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AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

CUBA AND ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

BY

JAMES MORTON CALLAHAN, PH. D.,

~~PROFESSOR, HAMILTON COLLEGE.~~

Johns Hopkins University

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During the decade after the negotiations which resulted in the cession of Florida to the United States the political destiny of Cuba was a subject of great international interest. During that period Cuba was the point of departure for expeditions of Spain to reconquer her revolted colonies and to regain her power over the land of the mighty Cordilleras. When all of Spain's other American possessions were falling away from her it was not certain whether in the course of events Cuba would find it convenient to refrain from breaking the bonds which had held her to the mother country for three hundred years. Her large slave population made the question of her independence different from that of the South American states and Mexico, where the new governments found it practicable to emancipate the slaves. It was doubtful whether she could maintain her independence unless under the protection of some other power. If she remained a possession of Spain she was open to attack from Mexico and Colombia as long as Spain persevered in the attempt to subdue those new states. If she should be conquered by Mexico and Colombia her destiny would still have been uncertain. Her position was such that her fate was a subject of especial concern to the United States, as well as to England, neither of which desired to see her fall into the hands of the other.

During this period the United States Government was frequently made uneasy by the reports that England had designs on Cuba. As early as the summer of 1819, when the execution in Florida of the two British subjects, Arbuthnot and Ambrister, and the subsequent treaty for the cession of Florida to the United States were being discussed in London it was hinted that England was likely to aim at Cuba. The newspapers said the Duke of San Carlos made the declaration that

it was about to be added to the British colonial possessions. Mr. Rush, the United States minister at London, asked Lord Castlereagh concerning the reports, but Castlereagh intimated that he knew nothing of any propositions. Lord Liverpool referred to the newspaper rumors as idle. Onís, who had recently represented the Spanish Government at Washington, was at London in June and said Spain had not ceded Cuba to England and did not intend to do so. The sentiment among the ambassadors at London was that the powers would not allow any cession of Cuba, and the newspaper rumors not generally credited.

It was surmised, however, that the British Government was using its influence to prevent the Spanish ratification of the Florida treaty. The Duke of San Carlos declared that it would be ratified, but there was much delay which created unrest in America as to the policy of both Spain and Great Britain. The British papers continued to count upon getting Cuba in case Florida was delivered to the United States. They stated that England should have it as an equivalent for injury which the British interests had received by the cession of Florida, and as a station by which to command the coast of the United States and oppose the progress of American aggrandizement.

The negotiations between London and Madrid were involved in mystery, but the newspapers from time to time announced that England had revived the proposal to obtain Cuba. It was a common subject of conversation at Madrid.

It was urged by the British journals that British trade in the Gulf of Mexico would be exposed in case of a future war with the United States, and that English dominion on the ocean was threatened by the growing strength of the American Republic. J. Freeman Rattenbury, in a series of articles in the *Morning Chronicle*, pointed out how Florida strengthened the American Union by firmly uniting the West to the Atlantic States, which, to him, seemed a step to further attempts at conquests. He said the United States watched with a quick and inquiring eye every movement of their opponents, and were ready to seize a favorable moment to appropriate nourishment "to the hungry appetite of their ambition;" and that it was necessary for England to have Havana for a depot of naval thunder to awe their enterprising competitor, and to give greater security to Canada. In case Spain would

not favor the cession of her precious possession, he urged coercion as a matter of self-defense, stating that the "apologists for the seizure of the fleet at Copenhagen could not want an excuse for this equally necessary violence."

The empire of Spain was falling to pieces. She had played a losing hand in two hemispheres, and President Monroe felt that she would soon be expelled from her former strongholds on the American continent, and that the United States could arrange the boundary with Mexico to include more territory than would probably be safe for our internal peace. Jefferson felt confident that Florida would be ours whether Spain ratified the treaty or not, and he thought that Cuba would probably join us voluntarily. He ventured to predict that the day was not far distant when we might "formally require a meridian of partition through the ocean which separates the two hemispheres, on the hither side of which no European gun" should ever be heard to threaten the peace which in thinly-populated America was necessary for producing men.

Spain finally ratified the Florida treaty and American territory was extended toward Cuba, so that the destiny of that island became more important to the United States than it had ever been before. The interest felt as to its future condition soon found expression in various ways. In February, 1822, Forsyth, the American minister at Madrid, expressed his conviction to one of the members of the political commission of the Cortez that Spain, by recognizing the independence of Colombia and Mexico, and by a liberal system of commerce, could procure a guaranty of Cuba from the United States, Mexico, and Colombia, since each of these powers preferred to see it held by Spain rather than fall into the hands of England or any other power. At this time there were fresh reports of British overtures to Spain. The French minister at Washington had recently stated that the British, in their negotiations for Cuba, had offered to give Gibraltar and a large sum of money. Similar news came from other sources. In April Senator De Wolfe, of Rhode Island, was alarmed, because he thought England would have possession of Cuba in another month. For a year after this date the attitude of Great Britain toward Cuba was a subject of frequent discussion and concern.

