CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT AND MEXICO: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

1861-1865

APPROVED:

Jack B. Dugger
Major Professor

S. B. M. Alston
Minor Professor

Frank H. Gofford
Director of the Department of History

Robert B. Toulouse
Dean of the Graduate School
CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT AND MEXICO: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
1861-1865

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Barbara F. Hammond, B. A.

Denton, Texas
August, 1956
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. DEBUT</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CAJOLERY</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. IMPASSE</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. EBB TIDE</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. APPRAISAL</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>132a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>132b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is not only to trace the diplomatic activities of the Confederate government with its neighbor, Mexico, during the period 1861 to 1865, but to evaluate these diplomatic efforts as to their practical consequences on behalf of the Confederate cause.

The Confederate Diplomatic Records for this period are fairly complete in some respects. During the evacuation of Richmond in April, 1865, the diplomatic correspondence, except the secret service vouchers, were taken by William J. Brownell, Chief Clerk of the Confederate State Department archives, and hidden in a barn in Virginia. The secret service papers were destroyed by Judah P. Benjamin, Secretary of State, on April 2, 1865. The five trunks of papers which had been hidden in the barn in Virginia were subsequently removed to Washington. The custodian of these trunks, realizing their value, entered into negotiations with Colonel John T. Pickett for the ultimate disposal of these documents to the United States government. In some unknown way, these documents were exported to Canada where, under the supervision of Lieutenant-Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, they were examined, returned to Washington, and purchased by the United States government.¹

From the "Pickett Papers," as the above were classified, and from the various other sources noted in the bibliography, the diplomatic activities during the period 1861-1865 were traced and evaluated. The lack of the Secret-Service Records and the inability to check into the Mexican archives represents a research problem in this area, but sufficient evidence has been collected and analyzed to substantiate the conclusions reached in this thesis.
CHAPTER I

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

During the decade of the 1850's, the sectional rift which was tearing asunder the North and the South became more and more acute. Each section of the Union became more resolute in its convictions. The states of the South were determined to prevent the Republican Party from gaining political power. The Republican Party was just as determined to break up the monopoly of political power which had been held by leaders of the South since the early days of the Republic. The basic economical, political, and psychological differences were hidden under the cloak of the slavery controversy -- the scapegoat of the impending crisis. Radicals of both sections of the country inflamed the coals of bitterness to such an intensity that compromise measures were doomed to failure.

The results of the 1860 presidential election brought the crisis to a head. Following the election of the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, on November 6, 1860, the legislature of South Carolina met on November 10, 1860, and elected delegates to a convention scheduled for December, 1860. At

---

1 Henry H. Simms, A Decade of Sectional Controversy, 1851–1861 (Chapel Hill, 1942), p. 145.
this convention, the delegates passed the Ordinance of Seces-
sion on December 20, 1860.² Within six weeks, six other
states had likewise seceded: Mississippi, January 9, 1861;
Florida, January 10, 1861; Alabama, January 11, 1861; Georgia,
January 19, 1861; Louisiana, January 26, 1861; Texas, Feb-
uary 1, 1861.³

On February 4, 1861, the Confederate Convention, composed
of delegates from five seceded states, met at Montgomery,
Alabama, and organized a provisional government. The Con-
gress, on February 9, 1861, unanimously elected Jefferson
Davis as President and Alexander H. Stephens as Vice-
President of the Confederate States of America.⁴

The leaders of the Secession Movement were hopeful that
peaceful separation could be achieved. This hope was put to
a test on January 5, 1861. A merchant steamer, "Star of the
West," on its way with reinforcements and supplies for Fort
Sumter, was fired upon by South Carolina's batteries.⁵ This,
however, was an act for which only the State of South Caro-
lina could be held responsible since the Confederacy had not
yet been organized as an independent entity. No actual

²Ibid., p. 217.
injury was incurred by this incident and diplomacy was utilized to mitigate hostility.⁶

A similar episode which occurred in April, 1861, was to serve as the kindling point for the four years of war between the states. The federal government realized that Fort Sumter would have to be abandoned unless provisions were sent promptly. President Lincoln notified South Carolina's Governor Pickens that provisions, not reinforcements, would be sent to Fort Sumter. A few days later, April 10, 1861, President Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States, ordered General Beauregard, of Louisiana, to demand the evacuation of federal troops from the Fort, or, upon refusal, the Fort was to be destroyed. Although Anderson, the commander of Fort Sumter, had reported to General Beauregard that he would have to evacuate by noon on April 15th unless he previously received supplies or orders, General Beauregard and his Confederate troops opened fire on April 12th. The Union relief expedition could do nothing but look on helplessly.⁷

The die had been cast and further attempts toward a peaceful separation were futile. May 6, 1861, war was recognized as having commenced between the states of the North and the states of the South.⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 103. ⁷Ibid., pp. 116-122.
The provisional cabinet of the Confederacy was selected on a "pork-barrel" basis. Each of the seven states comprising the Confederate States of America was represented by a cabinet member. Mississippi had the honoring of being the home state of the Confederate President, Jefferson Davis.\textsuperscript{9} The Davis cabinet comprised only six portfolios yet seventeen incumbents occupied the several offices during the four years of war.\textsuperscript{10} There were four Secretaries of State, and six men filled the office of Secretary of War. The latter office was a particularly difficult one for incumbents because Jefferson Davis, a military man himself, was exceedingly proud of his own concepts of military strategy. Five men held the post of Attorney-General, and two men held the office of Secretary of the Treasury during the four years of the Confederacy. Secretary of the Navy Mallory and Postmaster General Reagan were the only two cabinet members to continue their original offices throughout the war.

Obviously, these many changes were not conducive to stability or continuity in policy.\textsuperscript{11} The men selected as cabinet members, although capable men in their respective fields, had no real talent for the particular assignments they were called

\textsuperscript{9}E. Merton Coulter, \textit{The Confederate States of America 1861-1865} (Baton Rouge, 1950), Vol. VII of \textit{A History of the South}, edited by Wendell A. Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, 10 vols., p. 120.

\textsuperscript{10}Burton J. Hendricks, \textit{Statesmen of the Lost Cause} (Boston, 1939), p. 325.

\textsuperscript{11}Coulter, pp. 120-121.
upon to perform. Relationships between several of the Cabinet members were certainly not harmonious. In fact, relationships between cabinet members and the President were frequently quite strained. Thus the operation of the cabinet as an advisory counsel was largely ineffective.  

Jefferson Davis, the man who was unanimously elected President of the Confederate States of America, was not a member of the old Southern aristocracy. But, with the advice and support of his brother Joseph, Jefferson Davis had obtained a good education, secured an appointment to West Point, and later enjoyed financial success as a planter. Brother Joseph even arranged Jefferson Davis’s second marriage. This second marriage was to a girl of a socially prominent family -- a convenient prerequisite for a political career. During the stormy decade of the 1850’s, Jefferson Davis became the chief spokesman for "Southern Rights" and he insisted that these rights were guaranteed by the Federal Constitution.

Jefferson Davis was a very proud and sensitive individual, yet very doctrinal. He was generally so certain of the rightness of his stand, he would not tolerate criticism.


\[13\] Hendricks, p. 33.

\[14\] Ibid., p. 53.

\[15\] J. J. Eckenrode, Jefferson Davis, President of the South (New York, 1923), pp. 37, 116.
He would accept advice only if it was suggested in such a way that it appeared he himself was the originator of the thought or idea. One of the primary reasons Judah P. Benjamin became the right hand of Jefferson Davis was that Benjamin was an apt politician in this respect.

The Vice-President of the Provisional government, Alexander H. Stephens, was likewise an extremely sensitive, neurotic type of person. Like most physically small and weak people, Stephens longed for public honor and applause but at the same time tried to convince himself that he abhorred people.¹⁶ Stephens accepted the Vice-Presidency half-heartedly. Even though his state (Georgia) had accepted the state-rights political theory, Stephens was a constitutionalist at heart. Many historians consider that half-hearted cooperation on the part of Stephens and his home state in the activities of the Confederate States as a whole, played an important role in the downfall of the Confederacy in 1865.¹⁷ The weaknesses in the state-rights philosophy, particularly as it pertained to the purchasing of supplies, had a much greater effect on the collapse of the Confederacy.

Robert Toombs of Georgia, who had hoped to be elected President of the Confederate States, was offered, as a consolation prize, the office of Secretary of State. Toombs¹⁷

---

¹⁶ Hendricks, pp. 64, 65. ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 84.
talents lay more in the fields of finance and fiscal policy, and he would undoubtedly have made an excellent Secretary of the Treasury. 18

Toombs was a likeable person and possessed a keen mind. But his lack of self-control destroyed his usefulness as a statesman. No definite State Department policy was established during the tenure of Toombs, and very little business was conducted by the first State Secretary. What business there was, was formulated on the power of "King Cotton", a policy conceived before Toombs took office. 19

Toombs realized that the Secretary of State portfolio was relatively unimportant at this time. Until recognition of the South was effected, the Secretary of State would have little opportunity to exercise his abilities as a statesman. Not having much to do, Toombs was prone to chafe at inaction. In answer to a query as to whether or not he needed more assistants in the State Department, it is often quoted that Toombs replied that he "carried the State Department in his hat." 20 The Secretary's relations with President Davis became quite discordant when Toombs insisted upon advising the War Department to be more aggressive and suggested an immediate

18 Ibid., p. 72. The post had first been offered to Robert Barnwell Rhett who declined. Howell Cobb also refused this position. See Rembert W. Patrick, Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet (Baton Rouge, 1944), p. 78.

19 Patrick, pp. 79, 80. 20 Ibid., pp. 84, 85.
invasion of the North. At the end of five months, Toombs was thoroughly dissatisfied and disgruntled. He not only did not have enough to do to keep himself occupied, but his ego was deflated when the War Department ignored his suggestions and advice. 21

At last Toombs applied to President Davis for an appointment as Brigadier-General in the regular army. July 25, 1861, Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter of Virginia succeeded Toombs as Secretary of State, and August 2, 1861, the provisional congress confirmed the former secretary's nomination as Brigadier-General. 22

The policy followed by Hunter, like that of his predecessor, was predicted on the power of cotton to attract the sympathies of the European countries toward the South. Confederate agents had been dispatched, shortly after the organization of the government, to take up posts in the several European countries and were instructed to publicize the Southern tariff policy, the liberal navigation laws of the South, and to particularly stress that the Confederacy was desirous of peace and had no territorial designs. The manner in which these instructions and other state papers were written revealed that Hunter possessed a clear, orderly mind and the prerequisites for a good statesman. In addition to

21 Ibid., pp. 82, 84.  22 Ibid., p. 86.
inaugurating the policy of having the Confederacy represented by various individual missions in the European nations, rather than just a mobile European commission, Hunter sent Henry Hotze to London to disseminate Confederate propaganda. Like others in the Confederacy during these early months, Hunter expected England to fight the South’s diplomatic battles. After serving as State Secretary for six months, Hunter, like Toombs, found the job of Secretary of State merely a title with no concrete goal to accomplish. In February, 1862, the second incumbent in the Secretary of State post resigned to enter the Senate.  

When Hunter resigned as Secretary of State, it was rumored that he wished to leave himself free to run for the presidency against Jefferson Davis. Hunter’s reply to this rumor was that he wished to be Secretary of State, but was not content to be "the clerk of Jefferson Davis." Apparently, when Hunter offered some advice about the conduct of the war, Davis reacted in his usual manner to advice from subordinates and replied: "Mr. Hunter, you are Secretary of State, and when information is wanted of that particular department, it will be time for you to speak."  

Other members of this Montgomery government of 1861 included: Department of the Treasury, Christopher G. Memminger

---

23 Ibid., pp. 92-99.
of South Carolina; Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker of Alabama; Secretary of the Navy, Stephen R. Mallory of Florida; Attorney-General, Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana; Postmaster-General, John H. Reagan of Texas.  

Mallory, Reagan, and Benjamin continued as advisors to the President throughout the existence of the Confederacy. Mallory and Reagan remained in their original posts but Benjamin was transferred from Attorney-General to the Department of War. In March, 1862, Benjamin was "demoted" upwards to the Secretary of State. George W. Randolph and James A. Seddon, of Virginia, and John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, all served at various times as Secretary of War. George A. Trenholm, of South Carolina, was ultimately appointed to serve as Secretary of the Treasury in the permanent government to replace Memminger. Thomas Hill Watts, of Alabama, and George Davis, of North Carolina, were successors to Judah P. Benjamin in the post of Attorney-General.

These cabinet members were very much concerned with the formulation and execution of Confederate foreign policy. The future of this government, indeed, depended on a successful foreign policy. They were numbered among those Southern leaders, who, even prior to the formation of the Confederate States of America, held the belief that Southern policy should

---

25 Hendricks, p. 104.  
26 Curry, p. 60.
be centered around the power of "King Cotton." As the Southern economy was based upon the raising of staple crops, including of course, cotton, many of the necessities would have to be purchased abroad. The Lincoln cabinet fully realized this fact and therefore proclaimed on April 18, 1861, a blockade of Southern ports, anticipating that with its commerce cut off the Confederacy would have to come to terms in a matter of time. It was the conviction of the South, however, that the power of cotton would break the blockade and also serve as a medium for gaining recognition for the Confederacy. An air-tight embargo was placed upon cotton exportation.

Basically, Confederate foreign policy was simply to negotiate for the recognition of the Confederacy by the nations of Europe and also to cultivate friendly commercial relations with all countries. Efforts were concentrated particularly on England and France. It was believed that if one or both of these powers were to offer recognition to the Southern Confederacy, other nations would follow suit.

The Confederate State Department's action was based upon the supposition that the cotton monopoly plus the embargo would force England and France to disregard the paper blockade set up by the federal government and bring to Southern ports

---

28 Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago, 1931), p. 51.
29 Patrick, p. 77.
necessities needed by the South in exchange for cotton.\textsuperscript{30} It was believed that unless England did break the blockade she would be faced with a cotton famine and subsequent civil unrest. What the Confederate State Department did not realize was that England had large supplies of cotton on hand and a supply of marketable finished cloth. In addition, England was experimenting with the growth of cotton in India and Egypt. These factors would keep England from feeling the effects of the blockade throughout 1861-1862.\textsuperscript{31} The plan of the Confederate State Department was further paralyzed by a practice developed from the state-rights philosophy. Each state jealously guarded the cotton supplies within its own boundaries and competed with each other and with the Confederacy for markets in Europe -- a practice which undermined the effect of the cotton embargo.\textsuperscript{32}

The first commission dispatched to Europe to put this policy into operation was composed of William L. Yancey, of Alabama; Pierre A. Rost, of Louisiana; and A. Dudley Mann, of Georgia. These three agents were instructed to convince Europe of the might and power of the Confederacy, gain recognition from the European nations, get the Federal blockade

\textsuperscript{30}Thomas C. DeLeon, \textit{Four Years in Rebel Capitols} (Mobile, 1890), p. 273.

\textsuperscript{31}Coulter, p. 188.

declared illegal and negotiate treaties of commerce and friendship.\textsuperscript{33} The only concrete diplomatic victory attained by this first commission was an acknowledgement of belligerent rights, May 14, 1861. Yancey received such a cold reception in England, he felt it useless to court England any further. He resigned his commission early in the fall. Secretary of State Hunter believed much more could be accomplished if permanent representatives were established in each important European country. A. Dudley Mann was accredited to Belgium, Pierre Rost was sent to Spain, James M. Mason was to represent the Confederacy in England, and John Slidell was commissioned to serve the Confederacy in France. The instructions given these agents contained an analysis of the theory of secession and emphasized the importance of seeking recognition in the name of the "sacred right of self-government."\textsuperscript{34}

John Slidell was successful to a degree in his mission to France. In several interviews with the Emperor Napoleon III, Slidell was given the impression that Napoleon was in complete sympathy with the Confederacy. In action as well as in words, Napoleon III appeared to be sincere in his sympathies toward the South. As early as September 30, 1861, the French Minister in Washington, Mercier, discussed with Lyons, the British Minister in Washington, a proposition for joint recognition of the Confederate government by France and Great

\textsuperscript{33}Coulter, pp. 185, 186. \textsuperscript{34}Patrick, pp. 81, 93.
Britain. The English government decided against such a step. Throughout 1862, Napoleon continually urged England to take such action but without success.\(^{35}\) Napoleon visualized that joint recognition by Great Britain and France would insure the success of his Mexican project, since the United States would not dare to enforce the Monroe Doctrine by force against such great odds. But if France should stand alone in extending recognition to the Confederate Government, Napoleon feared he would become involved in a war with the United States. It was this fear that led Napoleon to adopt a policy of courting both the Union and the Confederacy.

One of Jefferson Davis' chief arguments for recognition of the Confederate States of America was that it would materially benefit all nations because Confederate exports of cotton, tobacco, naval stores, coal and iron would equal an estimated $250,000,000 per annum. The South would be a source of raw material plus a market for the manufactured products of English and French industry.\(^{36}\) Jefferson Davis also felt it was the duty of the nations of the world to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. This was clearly illustrated in his instructions to J. M. Mason, September 23, 1861:

The President of the Confederate States believes that he cannot be mistaken in supposing it to be the duty of the nations of the


\(^{36}\)Patrick, p. 93.
earth, by a prompt recognition, to throw the weight of their moral influence against the unnecessary prolongation of the war \ldots \ldots \ldots 37

President Davis could not see why any European country would not be eager to capitalize on the new channels of commerce with an independent Confederacy. But the major powers of Europe had many factors to consider before extending recognition. England must consider the fact she had long remained aloof from conflicts in Europe and in North America so as to be free to develop industrially. In addition, it would be unsound for England to contravene the Monroe Doctrine which she had helped to nurture. Such a step would merely be helping her traditional rival, France, gain glory in Mexico. True, the United States had been developing rapidly into a power that might prove to be a serious rival. After careful consideration, England decided that a neutral policy would be the best course. The United States was 3,000 miles away while France was just across the channel — too close for England to deliberately lend support in her acquisition of power.

To Napoleon III; his wife, the Empress Eugenie; Leopold I of Belgium; Maximilian and the Archduchess Charlotte of Austria, this impending break-up of the United States was a welcome event. The Federal navy would be too occupied to offer any resistance in the name of the Monroe Doctrine to the

37 Virginia Mason, The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence of James M. Mason (New York, 1908), p. 254.
French designs in Mexico. Jefferson Davis soon realized that French designs in Mexico were dependent upon whether or not the Confederate States could secure and maintain its independence. It seemed logical to him, therefore, to offer to promote the Maximilian regime in Mexico in return for French recognition of the Confederacy. Davis believed that French recognition of the Confederate States would automatically bring about Britain's recognition.\textsuperscript{38}

There was no question in the mind of Jefferson Davis that England should welcome the opportunity to see a potential rival like the industrial North humiliated. And, with its many textile industries, England would ultimately see the wisdom of recognizing the Confederacy and negotiating a favorable commercial treaty with the Confederate government -- a treaty which would keep English textile industries supplied with the raw cotton they needed.

