UNITED STATES AND MEXICO: DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS, 1861-1867

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UNITED STATES AND MEXICO: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, 1861-1867

THESIS

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PREFACE

This thesis traces the development of diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico during the years 1861 to 1867. The dates selected encompass the years of the Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico.

Sources used throughout the thesis were predominantly primary sources. These included the House Executive Documents related to foreign affairs commonly known as the Foreign Relations of the United States: The War of the Rebellion Series, and a number of rolls of microfilmed dispatches of the United States Ministers to France and to Mexico. The last source was that most extensively used for the body of the thesis. There were, of course, a number of secondary works used for the thesis. The most important of these were: The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1868, by Dexter Perkins; The United States and Mexico by J. Fred Rippy, and American Foreign Policy Toward Mexico, by James Morton Callahan.

Research demonstrates that Seward's Mexican policy was, from 1861 to 1864, dictated by necessity. He could not afford to antagonize the French Emperor and thus give Napoleon a pretext for recognizing the Confederacy. At the same time, Seward could not afford to not make American feeling about the French intervention in Mexico known. Thus Seward protested
to the French government and, at the same time, never threatened the use of United States troops to drive the French from Mexico until 1865. With the termination of the Civil War, Seward could afford to threaten the use of troops to drive the French from Mexico.

In 1867 the administration's policy was successful. The Emperor withdrew all French troops in Mexico, and the Maximilian government was routed by the Juarez forces. Even more important, the Monroe Doctrine, re-asserted, was thoroughly vindicated.
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CHAPTER I

PRELUDE

During the 1850s the sectional rift was growing at an alarming rate with each section of the Union becoming more firm in its demands. The South was determined to prevent the new Republican party from gaining the presidency. The Republican party was just as determined to destroy the power of the South in Congress, a power which that section had held tenaciously since the beginning of the Republic. The basic problem was that of a sectional balance of power in the federal government. The political scapegoat was the issue of the extension of slavery into the territories.

Personal encounters and violent language in both the House and Senate became more frequent during the decade as the extremists of both sides assailed their counterparts in Congress. The nation was stunned when the excitement reached fever pitch after the October 17, 1859, raid on Harpers Ferry by John Brown and his followers. William H. Seward, the spokesman of the Republicans, alarmed the South with his warning of an "irrepressible conflict"; John Brown gave an

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1Henry H. Sims, A Decade of Sectional Controversy, 1851-1861 (Chapel Hill, 1927), p. 145.
illustration of it in blood and slave insurrection. To abolitionists, free-soilers and radicals of all types, Brown represented a prophetic voice in the wilderness. Even Senator Stephen A. Douglas declared that it was his "deliberate conviction that the Harpers Ferry crime was the . . . logical, inevitable result of the doctrine . . . of the Republican party."

Amidst the storm of sectional strife, the ship of state began to drift, slowly but surely, among dangerous shoals. The man occupying the White House was no aid to the problem. James Buchanan, nearly seventy years of age, was discredited, and his cabinet was sharply divided over the issue of permissibility of secession. The "doughface" President also had a divided Congress with which to work. The House was controlled by the Republicans. The Senate was controlled by the Democrats, but within its walls were found men irreconcilably pitted against one another. The problem was heightened by a governmental framework which kept the repudiated President in the White House four months after he and his party had been defeated, and the new Congress out of power for the same period of time.