The future political condition of their island had become a subject of deliberation among the Cubans. In 1820, when the

discord in Spain had resulted in the reestablishment of the constitution of 1812, it was also proclaimed in Cuba. But the Spanish authorities in Cuba adopted the policy of restricting the liberal movement there. In 1821 the Cubans were talking of independence. In September, 1822, a number of the inhabitants of Havana sent a secret agent to notify the United States Government that plans were matured for Cuban independence and that they only wanted the assurance that they would be seconded by the United States in case they declared their independence without aid from the United States and then sought admission into the Union. In the discussion which arose at a cabinet meeting Calhoun expressed anxiety to get Cuba as a part of the United States in order to prevent the dangers of its revolution by negroes and its possession by England; but, as we were not then ready to risk a war with England, which the annexation of Cuba might have occasioned, he advised that the Havana overtures should be answered by persuading them for the time to adhere to Spain. He thought, however, that there could be no more objection to our acquisition of Cuba than to the purchase of Louisiana. J. Q. Adams did not agree with Calhoun's policy. He saw an ocean between Florida and Cuba which made the question of Cuba different from Louisiana. He said that if the taking of Cuba by us should lead to a war, it would for a long time result in British possession of the island. He favored a policy of strict moral duty to Spain; and he thought it best to give no advice to the Cubans, but simply to say that the executive was not competent to promise the admission into the Union, and that our relations to Spain would not allow us to encourage such a proposal. At the same time, he stated that we might mention our friendly sentiments, and the "common interests which point to intimate connection between Cuba and the United States." The policy of Adams was adopted.

Forsyth felt that the uncertainty of affairs as to Cuba would give England an opportunity to get a foothold in that quarter by which she might command the Gulf of Mexico and obtain the communication between the oceans at the Isthmus of Darien. Spain needed reinforcements in the Gulf of Mexico to protect Cuba from Mexico and Colombia; she also had some fears that Cuba would declare itself independent and place itself under the protection of the United States. At such a time Great Britain might have been able to get Cuba as a lien

on loans to Spain, or by agreeing to guarantee it against any desigus of the United States. There was a possibility of a change of conditions in Cuba which might have induced Spain not to resist a British offer for cession. Both England and France had political agents there watching the course of events, and perhaps giving them direction. In December, 1822, there was considerable popular expression in England favoring an attack upon Cuba. There is not evidence that this represented the views of the cabinet, though Secretary Canning did not see reason to disavow it in his conversation with Mr. Gallatin. Forsyth had informed the Spanish Government that as English property Cuba would be injurious to the United States; and this feeling was strengthened by time.

In January, 1823, there was a report that Great Britain had agreed to supply Spain with money in case of a war with France and hold Cuba as a mortgage. But Mr. Canning, the British minister at Washington, called upon Secretary Adams and read a letter from his cousin, George Canning, in which the latter denied that England desired Cuba. This caused Adams to state publicly that England had no designs on that island. England sent some troops to Jamaica early in 1823, but they were probably for the purpose of guarding British interests in Hayti. It was explained at Washington that if any English force went to Cuba it would be for the purpose of protecting it from the French, who might attempt to take it in case of war with Spain. According to the Paris journals, the British Government did make some kind of agreement to prevent French invasion of Cuba; but in February, when Forsyth asked the Spanish minister at Madrid whether there was local force sufficient to defend Cuba in case of an attack by the French, he was assured that Spain relied upon her own resources and upon the United States for security.

It was very difficult in 1823 for the United States Government to determine what its policy toward Cuba should be. Some of the English journals stated that the United States had long wanted Cuba, and that England should occupy it if she wanted to save her West India trade; but it does not appear that there had been any general desire to acquire Cuba except it should become inconvenient to do otherwise. On the other hand, there was a growing feeling that it should not pass into the hands of Great Britain. It may have been, as Chateaubriand said in the French assembly, that England