Despite much vacillation, Napoleon never changed from the position he took early in 1861. It was reported in a dispatch from Yancy and Mann, July 15, 1861, that the French emperor would leave any decision regarding recognition in the hands of the British cabinet. In this same dispatch, it was reported that the governments of Spain, Belgium, and Denmark favored friendliness toward the Confederacy, but out of deference for the larger European powers, France and England, they would not take the initiative in recognizing the

\textsuperscript{38}Hendricks, pp. 113, 114.
independence of the Confederate States of America until England and France did so.\textsuperscript{39}

When the Confederate State Department learned of the attitudes of the Spanish, Danish, and Belgian governments, it was more imperative than ever that Confederate diplomacy be directed toward inducing recognition from France and/or England. The logical approach seemed to be to concentrate on France via Mexico. Mexico was to become a focal point of Confederate diplomatic activities for several reasons. It was the only neutral country which could serve as an ideal loophole in the federal blockade. Large orders of war supplies could be furnished by Mexico. In addition, contraband from Europe could be transmitted to the Confederacy by way of Mexico.

In 1861, it was hoped that Mexico might be induced to recognize the Confederacy. The theory underlying this hope was that recognition by Mexico might embroil her in a war with the United States and thus become an ally of the Confederacy. After 1862, the major aim of the Confederate diplomacy in this sphere was to manipulate Mexico as a pawn on the chessboard of Napoleon III, with the ultimate hope of forcing Napoleon into an active alliance with the South.\textsuperscript{40}

Confederate leaders also cherished the hope of ultimate absorption of Mexico. A few months after Civil War had

\textsuperscript{39}Yancy and Mann to Toombs, July 15, 1861, James D. Richardson, ed., \textit{A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy} (Nashville, 1905), II, 42, 43.

\textsuperscript{40}Owsley, pp. 88, 89.
commenced, a Mexican governor who held control of two of the frontier states proposed annexing them to the Confederate States and requested a few troops from Texas in order to carry out this proposal. Jefferson Davis declined the offer. Although he favored annexation eventually, he felt that attention should be concentrated on other matters first.⁴¹

The primary task at this time was to plan what tactics should be employed to obtain favorable commercial agreements in Mexico and possible recognition. Many factors had to be considered. For example, the traditional attitude of Mexico toward the South was one of suspicion and distrust because the expansion movement of the 1850's, which threatened Mexican territory, had been largely the ambitious plans of Southern leaders.⁴² Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845 chiefly through the efforts of Southern slaveholders. The resulting War with Mexico was eagerly greeted by Southerners who desired to annex all of Mexico. Although all of Mexico was not annexed, a large portion was added to the territory of the United States to become the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, plus parts of Colorado and Utah. Unsuccessful in gaining all of Mexico, many disappointed and restless Northerners and Southerners began to lead filibustering


⁴²Thompson, pp. 103, 104.
expeditions into Mexican territory.\textsuperscript{43} Such was William Walker who set himself up as the President-Dictator of Nicaragua in 1854.\textsuperscript{44}

Even during the administration of President Buchanan, the United States Mexican policy sought to gain more Mexican land. John Forsyth, United States Minister to Mexico, drew up a treaty under which Mexico would receive a fifteen million dollar loan to liquify some of the United States and European claims held against Mexico. Certain custom duties were to be mortgaged as security for this loan. Forsyth had in mind that the real effect of such a loan would enable the United States to obtain hold upon Mexican soil and at the same time drive out any European powers. The treaty, however, was never ratified.\textsuperscript{45}

France and Spain had long harbored a desire to annex Mexico and had been threatening intervention for years, stating they wished only to exact settlement for damage claims.\textsuperscript{46} Indeed, an avowed fear of European intervention was often used as a cloak to disguise expansionist designs on the part of many Americans. Yet, European intervention in Mexico did not actually materialize until near the end of the year 1861.\textsuperscript{47}

---

\textsuperscript{43} Rippy, p. 96.  
\textsuperscript{44} Owsley, pp. 89, 90.  
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 90, 91.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 91.  
\textsuperscript{47} Rippy, pp. 29, 30.
careful consideration by the Confederate State Department in order to determine how it could be of advantage to the Confederacy.

Of utmost importance in determining the manner of approach in Mexico, was an analysis of the various factions within Mexico, and negotiate with that party which would best serve the Confederate government's plan to obtain recognition from France. Mexico was in the midst of a series of revolutions resulting primarily from the conflict between two rival factions: the Church Party and the Liberal Party. Mexican independence was attained only after forty years of almost continuous revolution. From 1822 to 1867, the form of government underwent nine changes while thirty-nine different administrations had, at one time or another, succeeded in gaining the governing power. The contest for power was usually accomplished by violence. An administration remained in power only so long as it held superior physical strength over its rival factions. In other words, as long as the administration held control of the military, it remained in power. The two main parties or factions were the Conservatives, composed primarily of the clergy, whose aim was to establish a highly centralized government or even a monarchy, and the Liberal Party, whose members were sometimes called Radicals or Federalists. They desired to establish in Mexico a federal

48 Owsley, pp. 91, 92.
republican form of government. Selfishness and greed for power characterized the leaders of both factions, and this served only to complicate the domestic situation still further. 49

The ruthless Santa Anna, who had been dictator of Mexico at least six times during the period 1829-1859, aroused much opposition in 1854 by his sale of Mexican territory. 50 On March 1, 1854, a group of liberals succeeded in arousing sufficient opposition to oust Santa Anna. The liberals, holding the reins of power, drew up a republican constitution. An election was held in which Ignacio Comonfort was elected president. Comonfort, however, possessed a compromising nature. In an attempt to conciliate both factions, he dissolved the congress and set aside the constitution. The result was a far cry from peaceful conciliation. Instead, Mexico again found herself in the throes of insurrection and disorder. 51 The liberal party, January 22, 1858, gave up allegiance to Comonfort and installed Benito P. Juárez as president. Thereafter, Mexico had two governments. One government had its headquarters in Mexico City and the other one operated from Vera Cruz. Both governments, needless to say, were in constant conflict with each other. 52

49Rippy, p. 33.

50Egon C. Corti, Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico (New York, 1929), I, 15, 16.

51Rippy, p. 168.

52Edgar W. Turlington, Mexico and Her Foreign Creditors (New York, 1930), p. 113.
From 1854 to 1861, agents of the Conservative or Clerical Party, in order to obtain additional support, financial and otherwise, were seeking out a monarch in Europe who would be willing to rule Mexico as a kingdom. In Mexico City, the clergy and conservatives elected Zuloaga to the Presidency.

Benito Juárez, leader of the Liberal Party, was driven from one city to another until at last he established headquarters at Vera Cruz. The Juárez government was recognized by the United States as the legitimate government of Mexico.

The civil war which was being waged between adherents of the federal form of government and those under the dictatorship regime, had its international repercussions as well as reaping internal devastation and disorder. The United States government supported Juárez while the European powers favored the Centralists at Mexico City.

Juárez, throughout the period of European intervention, although lacking the military strength of the Centralists and their European supporters, did have the support and confidence of the common people as well as the moral backing of the federal government of the United States.

Benito Pablo Juárez was the Mexican leader destined to become known as the "Abraham Lincoln of Mexico." Not only did he lead the fight for the amortization of church property,

---

53 Hippy, p. 40.  
54 Corti, p. 24.  
55 Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 46.
but he led in the reorganization of the laws and financing; the building of roads; reformation of the tax system; developing agriculture and mining; and establishing schools.\textsuperscript{56} Juárez was a staunch federalist and strongly opposed the burden of ecclesiastical powers and privileges which the Centralists wished to maintain. The clergy owned vast amounts of land, controlled the credit and were exempt from payment of taxes.\textsuperscript{57}

It is small wonder that they wished to maintain the status quo!

From this very brief resume of conditions in Mexico, it is obvious that if the State Department of the Confederate States of America were to win the friendship, arrange commercial relations, and perhaps secure the alliance of Mexico, the utmost in tact, diplomacy and statesmanship would have to be employed. It was decided that overtures to Mexico should be directed to the Clerical Party. Although this faction did not have the strength in numbers that its rival possessed, this was the group which was cooperating with Napoleon and thus held more promise as a means of enticing Napoleon III to extend recognition to the Confederacy.

\textsuperscript{56} George Creel, \textit{The People Next Door} (New York, 1926), pp. 206, 208.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., pp. 212, 213.
CHAPTER II

DEBUT

One of the first official duties of Robert Toombs, Secretary of State, was to appoint a representative to the Mexican government. Following the recommendation of John Forsyth, Colonel John T. Pickett was duly appointed Special Agent of the Confederacy to Mexico City and was so notified by the Department of State May 17, 1861.¹

According to the instructions given Colonel Pickett, he was to communicate with the government of the Republic of Mexico and convince that government of the Confederate government's sincere desire to cultivate amicable relations. After explaining that the Southern states separated from the Union and established themselves as a separate and independent nation in order to secure and maintain their liberties, Pickett was to persuade Mexico of the desirability of concluding a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with the Confederate States of America. It was suggested that Pickett remind the Mexican government that their interests and the interests of the Southern states were homogeneous. Both nations were engaged in agricultural and mining pursuits. Mexico's peonage system and the South's institution of slavery also had much

in common. Pickett was also instructed to point out that the ability to buy the cheapest goods and employ the lowest freight rates would be advantageous to both Mexico and the Confederate states. If any merchants and shipowners were interested in privateering, Pickett was given the authority to grant letters of marque and reprisal.²

Would this man whom Jefferson Davis had approved to represent the Confederate government at Vera Cruz be able to handle this delicate diplomatic mission? From a brief glance at Pickett's past activities and personal character, it is apparent that the Confederate State Department had little understanding as to the real situation in Mexico. Pickett was an overbearing, tactless adventurer, utterly lacking in the statesmanship of diplomacy. He had been a participant in the filibustering activities against Cuba and one of those men who had plotted for the annexation of Mexico during the 1840's. Although Pickett was not lacking in foresight, his egotism and tactlessness nullified any profitable accomplishments that might have accrued from his activities in Mexico. Pickett was no stranger to Mexico. He had served as the United States consul at Vera Cruz for several years, but because, without instructions, he had recognized the Juárez government in 1858, rather than the Comonfort government,

President Buchanan had dismissed him. President Buchanan later reappointed Pickett to this post as United States consul after he had decided to recognize the liberal government headed by Benito Juárez.\textsuperscript{3}

It had long been Pickett's dream to see Mexico annexed to the United States. When the Southern states had separated from the Union and began formulating their own foreign policy, based on winning the friendship and support of Mexico, Pickett hoped to see Mexico annexed to the Southern Confederacy. In a letter to John Forsyth of Alabama, March 13, 1861, Pickett states, "that the destiny of the Confederacy lay to the Southward, in Mexico and Central America, and that everything must be done to checkmate the designs of the United States which lay in that direction . . . . \textsuperscript{4}

Although John T. Pickett had long experience in Mexican affairs, was skilled in speaking the Spanish language, and was acquainted with various Mexican public officials,\textsuperscript{5} contrary to what one would expect, these qualifications did not contribute to a successful mission. Pickett's reputation as an expansionist and filibusterer was no secret in Mexico. This fact naturally hampered any success Pickett might have had as a diplomatic agent of the Confederate States of America.

Pickett's first official act upon arriving in Vera Cruz was to seek an interview, on June 3, with Don Ignacio de la

\textsuperscript{3}Owsley, pp. 92-3. \textsuperscript{4}ibid., p. 94. \textsuperscript{5}Hendricks, p. 119.
Llave, governor of the state of Vera Cruz. Vera Cruz, although theoretically within the jurisdiction of the Juárez government, was in practice virtually an independent state. So also were the border states of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila which were under the governorship of Vidaurre. Governor Llave exhibited a friendly attitude toward the Confederacy, but he was suspicious of the actual intentions of that government because of the activities of Southern expansionists in the past. Therefore, Llave informed John Pickett that both Federal and Confederate vessels would be treated alike. He would take no sides. Meeting with no real success in Vera Cruz, Pickett proceeded on to Mexico City where, much to his disgust, he found public opinion favored the North.  

The public reaction in Mexico City so irritated Pickett that he became very indiscreet in his conduct. More and more frequently he would, in a fit of temper, utter very tactless statements. The ultimate effect was to undermine the Confederate cause in Mexico. One of the several unwise statements Pickett made which alienated citizens and officials of the Juárez government included such as the following. When queried whether his mission in Mexico was to gain recognition from Mexico, he replied that his primary mission was "to recognize Mexico -- provided I can find a government that will stand still long enough."  

---

6 Owsley, p. 98.  
7 Thompson, p. 106.
The reaction to statements such as the above was such that Pickett decided to become more cautious. He sought and received an interview with Foreign Minister Zamacona.⁸ Pickett seemed to feel this interview had been quite successful and he transmitted a message to Secretary of State Toombs stating that he had succeeded in establishing friendly and confidential relations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pickett further reported that he felt the material objects of his mission might have been accomplished by this time except for the fact that a new revolution was about to occur in Mexico. Already England and France had severed diplomatic relations with Mexico.⁹

Actually, the assurances of friendship and neutrality which Pickett had received from the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zamacona, were but a stall. Juárez had instructed his foreign minister what to say. It was Juárez's intention to keep on good terms with the Confederate government until the United States had completed a proposed treaty which would give Juárez financial aid.¹⁰

Thomas Corwin, the Lincoln government's diplomatic agent in Mexico, was a thorn in the side of John Pickett. Unlike the reception given Pickett, Corwin had been warmly received.¹¹

⁸ Owsley, p. 100.
¹⁰ Owsley, p. 100.
¹¹ Hendricks, p. 120.
The Mexican government had harbored a suspicion toward Pickett because of his reputation, so they immediately felt that Corwin was the friend they should rely upon. In addition, Thomas Corwin and the United States Secretary of State, William Seward, had conducted a good propaganda campaign in Mexico prior to the arrival of John Pickett in Mexico City. Indeed, this campaign had worked so well, that when the Mexican Congress acted upon the request that Federal troops be permitted to pass from California to Arizona across Sonora, the request was granted by a unanimous vote. The members of the Mexican Congress felt they should not only permit the Union this privilege of transit across Mexican soil, but should even enter into a treaty with the United States so as to prevent further aggression from the South.\textsuperscript{12}

Pickett had been negotiating for and had received an interview with Foreign Minister Zamacona before he heard about this new decree permitting Union troops to cross over Mexican territory. When Pickett heard about this latest action of the Mexican Congress, his reaction was typical of his hot-headed nature. He announced that if the Mexican government did not annul this decree, Tamaulipas would be lost in sixty days. In addition, Pickett officially notified the Mexican government that its action would probably lead to an invasion of the North Mexican states by Confederate forces.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12}Owsley, p. 113. \textsuperscript{13}J. Fred Rippy, p. 233.
Obviously, the Juárez government was greatly insulted by such remarks and Corwin, Pickett's bitter rival, was very adept at utilizing the indiscreet remarks and conduct of Pickett to his own advantage in carrying out his mission for the United States State Department. While Pickett fussed and fumed that internal conditions in Mexico made diplomatic negotiations practically impossible, Corwin increased his influence in Mexico and won the friendship of the Juárez government and its people. Pickett's actions only increased Mexico's innate suspicions of Southern aggression.\textsuperscript{14}

On July 17, 1861, Juárez had issued a decree suspending payment of the foreign debt. This decree resulted in Britain and France suspending diplomatic relations with Mexico and in placing Mexico in a very undesirable position in the eyes of the world.\textsuperscript{15} Even prior to this date, June 29, to be exact, Corwin had written to Seward about Mexico's financial stress. He reported that Mexico was exhausted by forty years of almost uninterrupted civil war; that England was pressing for the payment of 62,000,000 pesos due British subjects; and France was urging payment on the 50,000,000 pesos which they had loaned the Zuloaga and Maramon governments during the struggle which had resulted in victory for Benito Juárez. Corwin hoped to persuade the Union government to make Mexico

\textsuperscript{14} Thompson, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{15} Ralph Roeder, \textit{Juárez and His Mexico}, I (New York, 1947), 319-20.
a loan in order to enable the Mexican government to take steps to prevent its subjugation and partition by one or more European countries. The amount due annually on the Mexican debt, Corwin reported, was less than 2,000,000 pesos and this sum the United States might guarantee for a period of five years in return for public lands and mineral rights in Lower California, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa. Corwin, too, had his eye out for Mexican territory which could be annexed to the United States, but he was more discreet about it than Pickett. Corwin figured that some day these Mexican lands would undoubtedly be ceded to the United States.

President Lincoln authorized Corwin to negotiate such a treaty under which the United States would pay the interest at 3 per cent on the funded debt of Mexico (62,000,000 pesos) for five years with the public lands and mineral rights in Lower California, Sonora and Sinaloa to be set aside as collateral. These lands and rights were to become the property of the United States at the end of six years in default of payment.

Although this treaty was never passed by the United States Congress but was tabled throughout the war, its existence had the effect of holding out hope to the Juárez

---

16 Edgar W. Turlington, Mexico and Her Foreign Creditors (New York, 1930), p. 133.

17 Ibid., p. 136.

18 James Morton Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York, 1932), pp. 282-83.
government and of circumventing any diplomatic success on
the part of the Confederacy with the Juárez government in
Mexico.