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4*Congressional Globe, 36th Congress, 1st Session*, p. 553.
Buchanan was convinced that time and thought would hold the South in the Union, give the extremists an opportunity to work out a compromise, and ultimately stop the dangerous trend toward secession. Perhaps his theories would have worked had he not chosen to surround himself with southern intimates who advised him that the only way to keep the South in the Union was to make concessions to the section.⁵

Mexico was experiencing an ordeal similar to that facing the Union. That country had gone through a long period of internal strife. The independence of Mexico had been achieved by much bloodshed and was followed by forty years of almost constant revolution. From 1822 to 1864 the form of government had changed nine times, and the country was governed by thirty-nine different administrations. Each administration gained its power by violence and retained it only so long as its leader controlled the armed forces.⁶

The struggle in Mexico was essentially one between two opposing factions, the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Conservatives, aided and dominated by the clergy, wished to establish a highly decentralised government. Their ultimate goal was to establish a monarchy in Mexico. The Liberals, sometimes called Constitutionals, on the other hand, desired a federal republican form of government and were covetous of


the enormous wealth which the Church held even after the revolution. Both parties were weakened by greed and a desire for power on the part of their leaders. 7

In 1854, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, the perennial dictator of Mexico, was overthrown. The Liberals then helped form a Constituent Congress. The Constituent Congress adopted a constitution and provided for a popular election in which General Ignacio Comonfort was elected President. Unfortunately, Comonfort tried to conciliate both Liberals and Conservatives, which task proved to be impossible. In the attempt to please both factions, Comonfort set aside the constitution of 1857 and dissolved Congress.

The result of Comonfort's action was not a workable compromise, but another revolution. The Liberals, on January 22, 1858, dissolved their shaky alliance with Comonfort and installed Pablo Benito Juárez, the former Chief Justice of the Mexican Supreme Court, as the constitutional president. The Conservatives also dissolved their alliance with Comonfort and installed General Zulouga as their presidential choice. Zulouga was ultimately replaced by Miramon and, after 1861, by the French sponsored "Regency of the Empire." After 1858 there were two claimants to the presidency of Mexico. Zulouga, the claimant sponsored by the Conservatives, established his headquarters in Mexico City. Juárez, the claimant backed by the Liberals, operated from Vera Cruz. 8

7Ibid.  
8Ibid., p. 168.
On Christmas day, 1860, the Juárez forces captured Mexico City and forced the Conservative government to flee. On January 11, 1861, Juárez moved into Mexico City and the Liberal Party took over the operation of the government of Mexico. The authority of the Liberals, however, was challenged continuously until the death of Maximilian, the French sponsored "monarch of Mexico," by a firing squad in June, 1867.

One of Mexico's problems was the desire of the monarchists in that country to have a European prince govern Mexico as a kingdom. The monarchists, especially strong among the Conservatives, kept agents in European cities from 1854 to 1861 in search of a royal house willing to accept Mexico as a kingdom. In 1858 the Conservatives sent an emissary to Spain. General Almonte, one of the contenders for the presidency of Mexico in the same year, was sent to Madrid to see if a Bourbon would accept the proposed throne. The outcome of the visit was not an acceptance of the throne by a Bourbon, but the Non-Almonte Convention of 1860, a convention entered into by the Conservative government of Mexico and the Spanish Crown. The convention powers drew up a resolution stating the Europe had a strong interest in the maintenance of a durable government in Mexico. The resolution was followed by a proposal for a triple guarantee of the territorial integrity.

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9Extract from the Mexican Extraordinary, May 24, 1861, Dispatches from the United States Ministers to Mexico, 47 vols. (Washington, 1949), XXVIII, unpublished correspondence of National Archives, on microfilm at North Texas State University library, Denton, Texas. Hereafter cited as Dispatches—
of Mexico, the three guarantors being Britain, France and Spain. The proposal, a forerunner of the London Convention of 1861, worried President Buchanan and the American ministers in Mexico who feared any European guarantee of Mexico's territorial integrity would ultimately lead to European intervention in Mexico's internal affairs.

Another thing that worried Buchanan and the American ministers in Mexico was the huge debt owed by that nation to European countries. Both Zulouga and Miramon contracted with the banking house of Jecker and Company, and both men sold bonds with which to finance their military expeditions in England, Spain and France. The half-brothers of Napoleon III, the Duc de Morny, as well as Napoleon's personal advisor, the Duc de Saligny, were involved in the monetary transactions of Mexico. Both men were purchasers of Mexican bonds in large quantities. Added to financial difficulties was the fact that the depredations by banditti on all the highways of Mexico had caused the subjects of both European countries and the United States to protest to their governments. Buchanan feared, and his fears proved correct, that the European nations would seize Mexican territory in an effort to force Mexico to pay her debts and protect foreigners within her borders.

