It may be interesting, therefore, to know what Mr. Canning said in a letter which the papers assure has just come to light, and which is as follows:

"The great danger of the time—a danger which the policy of the European system would have fostered—was a division of the world into European and American, republican and monarchial: a league of worn out governments on the one hand and youthful and stirring nations, with the United States at their head, on the other. We slip in between and plant ourselves in Mexico. The United States have gotten the start of us in vain, and we link once more America to Europe. Six months more and the mischief would have been done."

formal remonstrance. John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State, wrote a declaration of policy relating to colonization, and Jefferson a similar declaration in regard to interference. These two were tacked together by President Monroe and embodied in his Message, which can be summarized in the following four propositions:

1. That the United States would not tolerate further colonization in the American continent by European powers.
2. That they would not permit the subjugation or subversion of any American Government by the Governments of Europe.
3. That they would not allow the extension to America of the monarchical system of the "holy alliance."
4. That the United States had not interfered and would not interfere with any of the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power on this continent.

I take from the note of Mr. Richard Henry Dana on the Monroe Doctrine, contained in the eighth edition, Boston, 1866, of *Elements of International Law*, by Henry Wheaton, paragraph 67, Part II., Chapter I., page 97, the following passages, which explain the object and scope of the Monroe Doctrine, supported by the ample authority further stated in detail in that note.

As a summary of this subject it would seem that the following positions may be safely taken:

"I. The declarations upon which Mr. Monroe consulted Mr. Jefferson and his own Cabinet related to the interposition of European powers in the affairs of American States.

"II. The kind of interposition declared against was that which may be made for the purpose of controlling their political affairs, or of extending to this hemisphere the system in operation upon the continent of Europe, by which the great powers exercise a control over the affairs of other European States.

"III. The declarations do not intimate any course of conduct to be pursued in case of such interpositions, but merely say that they would be 'considered as dangerous to our peace and safety,' and as 'the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States,' which it would be impossible for us to 'behold with indifference'; thus leaving the nation to act at all times as its opinion of its policy or duty might require.

"IV. The declarations are only the opinion of the administration of 1823, and have acquired no legal force or sanction.

"V. The United States has never made any alliance with or pledge to any other American State on the subject covered by the declarations.

"VI. The declaration respecting non-colonization was on a subject distinct from European intervention with American States, and related to the acquisition of sovereign title by any European power, by new and original occupation or colonization thereafter. Whatever were the political motives for resisting such colonization, the principle of public law upon which it was placed was, that the continent must be considered as already within the occupation and jurisdiction of independent civilized nations."

Daniel Webster had still a more narrow view of the object and scope of the Monroe Doctrine, as appears from the following extract

from a speech he delivered in the House of Representatives, on March 27, 1826:

"The amount of it (Mr. Monroe's declaration) was that this Government could not look with indifference on any combination to assist Spain in her war against the South American States; that we could not but consider any such combination as dangerous or unfriendly to us; and that if it should be formed it would be for the competent authorities of this Government to decide, when the case arose, what course our duty and our interest should require us to pursue."

The Panama Congress.—When Simon Bolivar proposed the assembling at Panama of a congress of the American nations to agree upon some continental policy, President John Quincy Adams laid before Congress, in his annual message of 1826, the question of the representation of the United States at that Congress. The coalition against the Adams Administration, which ultimately became the Jacksonian party, made its first great fight on this measure. It called forth long debates and aroused great excitement in the House of Representatives, because it was not an ordinary mission, and seemed to have far greater importance than any question of foreign relations that had previously come under discussion. It was believed to be an attempt to make a confederation or league of all the American countries, and thus to a certain extent to extinguish the individuality of the United States.

This discussion lasted from February 3 to April 21, 1826, when the Committee on Foreign Affairs reported a resolution declaring that it was expedient to appropriate the necessary funds to send representatives to the Panama Congress. This resolution was approved by a vote of 143 to 54, and passed the Senate by a vote of 24 to 19.

The United States delegates to the Panama Congress were instructed to attend the Congress merely in a diplomatic character, without discussing or accepting any proposition of alliance binding the United States. These restrictions had been embodied in an amendment presented both in the House and Senate, which had passed the House, but was finally rejected, because it was considered an infringement upon the prerogatives of the Executive. As it expressed the views of Congress, however, its provisions were embodied in the instructions to the Commissioners.