Pickett attempted to prevent any such treaty arrange-
ment which would stabilize Mexico. He hoped for foreign in-
terference in Mexico such as that threatened from England
and France because this would furnish the opportunity for
filibustering in northern Mexico. In an attempt to counter-
act Corwin's negotiations, Pickett warned the Juárez govern-
ment that the Confederate states would never consent to any
sale of land to a government which was unfriendly toward the
Confederacy. To the Confederate Secretary of State, Toombs,
Pickett suggested that the Confederates should take military
possession of Monterrey and hold all that area until all the
controversial issues with the United States had been adjusted.19
"Our people," said Pickett, "must have an outlet to the
Pacific . . . . "20

Obviously, it was useless for Pickett to court the Juárez
government. Hence he was forced to look elsewhere for Mexican
aid in the form of arms and supplies, the extradition of crim-
inals and deserters, and the nullification of the privilege
for the United States troops and supplies to cross over Mexi-
can territory. Since the northern states on the frontier
virtually ignored the Mexican union and operated virtually as

---
19Ibid., p. 283. 20Rippy, p. 233.
independent states, Pickett capitalized on this fact to enter into negotiations with the frontier leaders. 21

At the same time, Pickett began to court the Conservative or Church party which favored the establishment of an empire under a European prince. Pickett calculated this party would soon come back into power under the European allies who were preparing to intervene. Actually, Pickett was acting prematurely in courting the Church party. Overtures to the party proved to be futile so Pickett ultimately returned to his indiscreet conduct. 22 He had already notified Secretary of State Toombs that President Zuloaga, of the Conservative government, the clergy and the old army chiefs would gladly ally themselves with the Confederate States. Thus he had placed the Confederate government in an embarrassing position as well as himself. Rather than accept the responsibility of his failure, Pickett compensated for his feeling of guilt by insulting remarks to those with whom he came in contact. His conduct culminated in a fist fight with a "Yankee" named Bennett. For this undiplomatic conduct, he was placed under arrest for "assault and battery." Despite his insistence that he should be accorded the right of "diplomatic immunity," he remained a prisoner for thirty days and secured release only by bribing the court. 23

---

21 Ibid., p. 234.  
22 Owsley, pp. 103-104.  
23 Hendricks, pp. 117, 132.
Thus for the seven months Pickett had spent in Mexico City, he had accomplished little. In fact, he had actually undermined the Confederate cause by playing into the hands of Thomas Corwin, the Union diplomatic agent. Only one interview had been obtained. This was with Foreign Minister Zamacona and was a personal reception, not an official interview. President Juárez never would receive Pickett.\textsuperscript{24}

The discomforting knowledge that his mission in Mexico was proving to be a miserable failure was further substantiated by a letter from the State Department informing Pickett that only one of his many dispatches had been received, one dated June 15, 1861. The puzzled Pickett began to investigate the situation. At Tampico, Don Santiago Tapia, Commander in Chief of the State of Tamaulipas, handled all mail from Mexico to the Confederate States. Much to his dismay, Pickett discovered that Don Santiago had been working for the American Minister in Mexico and had intercepted all such mail. Pickett's secret communications had been sent to Juárez, who after reading them, had transmitted them on to the United States Minister.\textsuperscript{25} The Federal government had the advantage of knowing every move and every intrigue made by Pickett while the Confederacy knew practically nothing about what Pickett had done during his tenure in Mexico.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 123-125.

\textsuperscript{25}Browne to Pickett, November 30, 1861, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 302. See also: Hendricks, pp. 129-30.
It is no wonder that the Juárez government had no respect for Pickett after they learned the contents of these confidential documents. For example, in one dispatch, Pickett remarked that "Mexicans are a race of degenerate monkeys . . . . A nation in a state of moral, political, and financial anarchy." In another dispatch he commented, "a million or so of money judiciously applied would purchase our recognition by the government. The Mexicans are not over scrupulous and it is not our mission to reform their morals at this precise period. Every Mexican has his price." These and other insults certainly contributed to Pickett's failure as diplomatic envoy to Mexico. Of course, if Juárez had had the same opportunity to read the dispatches of Corwin to the Union Secretary of State, he might not have been so enthusiastic about the overtures of the Federal government.

Pickett rewrote all his communications and carried them personally to the postmaster of New Orleans, Dr. Riddle. These precautions were likewise futile, however, because Dr. Riddle was also a spy in the employ of the Federal government and these duplicate documents were forwarded to Seward, Secretary of State, in Washington, D. C.

Pickett returned to the Confederacy in December, 1861, but was never able to get back into the good graces of Jefferson Davis. His failure to win the friendship or neutrality

---

26 Hendricks, pp. 130-32.  
27 Ibid., p. 137.
of the Juárez government was due not only to Mexican suspicion of the South, but to Pickett's lack of diplomacy, tact, patience, understanding, and his inability to capitalize on situations and counteract the more diplomatic conduct of Corwin. Probably the only constructive contribution made by John T. Pickett to history is that in some unknown way Pickett obtained all the diplomatic correspondence of the Confederacy which were, after the war, sold to the Federal government for $75,000.

As the year 1861 drew to a close, it was obvious that the Union minister, Corwin, had chalked up the first round. He had succeeded in placing the Southern diplomatic activities on the defensive rather than the offensive in Mexico. Corwin's success was transient, however; events were already leading toward a breakdown of peaceful United States-Mexico relations.

In the forty years that Mexico had been free from Spanish rule, there had been thirty-six changes of government and seventy-three presidents in Mexico. Juárez had managed to win the upper hand by January, 1861, but there were still Conservative generals such as Marquez and Mejia who continued to wage guerrilla warfare against Juárez. As a consequence, foreigners in Mexico suffered injury both in person and

28 Owsley, pp. 107-08.  
29 Hendricks, p. 138.  
property.\textsuperscript{31} By 1861, European nations were becoming quite insistent upon payment of claims to their nationals. In addition, with the United States involved in Civil War, the European nations felt they could even intervene in Mexico without interference from the United States and they would have the assistance of several of the Centralists (Conservatives) who were seeking aid abroad.\textsuperscript{32}

Such seeking of foreign intervention was not without precedent. As early as 1854, Santa Anna had realized that if he were to retain his dictatorship, he could no longer rely on his own resources. He thought he might be able to persuade some European prince to become monarch of Mexico. Since such a monarch would have little knowledge of Mexican affairs, Santa Anna felt that this monarch would be forced to rely upon Santa Anna to actually carry on the responsibilities of the dictatorship. But at least this way, Santa Anna figured, he would have the troops of the European monarch for support.\textsuperscript{33} Thus Santa Anna had participated in intrigues abroad to interest some monarch in accepting the crown of Mexico.

During the political struggle between the Conservative Zuloaga and the Liberal Benito Juárez in 1857, one young Conservative, José Hidalgo visited Paris where he had a talk with the French Empress Eugenie. Hidalgo told her about the unhappy conditions in Mexico. He suggested that the only

\textsuperscript{31}Corti, p. 94. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{32}Cline, p. 47. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{33}Corti, p. 32.
way to save the Latin race and Catholicism in the New World was to set up a monarchy. Hidalgo received a promise from the Empress Eugenie to speak to Emperor Napoleon about the matter.\(^{34}\) Napoleon III was quite in accord with such an idea but realized that no action could be taken as yet because it would arouse not only the jealousy of England and Spain, but the opposition of the United States who would vigorously re-assert the Monroe Doctrine.\(^{35}\) However, Napoleon began to watch very closely events in Mexico, patiently biding his time until an opportunity should present itself when he could put into effect this idea suggested by Hidalgo.

Meanwhile, the Juárez government was busily engaged in a struggle to overthrow the rival Conservative government under Zuloaga. Juárez succeeded in obtaining the upper hand in January, 1861, and began the task of trying to restore order in Mexico. Then on July 17, 1861, the Mexican Congress, lacking funds, passed an act suspending payment on the foreign debt for two years.\(^{36}\) This was just the opportunity the European countries had been awaiting -- a pretext for intervention. Napoleon convinced the governments of England and Spain that an armed expedition should be sent to Mexico to force the Mexican government to fulfill its financial obligations. The three governments entered into an agreement to that effect in October. Belgium and Austria did not sign

the Convention, but did promise aid. All three European
powers had different reasons for this action. England wished
to secure redress for actual injuries and had no sympathy
for the monarchical intrigues of Spain and France. Napoleon
III desired a ruler, chosen by him and under his control, to
be set up in Mexico. Spain would have liked to regain
some of her former possessions. The United States was in-
vited to join in this expedition but emphatically refused.
Realizing the Lincoln government was too preoccupied with
the Civil War raging in the United States to render any ef-
fective opposition to the expedition, the three European
powers sent their troop ships on to Mexico where they anchored
near Vera Cruz, January 2, 1862.

It was not long before the three countries quarreled be-
cause of their divergent interests. When England and Spain
learned the real purpose underlying the French expedition,
they hastened to sign a satisfactory agreement with the
Juárez government and to withdraw their forces. Thus Napoleon
was left a free hand to attempt to consummate his ultimate
desire.

---

37 José Luis Blasio, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico (New
Haven, 1934), p. xvi.

38 Bemis, VII, 105.

39 George Creel, The People Next Door (New York, 1926),
p. 225.

40 Bemis, VII, 106.
Success of the Napoleonic aim in Mexico (the overthrow of the Mexican Republic and the creation of a Hapsburg Empire), depended upon the fate of the Confederacy. Although public opinion in France favored the North, Napoleon III's foreign policy was fashioned around the success or failure of the Jefferson Davis regime.\(^4\) Even the future of this Second Empire in France was not secure, Napoleon realized, because it was based primarily upon the great name of his predecessor. Its existence demanded adventure and expansion in the name of "Gloirie." Eugenie, Napoleon III's wife, had different reasons for advocating intervention in Mexico. In her opinion, the greatest sin of the Mexicans was their warfare on the Papacy, particularly Juarez's decree for the secularization of religion and the confiscation of church property. Eugenie fanatically desired to right this wrong and considered that French domination in Mexico was the only way to accomplish this.\(^5\)

Napoleon had some misgivings regarding his Mexican project. He realized that United States was too strong for him to act without the aid of England, and hesitated to take any overt action without having the support of England.\(^6\)

But England had no intention of getting involved in any such intrigue which would only increase the power of her traditional rival, France. Such an undertaking was contrary

\(^4\)Hendricks, p. 306. \(^5\)Ibid., pp. 110-11. 
\(^6\)Corti, p. 94.
to the Monroe Doctrine which England had helped promulgate. This doctrine had protected England's commercial relations with the South American Republics in the 1820's and it might prove useful again at some future time. English statesmen also realized that with the superior manpower and material resources of the North, the defeat of the Southern states was only a matter of time. Another factor that had to be considered was if England did go along with Napoleon and his Mexican project, what safeguard was there that the Northern states might not come to an agreement with the South and look for compensation in Canada. Thus, even though England had no great love for the United States which had separated from the Empire in the eighteenth century and now seemed to be increasing in power to the point of being a commercial rival and a possible threat to the English possession of Canada, and despite the Mason-Slidell incident, England adopted a "hands-off" policy. 44

That there was utter lack of understanding of England and France on the part of the Confederacy is clearly obvious. From the beginning of the war until 1864, Jefferson Davis formulated his foreign policy on the hope of European intervention. 45 After French intervention in Mexico, the Confederates began seeking French recognition and support. 46 It

44 Ibid., p. 129. 45 J. J. Eckenrode, p. 135.
46 Rippy, p. 232.
was not that Jefferson Davis desired to see a French monarchy in Mexico, but perhaps in the back of his mind, he visualized that if France allied itself with the Confederacy in return for Confederate approval of a French puppet government in Mexico, England would likewise come to the aid of France and the United States would find itself in the throes of a World War. This would take much of the load off the shoulders of the Southern states. They could sit back and wait for the United States to become too weak to cause much disturbance over the separate existence of the Southern states. Meanwhile, England and France would become war-weary and then the Southern states, for the price of separate government recognition and independence from the North and a superior position, would aid the Union to bring war with England and France to an end and at the same time add Mexico to the territory of the Southern regime.\textsuperscript{47}

In the meantime, the Davis government continued its negotiations with the upper Mexican states. In addition to special missions, Jefferson Davis dispatched several agents to the border states of Mexico. One of the most successful of these agents was Juan A. Quinterro who, although born in Cuba, had spent many years in Mexico.\textsuperscript{48} Quinterro was sent on a temporary mission to Mexico on May 22, 1861, and was

\textsuperscript{47} See Owsley, pp. 123–24, for a contrasting opinion.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 120.
instructed to win the friendship and cooperation of these northern border states which were under the influence of Governor Vidalurri.\footnote{Toombs to Quinterro, May 22, 1861, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 217.}

Quinterro immediately won the cooperation of Vidalurri. The latter agreed to use his powerful influence to check the border disturbances and to work out a reciprocal trade agreement with the Confederacy.\footnote{Thompson, p. 106.} When Quinterro reported his success with Vidalurri relative to border protection, and also noted that Vidalurri was anxious to ally himself with the Confederacy, it was decided to confer upon Quinterro a more permanent appointment.\footnote{Rippy, p. 235.} Accordingly, on September 3, 1861, William M. Browne, Assistant Secretary of State, sent a letter to J. A. Quinterro which read as follows:

\begin{quote}
... the report of your recent mission to the governor of New Leon and the accompanying papers have received the entire approval of this Department, and it affords me pleasure to inform you that the President appreciating the skill, prudence, and ability which you displayed in the discharge of your duty, has appointed you confidential agent of this Government in northeastern Mexico, to reside at Monterey ...\footnote{Browne to Quinterro, September 3, 1861, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 253.}
\end{quote}

The Confederate State Department instructed Quinterro to proceed to Monterey where he was to assure the provinces under the influence of Governor Vidalurri that he and the...
Confederate government sympathized with their struggle for self-government. One of the primary objectives of Quinterro's mission was to collect accurate data on population; how this population was divided as to races and classes; products and material resources; amount and value of exports and imports; condition and amount of manufacturing; general social, political, and commercial conditions of the people in these provinces. Quinterro was also instructed to ascertain whether or not the Mexican government had definitely given permission to the United States for the transmittal of troops and supplies across Mexican territory. If so, he was to try and persuade Governor Vidaurre to use his influence to prevent the carrying out of this permission. In the matter of supplies, Quinterro was to investigate the possibility of purchasing small arms, powder, lead, sulphur, saltpeter and other necessary war supplies. 53

Quinterro quickly obtained a promise from Governor Vidaurre that he would not only protest against the passage of Union troops through Nuevo Leon and Coahuila but he would persuade the governors of the other border states to do likewise. 54

53 Browne to Quinterro, September 3, 1861, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 253-54.

54 Browne to Quinterro, December 9, 1861, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 308.
It was wise for both the Confederacy and Governor Vidaurre to encourage friendly relations. Certainly the diplomatic venture with the Juárez government in Mexico City had boomeranged. The diplomatic activities of the Confederate agent, Quinterro, were to be quite successful in the border states of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, and to some degree in Chihuahua and Sonora. The powerful coalition of states under the influence of Governor Vidaurre saw in this close friendship with the Confederate states, an opportunity for further protection against the centralization of the Juárez government. Furthermore, these border states could sell their previously unsalable goods to the Confederacy at enormous prices -- goods they could not sell to the United States. In addition, these border states would also act as middlemen for European goods coming through Matamoros and other border states to the Confederacy. This meant they could collect exhorbitant import and export duties. Thus the border states traded almost exclusively with the Confederacy, and the revenue, which accrued from this trade and upon which the governors of these border states depended, greatly increased.  

Following the failure of Pickett to win the friendship of Juárez, no further attempts were made to court Juárez. Instead, the center of attention in Mexican relations shifted from Mexico City to Monterrey.  

---

55 Owsley, pp. 119-20.  
56 Ibid., p. 122.
Quinterro, who was to prove himself a diplomat of some repute, was cordially received by Governor Vidaurri. The latter opened up channels of communication between the mercantile firms and Quinterro. It was the duty of Quinterro, with the aid of the commanding generals of the Western sub-district of Texas (Generals McCulloch, Bee, Slaughter) to keep open the channels of commerce along the border and to prevent the raids of bandits and renegades from either side of the border. 57

As soon as the channels of trade were opened to Nuevo Leon and Chihuahua, Confederate purchasing agents and contractors swarmed across the border. 58 Individuals from Texas and the surrounding area made personal contracts for supplies from individuals in Mexico. This competition thwarted the Confederacy's main purpose in keeping open this important channel of trade. As Colonel H. E. McCulloch reported to Inspector General S. Cooper on October 17, 1861, cotton and cattle were passing from Texas into Mexico where a large portion of it was being resold to Northern markets for the benefit of the Union Army. 59

Frauds, misunderstandings, reprisals, kept Quinterro busy. The civil war in Mexico began to affect the trade at Matamoros in the province of Tamaulipas. Maximilian ousted Juárez; Juárez ousted Vidaurri; and Vidaurri joined Maximilian, leaving Juárez to control the border states, but despite all this, Quinterro kept the trade going from 1861 to 1863. In 1863, the Union Army took over Brownsville. During the three years that Quinterro resided in Nuevo Leon, he was able to supervise the purchasing of large quantities of lead, sulphur, copper and saltpeter for the South. Thus, no matter whether he was dealing with Vidaurri, Juárez, or Maximilian, all of whom controlled the lower Rio Grande Valley at various times, Quinterro was able to manipulate personnel so as to keep the all-important trade between the border states and the Confederacy in operation.

---

CHAPTER III

CAJOLERY

By March 19, 1862, the incumbents of the first cabinet of the permanent government of the Confederate States of America were made known. Secretary of State portfolio was held by Judah P. Benjamin, George W. Randolph of Virginia became Secretary of War, Stephen R. Mallory of Florida remained as Secretary of the Navy, Christopher G. Memminger of South Carolina was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, John H. Reagan of Texas became Postmaster-General, and Thomas H. Watts of Alabama accepted the post of Attorney-General.¹

As previously mentioned, R. M. T. Hunter resigned as Secretary of State on February 2, 1862, to take a seat in the Senate. William M. Browne assumed the duties of the Secretary of State under the title, Secretary of State ad interim, until Benjamin was appointed Secretary of State on March 18, 1862. Judah P. Benjamin retained Browne as Assistant Secretary of State.²

Benjamin had held the office of Attorney-General in the Provisional government. He was elevated to the post of Secretary of War in September, 1861, following the resignation of Leroy P. Walker after the Battle of Bull Run. In this

¹Patrick, p. 55.  
²Ibid., pp. 101-02.
capacity, Benjamin served seven months. However, he was blamed for the Confederate defeat at Roanoke on February 8, 1862, and, because of the unfavorable publicity, Jefferson Davis transferred him to the office of Secretary of State.​[^3]

Despite occasional interference from the Confederate Congress, Benjamin did have a free hand in the management, operation and policies of the State Department. Benjamin was a shrewd and able man, well qualified to handle the responsibilities of the State Department. His state papers clearly reflect orderly thinking although at times, such as when he became aware of Napoleon's chicanery, some of his official letters were couched in rather undiplomatic terms.​[^4] His affairs were always in order and he operated his office and routine business on a very efficient basis. Unlike Jefferson Davis, Benjamin delegated responsibility to his assistants and allowed them plenty of latitude in which to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Benjamin's ability to make quick decisions, his keen mind, retentive memory, his ability to be a "jack-of-all trades," all contributed to his becoming the right-hand man of Jefferson Davis.​[^5]

In addition to his State Department duties, Judah P. Benjamin also aided Davis in drafting many public documents. He helped set up the Hampton Roads Peace Commission and

[^3]: Hendricks, pp. 182-84.  
[^4]: Patrick, pp. 194-98.  
[^5]: Ibid., pp. 201-02.
suggested the use of Negroes in various military capacities. But one of his greatest assets was knowing how to handle people. Benjamin would get to know the wants, weaknesses, strong qualities, etc., of those individuals with whom he came in contact. He would then adapt his conduct accordingly. Yet, strangely enough, Judah P. Benjamin was one of the most controversial figures in Civil War history; he never was a very popular man. Some of this unpopularity may have been due to jealousy on the part of those who felt envious of his position with Jefferson Davis. Prejudice over the fact that Benjamin was a Jew might also explain, in part, the contempt that many of his contemporaries had for him. Benjamin also refused to leave any papers that might be used for biographical purposes. This only gave critics additional cause to attack him. Benjamin explained his action saying:

I have never kept a diary, or retained a copy of a letter written to me. I have read so many American biographies which reflected only the passions and prejudices of their writers, that I do not want to leave behind me letters and documents to be used in such a work about myself.  