To stall the feared European intervention in Mexico, the American president tried to buy Mexican land and allow Mexico

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to pay her debts with the money given to purchase the land. President Buchanan, under the influence of Judah P. Benjamin and Emile la Sere, president and attorney respectively for the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company, authorized Forsyth, the American minister in Mexico City, to pay from twelve to fifteen million dollars for Lower California and a large portion of Chihuahua and Sonora, together with the perpetual right-of-way and privilege of transit over the regions. Forsyth did approach the Comonfort government with the offer, but he refused to assist the agents of the Tehuantepec Company in any way.11

Forsyth finally did draw up a treaty which won Mexican approval. The treaty would have given Mexico a lump sum of fifteen million dollars with which she was to pay off her debts to England, Spain, France and the United States. The treaty never won approval in the United States Senate because the slave question was raging in Congress when it was submitted, and the North would not allow the possible expansion of slavery into the territory which would have been ceded to the United States had the treaty been accepted.12

When Comonfort was overthrown, Buchanan tried to induce his successor, Zulouga, to agree to a similar treaty. The

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11Rippy, United States and Mexico, pp. 213-215.
12Frank Lawrence Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago, 1959), pp. 37-38.
Conservative President refused to consider such a treaty and even tried to force a loan from American citizens living in Mexico. The action led to the disruption of relations between Mexico and the United States. The American minister took it upon himself to break relations without conferring with President Buchanan, and the Secretary of State upheld Forsyth's action. Buchanan then went before Congress and in his second annual message of 1858 asked for permission to send United States troops into the northern states of Mexico. On January 11, 1859, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations brought in a bill authorizing Buchanan to employ the public forces of the nation in the protection of United States citizens in Mexico. The bill was debated and eventually defeated with little consideration.

Buchanan, rebuffed by Congress, decided to try a new approach. He decided to see if Benito Juárez would bargain with him. He sent a special envoy to investigate conditions in Mexico and to report the prospects of the contending parties. The envoy, William M. Churchwell, sent a dispatch to Buchanan saying the Liberal government was the one that would deal with the administration, and therefore the government which should be recognized and supported by the United States. The dispatch also contained a memorandum signed by Juárez in which the

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13 James D. Richardson, editor, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington, 1897), V, 513-14.

Mexican president expressed a willingness to cede, under certain conditions, Lower California, the right-of-way over Tehuantepec, and territory from the Rio Grande to Guaymas and Mazatlan.15

After receiving the dispatch, Buchanan authorized and sent Robert M. McLane as a new minister to the Juárez government at Vera Cruz. McLane was authorized to negotiate a treaty giving Mexico ten million dollars for Lower California and transit privileges across northern Mexico and Tehuantepec, a portion of which sum was to be retained to pay Mexican debts to the United States.

At first McLane was not successful in his venture and, discouraged by the rapid turnover in the Mexican ministers of foreign affairs combined with the demand that an immediate payment of a pecuniary consideration be made before any negotiations could begin, the minister wrote Cass, Buchanan's Secretary of State, that the United States government should enter Mexico with military forces to protect American citizens and Juárez be sustained by a military alliance.16 In November, 1859, McLane left Vera Cruz for consultation with the Secretary of State.

After two months in Washington, McLane returned to Vera Cruz and found conditions more favorable for a treaty such as

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15Ibid., p. 345.