could not have taken Cuba without making war upon the United States. Clay told Adams that we would fight for Cuba should England attempt to take possession. Some Members of Congress were decided upon the same policy. Adams was not certain that a war could prevent England from any designs which she might have on Cuba, and he therefore thought it a good policy to keep cool. The restriction of the liberal movement in Cuba, together with the reports that Spain might not be able to hold it, led to the organization of various secret societies on the island. About the beginning of 1823 some of these Cuban liberalists sent an agent (Morales) to Washington to sound the Government upon the course it would pursue in case Cuba should declare her independence. Poinsett, who had been in Mexico and Cuba in the service of the Government and had talked with many of the most influential characters in Cuba, was satisfied that they did not favor any change unless there should be some radical alteration of the constitution; but he believed that, in case the Spanish constitution should be radically changed, they would ask for protection of the United States and admission into the Union, and he said if the United States rejected them they would probably apply to England. C. J. Ingersoll wrote to Mr. Rush, our minister at London, that it was a momentous question for the decision of our country—and that while much might be said against annexation, he had long thought “that whenever Cuba presents herself without any forcing or maneuvering on our part we must e’en take the good the gods provide us.” Monroe, about this time, spoke of Cape Florida and Cuba as forming the mouth of the Mississippi.

The Western people did not want to see Cuba possessed by England; the Southern people did not desire to see it independent without slavery; the Northern people did not desire to see Cuba annexed with slavery.

In March, 1823, at a cabinet meeting, Mr. Thompson favored urging the Cubans to declare independence if they could maintain it, but Adams was sure they could not maintain it. A month later European affairs caused Adams much anxiety as to the future of Cuba. He felt that the United States was not yet prepared for the adoption of a policy of annexing territory beyond the sea, but he was satisfied that if Cuba should fall to the United States by the law of political gravitation, we should not cast her from our bosom, and that annexation

might become necessary. He saw that Spain could no longer hope to hold Cuba if the Spanish constitution was overthrown by the armies of the Holy Alliance, and that since Cuba was incapable of self-government she must necessarily be dependent upon either England or the United States. In case England should get a hold on Cuba by aiding Spain, he believed it would be unpropitious to the interests of our Union.

In June, Mr. Miralla, a native of Buenos Ayres, who had lived in Cuba several years, while visiting Jefferson said that the sentiment of the Cubans was opposed to their country falling into the hands of England, and that they would resist it. He stated that if events should lead them to desire independence, they would desire the protection of Mexico or the United States—opinion was divided as to which they would prefer.

Through authentic channels Mr. Monroe learned that the Cubans felt that they could not maintain their independence by themselves—for, in addition to the danger of being molested by foreign powers, they feared that in case of separation from Spain the black population would attempt to secure control of the government. Monroe saw that to England they could only become a colony; he believed that a connection with Colombia could be of little use to them owing to the distance; and he said that connection with Mexico was less desirable than incorporation into the United States, to which they were more contiguous. He did not think it best to encourage the Cubans to seek independence. Through organs in which he had confidence, he advised them to cling to Spain as long as possible and to resist by force any attempt of England to take possession.

While it appears that there was a general feeling that the cession of Cuba to England would have produced an attempt at independence, and might have resulted in a slave insurrection, there was not so much certainty that the majority of the people would have turned toward the United States. French merchants from Havana who were fellow-passengers with our minister to Paris, said that the people of Cuba disliked our conduct in Florida before 1819, our early recognition of the Spanish-American States, and our modes of traffic, which led many of them to call us a "nation of cheats."

There were in 1823, and thereafter, several causes of friction with the Spanish authorities in Cuba. Partly on account of our sympathy with the Spanish colonies in revolt, the governor

of Cuba had refused to admit a consul or commercial agent from the United States, and the necessity for one was daily becoming more urgent. Our commerce was receiving great injuries from the pirates, and the authorities in Cuba had been unable to suppress them. In the early part of 1823 the United States sent a special agent to Cuba to receive the Florida archives, and to urge the authorities to cooperate with our naval force to stop piracy, but in 1824 there had been no restoration to the security of our commerce in the vicinity of Cuba, and the pirates seemed to find sympathy among the Cuban people and authorities. In January, 1824, the committee on foreign relations in the House of Representatives considered the advisability of an act of Congress authorizing the President to blockade Cuba and Porto Rico as a measure of defense or retaliation, but it was finally decided to first call on the Spanish Government for a remedy. The next December Mr. Randall, an agent of the Government, returned from Havana and urged the absolute necessity of some remedy for protection. In January, 1825, Congress again considered the necessity of suppressing the piracy around Cuba. A bill was reported favoring the building of new vessels, the landing forces in fresh pursuit of pirates, authorizing a blockade under certain circumstances, making limited reprisals on offending vessels, and permitting merchant vessels to arm for defense. Barbour refreshed his memory on Jenkins's ear, and said that the hundreds of dead invoked immediate action. The blockade was generally opposed, but many favored landing in Cuba to repress pirates and to make reprisals. No two members on the committee of foreign relations could agree upon a policy. Forsyth did not want to invade Cuba or take any step which we could not allow England to take. He favored this policy not because he loved Spanish neighbors more, but because he desired English neighbors less. At various times after this date both England and the United States claimed and exercised the right of pursuing pirates who had taken refuge on the coast of Cuba.