Recent historians, however, now refer to Judah Philip Benjamin as "the brain of the Confederacy," despite the fact he was unable to accomplish a single objective of Confederate policy. His efforts to obtain recognition of the Confederacy,  

---

7Ibid., pp. 123-24.
foreign intervention, break-up of the federal blockade, and trade treaties failed, not because of errors on his part, but because every diplomatic move was stalemated by such things as surplus cotton, the diplomatic situation in Europe, and Confederate defeats at crucial moments.  

When J. P. Benjamin assumed the duties of Secretary of State, he still clung to a firm faith in the power of King Cotton, which formed the nucleus of the Confederacy's foreign policy. Like his predecessors, Benjamin hoped to obtain from foreign nations recognition of the Confederacy as a separate and independent nation. Benjamin's method was to emphasize the ineffectiveness of the federal blockade and also to argue that recognition meant peace, not war, on the grounds that as long as foreign nations refused to recognize the Southern Confederacy, the North would continue to believe that the conquest of the South was possible. 

From the time he was inaugurated as Secretary of State, Benjamin endeavored to get France and England to act separately in recognizing the Confederacy. He instructed John Slidell, Confederate agent in France, to propose a commercial convention under which French products would be admitted into the Confederacy free of duty if Napoleon III would break the federal blockade. The Emperor Napoleon, however, was afraid to accept the Confederate proposal, but he continued to lead the

---

8 Patrick, pp. 155, 200-01. 9 Ibid., pp. 183-84.
Confederate agents into thinking he would eventually recognize the Confederacy. Napoleon would not act without the support of England nor did he dare do anything that would offend England. He feared intervention on behalf of the Confederacy would cause the United States to declare war on France. This he could not afford: not with the rising spirit of nationalism in Germany, his unpopularity with the French masses, and the future of his project in Mexico at stake.  

From 1862 on, it is impractical to consider Confederate relations with Mexico without considering the European situation as well. Capitalizing on Napoleon's interest in Mexico, the Confederate State Department revised its policy. Mexico became the pivotal point around which the Confederate State Department's entire foreign policy was to be formulated.

Napoleon III's designs in Mexico were quite obvious. He realized, however, that his Mexican expedition would be jeopardized by any rupture with the United States and such a rupture might result should he recognize the Confederacy.  

At the same time, he was aware of the fact that the Mexican empire (under a French puppet ruler) would stand a better chance against two rival republics than against a united republic pledged to uphold the Monroe Doctrine. His policy was formulated on a plan to play both ends against the middle.

---

10Ibid., pp. 186, 188.

The Confederacy likewise saw pleasant prospects should the French establish a regime in Mexico with the support of French troops. They visualized free transportation of contraband goods plus the privilege of Franco-Mexican ships conveying much needed cargoes into Wilmington and Charleston.\textsuperscript{12}

Although Napoleon dared not take any drastic steps to help the Southern states, he used every means, short of open war, to aid them -- such as in building ships for the Confederate Navy. The United States Minister to Paris, John Bigelow, had an idea that ships for the Confederacy were being constructed in France, but he could not prove it. He therefore resorted to a trick. He wrote a letter, which as he hoped, was intercepted. From this letter, the Emperor Napoleon learned (what he thought was true), that privateers and armed cruisers would be sent to the Gulf of Mexico with letters of marque from Benito Juárez. These ships were to direct operations against French commerce. Immediately, Napoleon stopped the building of Confederate ships and hastily assured the United States of his friendship.\textsuperscript{13}

Undaunted, Benjamin continued his plan of trying to persuade England and France to ignore the federal blockade and to extend recognition to the Confederacy. He supplied the

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 207.

\textsuperscript{13} Willis F. Johnson, \textit{America's Foreign Relations} (New York, 1921), II, 27.
Confederate agents in these two countries with long lists of statistics pointing out the ineffectiveness of the blockade. These agents were also instructed to warn the governments of England and France that between the South's embargo on cotton and the federal blockade, these countries would find themselves in the midst of a panic and perhaps revolution. The cotton districts of France and England, especially England, did suffer a temporary depression in 1862. However, surplus cloth on hand gradually eased the situation and after 1862 conditions in England and France improved. The South's hope of bringing about intervention from England and France on the basis of King Cotton collapsed.  

The Confederacy's embargo and the federal blockade played only a minor role in the depression in England and France. Private speculation undermined the effect of the South's embargo and the federal blockade was little more than a paper blockade. During the first year of the war, the blockade was practically non-existent and even during the next four years, federal cruisers were unable to stop more than one ship out of four either on the Atlantic or the Gulf coast. Neither England nor France was willing to break the federal blockade. Since they were not very seriously affected by it, they saw no need to risk the possibility of war with the United States.

14Owsley, pp. 154, 165, 562, 563.

15Thomas Cooper DeLeon, Four Years in Rebel Capitals (Mobile, 1890), p. 279. See also: Owsley, pp. 281-82.
Public opinion in France also caused Napoleon to hesitate in extending recognition to the Confederacy. The general attitude on the part of the French people favored a united America which made it rather dangerous for Napoleon to take any steps that might lead to armed conflict with the United States. This was one of the main reasons why the French expedition to Mexico did not have the support or approval of the masses. From July, 1862, until actual withdrawal of French troops, public opinion, as recorded in the Procureur Reports, became increasingly more opposed to the Mexican expedition. An example of this feeling is illustrated in the report of Gaulot, Procureur Général, to the Ministry of Justice.

I have already had the honor of telling Your Excellency that the Mexican War was not popular. The latest bulletins have still failed to stir a feeling of patriotism. I am astonished because our Flag flies in the midst of the dangers of that distant expedition and France's honor is involved. Indeed, should news of victory come . . . ., all would applaud. The applause would be still louder if peace were swiftly imposed.

In the meantime, it is regrettable that disquieting stories are circulated. According to them the Emperor was deceived by diplomacy, the (Mexican) people are hostile toward our soldiers, President Juarez is not abandoned by his army, and we are thrown into the midst of all the difficulties of a regular conquest. The letters from our officers seem to substantiate these rumors.16

---

Nevertheless, Napoleon III still felt secure enough during this decade of the sixties to permit this criticism regarding the big question in France, the question of the Mexican project, to be freely pronounced.  

The semi-official papers in France, those reflecting the view of the government, such as the *Constitutional* and the *Patrie*, leaned toward recognition of the Confederacy and were favorable toward the Mexican expedition. But the papers and journals reflecting the popular French opinion such as the *Journal de débats*, the *Opinion Nationale*, and the *Presse*, favored neutrality, sympathized with the North, and consequently were opposed to the Mexican expedition.

England had already decided upon a neutral policy for reasons previously explained. This, too, was what the French people desired. The Confederate government, however, was aware that the French people did not have much to say in what the government did. It was also cognizant of Napoleon's interests in Mexico. Perhaps, the Confederacy could win Napoleon's support by bargaining with him on this Mexican project. Realizing that some means must be found to persuade France to act independently of England, the Confederacy began to concentrate its main efforts on wooing Napoleon. Southern leaders agreed that Napoleon's ambition to establish Mexico

---

17 Frank Edward Lally, *French Opposition to the Mexican Policy of the Second Empire* (Baltimore, 1931), pp. 46, 60.

18 Owsley, p. 85.
as a French vasselage could never be realized unless the South was permanently established as an independent state and was favorable to Napoleon's Mexican endeavors. It was the conviction of the Condeferacy that Napoleon must eventually recognize the Confederacy and, if necessary, intervene on behalf of Southern independence. Thus Slidell in his two interviews with Napoleon in July and October of 1862 and on other occasions, let it be known to Napoleon that the Confederate government would support the Mexican venture in exchange for recognition or intervention.19

Napoleon refused to commit himself regarding the blockade, intervention, or recognition, but continually held out to John Slidell, the Confederate agent in France, false hopes that he might intervene without England.20 But there was always one excuse or another to delay such action. In 1862 it was Garibaldi and the Liberal movement in Italy. In 1863, it was trouble in Poland which Napoleon used as an excuse for not taking action.21

Napoleon's vacillation, plus the attitudes of two French Consular officers, made Benjamin somewhat suspicious of France. In a letter to John Slidell, Confederate agent in Paris, he expressed his opinion that the views and conduct of two French Consular officers were so similar that he feared some


French sponsored plot was being formulated. Monsieur Tabaneille was stationed in Richmond and Monsieur Theron was in Galveston. Although they were not near each other, both men held such similar views, Benjamin feared the French government must have instructed them to persuade Texas to withdraw from the Confederacy. Such action would be of benefit to France. It might be that France wanted Texas to serve as a weak buffer power between the French-Mexican colony and the Confederate states. Another reason France would advocate such action might be to establish its own cotton supply so as not to be outdone by Great Britain who was obtaining cotton from India. Interviews with the two consulars convinced Benjamin that there was actually no foundation to his suspicions.22 The policy of persuading Napoleon III to take separate action in support of the Confederacy was resumed.

Finally, in April, 1862, Benjamin authorized Slidell to offer as additional inducement to Napoleon to take separate action, permission to ship French goods into the Confederacy free of duty. Slidell was also authorized to present Napoleon 100,000 bales of cotton, or as much as it would take, to persuade Napoleon to break the blockade by sending for this cotton.23

Napoleon III found himself in a dilemma. The inducements were certainly tempting. On October 30, 1862, he advised his

22 Benjamin to Slidell, October 17, 1862, Richardson, II; 334, 335, 337.
23 Coulter, p. 90.
Minister of Foreign Affairs to address a proposition to the British and Russian governments to the effect that the three governments unite in a formal mediation of the American War.24 In a note from J. M. Mason, the Confederate agent in London, to J. P. Benjamin, November 8, 1862, he reported: "... it is confidentially asserted that Russia has assented to it . . ."25 However, when the offer was presented to the Lincoln government on February 3, 1863, Seward emphatically declined the proposal.26

While the Confederate agents were concentrating to get Napoleon III to recognize the Confederacy in return for their approval of the French designs in Mexico, conditions in that country were far from peaceful. Lawlessness and anarchy existed over wide regions of Mexico. Only a few members of the Conservative party had joined the French expedition. Where was the large and powerful Monarchial party which was supposed to be on hand to greet the landing of the expedition?27

The disorder that raged throughout Mexico not only impeded the French expedition in Mexico, but made Quinterro's job of getting supplies to the Confederacy increasingly difficult. Border chiefs, such as Juan N. Cortina, Albino López,


26 Foster, p. 383.  
27 Corti, p. 135.
Manuel Ruiz, and José María Carvajal, not only offered inducements to encourage desertion from the Confederate army, but they also organized companies which ravaged Southern commerce coming through the various passes from Mexico into Texas. General Bee, of the Trans-Mississippi District, and Quinterro both appealed to Governor Vidaurre of Tamaulipas to put down these raids and also to defy the decree of non-intercourse with Texas published by Juárez. Governor Vidaurre was eager to cooperate with the Confederate agents because he did not want to lose the profits he was able to accrue from Confederate trade.  

Soon after Governor Vidaurre and Quinterro had reached this agreement, an incident occurred which greatly angered Vidaurre. Carvajal, one of the bandit chiefs who sympathized with Juárez, began stirring up trouble along the Mexican border. Vidaurre discovered that Colonel Ford of the Confederate army had given aid to this renegade. In retaliation, Vidaurre increased the duties on all cotton exported into Mexico in payment for supplies received. This practically doubled the cost of the supplies purchased by the Confederate government. Quinterro hastened to convince Vidaurre that these duties were more injurious to himself than to the Confederacy since it meant the Confederacy would have to curtail its trade relations with the Mexican states. This would

---

28 Rippy, pp. 238-40.
also result in a loss in revenue for Vidaurre's own personal use. Subsequently, Vidaurre repealed some of the duties. 29

During the latter part of the year 1862, Quinterro was kept busy attempting to keep border raids down in order to keep open the much needed channels of commerce between Mexico and the Confederacy. The situation was made more difficult because the administration in Tamaulipas changed so often, it was hard to keep track of the rulers. 30

Under Vidaurre's successor, General Traconis, trouble again marred Confederate commercial relations. The new governor permitted Zapata and other banditti to use Tamaulipas as a base of operations for raids into Texas. Loyal Confederates retaliated by seizing Judge J. E. Davis, the renegade Confederate Hamilton and several others who had helped instigate these raids into Texas. The Confederates seized these men on the Mexican side of the border and brought them back to the Texas side. General Lopez, who had now succeeded General Traconis as the governor of Tamaulipas, urged Juárez to close the frontier until Davis and the others were returned to the Mexican side of the border. The Confederacy was in danger of incurring the hatred of the state of Matamoros in the province of Tamaulipas if it did not comply. Because of the importance of Matamoros in the Confederate trade relations,

---

29 Thompson, pp. 119-120. 30 Owsley, p. 129.
General Bee released all the prisoners. Montgomery, however, had been killed.\textsuperscript{31}

For a few months, all remained quiet along the border. Then General José Maria Cobos crossed over into Brownsville where he began making plans for setting himself up as the governor of Matamoras and ultimately of the province of Tamaulipas. When General N. P. Banks of the Union army began moving upon Brownsville, Cobos collected 200 men, seized the town, and held it until the Union troops arrived. Cobos was subsequently shot by his partner Cortinas when the two were cooperating to take over Matamoras.\textsuperscript{32}

With Cortinas in Matamoras and federal troops in Brownsville, Quinterro had to seek new routes through which supplies for the Confederacy could still be obtained from Mexico. The responsibilities were inordinate for one man. Benjamin decided to send two additional agents to Mexico to help ease the burden handled by Quinterro. On the fifteenth of November, 1862, Richard Fitzpatrick was appointed as Commercial Agent at Matamoras in Tamaulipas. Bernard Avegno was appointed on December 18, as Commercial Agent at Vera Cruz.\textsuperscript{33}

Actually, lack of authority and the problem of communications prevented either of these men from rendering much service. In the case of Fitzpatrick, ill health was a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 133.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., pp. 134-35.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Naval Records, Series 2, III, 136-38.
\end{itemize}
contributing factor in his inability to be of much help. Thus the responsibility of maintaining friendly relations and keeping open the channels of commerce in Mexico and the border states still fell primarily upon the shoulders of Quinterro and the generals commanding the western sub-district of Texas.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite many obstacles, Quinterro continued to do an outstanding job in keeping friendly relations between the Mexican border states and the Confederacy. Regardless of border disturbances and frequent changes in administration in the border states, the channels of trade were kept open not only for the goods purchased from Mexico but also for the goods coming into Mexico from Europe and subsequently destined for the Confederacy.

The Federal government was aware that the blockade was being circumvented and that goods coming in through Matamorcas and the other ports of Mexico were ultimately intended for the Confederacy. Yet, it could not take any direct action because technically it was trade between Mexico and another neutral country in Europe.

Another obstacle in the smooth operation of commercial relations with Mexico developed within the jurisdiction of the Confederate government. The military supplies needed by the Confederacy from Mexico and other European nations could

\textsuperscript{34} Thompson, p. 118.
only be purchased with cotton. But cotton became scarce because of speculation and competition between various agents of the government with one another as well as with private contractors. As soon as the Confederate government sent agents to Texas to purchase or impress cotton for the purpose of war supplies, General Magruder would send out his own agents to requisition cotton to buy supplies for the state troops. The Trans-Mississippi Department established a Cotton Bureau in July, 1862, which also participated in this race for the purchase of cotton to ship to Mexico in exchange for supplies.\(^{35}\)

This conflicting authority of agents and competition from private individuals sent the price of cotton and supplies soaring upward. This was but one example of how the state-rights philosophy, for which the South seceded, actually undermined its attempts to exist as a stable and independent government.

Despite the inflationary trend, trade between Texas and the border states continually increased with supplies of powder, copper, lead, tin, blankets, sugar, coffee, cattle, mules, cloth, among the commodities obtained directly or indirectly from Mexico.\(^ {36}\) By one route or another, supplies were transmitted across the border, going from Matamoras to Brownsville or from Monterrey to San Antonio. They might be shipped to

\(^{35}\)Owsley, pp. 127-28. \(^{36}\)Thompson, p. 108.
East Texas by way of King's Ranch to Alleyton; from Monterrey to Laredo or Eagle Pass to San Antonio; or from Rio Grande City to Laredo and Gonzales.\(^{37}\)

Whatever the route, the trade between Mexico and the Confederacy continued without too much interruption throughout the war. What percentage of the supplies actually reached the Confederate War Department or was waylaid along the route for use by state troops is another matter. Supplies that may have been retained along the route did indirectly aid the Confederate government in that it did not have to worry about supplying these states in the west.

\(^{37}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 110.}\)
CHAPTER IV

IMPAasse

The year 1863 was one of high hopes for European recognition of the Confederate States of America, but the situation was to remain more or less an impasse. This was the year when the Union army took over Brownsville in an attempt to close up the loophole in the federal blockade through which the Confederate government was obtaining supplies from Mexico. It was also the year that Napoleon's French expedition took over Mexico City and set up a puppet government under Maximilian. Thus, new problems arose to test the soundness of Confederate diplomatic strategy. Unfortunately, for their cause, Confederate diplomats depended on keeping their fingers crossed and hoping.

Yet, despite many upsetting situations, the trade between the Confederacy and Mexico continued throughout the war. The Trans-Mississippi Department, under Kirby Smith, rebuilt captured federal warships and pressed them into service as blockade runners. Playing an intricate game of "hide-go-seek" with the federal ships patrolling the Gulf Coast, the Texas blockade runners brought in arms, powder, lead, saltpeter, hardware, rope, drugs, dry goods, shoes and salt from such ports as Matamoros, Havana, Nassau, and other European ports.
Thus, supplies were never completely cut off; and cotton was the medium of exchange.\(^1\)

Apparently, the Confederate War Department, as early as December, 1862, was counting on utilizing the French expedition in Mexico. In a letter from James A. Seddon to Bernard Avegno, Commercial Agent of the Confederate states at Vera Cruz, Avegno was advised to find ways and means to talk some of the French citizens, who had come with the French Emperor's forces, out of essential supplies which they may have brought with them to meet the needs of their own French army. Seddon likewise reminded Avegno that the French army would have need to import under the French flag quantities of munitions and other army supplies -- materials also needed by the Confederacy.\(^2\) The implication was that perhaps Avegno could bribe either French citizens or the French military procurement officers to augment the shipments of goods to meet the needs of both the Confederacy and the French expedition. The problem that faced Avegno was not only what should be used as a basis of "exchange," specie or cotton, but the war that raged between the guerrilla forces of Juárez and the French expeditionary forces which disrupted communications between Avegno and the Confederate government. Indeed, several months passed without communications between Avegno and

\(^1\) Alfred A. Hanna, *Flight Into Oblivion* (Richmond, 1938), p. 76.

the Confederate government. Finally, in January, 1864, Secretary Benjamin began a search for the whereabouts of Bernard Aveño. Presumably, Aveño found himself unable to carry out the advice of Seddon while in Vera Cruz. He decided to resign. The news of his resignation was finally received in an indirect way in April, 1864.