16McLane to Cass, October 31, 1859, Dispatches—Mexico, XXVIII.
he had been originally sent to negotiate. Juarez had tried
during McLane's absence to negotiate a loan directly with
Washington, but his minister of finance failed to make the
desired contacts and the loan never went through. Desperately
needing money and too weak to maintain order and enforce any
loans, Juarez had to accept the only alternative—to conclude
negotiations for a treaty on the basis of McLane's instruc-
tions. 17

The outcome of McLane's work was the McLane-Ocampo Treaty
which was submitted to both the Mexican and United States
Congresses in January of 1860. For a loan of four million
dollars, Mexico was to guarantee a perpetual right-of-way
across northern Mexico and across the isthmus of Tehuantepec.
Half of the four million was to be used to pay American claims
against Mexico, a gesture planned to insure passage in the
United States Senate. To insure the right of American inter-
vention in Mexico's internal affairs, a clause was inserted
in the treaty which specifically stated that the United
States had the right to intercede in Mexico if that nation
did not protect United States citizens living within its
borders. Had the treaty been passed by the United States
Senate, it would have been a radical departure from the tra-
ditional policy of the United States government not to interfere

17 James Morton Callahan, American Foreign Policy in
in the domestic concerns of other nations. McLane knew the Mexican foreign minister would balk at the idea of any intervention in Mexican internal affairs, but he forced the Juárez government's foreign minister to sign the treaty by a blunt warning that the United States would enforce the fulfillment of the treaty by military power whether Mexico objected to the particular clause or not.

The treaty was submitted to the Senate on January 4, 1860, and on May 31, 1860, it finally came to a vote. Much to the dismay of both Buchanan and McLane, it was defeated by a vote of twenty-seven to eighteen.

Convinced that he could do nothing more to further the proposed treaty, McLane returned to Mexico to get the affairs of the legation in order and then submitted his resignation. He advised Buchanan to withdraw the United States legation from Vera Cruz. The minister's last official act was to order a special envoy to the American legation, Henry de la Reintrie, to have a circular published and distributed in which McLane declared that the United States would resist any attempt at forcible intervention into the affairs of Mexico by any power.

18 H. L. Wilson, "President Buchanan's Proposed Intervention in Mexico," American Historical Review, V (July, 1900), 695.

19 Callahan, American Foreign Policy, p. 267.

which "looks to the control of the political destiny thereof ... ."

Thus Buchanan's term closed with the United States facing a civil war, but, at the same time, warning foreign nations to stay out of the internal affairs of Mexico. It is interesting to speculate on results if the French intervention in Mexico had occurred while Buchanan was still President. Had Buchanan not been the individual he was, it is probable that the pretext for intervention by the three European powers would have been removed and the United States government would have been spared the humiliation of seeing the Monroe Doctrine rendered totally impotent at a time when civil war weakened its foreign policy.

The crisis in the United States was brought to a climax when the election of 1860 swept Lincoln into the White House. The explosive elements in South Carolina leaped into flame. The State Legislature met on November 10, 1860, and issued a call for a convention scheduled for December. The delegates to the December convention passed the Ordinance of Secession on December 20, 1860. The congressmen from the state resigned their seats and the Stars and Stripes was soon replaced with the palmetto flag. Within the short period of six weeks,


22 H. L. Wilson, "President Buchanan's Proposed Intervention," p. 701.
South Carolina’s action was followed by six other southern states: Mississippi, January 9, 1861; Florida, January 10, 1861; Alabama, January 11, 1861; Georgia, January 19, 1861; Louisiana, January 26, 1861; and Texas, February 6, 1861.23

On February 4, 1861, delegates from the seceding states met in convention at Montgomery, Alabama, and organized a provisional government. The Confederate Congress, on February 9, 1861, unanimously elected Jefferson Davis, former congressman from Mississippi, as President and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia as Vice-President of the Confederacy, yet it remained for a military event to begin the Civil War.