In 1825 the London Courier described Cuba as the "Turkey of transatlantic politics, tottering to its fall, and kept from falling only by the struggles of those who contend for the right of catching her in her descent." Spain, Great Britain, and the United States were all uneasy as to its fate. France was ready to succor Cuba if conditions required it, but Eng-

land objected. The United States was anxious, and Mexico was alarmed at the report that France probably intended to invade Cuba. Mexico asked the United States to fulfill her pledge of December 2, 1823.

Cuba was the Spanish base of supplies for the war against Mexico and Colombia, and the latter had resolved to strike at this stronghold while it was weakly garrisoned, but both England and the United States objected to their proposed invasions, and by their interposition probably were the means of preserving Cuba to Spain. In October, 1824, Canning, in a conversation with the Mexican agent, spoke of the danger of a slave insurrection which might result from such an invasion. The attitude of Canning doubtless had some influence in causing the abandonment of the expedition which was in preparation under Santa Anna at Campeachy in the spring of 1825. In June, 1825, when the Mexican agent returned from England, Canning, who had heard of Santa Anna's proposed proclamation to the negroes of Cuba, informed the agent that the British Government not only opposed the possession of Cuba by France and the United States, but would also be displeased at any attack upon it by Mexico or Colombia. In November, 1825, he informed Hurtado, the Colombian agent, to the same effect. Hurtado was at this time urging the British Government to renew its efforts for peace. A month later he stated to Canning that Colombia "could not continue to see with indifference the enemy retain a possession at which it might continually collect armaments and thence direct expeditions against Colombia and its allies," and he referred to the necessity of joining Mexico in an attack against Cuba. Canning admitted that as belligerents they had a right to attack their enemies and capture their possessions, but added that they "ought to remember that this warfare might be very prejudicial to England by causing an insurrection of the blacks, and by the pretext which it offered to other nations to interfere in the affairs of Cuba, and perhaps to forcibly occupy the island." Thus Colombia was dissuaded from an expedition which, it was afterwards declared in the British Parliament, might have been advantageous to her at that time.

The United States also used her influence to prevent a change in the political condition of Cuba. She was not disposed to interfere with Cuba's "present actual state"—for its ports were open, and its cannon silent and harmless while

Spain had possession; but there was no desire to see it pass to Colombia or Mexico, who might not be strong enough to resist the attempts which other powers might make to secure it. The United States had been among the first to hasten to acknowledge the independence of these new States, and had served their cause of independence by her neutrality, but she did not desire to see their power become too great, and she was especially anxious that the immediate fate of Cuba should not be left in great uncertainty. So the Government at Washington feared the results that might come from Spain's useless attempts to subjugate her revolted colonies. At a cabinet meeting on May 7, 1825, the condition of Cuba was considered critical. There was at that time some preparation for the invasion of Cuba from Mexico, and the piracies around Cuba were liable to continue so long as the war between Spain and her colonies should continue. On May 10 Clay directed our minister at St. Petersburg to ask the Russian Government to urge Spain to recognize the independence of Colombia and Mexico in order that she might not also lose Cuba and Porto Rico. At the same time Clay advised Colombia and Mexico to abstain from any hostile expedition, and again in the following December he asked them to suspend any expedition which they might have in view against Cuba. Hurtado, the Colombian agent at London, at the close of 1825, said that the state of the population of Cuba was favorable to an attack by his state and Mexico, but the Spanish Government did not consider that Cuba was then in any great danger. Mr. Everett, the American minister at Madrid, admitted that Cuba seemed satisfied to remain connected with Spain.

The idea of cooperation between the United States and Great Britain in a policy concerning Cuba had been several times suggested, and finally became a subject of correspondence between the two governments. In March, 1823, when the cabinet was considering the possibility of England getting Cuba, the question arose as to whether it would not be wise to propose to England to join the United States in a mutual guaranty of Cuba to Spain. A difficult question arose as to whether the guaranty should be of such a character as to prevent the island from becoming independent, and whether Spain would agree to it if it did not include this provision, and whether England would favor it. It was agreed, however, that the United States should not make Great Britain any

mutual promise not to take Cuba. A short time after this, Jefferson suggested to Monroe that a mutual guaranty of Cuba to Spain might be made. Monroe wrote to him concerning the difficulty which stood in the way of such a policy. In June Jefferson again wrote to Monroe that if the United States could induce England to join in a guaranty of Cuba's independence "against all the powers except Spain it would be nearly as valuable as if it were our own." A few days later, after having a talk with Mr. Miralla, who had lived in Cuba for several years, he wrote that the interests of England did not seem to be as strong as those of the United States in Cuba, and that we need not join that power in a guaranty. In September, 1823, when France was threatening to reconquer the Spanish colonies whose independence the United States had recognized, Mr. Erving, our minister at Paris, feared we would have to act in unison with England, and yet he was not certain that it would not be better to abandon the colonies than to form an alliance with England.