Again, the responsibility for keeping open the channels for transportation of supplies from Mexico to the Confederacy fell solely upon the shoulders of Quinterro and it was not an easy task even for the capable Quinterro. The anarchic conditions resulting from guerrilla warfare around Tamaulipas and the other border provinces made transportation precarious and unpredictable. The guerrilla forces of Juárez needed supplies too, and the caravans of supplies going through the various passes into Texas from Mexico were temptations that these guerrillas and other brigands could not ignore.

Juárez also attempted to get supplies from the Union government. The Confederate agents were always alert for such situations in an effort to turn them into an advantage for the Confederacy. Brigadier General H. P. Bee, of Fort Brown, learned that an agent of the Juárez government, Bustamente, had received the necessary clearance from Thomas Corwin, United States Minister to Mexico, to purchase 65,000

---

3 Benjamin to Slidell, January 28, 1864, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 1012.

4 Slidell to Benjamin, April 7, 1864, Ibid., p. 1077.
stand of arms in New York at a price of $700,000 payable on
delivery. General Bee discovered that the Juárez government
would not be able to requisition enough money to pay for all
these arms. He made contact with certain officials and re-
ceived from them a promise that the Confederate government
would receive all the arms that the Mexican government was
unable to pay for.  

Quinterro also received word of this shipment of arms
from New York. His information must have been from a dif-
ferent source than that received by General Bee because of
the difference in figures. Quinterro made arrangements with
Zambrano, the custom-house inspector, to purchase those arms
that were not paid for by the Mexican government of Juárez.  
This is just one instance of the way in which the War Depart-
ment and the State Department worked at cross purposes with
each other. This was true not only of these two particular
departments, but there was a definite lack of coordination
and cooperation between the various departments of the Con-
federate government. Its consequent effect upon the ulti-
mate success of diplomatic relations cannot be underrated.
Whether or not the Confederate government received these arms
or whether the lack of specie, which was always an embarrass-
ing factor, or non-cooperation between these two departments

5 Bee to Cooper, February 15, 1863, Official Records,
Series 1, XIV, 980.

6 Quinterro to Benjamin, March 1, 1863, Official Records,
Series 2, V, 842.
sabotaged the operation remains a moot question. A thorough search of the records reveals that no further mention was made regarding this particular matter. This in itself may be significant. In reading over the reports of the various agents in the pay of the Confederate government (in fact this applies also to those who were laboring on behalf of the Union government as well), these men were found to be quite human. In discussing matters that were later chalked up as failures, the reports are either quite silent on the matter or evasive. In reporting encouraging situations or successes, the reports become quite lengthy and glowing.

There seemed to be no end to the problems which tested the ability and statesmanship of Quinterro. In April, 1863, he reported to Secretary of State that federal troops were marching from Tucson, Arizona, toward the Rio Grande. In Quinterro's opinion, the purpose of this expedition was to take over the Texas boundary and thus cut off the channels of supply between Mexico and Texas.7

Great was the fear of the Confederate government: What if the Union troops should capture Brownsville? Would this not make impotent the valuable port of Matamoras in the province of Tamaulipas? Even as early as October, 1861, General Hamilton P. Bee had been urging the Secretary of War to make some provision for fortifying Brownsville against

7Quinterro to Benjamin, April 20, 1862, Official Records, Series 1, XXVI, 49.
capture by federal troops. General Bee felt that it was inevitable that the Union army would attempt to take Brownsville since it was "the only point through which we can communicate with nations of Europe ... ."\(^8\)

General Bee was not the only one concerned over the welfare of Brownsville and Matamoras. The Union government was well aware of this loophole in their federal blockade. But Matamoras was in Mexico and therefore a neutral port. It could not be blockaded. Secretary of State for the Union government, William A. Seward, believed it was essential to capture Brownsville, Texas, so as to curtail the trade between Tampico and the Southern states.\(^9\)

Union forces began operations on the Texas coast, and in November, 1863, Brownsville was taken over by the Union. This did not stop the trade between Matamoras and the Confederacy as the Union government had hoped. Instead, the trade was continued farther up the Rio Grande. The Union government found it impossible to completely cut off all the trade between Matamoras and other Mexican states and the Confederate government, although a few shipments of goods were seized as contraband.\(^{10}\)

---

\(^8\) Bee to Secretary of War, October 12, 1861, *Official Records*, Series I, IV, 119.


\(^{10}\) Fish, *The American Civil War*, pp. 223-24.
The Confederate government could count a victory in this particular phase of their policy. The Confederacy, however, benefited only indirectly by this victory. This was through no fault of Quinterro but was primarily one of the inadequacies of the state-rights philosophy. As the supplies, regardless of what particular pass was used, landed in Texas, that state was more than able to meet her own needs for her state troops and civilian population. This was true despite the fact that Texas, for the most part, was quite a distance removed from the battle fields. To some extent the Confederate government benefited in that it did not have to worry about keeping the West supplied with the necessities of subsistence.\textsuperscript{11}

Another problem for Quinterro was the task of trying to maintain cordial relations between citizens of the several Mexican states and citizens of the Confederacy living along the Texas-Mexican border. In March, 1863, General Bee reported to Quinterro that the United States consul at Matamoras had been openly recruiting troops for the United States army. Citizens from both Mexico and Texas had enlisted in the United States army. Furthermore, General Bee noted that the United States consul at Matamoras was attempting to demoralize the Confederate troops and trying to get them to desert.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 224-25.
\textsuperscript{12} Bee to Quinterro, March 16, 1863, Official Records, Series 1, XXVI, 69.
The Governor of Tamaulipas, Albino Lopez, was advised by General Bee that to allow the activities of the United States consul at Matamoras to continue was a violation of the neutrality laws.\textsuperscript{13}

In fact, throughout most of the year 1863, affairs in Mexico were in such a state of disorder that even though Quinterro had made favorable arrangements with Vidaurre for carrying on the border trade through Monterrey, Coahuila and Nuevo Leon (thus nullifying the fact that the Union occupied Brownsville), the Confederate authorities never knew from one day to the next which way goods should be channeled.\textsuperscript{14}

As reported by Quinterro to Secretary of State Benjamin in September many disrupting changes had taken place in Mexico since July 23rd. On September 2nd, with the advice of President Juárez, General Doblado as the new Minister of State and Foreign Relations, set up a new cabinet with the hope of restoring order in Mexico. Even President Juárez had great faith in the ability of General Doblado to successfully restore order and help preserve the Republic of Mexico. But Juárez’s faith in Doblado did not go as far as permitting the latter to banish personal friends of President Juárez. When General Doblado attempted to banish such persons, Juárez became quite irate. Doblado resigned and returned to the state

\textsuperscript{13} Bee to Lopez, March 16, 1863, \textit{Ibid.}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{14} Rippy, p. 240.
of Guanajuato of which he was the governor. Matters went from bad to worse. The Juárez government was beginning to lose ground to those who favored French intervention, a party which was gradually growing stronger. The masses of the common people, who ordinarily would have been the backbone of Juárez's republican party, were growing apathetic and disheartened. Governor Vidaurre, governor of Monterrey, was hoping the Mexican Union would break up. He himself favored state sovereignty. Juárez and his agents still hoped the United States government would come to their aid. The United States, however, believed Napoleon III of France when he stated he had no intention of establishing a French supported monarchy in Mexico. Yet, according to all rumors, continued Quinterro, French forces are expected any day to occupy Matamoros and possibly even Monterrey. Meanwhile as of July 25, 1863, a new governor had been set up in the province of Tamaulipas, Don Manuel Ruiz, succeeding Albino Lopez. Fortunately, Governor Ruiz was sympathetic toward the Confederacy so the valuable trade between Matamoros and the Confederacy would not be discouraged.15

Although Quinterro was successful in making the necessary arrangements for routing supplies from Mexico into Texas, there was another necessary element in these trade relations which often caused much concern. This important element was

15 Quinterro to Benjamin, September 16, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 899-901.
paying for such supplies. As previously stated, the Confederate government used cotton as the basis for making payment on the supplies from and through Mexico. Major Hart of the provisional army in Texas was responsible for seeing that the cotton was available at the right time and place. In July, 1863, it was learned that the English ship, Sir William Peel, was captured by a federal blockade steamer, the Princess Royal. On board this ship were 1,000 bales of cotton. Through the intervention of Quinterro, the Sir William Peel and its cargo was released and negotiations were continued with Droege, Oetling and Company of Matamoras to take over this cotton. This particular company agreed to pay $20.00 per bale in advance if the cotton was received at San Antonio or Alleyton, and if cotton was delivered at Eagle Pass, Roma, Rio Grande City or Brownsville, Droege, Oetling and Company agreed to advance $40.00 per bale in specie.16

Major Hart was desirous of completing these negotiations with such companies so he could go ahead with other large contracts he had consummated with firms in Monterrey and Matamoras. Previously, in attempting to transmit cotton to the border, Hart was annoyed to learn that the military authorities for the district of Texas were confiscating this cotton in order to pay on contracts they too had concluded with Mexican merchants. Apparently this was not unusual. According to a report from the Confederate commercial agent at

---

Matamoras, Richard Fitzpatrick, dated July 15, 1863, so many agents were involved in the requisitioning and selling of cotton, none of whom were able to fulfill their promise of prompt delivery, that the business houses in Matamoras and in other border states, were becoming very perturbed. The situation did not ease during 1863-1864, but became increasingly more complicated. A Cotton Bureau was established under the supervision of General Smith to purchase cotton for the Trans-Mississippi Department. Then General Magruder assigned his quartermaster, Major Russell, to purchase cotton for the Department of Texas. The Texas state government also entered into the field of cotton purchasing. In all, it was estimated that in January, 1864, there were some thirty to forty cotton buyers competing against each other and undermining the attempts of the Confederate government to purchase much needed supplies. Not only did these civilians and other agents tie up the transportation facilities (which were very limited since the capture of Brownsville), but many Mexican businessmen who went unpaid for months were demanding payment. Swindlers also capitalized on the confusion through fraudulent contracts.17

With the important consignment to the Droege, Oetling and Company of Matamoras just about settled, Major Hart was hoping that the Confederate government had taken steps to prevent any interference. Quinterro informed him that no

17 Owsley, pp. 136-37.
citizen of Texas could claim this cotton acquired from the Sir William Peel as their property and the Texas state government was supposed to back up the Confederate govern-
ment on this matter.\textsuperscript{18}

This time, instead of Confederate competitors creating an embarrassing situation, it was Milmo and Company, one of Hart's biggest creditors. Milmo and Company not only sold directly to the Confederate government but also financed other individuals and companies who did business with the Confederacy. Up to about June, 1863, Milmo and Company seemed to be conducting a fair and honest business. But around mid-summer, 1863, the company began acting as agents of a number of speculators. Patrico Milmo was the son-in-law of Governor Vidaurre and, because of his political connections and political ambitions, was willing to act as agent for both honest and unscrupulous agents, apparently thinking he might be able to collect quite a bit of loot for himself.\textsuperscript{19}

Meantime, an agent of the Confederate Treasury Depart-
ment, Clarence C. Thayer, had successfully arrived in Mata-
morcas, November 6, 1862, through the federal blockade. He had with him several boxes containing in all some $15,000,000 in Confederate money for use by the Trans-Mississippi Depart-
ment. Thayer, after his rather hectic journey, was unable

\textsuperscript{18}Quinterro to Benjamin, September 16, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 201.

\textsuperscript{19}Owsley, pp. 138-39.
to adjust to his new position. Matamoros was the base of operations for many spies, Union renegades and other desperados. This situation seemed to worry Thayer more than the risks he had taken coming through the several federal blockades. To him, the only solution seemed to be to give the funds to the first likely person who would get this money to the Confederacy. The first such person turned out to be Major Russell, General Bee's quartermaster and agent for the Cotton Bureau. Actually, this Cotton Bureau had been working at cross purposes with Major Hart; side-tracking the cotton intended for Hart's creditors and turning it over to agents whom Major Russell favored. Thayer, however, was not aware of this situation, so he readily believed Major Russell when the latter advised him that he had the authority to give Thayer instructions. Major Russell instructed Thayer to give the money to Milmo and Company; that this company would send the money to Monterey and over to Eagle Pass where Confederate authorities would take charge of it. Thayer saw nothing irregular in these instructions. In fact, he was quite relieved, especially after he learned that Milmo was a relative of Governor Vidaurre. Even Thayer had heard that Governor Vidaurre was a great friend of the Confederacy. Feeling quite confident that he had carried out his mission successfully, Thayer traveled on to Monterey to await receipt of the funds. Almost simultaneously, Major Hart and Thayer were informed by Milmo that he was retaining the money as security
until he had received payment in full for all that Major Hart owed to Milmo and Company. Hart received the additional warning that Milmo and Company would seize any Confederate cotton coming into Mexico or leaving Mexico via Piedras Negras. 20

Quinterro when informed of this new turn of affairs appealed unsuccessfully to Governor Vidaurri. The only alternative, since Vidaurri seemed to think well of his son-in-law's action, was to find ways and means of paying all the sums due Milmo and perhaps satisfying him to the point of releasing the cases of money needed by the Confederacy. Quinterro advised Major Simeon Hart to take immediate action on this matter. 21

On December 23, 1863, Quinterro advised Secretary of State Benjamin of the situation in which Governor Vidaurri seemed so interested in the making of money that the gravity of this gross breach of neutrality seemed to have escaped him. Undoubtedly, Governor Vidaurri thought the hands of the Confederate government were tied. Quinterro's keen mind, however, was quick to perceive a way to retaliate against Governor Vidaurri -- to hit where it would hurt Governor Vidaurri the most -- the pocketbook. He urged Secretary Benjamin to prohibit all trade along the Texas-Mexican border, to cease all exportation of cotton and importation of Mexican

20 Ibid., pp. 139-40.
21 Quinterro to Hart, December 20, 1863, Official Records, Series 1, LIII, 943-44.
commodities, and to confiscate all Mexican goods sent across Texas. The lack of revenue from the collection of duties and the sale of goods soon forced Governor Vidaurre to come to terms with Quinterro. An agreement was reached under which Milmo and Company were to release the Confederate funds, seizure of Confederate cotton was to cease, and the Confederacy agreed to pay the debts owed Milmo and Company and its agents. Again, Quinterro had saved the day and restored amicable relations between Governor Vidaurre and the Confederate government.\textsuperscript{22}

At the same time the Confederacy was endeavoring to maintain friendly relations with the border states of Mexico, overtures were also being made to the French party in Mexico which was supporting Napoleon's plan for the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico. Although many Confederate citizens were opposed to the monarchial form of government, they thought perhaps Napoleon would extend aid to the Confederacy, in the form of recognition or more advantageous trade relations, if they adopted the proper attitude toward the establishment of his puppet government in Mexico. In January, 1863, General Hamilton P. Bee sent A. Supervielle to talk with the French officials in the vicinity of Tampico about the mutual advantages that would result if the French took over Matamoros. For instance, insofar as the Confederacy was concerned, with the French in Matamoros, they might be able to

\textsuperscript{22}Owsley, pp. 141-42.
get more supplies at lower prices. They hoped that the French, if they occupied Matamoras, would lift the duties on cotton which they now had to pay to Governor Vidaurri and his successors.  

Confederate policy was now concentrated exclusively on an attempt to use Napoleon's Mexican project as a means of securing French aid to the Confederacy. On September 22, 1863, John Slidell, Confederate Minister to France, reported to Benjamin that he thought Maximilian would accept the throne of Mexico as soon as he had evidence that this met with the desire of the Mexican people. Several months later, John Slidell informed the secretary that his interview with Maximilian was quite encouraging. In fact, according to Slidell, Maximilian felt that the success of the Confederacy was closely related with the success of the new Mexican empire. Maximilian was purported to have said that an acknowledgement of the Confederate States of America by England and France should be prerequisite to his acceptance of the Mexican throne.

As a result of these interviews, John Slidell felt quite strongly that the French government would be ready to aid the Confederate cause in any way it could. Consequently, Slidell sent a message to the Emperor Napoleon III urging the occupation

---

23 Rippy, p. 240. See also: Quinterro to Benjamin, September 16, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 901.

24 Slidell to Benjamin, September 22, 1862, and December 3, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 906, 969.
of Matamoras by French troops. Such a move, Slidell maintained, was advantageous both from a military and political point of view. To emphasize his point, Slidell related that failure of the French to occupy Matamoras had already caused several mishaps. For one thing, French cruisers had seized two vessels carrying a cargo of arms for the Confederate states. The French had thought such arms were on their way to supporters of Juárez rather than the Confederacy. The result was that some 16,000 Confederate soldiers had been without arms and were unable to repel the federal forces which subsequently were able to capture Brownsville and extend their control over the northern banks of the Rio Grande. Slidell pointed out that the way was now clear for the federal government to send agents into northern Mexico to stir up the population against the French and in favor of the Juárez government. In addition, supplies and money could easily be sent across the border by the federal government to aid the cause of the Juáristas. From this argument, Slidell felt sure that Napoleon should realize the disadvantages of having federal troops in control of the Rio Grande.25

Meanwhile, French troops had slowly been advancing on San Luis Potosí. In November, 1863, President Juárez figured it would not be long before the French troops marched on this site. As a precaution he moved his family to Saltillo, which

was twenty-five leagues outside Monterrey. Juarez hoped to eventually establish Monterrey as the capital city of his government.26

Although the French forces were adding one state after another to their jurisdiction, these were actually empty victories. The various towns acknowledged allegiance to the French only while French troops occupied the area. As soon as the French troops left to take over another town, the people reverted to their loyalty to the Mexican authorities.27

Throughout the first few months of 1863, French forces continued to advance toward Mexico City. Confederate and Union authorities were trying desperately to figure out what Napoleon had in mind. In January, 1863, Secretary Benjamin had heard an erroneous rumor that the French already held the capital of Mexico. In so reporting to Slidell in France, Benjamin speculated that perhaps Napoleon III was desirous of putting things in Mexico in order before recognizing the Confederacy. In this same letter, however, a note of despair creeps into Benjamin's attitude as he remarks, "This, however, is mere speculation, and the action of the cabinets of Europe has thus far been so different from what was anticipated and

26 Quinterro to Benjamin, November 26, 1863, Official Records, Series 1, XXXIV, 890.

so opposed to what seems to us the clearest dictates of policy, that we no longer seek to divine their probable course of action . . . ."  