The Union faced its first severe test after South Carolina’s action when the federal steamer, The Star of the West was sent to the forts off the coast of South Carolina to provision the troops there. The ship was fired on by the Charleston batteries when it attempted to reinforce Fort Sumter. Preoccupied with the thought that the North should not be the first to shed blood, and advised to withhold any call to arms by his southern cabinet members, Buchanan did not issue a call to arms, thus averting a war during his administration.24

The bombardment of Fort Sumter was the incident which virtually forced Lincoln’s hand and led to the Union call to arms. President Lincoln had notified the governor of South


Carolina that an attempt would be made to land provisions at the fort. On April 10, 1861, Jefferson Davis gave orders to General Pierre Beauregard that the evacuation of the fort was to be demanded. Failure to comply with the demand was to be met with force. Although the commander of the fort notified Beauregard that an evacuation would be made by noon of April 15, unless provisions or alternate orders were received, an order was given and the Charleston batteries opened fire on April 13, 1861. Thus the Rubicon was crossed and forces moved swiftly and ultimately to their destiny—the Civil War. No longer were any attempts made to reconcile the opposing sections of the country. The bombardment of Fort Sumter was followed by Lincoln’s call for 42,134 volunteers on May 3, 1861.

Immediately after his election, Lincoln began planning his choices for the cabinet. He chose William H. Seward, a political contender in the recent nominating convention and New York political boss, for his Secretary of State. Lincoln’s choice was extremely important because he had no previous diplomatic contacts with European countries. The post was difficult to fill due to the newness of the party, and the problem of inter-party strife. The problem was heightened by the fact that American diplomats in all the capitals of the Continent held their appointments from the Democratic party. Most important of all, in the choice of any cabinet member, was the fact that all selections had to be of Lincoln’s own choosing. He could not afford to have the factions within the
party dictate the choice of cabinet members. Seward finally accepted the position and retained the post until the end of Andrew Johnson’s tenure in the White House.

Lincoln offered the post of Attorney General to Edward Bates, the unorthodox Republican of Missouri politics. Bates was an ideal choice for the position as he had widespread fame both as a lawyer and as an intellectual. He was in birth, training, and in many respects sympathy, a Southerner. He served in Lincoln’s cabinet until 1864.

Lincoln’s choice for Secretary of the Treasury was the Ohio politician, Salmon P. Chase. Chase accepted the invitation to serve and was in the cabinet until 1864. Lincoln’s New England cabinet member was Gideon Welles of Connecticut. The New Engander was offered the post of Secretary of the Navy. He and Seward were the only two cabinet members to serve for two full terms.

Montgomery Blair, of the Blair family well known in Maryland politics, became Lincoln’s Postmaster General. Lincoln thus gained the allegiance of an old important political family, an allegiance which was to aid the President during the war.

The last two cabinet positions to be filled were those of Secretary of War and Secretary of the Interior. Simon

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Cameron, after much scandal had been brought to light, was offered the position of Secretary of War. His position was the result of an agreement made by Lincoln’s managers at the Wigwam, and the President was pleased when he was able to send Cameron abroad as an ambassador thus leaving the cabinet position open to Stanton.

Caleb Smith, because of a similar political bargain, became Lincoln’s Secretary of the Interior. He accepted the post when it was offered to him but only served until December, 1862. Lincoln’s cabinet, as it finally evolved, consisted of William H. Seward, Secretary of State; Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury; Simon Cameron, Secretary of War; Caleb Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Montgomery Blair, Postmaster General; Edward Bates, Attorney General, and Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy.

Lincoln was faced with a civil war when he assumed office in March, 1861. His first task was to bring together the opposing sections of the country by whatever means were necessary. When it became clear that no compromise measure could win acceptance by either North or South, the President had to weld together a great army to conquer the rebellious states. He also had to weld together a cabinet composed of opposites, to win the allegiance of people who would refuse to cooperate with him. He had to mend the inter-party split and bring together all elements of a minority party. Lincoln had to be expedient rather than just; he had to appease the quarreling
factions within both cabinet and party so that he could get on with the war.