At this very time Canning was proposing to Rush at London that the two countries join in a declaration that they did not aim at the possession of the Spanish colonies for themselves, and would not with indifference see them transferred to any other power. Jefferson, who was opposed to entangling ourselves with the broils of Europe or in allowing Europe to meddle in cisatlantic affairs, was nevertheless pleased that England had suggested cooperation, and he thought we should accede to her proposition—even to join in a declaration that we did not aim at the acquisition of any of the Spanish possessions—though he still thought Cuba would be a valuable acquisition to our Union if it could be gotten without a war. In the cabinet meeting of November 7 Calhoun was inclined to think that the declaration against the interference of the Holy Allies would be to our advantage, even if it should pledge the United States not to take Cuba or Texas, since England's power to seize was greater than ours. But Adams, without discussing the expediency of annexing Cuba and Texas, thought we should be free to act as emergencies arose, and he said that the proposed joint declaration would be a pledge against ourselves; for, while we had no intentions of playing a game of grab, the inhabitants of Cuba and Texas might "exercise their primitive rights" and seek incorporation into the United States, and that they would not seek annexation

to England. Adams believed that Canning's main object at this time was to get a pledge from the United States that would prevent her from acquiring any of the Spanish-American territory.

Both England and the United States agreed that Spain should recognize the independence of Mexico and Colombia, and that neither of these two new States should obtain control of Cuba. In 1824, before England herself had recognized their independence, Canning offered Spain to guarantee her the possession of Cuba if she would recognize the independence of Mexico and Colombia, but Spain declined. In the spring of 1825 Clay, in a conversation with Addington, the British minister at Washington, agreed that it could hardly accord with the views of the English and American governments to allow Cuba to fall into the hands of Mexico or Colombia, and it was suggested that if Spain continued the war it might be necessary to establish an independent government in Cuba under the joint guaranty of the United States and Great Britain, and "perhaps some of the Spanish-American States." This encouraged Canning to believe that the United States would enter into some sort of an arrangement to guarantee Cuba to Spain.

When Rufus King went as minister to London in the summer of 1825, the United States was anxious that Russia, England, and France might be induced to influence Spain to make peace with her revolted colonies in America by acknowledging their independence. The United States Government had written to Russia to use her influence for peace, but Canning said there was no hope from that source. He told King that some action should be taken without waiting for Russia, and he thought that the first step should be to remove the Spanish suspicions as to the great powers. During the summer the French Government had given orders to the authorities of Martinique to send troops to Cuba if necessary to put down any internal disturbance. Canning had at the time given the French to understand that sending troops to Cuba would be considered as taking part in the war, and afterwards the fear that French soldiers would misconstrue orders and take possession of Cuba had weighed heavily on his mind. He told King that when he went to bed at night he could feel no assurance that morning might not bring news that the French force had landed at Havana "in consequence of some orders

hastily given for contingencies ill defined." He said that the United States and England should take prompt steps to guard against this danger; that while Spain feared that the United States or England would take Cuba from her, she did not have the same fear of France, and that she was thus liable to call France to her aid in case a panic arose as to the intentions of the United States or England. France, as well as England and the United States, had already disclaimed any desire to get possession of Cuba, and Canning said France would hardly refuse to concur with England or the United States in a written disavowal. He therefore proposed either the signature of three joint ministerial notes, or of one tripartite note, in which each of the three powers should disclaim any intention of occupying Cuba, and should protest against such occupation by the others. After such an agreement he thought Spain would be willing to consent to a suspension of hostilities, and thus prevent any remaining danger to Cuba from Mexico and Colombia.

Mr. King suggested that the omission of any mention of Mexico and Colombia might cause an immediate invasion of Cuba by them, giving rise to questions which would throw the whole West Indies into disorder and perhaps excite much anxiety in the southern part of the United States. Canning, in reply to this, said it would be wise not to mention anything in the tripartite note that might be construed by Spain as a threat to induce her to make peace with her colonies, or as a menace to Cuba. How, then, could Mexico and Colombia be mentioned? Should the note say that they "shall not do what we will not do?"