A Dudley Mann, who was stationed in Brussels as Confederate Minister, ventured the opinion that Napoleon III had in mind setting up Mexico as an empire under the rule of his nephew, Jerome Napoleon, and thus getting this young radical out of his way. Thomas Corwin, the Union government's diplomatic minister in Mexico, had formulated the opinion back in August, 1862, that it was the French government's intention to set up a government of some sort at Mexico City. In his opinion, however, for the French to maintain a hold over that country would prove to be too expensive a proposition. If the Union should win a decisive victory over the South, Corwin further maintained, Napoleon would seek some honorable means of eliminating France from Mexican affairs.

Indeed, it was difficult to fathom the intentions of Louis Napoleon III since he was attempting to pull the wool over the eyes of both the Confederate and Union governments. Napoleon III, right up to the occupation of Mexico City, continued to deny his true intentions in Mexico to the Union

28 Benjamin to Slidell, January 15, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 656.

29 Mann to Benjamin, January 29, 1863, Ibid., p. 671.

government. To Secretary Seward, who reminded Napoleon III of the existence of America's Monroe Doctrine, Napoleon sent word that the only purpose France had in Mexico was to settle claims and make arrangements for the payments due to France.  

Napoleon III worked very closely with leaders of the clerical party and by various devices was able to persuade them to see his plan for calling a plebiscite to decide on whether or not a monarchy should be established in Mexico with an emperor selected from one of the European countries. Napoleon was laying his plans carefully. A great deal was at stake -- the continuance of the Second French Empire with himself as its head.

Napoleon III believed he would be able to find a loophole in the Monroe Doctrine by making it appear that it was the people of Mexico who were desirous of the type of government he had in mind. Besides the Union government was so busy in attempting to prevent the permanent break-up of the Union, it was not likely they would be in a position to enforce this doctrine of 1823. Even if the Union should win the Civil War in which they were engaged, Napoleon III was confident that his puppet monarchy in Mexico would be too well entrenched for the United States to undo it.

32 Willis F. Johnson, America's Foreign Relations (New York, 1921), II, 52.
33 Ibid., p. 53.
The uppermost thought in the mind of Napoleon III was that he must be successful in this last attempt to win glory for the Second French Empire; to again ingratiate himself with the clerical party in his own country and recover the prestige and popularity he had lost when he had left the Italian Nationalists in the lurch when they were attempting to achieve unity and release from Austrian subjugation in 1859. Whether the Confederacy won its cause or not was only of minor importance in Napoleon's plans. It was of importance only in that this war between the two sections of the United States kept either section, particularly the Union, from interfering in his plans. He did not dare recognize the Confederacy unless England joined him in such a movement; otherwise, he might find himself involved in a war with the United States which would frustrate his Mexican plans and it did not appear likely that England would join France in recognizing the Confederacy.

It seems rather ironic that although Napoleon was in a better position to carry out his plan for Mexico as long as the Union government was embroiled in war, he did propose that the European powers intervene in this war and bring about settlement through mediation. England and Russia refused to go along with this plan, but on January 9, 1863, Napoleon offered the services of France to act as mediator to bring about an armistice. Although the federal troops had just suffered a rather humiliating defeat at Fredericksburg,
Secretary of State Seward declined the mediation offer.\textsuperscript{34} Perhaps Napoleon III was hopeful that the Union government would decline the offer, or if it did accept, he may have had in mind injecting some condition into the terms which would have allowed him a free hand in Mexico. Then again, Napoleon hoped such action would placate his subjects. Just a week previously, Slidell had sent another message to the emperor urging separate recognition.\textsuperscript{35} Napoleon dared not. Yet, he must do something to appease adverse public opinion in France. According to the reports of the procureurs généraux public opinion had shifted to sympathy for the South. This was due in large part to the fact that the cotton and exporting industries in France were suffering a business depression. The general public felt this was because of the American Civil War. Many of the reports indicated France should take action alone in trying to bring the American Civil War to an end.\textsuperscript{36} With his mediation offer rejected, Napoleon turned his attention to carrying out his Mexican project.

The Confederate agents did not give up hope. By various devices, they attempted to persuade the French emperor to recognize the Confederate government regardless of England's attitude. Slidell, backed by Benjamin, attempted to influence Napoleon by a favorable financial offer. Under the terms of


\textsuperscript{35}Butler, p. 307. \textsuperscript{36}Case, p. 257.
this proposition, France would receive special trade facil-
ities and financial aid if that country in return would
ignore the paper blockade of the federal government and send
merchant ships to Southern ports. French goods would be ad-
mitted into the Southern ports duty free. The financial aid
Benjamin had in mind was the old stand-by, cotton. A large
amount of cotton would be given France for ignoring the
federal blockade.\textsuperscript{37} Although the offer was tempting, Na-
poleon dared not accept without having the support of Eng-
land in such a move -- acceptance of this bribe was tempt-
ing in view of the economic condition in the French cotton
industry, but still Napoleon was wary of getting involved in
an embarrassing situation with the Union government.

Slidell did receive the encouragement, however, that
perhaps some warships might be built in French shipyards for
the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{38} This particular plan came to naught as
news of it reached the government at Washington.

Meanwhile, French troops were on their way to Mexico
City. In mid-June, 1863, the French finally occupied the
capital of Mexico and a provisional government was established.
The Juárez government fled to Saltillo. The Union govern-
ment's diplomatic minister, Thomas Corwin, felt that he was
unable to do anything constructive in Mexico and thus decided

\textsuperscript{37} Hendricks, pp. 311-12.
\textsuperscript{38} Eckenrode, p. 159.
to return to Washington.\textsuperscript{39} The hands of the Union government were tied. The year 1862 had been a gloomy one with one defeat after another. Although the Lincoln government believed the Mexican people would much rather have a republican form of government with a president of its own choosing rather than a monarchy under a foreign prince, they were in no position to intervene in support of the Monroe Doctrine.

In September, 1862, the Lincoln government had promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation with the hope of winning the support of anti-slavery groups in Europe, and in particular, in England.\textsuperscript{40} Insofar as England was concerned, the Emancipation Proclamation produced the desired effect. Public opinion in England shifted in favor of the North and this was another factor which deterred the British government from extending recognition to the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{41} Just as he regarded the Monroe Doctrine, Napoleon did not let the Emancipation Proclamation phase him. He was advised by his minister, Mercier, who had just returned from Richmond, that the Proclamation was only propaganda media and it would not interfere with the Mexican project.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} Seward to Corwin, August 8, 1863, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States, 1863-1864} (Washington, 1864), Part 2, II, 1256.

\textsuperscript{40} Owsley, p. 355.

\textsuperscript{41} John W. Foster, \textit{A Century of American Diplomacy} (Boston, 1900), p. 396.

\textsuperscript{42} Owsley, p. 355.
After the Proclamation had brought about the change in public opinion in England, coupled with federal victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, etc., in 1863, the Confederate agent in England, James M. Mason, found his efforts to even be received as an accredited minister to England futile and in September, 1863, Secretary of State Benjamin requested his return to Richmond.\textsuperscript{43}

Although the Union government no longer had to worry about intervention from England, the establishment of an imperial government in Mexico by the French was regarded as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Seward formally stated in messages to the United States ministers in Austria, France and England that the American government would follow a policy of neutrality since it appeared the monarchy was being established according to the wishes of the Mexican people. Despite this statement, the United States throughout the war continued to recognize only the Juárez government which was kept on the move until 1867.\textsuperscript{44} The Lincoln strategy was to try to stay on a middle course insofar as Napoleon's scheme was concerned, not only because of the need to concentrate on the war, but also if Napoleon was high-pressured too much, he might recognize the Confederacy. The Union government

\textsuperscript{43} Virginia Mason, *The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence of James M. Mason* (New York, 1906), p. 449.

\textsuperscript{44} Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Mexico, 1861-1887* (San Francisco, 1888), VI, 99, 100.
relied on such things as the Corwin Treaty to keep the internal situation in Mexico in such a state as to make life miserable for the French in Mexico. This treaty was never ratified, but it served the purpose which Corwin had predicted of holding out hope to the Juárez supporters -- they still could count on the friendship of the Union government. Thus encouraged, President Juárez never gave in to defeat. The support he received from the Union government was chiefly moral, but this along with the fact that throughout wide areas of the country, the masses of the common people regarded him as their potential savior from this foreign interference, motivated Juárez and his followers to continue their guerrilla tactics and wait for the day that the French would give up and withdraw.\textsuperscript{45} As Seward reported in October, 1863, "the permanent establishment of a foreign and monarchial government in Mexico will be found neither easy nor desirable."\textsuperscript{46} Napoleon and Maximilian were soon to discover this fact themselves.

Initially, however, the Mexican venture seemed to be working out just as Napoleon III desired. There was a strong conservative party in favor of French intervention. The clergy, in particular, were the backbone of this party because they mistakenly believed that a Catholic emperor such

\textsuperscript{45} Corti, p. 293.

\textsuperscript{46} Seward to Dayton, October 23, 1863, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1863-1864 (Washington, 1864), Part 2, II, 799.
as Maximilian would certainly annul the anti-church decrees that Juárez had promulgated. In particular, the law providing for the confiscation of church properties would be abrogated. Napoleon was depending on this group. But when many of the clerics discovered that General Bazaine and the Emperor Maximilian were not going to remove these laws from the statute books, many of them joined Juárez in the opposition movement.\textsuperscript{47} The gala affairs feting the French troops when they first entered Mexico City in June, 1863, were sponsored primarily by the conservatives -- those who owned property or had money. The common people appeared to be quite unhappy and to some extent belligerent toward this foreign intervention.\textsuperscript{48}

Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, brother of the Emperor Joseph of Austria, was unaware of the real situation. He approached his new assignment very idealistically. First of all he refused to accept the crown unless an election was held so that the reaction of the people could be obtained. The French troops in practically every city rigged up a so-called election, the results of which made it appear that the inauguration of the Archduke Maximilian as emperor of Mexico was the desire of the majority of the populace. The formal ceremony took place on April 10, 1864.\textsuperscript{49} There was much discontent among the conservatives, those who had helped to bring

\textsuperscript{47} Corti, pp. 272, 274. \textsuperscript{48} Blasio, p. 41. \textsuperscript{49} Creel, p. 231.
the archduke to Mexico as emperor, and Maximilian was of the opinion that the best way to correct this party division and also obtain able assistants was to call upon liberals as well as those conservatives who had the ability to do certain jobs. Rather than relieving the situation, this policy only aggravated it.\textsuperscript{50} Fear of the Union government attempting to enforce the Monroe Doctrine plus the internal situation in Mexico, soon forced Maximilian to write Napoleon III for armed support.\textsuperscript{51}

Neither Maximilian nor Napoleon had the leisure to think about the Confederacy. Maximilian, in particular, was too preoccupied with his rather thankless task. But the Confederate government never gave up hope.

Slidell, the diplomatic agent in Paris, by September, 1863, changed his tactics. He was by now cognizant of the fact that direct diplomacy with France to secure recognition had proven futile by the use of argumentation, by the proffer of a bribe and a favorable economic treaty. But perhaps if the Confederate government parried with Napoleon through Maximilian, a Franco-Confederate alliance might be forthcoming. The point was to try and convince Maximilian that such an alliance or some such aid to help the Confederacy win its independence was essential or otherwise Maximilian's empire in Mexico would continually be subject to interference from the Union government.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} Blasio, p. 43. \textsuperscript{51} Corti, p. 378. \textsuperscript{52} Owsley, p. 527.
Henry Hotze, who had been sent to France to distribute propaganda, composed a draft of a proposed pamphlet on Mexico. The main feature of this pamphlet was to put France in a receptive mood for a Franco-Confederate alliance. This is brought out quite clearly in the following excerpt.

... pamphlet might open with a glowing description of the magnificent resources, the unparalleled climate, and the vast commercial importance of Mexico... Next might come a rapid and epigrammatic statement of the causes which have led to the anarchy that has become chronic in Mexico and have defeated all attempts at good government and social order. These causes I am strongly convinced are the confusion and chaos in which the various races which constitute the population have been thrown by the immature political experiments commencing with Mexican independence... Next the hostility of the of the United States to the French regeneration might be brought out in striking colors... The necessity of an alliance with the young Confederate power follows as a natural sequence... (the idea is to flatter the French and also put the Confederate states in good light).23

A. Dudley Mann who was in Brussels was quite pessimistic about any approach to Napoleon III. In his opinion, it seemed unlikely any alliance could be consummated unless the Union government should suddenly declare war on France and this did not seem probable. Mann, with unusual insight, interpreted Napoleon's vacillation quite accurately -- an attempt to be coy with both North and South and hope they continue the war until both sides were exhausted.54 But Slidell and Benjamin

53Hotze to Slidell, August 23, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 868-869.
54Mann to Benjamin, August 15, 1863, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 871.
were not disheartened. If Napoleon was really serious with his Mexican venture, it was only logical, in their opinion, that the existence of such a puppet government in Mexico would be dependent upon the Confederate government achieving independence.

The optimistic attitude of Slidell and Benjamin was given an additional boost in October, 1963. Early in the month, one James De Haviland presented himself to Slidell and informed him that he was going to have an interview with Archduke Maximilian regarding the latter's views toward the Confederacy. Slidell thought his visitor was merely making conversation. However, a few weeks later, both Slidell and Jefferson Davis received letters from de Haviland in which he maintained that Maximilian stated that the success of the Mexican empire depended upon recognition of the Confederate states by England and France. According to de Haviland's report of his interview, Maximilian felt such recognition should be made before he even accepted the crown of the new Mexican empire.55 At about this time, James Williams, former United States minister to Turkey, but now in the pay of the Confederate government as a propagandist, related that he, too, had talked several times with Maximilian. Williams reiterated what de Haviland reported, that France should acknowledge the Confederacy before he accepted the Mexican throne.56

55 Willson, p. 208. See also: Owsley, p. 539. 56 Owsley, p. 540.
Whether or not Maximilian did make such statements is a debatable question. No record of such interviews was mentioned in any of the biographies or personal documents of this unfortunate emperor. Maximilian was very anxious to prove himself and to demonstrate to all of Europe that he could assume the responsibility of an emperor. As his greatest fear was that the Lincoln government might carry out its threat to enforce the Monroe Doctrine, it is conceivable that recognition of the Confederacy would remove this threat and his emperorship of Mexico would prove to be as undisturbed as he visualized it would be. It is quite obvious that Maximilian was unaware that he was going to be a mere puppet to be manipulated only when Napoleon III pulled the strings. He soon learned differently.

Slidell, in attempting to force Napoleon III to take a definite position, showed him the letter he had received from de Haviland. Napoleon III was greatly angered at such indiscretion on the part of his pawn. Maximilian was called to account for his statements, and quickly asserted that the letter wholly misrepresented the facts that had been discussed at the interview with de Haviland.57

Although Slidell had not succeeded in forcing Napoleon's hand, another opportunity presented itself late in October, 1863. Almonte, one of the chief Mexican imperialists, who had paved the way for Maximilian's assumption of the throne,
dropped the suggestion through Governor Vidaurre, that the Confederate government should send a minister to Maximilian in Mexico. Since the resignation of Pickett in 1861, there was no official minister in Mexico City. According to Almonte, it was almost certain Maximilian would recognize the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{58}

It must have been fairly obvious from the talk between Napoleon and Maximilian concerning the "indiscreet" remarks, that Maximilian was a person who would succumb to pressure. Whether or not Jefferson Davis was aware of this or whether he was just willing to try any door that might lead to recognition of the Confederacy is open to differences of opinion. But December 8, 1863, the following message was sent by Jefferson Davis to the Confederate congress:

The events of the last year have produced important changes in the condition of our Southern neighbors. The occupation of the capital of Mexico by the French army and the establishment of a provisional government followed by a radical change in the constitution of the country, have excited lively interest. Although preferring our own government and institutions to those of other countries, we can have no disposition to contest the exercise by them of the same right of self-government which we assert for ourselves. If the Mexican people prefer a monarchy to a republic, it is our plain duty cheerfully to acquiesce in their decision and to evince a sincere and friendly interest in their prosperity. We may confidently expect the continuance of those peaceful relations which have been maintained on the frontier, and even a large development of the commerce already existing to the mutual advantage of the two countries.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{58}Owsley, p. 541.

\textsuperscript{59}Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, III, 441.
Recognition from the unstable, unpopular puppet government in Mexico would not have benefited the Confederate government. The masses in Mexico were daily growing more discontented and joining the ranks of the Juáristas. The Mexican project was unpopular in the eyes of the majority of the French people; England regarded the project disdainfully. Bismarck, leader in the rise of Prussia and the unification of Germany, would never accept anything that added more stars to the glory of France. And obviously, the federal government would not tolerate for long this gross violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

Still, after much debate, the Confederate congress finally decided to send an envoy to Mexico to negotiate for recognition.\textsuperscript{60} William Preston was sent as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico. He was instructed to negotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce with the Maximilian government.\textsuperscript{61}

By the end of 1863, the Confederate State Department was pinning all its hopes on how successfully Preston accomplished his mission and whether or not the new year would bring military victories to compensate for several costly defeats in 1863. At last the Confederacy realized it was futile to attempt to secure foreign aid or recognition on the basis of "King Cotton."

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 494. \hfill \textsuperscript{61}Rippy, p. 243.
CHAPTER V

EBB TIDE

The last ray of hope for recognition of the Confederate States of America seemed to emanate from the new imperial government in Mexico City. If the Emperor Maximilian could be persuaded to recognize the Confederacy, would it not force the hand of Napoleon III to also extend recognition? Thus did the Confederate officials pray as they sent the new envoy, William Preston, on his way to Mexico.