In the field of international relations, specifically, relations with Mexico, Lincoln had to work through the State Department to dispel traditional Mexican fears of the "big brother to the North" and, at the same time, to seek the permission of the Mexican Congress for passage of American troops through the northern states of Mexico. Lincoln was faced with a dilemma from his very first day in office regarding the government of Mexico. He had to decide whether he would follow Buchanan's footsteps and negotiate until he decided which government to recognize, or he had to take a definite stand in favor of the Liberal President from the start. As it was to the interest of the Union to avoid any incident which might serve as a pretext for either European or Mexican recognition of the seceding states, Lincoln had to be especially careful lest any remarks be interpreted as offensive to either Juárez or any European Crown.

Lincoln worked through the State Department to keep European powers from taking advantage of the Union's weakness to interfere in Mexico's internal affairs. Once a European power gained control of Mexico, there was, in the case of the Union being engaged in a life-and-death struggle, nothing to keep such a power from making an alliance with the Confederacy and forcing the United States government to fight a two-front
war, Lincoln and Seward, as events proved, both knew and appreciated the dangers of such a war.

Perhaps most important of all, Lincoln and Seward had to impress upon Mexican statesmen the idea that the struggle which the Union was waging "for the integrity of a republican nation" was of great concern to every state on the American continent. They had to impress upon the heads of state in the countries bordering the United States that the crisis for Union involved all republican nations, since, if the experiment failed in the United States, it would undoubtedly fail elsewhere.26

26 Rippy, The United States and Mexico, p. 254.
CHAPTER II

THE FORMULATIVE YEARS

President Lincoln, after assuming office in March, 1861, was able to make his appointments for foreign ministries. He chose Thomas Corwin, an anti-Mexican War spokesman in 1847 and a Lincoln political backer in 1860, for the post of United States minister to Mexico. The minister to Paris was another political supporter, William L. Dayton, an ex-senator and past Attorney General of New Jersey.¹ Corwin kept his post until he retired and was succeeded by his son in 1864. Dayton died at his post and was succeeded by John Bigelow in 1864. These two men, along with the Secretary of State and the President, were the principal Americans involved in the major diplomatic problems between the United States and Mexico during the years of 1861 to 1867.

Corwin's first official act as minister to Mexico was an interview with the Mexican President, Benito Juárez, in which the two discussed the serious problem of Mexican indebtedness to France, Spain and England. After the meeting, Corwin sent a dispatch to Seward revealing that the Mexican cabinet, the President and majority of the Congress had ideas in common.

with the Mexican populace. The most serious problem facing the Juárez government, wrote Corwin, was the fear of bankruptcy and, due to the prevailing lawlessness of the country, the fear that the European nations might intervene in Mexico's internal affairs under the pretext of establishing law and order. It was true that Juárez had managed to get possession of the capital by January, 1861, but there were still numerous small pockets of resistance throughout the country as Conservative generals such as Mejía continued to wage guerilla warfare against the Liberal government. No money could be obtained to pay the armed forces except through forced loans, the fear of which made the wealthy send their money to European banking houses. As a consequence, foreigners in Mexico suffered loss of property and personal injury. The internal affairs of the country were extremely chaotic.

Mexico had signed an agreement in 1842 with England, Spain and France whereby she promised to set aside a certain percentage of the duties collected at Vera Cruz and Tampico in order to pay the interest and principal of her indebtedness. As a result of the changing government in the country and the failure to protect foreign citizens within her borders, she had failed to make the payments and incurred the threat of European intervention in her internal affairs. With the

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2Egon Cesar Corti, Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico (New York, 1929), I, 94.

United States involved in civil war, the nations of Europe felt they could intervene in Mexico without fear of recriminations from the United States. Coupled with the fear of possible intervention was the knowledge of Confederate plans to cross the Rio Grande and move into the bay of Lower California and thence into the interior of Mexico.  