The draft which Canning prepared also provided that the landing of small parties from friendly ships of war in pursuit of pirates was to be allowed in aid of the local authorities in Cuba, but such landing was to be with consent of the local authorities, unless it should be at places where it was inconvenient to cooperate in this way.

In proposing the tripartite arrangement to France Canning expressed the determination of Great Britain not to take Cuba nor suffer its appropriation by the other two great powers. Though France gave some encouragement at first, she would not agree to sign. Canning was willing to sign with King alone, but the latter had already referred the matter to his Government. When Canning learned that King had sent

their correspondence to Washington, he was very uneasy lest the United States Government might decide to publish it.

Spain at this time may have been urging England for a pledge as to Cuba. In September, a member of the Spanish Government suggested to Mr. Everett that the United States might be able to obtain a consul or a public agent in Cuba if she would by treaty guarantee the Spanish possession of that island. Mr. Everett replied that such a guaranty would be inconsistent with the American policy; that the United States, merely to get a consul, could not run the risk of a war which might be necessary to insure Cuba to Spain.

When the draft of the tripartite arrangement reached Washington, in October, Clay decided that Canning's policy of soothing Spain and leading her to be unsuspecting of "our united councils" would not contribute to the great object of stopping the war. If Spain felt that Cuba was safe, she might be the stronger resolved to continue the war. Clay thought it would be better to let Spain speculate upon the possible dangers to Cuba, or to let her feel that if Cuba declared its independence the powers would guarantee it, than to lull Spain's apprehensions as to any possible contingencies which might threaten her West Indies in case the war was continued. It seemed to Clay that Canning's real object was not to end the war, but to quiet the suspicions of the powers as to each other.

Mr. Clay informed King that the President saw no objection to acceding one or the other of Mr. Canning's propositions—the three separate ministerial notes or the one tripartite note—but he would give no instruction till he heard from the Emperor of Russia. He said, however, that the pacific policy of the United States really made her declaration unnecessary, and that it was not apprehended that Great Britain would "entertain views of aggrandizement in regard to Cuba, which could not fail to lead to a rupture with the United States." As to France, he hoped she would "equally abstain from a measure fraught with such serious consequences, though he realized that there was some danger of her getting into Cuba by a pretext of assisting distracted Spain to quell some disturbance. When Clay received King's letter stating that France had declined to accede to the tripartite arrangement, he decided that it was no longer necessary or proper to consider the subject, but he stated that after the friendly communication between the British and American governments "each

must now be considered as much bound to a course of forbearance and abstinence in regard to Cuba and Porto Rico as if they had pledged themselves to it by a solemn act." With the hope that France would abandon her designs on Cuba if she had had any, Clay wrote to Brown, the American minister at Paris, to say to the French Government that he could not suppose that any European power would attempt to occupy Cuba without the concurrence or knowledge of the United States.

The efforts to get Spain to agree to stop the war against her former colonies were unsuccessful, though the United States continued to urge Russia to prevail upon Spain to make peace at once if she desired to retain Cuba and Porto Rico. While the United States did not desire any change in the possession of Cuba, and had recommended that Colombia and Mexico suspend their proposed military expeditions, she informed Russia, in December, 1825, that she did not see any justifiable ground on which to interfere with another expedition in case Spain obstinately continued the war, and that she could interpose only in case the excesses of a race war should threaten her own shores.

Mr. Everett, still at Madrid, contemplated the uncertainty of the immediate future, and decided that the surest plan to stop the inconvenience which the United States experienced at her doors was to get Cuba peaceably at once—obviating the risk of broils with Europe, which might arise by getting it later. On November 30, 1825, he wrote President Adams that his informal conversation with the Spanish minister gave him some hope that the pecuniary needs of Spain would induce her to give Cuba as security on a loan from the United States. He did not think that Great Britain could have reason to take umbrage at this, and he suggested that in case Spain did not repay after a reasonable length of time the complete sovereignty of Cuba might vest in the United States. It does not appear that Adams favored this plan of his enthusiastic pupil.

Though the American Government had not accepted the tripartite proposal, it was anxious to secure some guarantee against the foreign intervention of other powers in Cuba. At the beginning of 1826 Mr. King, by instructions from Washington, was endeavoring to have Canning send a formal communication to the French Government, stating that Great Britain would "not consent to the occupation of Cuba or Porto Rico by any other European power than Spain under any cir-

circumstances whatever." But Canning replied that in the previous July, before the tripartite proposal, he had communicated with France precisely to this effect, and that by repeating it he would appear to be acting at the suggestion of a third power, and subsidiary to it, in a step which he had already taken alone.