Before departing for Mexico, Maximilian had spent a week in Paris in March, 1864, and Slidell vainly tried to secure an interview. He sent word to Maximilian through Gutierrez de Estrada that he had important matters to discuss. The Emperor Maximilian replied he would have his secretary make an appointment in the near future. Slidell waited and waited and still no word. When it was almost time for Maximilian to go to Mexico, Slidell repeated his request for an interview and again received no answer.¹

Meanwhile, General William Preston of Kentucky, was officially notified that his nomination as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the Mexican government had

¹Willson, p. 216.
been ratified as of the 7th of January, 1864. On the same day Walker Fearn was duly appointed secretary of legation at Mexico City.²

Benjamin elaborated in much detail the objects Preston was to attempt to accomplish on this mission to Mexico. He pointed out that he had received word from General Almonte that Mexico would recognize the Confederacy upon the return of Maximilian from Paris. Since both were new governments no formal recognition was necessary. The public reception of diplomatic envoys and the negotiating of treaties would have the same legality. If any difficulty arose regarding the reception of Preston on these terms, he was instructed to return at once to the Confederacy. If not, Preston was to try and bring about free trade along the frontier; establish commerce between the two countries on a "most favored nation" principle; freedom of navigation in both countries; and in particular, obtain favorable rights and privileges in the Mexican ports on the Gulf and Pacific coasts. If such favorable treaties could be negotiated, President Davis was also willing to enter into a mutual defense pact for a period not exceeding ten years. Such a treaty, in all probability, would not be acceptable to Mexico unless the United States became quite hostile toward the Mexican government. But if such a defense treaty was agreeable to the Mexican government,

²Davis to Preston, January 7, 1864; Davis to Fearn, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 154-55.
continued Benjamin, it would be opportune for Preston to try and press for a provision giving the Confederacy free passage across Chihuahua to Guayman. Such a passage would greatly benefit Arizona when her mines were opened up. It would also be of importance to Mexico in that the products of these mines could be transported to Guayman which would not only bring more business to that port but would materially enrich the surrounding provinces.\(^3\) These lengthy instructions to Preston were further modified by Benjamin in a second letter of the same date. The reciprocal free trade proposal was to be modified to include not just the frontier but to extend throughout both countries. The Mexican government of Maximilian should be again reminded that the ultimate policy of the United States was to annex Canada and Mexico. Since the congress of the United States was considering a resolution to the effect that war should be declared on France for the violation of the Monroe Doctrine, Maximilian must certainly be made to understand that the fate of his Mexican empire depended on the Confederacy's obtaining independence. Benjamin further advised Preston to capitalize on the inevitable clashes that would occur between French soldiers and federal troops along the Texas frontier. In addition, it was further understood that Preston was to do all in his power to assist Quinterro in obtaining supplies from Mexico.\(^4\)

---

\(^3\) Benjamin to Preston, January 7, 1864, Richardson, II, 611-617.

\(^4\) Benjamin to Preston, January 7, 1864, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 988-89.
Armed with these instructions, it appeared Preston would be a very busy man. Unfortunately, he did not obtain the opportunity to see whether or not he had the diplomatic ability to carry out these instructions. At this stage of the game, Napoleon was not willing to consider recognition of the Confederate government and certainly he would not permit Maximilian to do so.

During 1862 and most of 1863, Seward, the Union Secretary of State, was conducting a very careful policy toward Napoleon and his Mexican expedition. To maintain self-respect, the Union was forced to inform Napoleon of its attitude toward the French project in Mexico. Yet, this was a matter that had to be handled very delicately. Seward had to be careful not to antagonize France to the point of recognizing the Confederacy. Nor could he give Napoleon III the impression that the Union would tolerate the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico. Seward handled this precarious situation astutely. Napoleon III was advised that public opinion in the Union was against a monarchy and against European interference in affairs on the North American continent. Napoleon, tongue in cheek, attempted to convince the Lincoln government that France was only interested in settling claims which were due. Although Seward was well aware that Napoleon was being evasive and disguising his true aims in Mexico, the reprimands that the secretary sent to Napoleon III had to be phrased in such a way as to make Napoleon cautious about
treading on the toes of the United States and at the same time remind him of the long-standing friendship between France and the United States. During this critical period, when federal troops were suffering reversals and European sympathies seemed more inclined toward the Confederacy, Seward did not even mention the Monroe Doctrine.⁵

But toward the end of 1863 and the early months of 1864, the Union army enjoyed a number of major victories. Members of the House of Representatives became quite determined to take a firm stand toward France and its violation of the Monroe Doctrine. By unanimous decision they passed a joint resolution to the effect that the occupation of Mexico by the French emperor or anyone whom he designated was an offense against the American people. The resolution firmly stated that if France continued its proposed project, it would mean war with the United States.⁶ Although Seward agreed that the majority of the people in the Union shared this sentiment, such a statement almost undermined his skillful strategy on the Franco-Mexican question. In a letter to William L. Dayton, Union representative in Paris, Seward requested him to inform Napoleon that the Union, as of April 7, 1864, had no intention of departing from its neutral policy with regard to the war between France and Mexico. Furthermore, such a change in

⁵Rippy, pp. 259-60.

policy would be initiated by the executive branch of government and not the legislative branch. 7

Napoleon was eager to stay on good terms with the Union government. He was convinced that the success of his Mexican venture depended upon maintaining amicable relations with the United States, and at the same time he felt confident that he had found a loophole in the Monroe Doctrine by maintaining that it had been the Mexican people themselves who had elected Maximilian.

Confederate agents in Europe diligently informed the State Department on every move Napoleon made concerning his Mexican project. It was imperative that such information be made available so that the Secretary of State could more adequately guide Prescott on his mission in Mexico. In March, 1864, the Confederate State Department was informed by its agent in Brussels, A. Dudley Mann, that Maximilian had been instructed not to officially receive the Confederate envoy to Mexico. Mann was still of the opinion that Napoleon III was merely cavorting with both the North and the South while secretly desirous of prolonging the war between the states. 8

This disappointing news was supported by similar reports submitted by J. M. Mason, Confederate agent in London and John Slidell in Paris. Both men also reported that a rumor

7 Seward to Dayton, April 7, 1864, Ibid., p. 346.

8 Mann to Benjamin, March 11, 1864, Naval Records, Series 2, III, 1057-58.
was being circulated around England and France to the effect that Napoleon and the Lincoln government had concluded an agreement. According to the rumor, Mercier, the representative of the French government in Washington, D. C., maintained that President Lincoln authorized him to inform Maximilian that the United States would recognize the new Mexican government under the archduke provided that Maximilian did not recognize the Confederacy. 9

This rumor undoubtedly was the product of Napoleon's mind -- another approach in currying favor with the Union. Although Seward had clearly stated that the Union was following a policy of neutrality relative to the French expedition in Mexico, and from a military viewpoint, the Union obviously would not deliberately initiate war on two fronts, Napoleon III still regarded the Union as the most formidable threat to his desire to achieve glory for the Second Empire of France.

John Slidell and the Confederate State Department were naturally disheartened by the news of Maximilian's attitude. Yet they were still optimistic. The Confederacy was aware of the pressure of adverse public opinion in France and they realized Napoleon III might suddenly withdraw his support of Maximilian. 10 The need for Maximilian to support the

9 Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, Ibid., pp. 1063-64. See also: Mason to Benjamin, March 16, 1864; V. Mason, Diplomatic Correspondence of James Mason, pp. 474-75.

10 Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, Richardson, II, 634.
Confederacy in winning independence seemed to the Confederates an obvious necessity if the imperial government in Mexico was to endure.

Meanwhile, Preston had reached Havana where he waited hoping to get word from Slidell that Maximilian had recognized the Confederacy. After receiving Slidell's message that an interview had not materialized yet with Maximilian, Preston sent Captain R. T. Ford to Mexico to communicate with Maximilian and also to check on the situation there. He himself went to Europe. Captain Ford talked with Maximilian's foreign minister. The interview was a failure. From London, Preston wrote for advice from Almonte, who was acting as regent, and Marquis de Montholon, the French representative at Mexico City. Preston was advised by them not to come to Mexico as the situation was hardly conducive for Preston to carry out his instructions.11

When Benjamin was informed that Preston had sent Ford to Mexico, he advised Preston to instruct Captain Ford to talk with the minister of foreign affairs or the emperor's secretary and inform the emperor's representative that the minister plenipotentiary had been sent in accordance with the understanding that this was what Maximilian desired. Ford should also remark that since the imperial government did not seem inclined to officially receive this minister, the minister plenipotentiary and his party were returning to

11Owsley, p. 542.
Havana. If the imperial government made no effort to alter its cool attitude toward Preston and his party, they were to return to the Confederacy.\(^\text{12}\)

Communication between agents and the State Department, however, was very slow. Before Preston received his latest instructions from Benjamin, he had already proceeded to attempt to carry out his interpretation of Benjamin's instructions. Some time in the early part of July, 1864, Benjamin received a report from Preston containing a statement of his latest activities. Benjamin was none too pleased with this latest communication. Preston had acted quite tactlessly by writing to the emperor and informing him in no uncertain terms that it was the right of the Confederacy to have its evidence for recognition heard and evaluated. This, no doubt, produced just the opposite impression from that which Benjamin had wanted to leave on the mind of the emperor.\(^\text{13}\) It placed the Confederacy in the position of being the inferior government desirous of receiving a favor from the Maximilian government. Benjamin had desired Maximilian to make the initial move so that it would appear to be the Confederacy which was adopting an altruistic policy to save the Mexican government from ultimate destruction by an aggressive North.

\(^{12}\text{Benjamin to Preston, June 20, 1864, Richardson, II, }650, 652.\)

\(^{13}\text{Benjamin to Preston, July 22, 1864, Ibid., 661-62.}\)
In acting contrary to Benjamin's instructions, Preston had committed himself to remain in Mexico until he had learned whether or not Maximilian was willing to hear his evidence in favor of recognition. Benjamin realized Preston could not gracefully retreat from the stand he had taken. However, Benjamin advised Preston that he was to return to the Confederacy if he had had no word from the emperor by the end of September.\textsuperscript{14}

Although Preston received no word from Maximilian, another opportunity presented itself by which he still hoped to win recognition. A friend of John Slidell's, William M. Gwin, was enroute to Mexico from Paris. Gwin, one-time senator from California and now an ardent sympathizer of the South, had gone to Paris in September, 1863, after his release from a federal prison. In Paris, Gwin had succeeded in convincing Napoleon that there were untold riches in the form of various types of metals just waiting to be mined in the Mexican province of Sonora. Napoleon agreed to appoint Gwin as governor of this province and persuaded Maximilian to accept the plan for establishing this new colony in Sonora. What Gwin visualized was the establishment of a French colony in Sonora which would so anger the Union that it would declare war against France in the defense of the Monroe Doctrine. This, in turn, would force France to recognize the Confederacy.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 663.
and also give it armed support. Preston decided to support Gwin in this scheme. He believed that Gwin, in his position as governor of Sonora, might be able to persuade Maximilian to recognize the Confederacy. In addition, should the French colony in Sonora bring about a war with the Union, surely Maximilian could see the logic of an alliance with the Confederacy.\(^{15}\)

Gwin, however, found his project an impossible one to attain. Many Mexicans, particularly the liberals, were opposed to the establishment of a colony in Mexico to be inhabited by foreigners. One obstruction after another prevented the scheme from being put into effect. So much resentment had been aroused, Maximilian finally requested Gwin to leave Mexico under escort in July, 1864.\(^ {16}\) Preston finally realized he would be unable to accomplish his mission in Mexico. He went to France where he and Slidell continued to persuade Napoleon to grant recognition and aid to the Confederacy.

Meanwhile, Napoleon's protege, Maximilian, was finding his task a very difficult one. At the time he had officially accepted the crown, April 10, 1864, Maximilian had also signed the Treaty of Miramar with France under which Maximilian was obligated to pay all Mexico's debts as well as the cost of French military support. The financial terms of the treaty

\(^{15}\) Rippy, p. 248. See also: Corti, I, 326-27.

\(^{16}\) Rippy, pp. 249, 251.
were impossible of fulfillment. Lack of funds was an ever present problem. In addition to financial problems, tension was rife among the people. Conservatives were disgusted with his attempts to win support of liberals and the liberals who detested him, because he symbolized foreign interference, were unimpressed by his attempt to be liberal. Juárez and his guerrilla troops were becoming increasingly disturbing. All these problems loomed larger as civil war in the United States drew to a close and seemed likely to end as a victory for the Union. The future of the Maximilian empire was none too bright.17

Both Maximilian and the Confederacy had received support from Governor Vidaurre. Besides the aid Vidaurre had rendered in helping to keep open the supply lines into the Confederacy, since the early months of 1864 he had been currying favor with the French. He had agreed to turn over to the French troops in Mexico the states of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila on condition he be made the governor of Tamaulipas.18 Such a step, had it been accomplished, would have greatly weakened the power of Juárez. Juárez countered, however, with a decree deposing Governor Vidaurre who was finally forced to flee to Texas where he was given refuge by General Magruder. In Texas, Magruder and Vidaurre schemed unsuccessfully to conclude an alliance between the Confederacy and the imperial

---

17Case, pp. 348-49.
18Herron to Stone, March 11, 1864, Official Records, Series 1, XXXIV, 565.
government.  

Vidaurre had lost a great deal of his influence while Juárez had gradually extended the power of his sway. It was, therefore, Juárez and not the ousted Vidaurre upon whom the imperial government and the Confederacy focused their attention.

As the war drew near to a close in the United States, the Mexican people began to hope that perhaps the forces of Juárez might, with the aid of the Union, overthrow the French government in Mexico. They began to throw off their apathy and to more actively identify themselves with the national patriotism of the Juárites. Throughout the war the Union government had been able to give the Juárez government only moral support, such as keeping the Corwin Treaty dangling on the calendar. There had also been some smuggling of arms. But with the end of the war in sight, perhaps more active support from the United States would be forthcoming. Daily, the Juárez forces grew in number and a campaign was conducted to recover lost ground.

Quinterro intently watched the progress of the Juárez forces. Although he thought there was little likelihood of receiving recognition from Mexico, it was still necessary to maintain trade relations between the two countries. Thus, when Juárez regained Monterrey in the spring of 1864, the

---


Confederate agent was fearful that Juárez would turn over to the federals all munition contracts and Confederate contracts. Facing this dilemma squarely, Quinterro contacted Juárez's secretary of war as to what Juárez intended to do about the border trade. Juárez replied he would observe a policy of neutrality. The border trade was to continue and Confederate agents would come to no harm.\textsuperscript{21}

Whether the border states of Monterrey and Matamoras were in the control of Vidaurri, Juárez or the French, as in October, 1864, Quinterro proved himself able to retain amicable trade relations. Indeed, both Juárez and Vidaurri acquired quite a bit of revenue from this trade through the collection of duties. In the two-year period, 1862-1864, it was estimated that Vidaurri collected over a million dollars in revenue at Piedras Negras. Other border towns also enjoyed similar financial success.\textsuperscript{22}

One factor still marred the effectiveness of the trade between Mexico and the Confederacy. In 1864, the Confederate government attempted to correct this glaring evil in the commercial relations along the Texas border. To eliminate the costly speculation and competition among rival cotton purchasers, the Cotton Bureau was abolished and P. W. Gray, as Treasury agent for the Trans-Mississippi Department, was to try to regulate and centralize this particular phase of trade.

\textsuperscript{21}Owsley, pp. 143-44. \textsuperscript{22}Thompson, p. 125.
relations. Centralization and reorganization came too late, however. Much cotton had already been side-tracked by speculators into avenues which did not benefit the Confederate government at Richmond. Then, too, much cotton had been destroyed by both armies, and by 1864 federal troops held sway over much of the Texas frontier and were in a position to capture much cotton in transit.

Meantime, Secretary Benjamin was becoming quite disgusted with the attitude of the French government. As early as June, Benjamin began to realize that trying to deal with Napoleon III was futile. He at last had to admit that Napoleon had no scruples when it came to breaking promises. Benjamin, however, did not feel it was Napoleon's fault. Rather, he believed Napoleon was letting himself be deceived by the Lincoln government's assertions that it would follow a neutral policy relative to the war between the French and Mexicans.

Negotiations with Napoleon were continued, however, with Preston and Slidell working together in an effort to win recognition from the French government. William Preston talked with Arrangoiz and Hidalgo, Mexican ministers in London and Paris. At the same time, Slidell talked with the French government's representative, Drouyn de Lhuys.

---

23 Thompson, p. 116.  
24 Owsley, p. 416.  
main theme of these interviews was to let it be known to the French government that peace terms might soon be concluded between the North and South based not only on recognition of the Confederacy as a separate government but also with a mutual defense alliance to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. Preston's punch line in this bargain basket stated that the French government could protect its empire in Mexico by recognizing the Confederacy. In exchange for recognition, the Confederate government would agree not to enter into any defensive alliance with the North. 26

Napoleon III ignored the bait. He realized the war in America was rapidly coming to an end and would result in a Northern victory. His primary concern now was to seek an honorable way to withdraw from Mexico.

Confederate agents differed in their reaction toward Napoleon's failure to recognize the Confederacy. A. Dudley Mann had consistently maintained that Napoleon was only playing games with the Confederacy; that by 1864 Napoleon and the Lincoln government must have reached an agreement whereby the Lincoln government would keep its Monroe Doctrine locked up in the archives if the French would not recognize the Confederacy. Slidell, on the other hand, never could bring himself to see Napoleon III other than as a well meaning individual who was sincerely desirous of seeing the Confederacy

26 Slidell to Benjamin, August 8, 1864, Ibid., p. 1187. See also: Owsley, p. 544.
win its cause. Slidell analyzed Napoleon’s hesitancy to recognize the Confederacy as a temporary necessity until the Maximilian empire enjoyed stability. Secretary Benjamin was greatly disillusioned by Napoleon’s inaction. In his opinion, the emperor of the Second French Empire had been guilty of deception in the way he continually professed friendship to the Confederacy and yet on a number of occasions gave aid to the Union. Such acts included recognition of the federal paper blockade; the seizure of goods destined for the Confederacy by the French navy; misuse of the permission granted the French to export tobacco; and the interference of the French government which persuaded Maximilian not to negotiate with the Confederacy.  

Jefferson Davis expressed his views in a message to the Confederate congress November 7, 1864. Davis implied that the European nations had not acted as Christians in their refusal to recognize the Confederate government. Such recognition was dictated by the letter and spirit of international law as well as for the sake of humanity. Indifference was the word Davis employed to describe the European failure to accord recognition. Such an attitude, Davis observed, had prolonged the war by encouraging the Union to believe they could still win the war.  

27 Mann to Benjamin, July 22, 1864; Slidell to Benjamin, August 24, 1864; Benjamin to Slidell, September 20, 1864; Naval Records, Series 2, III, 1176, 1189, 1213.