In light of possible intervention by European powers and the Confederacy, the Juárez government felt constrained to seek aid from the United States. Corwin submitted a plan to Seward which he felt would alleviate the chaotic state of Mexican finances and thus give the Juárez government the means of paying both the armed forces of the nation and European creditors. The plan was a treaty of assumption whereby the United States would assume the foreign debts of Mexico, and loan to that nation from five to ten million dollars in installments with which she would pay her creditors. The Juárez government was, in return, to cede the bay of Lower California to the United States along with the revenues from the sale of church lands. Once again the aims of McLane and Forsyth were proposed by an American minister in Mexico.

Corwin also sought and obtained the consent of the Mexican Congress for the passage of United States troops across Sonora. The Mexican Congress granted the request by a unanimous vote, and Corwin told Seward that the consent was

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4Corwin to Seward, June 29, 1861, Dispatches-Mexico, XXVIII.
indicative of the Mexican government's desire to obtain American aid to prevent aggression from both the states of Europe and the Confederacy.\(^5\)

Seward seemed non-committal regarding the proposal by Corwin early in 1861. The Secretary of State was not eager to commit the United States to a definite plan of diplomatic action with Mexico. When Corwin asked Seward whether the United States government concurred in the Reintrie Circular, Seward answered that times had changed since the issuance of the circular. It did not, stated the Secretary of State, seem an opportune time for the formal reassurance of the policy of the United States government to foreign nations. "Prudence requires that in order to surmount the evils of faction at home, we should not unnecessarily provoke debates with foreign countries . . . ."\(^6\) Since the United States was struggling to create an efficient war machine, the advice of the Secretary of State was extremely meaningful.

Though Seward was fearful of an outright affirmation of the Reintrie Circular early in 1861, he did accept the proposal of his minister in Mexico for a treaty of assumption. The assent of the Secretary of State to Corwin's proposal could be attributed to his knowledge of the extensive trade in cotton

\(^5\)Ibid.

between Texas rebels and Mexican agents at Matamoros. Another factor which was instrumental in forcing the Secretary of State to advocate Corwin's treaty was a dispatch from the American minister telling of the visit made by the Confederate representative, Thomas Pickett, to Mexico City. Pickett's mission was to gain recognition by the Juarez government of the Confederacy. Though Juarez refused to grant the desired recognition, or even neutrality, the thought that Pickett might attain his objective with the passage of time was disconcerting to the State Department.

The action which made Corwin's treaty seem imperative was the intervention of France, Spain and England in Mexico's internal affairs late in 1861. On July 17, 1861, the Mexican Congress, desperately needing funds to carry on affairs of government, passed an act suspending the payment of all debts of any sort due from the government for a period of two years. Juarez issued a similar proclamation the same day and the result was an instantaneous demand by the European powers that the decree be repealed. When Juarez and the Congress refused to comply with the demand, the legations of France, Spain and England were closed, and the respective governments broke diplomatic relations and began plans for a joint military expedition to Mexico. Corwin wrote Seward that England and

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8Corwin to Seward, July 29, 1861, Dispatches-Mexico, XXIX.
9McCorkle, American Policy, p. 55; House Executive Document 100, pp. 77-79.
France were acting in a conspiracy to initiate a movement which would begin in the occupation of the entire maritime frontier of Mexico and end in the occupation of the entire country. It was to the interests of the United States, Corwin urgently warned, that a guarantee of the interest and principal owed to English and French bondholders be given by the United States government.\(^\text{10}\)

In September, 1861, Seward informed Corwin that the President was authorizing the American minister to negotiate a treaty with the Mexican government whereby the United States would assume the Mexican national debt, the principal of which was about sixty-two million dollars, for the term of five years. The assumption was to be made only if Mexico pledged to the United States its faith for the reimbursement of the money loaned at 6 per cent interest. The interest was to be secured by a lien upon all the public lands and mineral rights in Lower California, Chihuahua, Sonora and Sinaloa. If the debt were not repaid within five years, the four states were to become property of the United States. The treaty was also conditional upon the consent of the European powers. They had to promise that they would not resort to force against Mexico because of her failure to pay the debts, so long as the United States promptly paid the amount due them.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{10}\)Corwin to Seward, Aug. 28, 1861, Dispatches-Mexico, XXIII.