The feeling that a change in the political condition of Cuba was imminent, is reflected in the debates in Congress in the spring of 1826. In 1823 there had been a suggestion that the United States should dig a canal across Florida in case England took Cuba. The uncertainty as to Cuba now led to a revival of this suggestion. A bill was introduced in Congress to provide for the survey of such a canal. Randolph opposed the bill as unconstitutional, and it was urged that such a canal would protect southern interests in case Cuba should pass into the hands of a first-class naval power. In reply to this Randolph said: "If all constitutional restraints are to be pushed aside let us take Cuba and done with it." There was considerable discussion outside of Congress at this time in regard to this proposed canal. It was seen that a friendly understanding with the government which should direct the policy of Cuba would always be important to the United States, but it was hoped that with the canal across Florida Cuba would be less regarded as a military station and as an asylum for pirates.

The American policy toward the proposed Panama congress was largely connected with the Cuban question. Forsyth said that the destiny of Cuba was the great object of the Panama mission. Although all the new Spanish-American States had abolished slavery, the United States had not hesitated to recognize their independence, but there was no desire to see any extension of their principles, which might endanger the slaveholding interests in the United States. It was especially desired that no negro republics should be created in the Caribbean Sea. The political constitution of the government of Hayti had kept the United States from acknowledging the independence of that island. An invasion of Cuba and Porto Rico was stated to be an object of the Panama congress. It was seen that such an invasion might lead to internal convulsions and a servile war, which would endanger the institutions of the Southern States. President Adams, who favored sending delegates to Panama, urged the point

that by representation there we might be able to discourage any project that might threaten to disturb or change the existing condition of Cuba. In both March and April 1826 the subject was discussed in Congress. Buchanan said that while we were warning England and France, we also should have warned Mexico and Colombia against the occupation of Cuba. He favored the mission to Panama as a step in averting an attack upon Cuba. Brent, of Louisiana, feared it was too late to stop the blow from Campeachy Bay, where Santa Anna had partially organized an expedition. He would have favored the independence of Cuba except for the danger which it might bring to the Southern planter. Those who opposed the mission did not all act from the same principle. Webster said it was unconstitutional. He thought, however, that we should not be cold toward the new American States. He appears to have had greater fear of the transfer of Cuba to England, in which case he held that we would have a right to interfere in self-defense. Forsyth favored a strictly neutral policy. He stated that self-preservation compelled us to anxiously watch over Cuba. He desired to see Spain hold it, but he opposed any interference against the rights of Mexico and Colombia to conquer it in order to end the contest with Spain. He said that we should avoid any political connections which might result in wars and burdens on our people, and that we should not interfere on either side except for self-preservation. Hamilton, of South Carolina, feared a Mexican invasion of Cuba more than any European possession of it. He stated that a cession of Cuba to England could not be near so dangerous to the United States as the erection of a second Carthage or Hayti "to shadow our shores." He believed that Spain might cede Cuba under circumstances where it would be folly for us to interfere, and he said that it was not a wise policy to change Monroe's mere declaration as to the continent into a pledge as to Cuba, which we might be called upon to fulfill. Mr. Floyd said that England had interests in the West Indies. Mr. F. Johnson did not agree that it would be better for Cuba to pass to England than to Mexico, but he did not favor any alliance with the new Spanish-American States. As to our Cuban policy, he said it was against our principles and interests to take possession of Cuba or any other colony, but that we should deny the right of either England or France to take territory not contiguous to them and so near to our own shores.

It was not till in May or June that news reached Washington that the Mexican expedition against Cuba had been abandoned. In the meantime the United States kept urging Russia and Spain to hasten the peace. Spain endeavored to get the United States to guarantee Cuba to her, but the Government at Washington continued to decline to agree to any proposal to that effect, stating that the condition of the United States, England, and France was almost equivalent to an actual guaranty. England and France knew that the United States would not consent to their possession of Cuba, and Spain was assured that the forbearance of the United States could be relied upon.

In May, before it was certain what immediate course Colombia and Mexico would take, Clay, in instructing the delegates to Panama, stated that neither of these two new powers had the supplies necessary for a conquest of Cuba; that the United States could not see a desolating war there, and that action should at least be suspended until news should arrive from Europe. Clay doubtless had other reasons than those mentioned which prompted him to discourage the threatened attack. Might there not be danger of Cuba becoming a bone of contention between these two new States? When the Mexican minister at London, in a conversation with Mr. Gallatin, intimated a desire that Cuba should be united to Mexico, Gallatin suggested the danger of a war between Mexico and Colombia, during which Great Britain might claim the right to conquer Cuba as well as the two contestants. He also stated that the United States would be decidedly opposed to Cuba becoming a British colony, and might find it difficult to maintain this opposition and at the same time acquiesce in an attack by one of the American States.