By the end of 1864 the South was exhausted. Sherman's march through Georgia was well under way and the army of Lee found a large portion of its food supply cut off. The Confederate forces under Hood had suffered a decisive loss at Nashville. There were groups on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line who desired to bring the war to an end. One wing of Democrats, the Copper-heads, had campaigned actively in the 1864 election on the platform of peace. Although the Copper-heads had lost the election they still were working toward bringing about a peace. The South, too, was ready to accept an honorable peace. Although Preston's attempt to bait recognition from France by suggesting a defensive alliance with the North failed, his idea was taken over by some of the Copper-heads who desired to see such an idea incorporated into more definite terms. One such person was Francis P. Blair, whose son was the Union's Postmaster-General. Lincoln refused to listen to his plan but did give Blair permission to go through the lines and talk to the Confederate government at Richmond. Blair suggested an armistice which would give Davis time to collect an army composed both of Union and Confederate soldiers. Davis should then take this force down into Mexico, secure an alliance with Juárez, and between the combined forces force Maximilian and the imperialists out of Mexico. Although Davis did not commit himself regarding the plan, he did agree that a conference should be held to consider proposals of peace.
Lincoln also agreed to a peace conference which was arranged at Hampton Roads. At this conference, Lincoln refused to compromise on his original terms. Any peace terms must include: acceptance of the federal government as supreme over the states; no back-tracking on the slavery question; and no armistice — fighting must continue until one side agreed to end the war. The conference at Hampton Roads accomplished nothing. Both the North and South felt they were fighting for a just cause, and they were not willing to compromise on any issue at this time.\textsuperscript{29}

As the year drew to a close, the Confederate State Department was forced to admit the failure of cotton and the Mexican situation as pawns in the intrigue of diplomacy. The future of the Confederacy appeared doomed as the year 1865 opened. Sherman and his federal troops had just captured Savannah and were continuing on their destructive way toward Charleston, South Carolina. Confederate officials sought desperately for a way to stave off the death blow. Every incident was given careful attention with the hope of turning it into an advantage for the Confederacy. When it was learned that a rumor was circulating throughout Europe and the United States to the effect that Maximilian and Napoleon had come to an agreement to cede Sonora to France, Slidell went about the task of checking on this rumor hoping to find

\textsuperscript{29}Bemis, VII, 103, 104.
it true. If true, perhaps it would be the turning point for the Confederacy. Would such a cession not irritate the Union to the point of enforcing the Monroe Doctrine which in turn would make it extremely desirable for the Mexican government and France to seek an alliance with the Confederacy? In following up the rumor, however, Slidell found that there had been no cession of territory. Maximilian and Napoleon had merely talked about the possibility of giving the French government a lien on Sonora as security for the Mexican debt to France. 30

In fact, the people of France were clamoring for Napoleon to withdraw completely from Mexico. Napoleon himself realized all was lost for the Confederacy. Soon peace would be declared and the Union government would more than likely drag the Monroe Doctrine out of the archives again. Rather than getting himself more involved with Maximilian and the imperial government in Mexico, Napoleon was searching for a graceful retreat.

Meanwhile, one victory after another was added to the Union score card from February to April of 1865. Before resigning themselves completely to what seemed inevitable, the Confederacy drew its last ace out of the deck. Duncan F. Kenner, congressman from Louisiana, was sent to England in

an attempt to win recognition on the basis of freeing the slaves.\textsuperscript{31} However, it was too late for this last diplomatic tactic to be put to a test. Kenner had just arrived in England when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, April 9, 1865. On the 26th of April, Johnston surrendered to Sherman at Durham. The curtain had fallen on the last act of the Confederacy as a separate entity.

After Lee's surrender, the Trans-Mississippi Department which was well armed and well supplied arranged to organize an army of 15,000 with headquarters in Marshall, Texas. General Kirby Smith, self-appointed dictator of this department, let it be known to Maximilian that the remainder of the Confederacy was willing to enter into an agreement with the imperial government of Mexico for "mutual protection from their common enemy." It was expected that Jefferson Davis would lead this force. These plans were upset by the federal government. Smith had to surrender the Trans-Mississippi Department. However, some of the soldiers managed to keep some guns and ammunition and during the next few months an estimated three or four thousand of these ex-Confederates went into Mexico where they continued making overtures to the Maximilian government.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}Coulter, pp. 194-95.

\textsuperscript{32}Rippy, p. 245. See also: Hanna, pp. 78-81.
The Mexican imperialists encouraged the disbanded Confederates in their overtures to form a mutual protective alliance. Even here, the ex-Confederates were lining up on the losing side. Their hope of ultimate revenge against the Union by helping to stabilize the imperial government of Maximilian and then with his help again seek independence at a more opportune time, was to be frustrated by the withdrawal of French troops from Mexico.

For some time now, Napoleon III had been seeking a way out of this Mexican fiasco. The procureur reports of 1866 and 1867 manifested a great increase in the opposition of the French populace toward the Mexican project. Withdrawal demands were becoming quite vociferous, and the attitude of the United States government had grown more threatening since the termination of the Civil War.\(^{33}\) Although Seward had never threatened war in his messages to the French government, United States' recognition had been given only to the Juárez government. The United States refused to receive Arroyo, whom Maximilian had designated as his consul.\(^{34}\) Indeed, that government which the United States did recognize, was continually growing stronger, whereas the Emperor Maximilian was daily losing support. The guerrilla forces under Juárez continually advanced southward. Much to Napoleon III's amazement, these republican forces under Juárez, despite their

\(^{33}\) Case, p. 404. \(^{34}\) Corti, II, 497.
many defeats, could not be crushed. It was not worth the risk to continue the project. In addition to the great opposition it had aroused, the project had been a costly undertaking which represented millions of dollars. Since the close of the Civil War, the messages from Seward were becoming more forceful in their phraseology indicating that friendship with the French government was in danger unless France ceased its attempts to establish a foreign monarchy in Mexico.36

The fact that the United States had sent Sheridan and his troops down to the border of Texas and Mexico, was to Napoleon sufficient evidence that the United States earnestly intended to enforce the Monroe Doctrine.37 The government of France could not risk war with the United States. Prussia was daily gaining strength and Otto von Bismarck was eagerly awaiting an opportunity to humble France. Why go to war over a bankrupt nation? Announcement was made in January, 1866, that the French troops were to be withdrawn from Mexico. Between October, 1866, and October, 1867, this was accomplished.38

The Emperor Maximilian was left alone to face his fate. The guerrilla forces under Juárez and Porfirio Díaz advanced

35 Bancroft, VI, 207-08.
36 Seward to Bigelow, November 6, 1865, and December 16, 1865, Foreign Relations of the United States, Part 2, II, 489-90.
37 Foster, p. 402.
38 Case, p. 402.
steadily southward until in 1867 they recaptured Mexico City. June 19, 1867, the hapless Archduke Maximilian, ex-emperor of the imperialist government of Mexico, was executed. 39

Thus after a four-year struggle, the Maximilian government, like that of the Confederate government, went down in defeat. Although the two governments were radically different -- a monarchy and a republic attempting to secure a stable existence -- one cannot but notice a few similarities. The Confederacy began its existence in 1861 and collapsed in 1865; the imperial government of Maximilian was established in 1863 and met its doom in 1867. Both governments endured for approximately four years. Napoleon III was seeking an opportunity to win glory for France, to ingratiate himself with his people and make his position as emperor more secure. Whether or not one agrees with his aim, the strategy employed was sound even though it was based on deceit. The cause for which the Confederacy was struggling was recognition as an independent nation. The use of Mexico as a pawn in the diplomatic strategy to secure this aim also seemed logical. Misinformation, misinterpretation, and lack of information kept both governments two steps behind in the tactics employed. Conditions in Europe would not have been receptive to any diplomatic strategy employed to secure recognition for the Confederacy.

39 Cline, p. 49.
CHAPTER VI

APPRAISAL

Analysis of the diplomatic activities of the Confederate State Department discloses that the initial strategy, which the Confederacy attempted to execute, accomplished nothing. In fact, it worked to the disadvantage of the Confederacy insofar as its need for materials of war was concerned. The policy throughout 1861 and the early months of 1862 was to concentrate wholly upon seeking recognition from the European nations, particularly England and France. The respective secretaries of state, Toombs, Hunter, and even Benjamin in the beginning of his tenure of office, over-emphasized the importance of Southern cotton. They sincerely believed that if England and France were unable to purchase Southern cotton, these two countries would find themselves in the throes of a depression and civil unrest. Such a condition would surely arise as long as England and France obeyed the paper blockade of the federal government. So sure was the State Department of its prediction, they placed an embargo on all Southern cotton with a view of forcing these two European powers into breaking the blockade and extending recognition of the Confederacy.

123
Obviously the Confederate State Department had been misinformed or uninformed as to the true state of affairs in Europe. Neither England nor France were so dependent upon cotton that they would risk getting involved in a possible world war. Not only did they have an adequate stockpile of raw cotton on hand, but the federal blockade was never very effective. Likewise, the embargo decreed by the Confederate government was ineffective. Not only was it applied too late in 1861, but under the state-rights philosophy, many of the individual states continued exporting cotton. In addition, England was enjoying considerable success with the cultivation of cotton in Egypt and India.

Obviously, the Confederacy realized the inadequacy of its own economic system; it was unable to become a self-sufficient nation. Unaware that their basis of bargaining was predicated on an erroneous interpretation of the situation, the Confederate agents attempted to convince Europe of the power of "King Cotton." The uppermost thoughts in the minds of the Confederate agents were that recognition from the European powers would also mean favorable commercial relations which would more than compensate for their chief military weakness -- inadequate supplies. If such recognition should result in a declaration of war by the Union upon those European governments, all the better. Such a world war would permit the South to conserve its military might and then at an opportune moment they could step in on the
side of the Union and help bring the war to a close on the condition, of course, they be accorded separate existence as an independent nation.

This was just a utopian dream which was not shared by France and England who scanned realistically this Civil War in America and the consequences if they should intervene.

If the Confederate agents in Europe had taken the same realistic look, they would have early realized the European countries were not going to fight the Confederacy's battles for them. Then, the South could have utilized its protege, "King Cotton," in a more practical manner -- use it as collateral against which they could purchase the much needed supplies to carry on a war against the more self-sufficient North.

As a source of supply, the Confederacy looked to its neighbor Mexico which could, as a neutral nation, import commodities from Europe without violating the federal blockade. These goods, along with the materials that Mexico could furnish, could then be channeled into Texas and on up to the Confederate government. This was a logical plan, but as its first diplomatic agent to Mexico, the Confederacy dispatched John T. Pickett, a man who was utterly lacking in the qualities that make a statesman. His tactless treatment of the Mexican people as a group of degenerates succeeded in only increasing the suspicions of the Mexican people as to the real intentions of the Southern Confederacy. Finally, after
a brief sojourn in jail for disorderly conduct, Pickett was recalled. His rival, the Union minister in Mexico, Thomas Corwin, succeeded in winning the friendship of the Juárez government by the offer of a financial treaty (the Corwin Treaty), which, although never ratified, rendered the Juárez supporters the necessary moral encouragement to abstain from giving in to defeat before the French expeditionary forces of Napoleon.

Meanwhile, although continued overtures were made to Napoleon, on the basis of favorable commercial treaties, etc., to try and get him to act without England, the Confederate State Department under Benjamin gradually realized the true intention of the French expedition in Mexico. Napoleon's Mexican project would serve as a much more powerful bargaining weapon than cotton. Thus after 1862, Mexico became the focal point in the overall diplomacy of the Confederate government.

It was logical for the Confederate State Department to assume that the success of the Napoleonic puppet government in Mexico would depend on the success of the Confederacy. If the Confederate government ignored the Monroe Doctrine and agreed to lend support to the establishment of a French monarchy in Mexico in return for recognition and aid from Napoleon, it did not seem likely that the Union would attempt to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. The Union had suffered several stinging defeats and was in no position to fight a
war on two fronts. With European help, the Confederacy felt it surely would win the war while the Union would not be able to upset Napoleon's plans.

Napoleon III was not so optimistic. He feared the Union would declare war on him to enforce the Monroe Doctrine should he recognize the Confederacy. He did not have much faith in Confederate assurances that the Union would not fight a two-front war. This Mexican project was his last chance to regain gloire, and he was not willing to take any chances. Besides, if the Union should attempt to enforce the Monroe Doctrine, England would undoubtedly lend her aid. And of course, there was Bismarck of Prussia who surely would seize this opportunity to humiliate the French empire. Thus Napoleon chose to play both sides against the middle -- giving the Confederacy the impression that he might extend recognition and at the same time reassuring Seward and the Union government that his intentions in Mexico were purely to settle just claims due his people. Later, he sought a loophole in the Monroe Doctrine by asserting the imperial government in Mexico was the expressed will of the people. Napoleon continually followed this vacillating policy. Although he saw the writing on the wall for the Confederate government because of its inability to match the superior manpower and resources of the Union, Napoleon figured his policy would help prolong the war to the point where his puppet government
would be too firmly established in Mexico for the Union to do anything about it once the conflict ended.

From the end of 1863 on, the tides of war turned in favor of the North. The Confederacy frantically continued its efforts to convince Napoleon of the need to recognize the Confederacy to assure the success of his own puppet government in Mexico. When persuasion failed, Preston attempted to force Napoleon's hand by threatening that the South would join the North in enforcing the Monroe Doctrine. Napoleon would not be forced. Indeed, when Maximilian became convinced that the Confederacy's arguments were sound, still Napoleon would not let him proffer recognition.

By 1864, Napoleon began to see his project was turning into an act of folly and he began looking for a way to gracefully withdraw from the Mexican project. Public opinion in France was growing particularly adamant toward the project and it was also proving to be a very expensive undertaking. The future of the Maximilian empire looked dark as the war seemed destined to end in a victory for the Union and the imperial government was not, as Napoleon had earlier expected, very firmly established. In fact, the empire was floundering as Maximilian found himself unable to cope with the financial problems, the tension between the conservative and liberal parties and the growing strength of the Juarez forces. The latter group, encouraged by the fact that the Union had
gained the upper hand in the Civil War, were hopeful that with Union aid they would ultimately oust the foreign administration of Maximilian. As it was, the Juarists were steadily recovering lost ground.

The Confederacy, faced with failure of the plan to use the Mexican project as a pawn in the game of recognition plus discouraging military defeats, tried one last attempt to secure recognition. Kenner was sent to England to attempt to secure recognition on the basis of freeing the slaves. This, too, was a lost cause. Shortly after Kenner’s arrival in England, the news came of Lee’s surrender. Thus the Confederacy’s attempt had failed to secure recognition or sufficient commercial aid to compensate for their inability to keep the military organization supplied with the essentials to wage a war. The strategy of using Mexico as a bargaining basis failed, not because it did not stand the test of reason, but because conditions in Europe and the inability to understand the psychological factors that motivated Napoleon to act contrary to what seemed logical, would have made any diplomatic strategy for recognition unsuccessful.

The plan for using the Mexican project as a basis for action had a twofold objective. Besides recognition, Mexico was an excellent loophole in the federal blockade. It was calculated that with the French in control of the various Mexican states, more supplies would be forthcoming to the Confederacy and, minus duties, it would amount to quite a
saving for the government. The supply phase of this project can be chalked up as a victory for the Confederacy, thanks to Jaun A. Quinterro. Whereas Benjamin is often referred to as the "brains of the Confederacy," Quinterro also deserves much credit as the backbone of the Confederacy's commercial relations. Regardless of the obstacles or whether he was dealing with one of the border state governors such as Vidaurre, or with Juárez, or even with the French forces, Quinterro successfully kept open the channels of trade between Mexico and Texas. The fact that the full effectiveness of these trade relations with Mexico was not fully realized by the Confederate government was in no way due to any lack of effort on the part of Quinterro.

Lack of specie was only a minor problem which contributed to undermining the amount of supplies received via Mexico. Two of the major factors in nullifying Quinterro's tireless efforts were products of the state-rights philosophy. For instance, Major Hart, who was the purchaser for the Confederate government and who used cotton as the basis of exchange, was constantly hampered in his duties by the competition from agents working for the Trans-Mississippi Department, the Texas Department, the Texas State government and other private individuals. All were attempting to requisition cotton to pay for supplies. Often the result was that none of them received a sufficient amount to pay the various Mexican business houses, a factor which created tension
between Confederate agents and Mexican businessmen. Also
the competitors for supplies tended to block up the trade
channels which Quinterro worked so hard to keep open for the
benefit of the military machine and civilian needs of the
Confederacy. The other factor involved was that a consider-
able portion of the supplies in transit over the routes into
Texas never got beyond the southwestern portion of the Con-
federacy. The inadequate number of railroads and the poor
maintenance of the railroads and other transportation facil-
ities played a part in preventing those within the area of
battle from realizing the full benefit of the supply channels
through Mexico. Since it is obvious that the sources of sup-
ply through Mexico prolonged the life of the Confederacy, it
is interesting to postulate what the outcome would have been
after Sherman had cut off the little used channels of supply
on the east coast if the forces of Lee and Johnston had been
able to realize the full benefit of the commerce with Mexico.
It is rather ironic to note that following the end of the
war, it was discovered that the state troops in Texas were
much better equipped and civilians of that state much better
supplied than troops or civilians around the field of battle
had been at any time during the war.

Thus, Confederate diplomacy beginning on a note of ideal-
ism had through years of trial and error approached a more
realistic basis by the end of the war. The use of the
Mexican question as an entree into more extensive diplomatic negotiations represented a change in foreign relations which the Confederacy might have been able more effectively to utilize at an earlier date. As the military situation deteriorated for the Confederacy, such an initial advantage as might have been gained through a more realistic strategy was lost in the face of increasing reluctance of European nations to identify themselves with a sinking cause.
APPENDIX A

CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONERS AND AGENTS TO MEXICO*

Mexico, John T. Pickett ............. May 17, 1861
Mexico (New Leon), J. A. Quinterro .... May 22, 1861
United States of Mexico (Monterrey),
   J. A. Quinterro ............... September 3, 1861
Mexico (State of Tamaulipas), Richard
   Fitzpatrick, commercial agent .... November 15, 1862
Mexico (Vera Cruz), Bernard Aveño,
   commercial agent ............. December 18, 1862
Mexico, William Preston
   Walker Fearn, secretary ....... January 7, 1864
Mexico (Vera Cruz), Emile Sere ........ May 30, 1864
Consul from Mexico to the United States,
   F. Gonzales, Galveston, Texas .... 1861-1865

*Naval Records, pp. 11, 12.
APPENDIX B

SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA*

Robert Toombs . . . . February 21, 1861 to July 25, 1861
Robert M. T. Hunter . . July 25, 1861 to February 17, 1862
W. M. Browne (ad interim)February 17, 1862 to March 18, 1862
Judah P. Benjamin . . . . March 18, 1862 to April 26, 1865

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources: Public Documents


Autobiographies, Diaries, Memoirs, Contemporary Accounts

Blasio, Jose Luis, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, Memoirs by His Private Secretary, edited by Robert Hammond Murray, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1934.


DeLeon, Thomas Cooper, Four Years in Rebel Capitals: An Inside View of Life in the Southern Confederacy From Birth to Death, Mobile, Gossip Printing Company, 1890.


"Proceedings of First Confederate Congress," Southern Historical Society Papers, XLIV, XLV (June, 1923; May, 1925).

Secondary Works