I understand that one of the objects of that Congress was to accomplish the independence of the island of Cuba, but the idea did not meet with the approval of the United States, and that fact prevented the Panama Congress from arriving at any practical result.

Mr. Buchanan, a Member of Congress from Pennsylvania, and afterwards President of the United States, introduced in 1826 a resolution which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 99 to 95, and which reads as follows (see Wharton, *International Law Digest*, Volume I., Chapter III., paragraph 57, page 282):

"It is, therefore, the opinion of this House that the Government of the United States ought not to be represented at the Congress of Panama, except in a diplomatic character; nor ought they to form any alliance, offensive or defensive, or negotiate respecting such alliance, with all or any of the South American Republics; nor ought they to become parties with them, or either of them, to any joint declaration for the purpose of preventing the interference of any of the European powers with their independence or form of government, or to any compact for the purpose of preventing colonization upon the continents of America; but that the people of the United States should be left free to act, in any crisis, in such manner as their feelings of friendship towards these Republics, and as their own honor and policy, may at the time dictate."

It is interesting to quote here what Mr. J. C. B. Davis says in his *Notes on Treaties of the United States*, in regard to the Panama Congress, and which appears in Wharton's *International Law Digest*, Vol. I., Chapter II., paragraph 57, page 279.

"The Congress of Panama in 1826 was planned by Bolivar to secure the union of Spanish America against Spain. It had originally military as well as political purposes. In the military objects the United States could take no part; and indeed the necessity for such objects ceased when the full effects of Mr. Monroe's declarations were felt. But the specific objects of the Congress, the establishment of close and cordial relations of amity, the creation of commercial intercourse, of interchange of political thought and of habits of good understanding between the new republics and the United States and their respective citizens, might perhaps have been attained had the Administration of that day received the united support of the country. Unhappily they were lost; the new States were removed from the sympathetic and protecting influence of our example, and their commerce, which we might then have secured, passed into other hands unfriendly to the United States.

"In looking back upon the Panama Congress from this length of time it is easy to understand why the earnest and patriotic men who endeavored to crystallize an American system for this continent failed. . . . One of the questions proposed for discussion in the conference was 'The consideration of the means to be adopted for the entire abolition of the African slave trade,' to which proposition the Committee of the United States Senate of that day replied: 'The United States have not certainly the right, and ought never to feel the inclination, to dictate to others who may differ from them upon this subject; nor do the Committee see the expediency of insulting other States with whom we are maintaining relations of perfect amity, by ascending the moral chair, and proclaiming from thence mere abstract principles, of the rectitude of which each nation enjoys the perfect right of deciding for itself.' The same Committee also alluded to the possibility that the conditions of the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, still the possessions of Spain, and still slave-holding, might be made the subject of discussion and of contemplated action by the Panama Congress. 'If ever the United States' (they said) 'permit themselves to be associated with these nations in any general congress assembled for the discussion of common plans in any way affecting European interests, they will, by such act, not only deprive themselves of the ability they now possess of rendering useful assistance to the other American States, but also produce other effects prejudicial to their interests.'

"The printed correspondence respecting this mission will be found in the fifth volume of the *Foreign Relations*, folio edition, pages 834-905. It was the subject of animated discussion in Congress, which will be found in the second part of the second volume of the *Register of Congressional Debates for the Year 1826*."

Conclusion.—Circumstances have made this paper much longer than I expected, but it was necessary to speak of several subjects, all of which were closely connected with the independence of Mexico and the other Spanish colonies in America.

I hope that this statement of facts will serve to show that the Spanish colonies in America achieved their independence by their own efforts and without the aid of any foreign nation, and that if some of them expected such aid from England they never got it, and they had to rely upon the native element. I trust, also, that it will dispel some errors prevailing on that subject.

The Government of the United States maintained during the War of Independence a strict neutrality, although the recognition of belligerency of the revolted colonies was a decided advantage to them. But the people of the United States heartily sympathized with them, and in some cases personally assisted the cause of independence.