In his conversation with Gallatin the Mexican minister to London was led to speak of the propriety of making Cuba independent under the just guaranty of all the American states and Great Britain. Mr. Gallatin favored the plan, and wrote Clay that it was "the only one which could give a permanent security to the United States." Mr. Gallatin could not speak with authority as to the intentions of his Government, but he suggested to the Mexican minister that "if his Government thought this to be a practicable object, that Cuba was ripe for it, and that it could be done without disturbing the state of society in reference to the black population, they

might make an overture to the Government of the United States and get its views."

Gallatin at once resolved to get Canning's views concerning the ultimate destination of Cuba. At this time it was not certain that there would not soon be a war between England and Spain, and there had been a recent report that England intended to occupy Cuba. Gallatin suggested to Canning that complications in Anglo-American relations might result from an Anglo-Spanish war—and that this was especially probable as to Cuba, which it was understood should not fall into the hands of either England or the United States. He also stated that the United States and Mexico could not submit to a transfer of Cuba, and asked whether it would probably go to Mexico or Colombia, or whether the whites were strong enough to maintain its independence, in case it should not be practical to keep it under the Spanish rule as had been previously desired. Canning was cautious and reluctant to speak. He said England already had too much territory, but he gave no positive assurance that his Government had no designs on Cuba. His reserve may have been partly due to the failure of his proposed tripartite agreement of the year before, concerning the details of which Gallatin was not informed. It appears that the suggestion of the Mexican minister received no further consideration.

In 1827 there was a report that British emissaries were preparing the way for the independence of Cuba under English protection. In June of that year the Spanish minister at London informed his government that the British had recently sent a frigate to the Canaries with commissioners to investigate what preparations were being made for an expedition against the new Spanish-American states; that they also went to Havana where they found many disposed to revolt; and that they left emissaries in Cuba "to guide public opinion" so that the people would ask for British protection in preference to that of the United States. It was supposed that this would lessen the chances of objection by the United States in case the occasion for British protection or interference should prevail. The Spanish ambassador stated that he had his information from the Duke of Wellington, who had advised a British officer to give immediate information of any signs of disaffection which he should see in Cuba. In August Mr. Everett notified Mr. Clay of the information which he had

privately received, and which seemed to indicate that the British ministry was planning a revolution in the Canaries and Cuba. The news gave Clay some uneasiness. In December, Everett called the attention of the Spanish Government to the report, and was informed that everything was secure in Cuba. Everett suggested that Spain should keep the United States better informed in matters relating to Cuba, and stated that the British could not cover their operations by disguises. The British at this time were still desirous of preventing any attack upon Cuba or Porto Rico by Mexico or Colombia. During the year Bolivar had gathered ships and forces at Caracas for a contemplated invasion of Porto Rico; but Mr. Cockburn, the British minister to Colombia, energetically discouraged such an attempt against any of the Spanish islands, and frustrated the plans of Bolivar.

The indemnity treaty which Spain made with Great Britain and France lessened the possibility of their interference in Spanish affairs, but the United States Government felt that it did not entirely obviate the danger of their attempting to occupy Cuba. In 1829, Mr. Van Buren, Secretary of State, instructed Van Ness, the new minister to Madrid, to watch for any events which might lead to a change in the condition of Cuba, and stated that while it was not the American policy to give a direct promise to guarantee Cuba to Spain, he believed the United States would be ready to prevent any blow which might threaten Cuba, or any objectionable project which might affect the affairs of nations engaged in American commerce. The unsuccessful expedition which Spain sent from Cuba to Mexico in 1828 was a cause of some solicitude to the American Government. Mr. Van Buren stated that although the Government had preserved Cuba to Spain when Mexico and Colombia were ready to strike a blow, and although the possession of Cuba by these new states might give England or France a chance to get it, yet the United States could hardly interfere with a defensive attack which Mexico or Colombia might think it to their interest to make—unless such attack should threaten to disturb the internal condition of the island, or result in measures which would tend to excite the slaves to revolt. By 1830, when Mexico was again threatened by an attack from Spain, the English Government also ceased to offer any objection to a Mexican defensive expedition against Cuba.

Spain was forced by her weakened condition and by popular

sentiment at home to discontinue her attempts for the reconquest of her former colonies on the American continent, though she did not recognize their independence for several years after the war closed. The international complications which might have arisen if Spain had been able to continue the war were thereby avoided, and both England and the United States were satisfied at that time to see the "Queen of the Antilles" remain in the hands of the nation that had depleted her treasury in the vain attempt to retain half of the American continent.



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