\(^{11}\)Seward to Corwin, Sept. 2, 1861, House Executive Document, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 100, p. 22.
The treaty was protested by the Confederate representative, Pickett, and the European powers. Pickett warned Juarez that any cessions of territory to the United States would result in Confederate occupation of the state of Tamaulipas within sixty days of the cession date. The French minister of foreign affairs, Edouard Thouvenel, gave Dayton an interview at which he was told that the United States did not understand the character of the French claims. The danger of Mexican extinction, hinted Thouvenel, came not from France or Europe, but from America. Dayton was informed that the French government intended to collect the debts owed her by taking possession of the Mexican ports of Vera Cruz and Tampico and appropriating portions of the customs revenue until the interest on the debt owed her was paid.\textsuperscript{12}

The reaction of England to the proposed treaty was as definite as was that of France. The British foreign minister informed Charles Francis Adams, the American minister to London, that the treaty was unacceptable to England on the grounds that it was nothing but "the preliminary to an entry for inevitable foreclosure.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Dayton to Seward, September 27, 1861, Dispatches from United States Ministers to France, 1789-1889, 64 vols. (Washington, 1949), L, unpublished correspondence of National Archives, on microfilm at North Texas State University library, Denton, Texas. Hereafter cited as Dispatches-France.

\textsuperscript{13} Adams to Seward, September 27, 1861, House Executive Documents, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 100, p. 212.
Napoleon III convinced the governments of Spain and England that the best means of solving Mexico's refusal to pay her debts was to send an armed expedition to that land, and the three governments formally entered into a treaty for that purpose. All three, however, had different reasons for their actions. England wished to secure redress for actual injuries and did not favor the monarchial schemes of France and Spain. Spain wanted to regain her former possessions and set a Bourbon on a Mexican throne. Napoleon III wanted a monarchy established in Mexico, chosen by him and under his control. On October 31, 1861, the three powers met in London and signed the London Convention whereby they agreed to send combined naval and military forces to Mexico. The allied force was to seize the custom houses along the Mexican coast. One of the four articles of the convention forbade the contracting parties to meddle in the internal affairs of Mexico.

The high contracting parties engage not to seek for themselves, in the employment of the coercive measures contemplated by the present convention, any acquisition of territory nor any special advantage, and not to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influences of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose and to constitute freely the form of its government.


15 Articles of the London Convention, October 31, 1861, House Executive Documents, No. 100, pp. 126-127.
The article was signed by France, yet events proved that of all the signing powers, France had no intention of abiding by it.

The allied powers invited the United States to join in the convention. After signing the convention, they wrote to Seward asking that the United States government join, but the Secretary of State did not favor the idea. Seward still hoped the Corwin treaty would win acceptance in the Senate. The death of the treaty finally came, however, on February 25, 1862, when the United States Senate, sitting in executive session, resolved it not advisable to negotiate a treaty which would require the United States to assume any portion of the principal or interest of the Mexican debt, or that would require the concurrence of European powers. 16 The Senate invoked the old tradition of non-alliance with European powers to officially veto the treaty.

With the defeat of the Corwin treaty in the Senate, the Secretary of State could no longer rely on the assumption of Mexican debts as a feasible policy to eliminate the threat of European intervention in Mexico and possibly the United States. He was forced to formulate a different plan to halt the intervention and to stall recognition of the Confederacy by France.

The year 1862 was extremely critical for the Union due to two reasons: the danger of European interference on behalf

16Callahan, American Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 292.
of the seceding states, and the domestic difficulties of the Federal government. Union forces had suffered the defeats of First Bull Run, the Seven Days Battle and the retreat from Richmond. Added to the defeat of the Peninsular Campaign was the magnitude of the Battle of Shiloh which, while acclaimed as a Union victory, caused much anxiety due to the huge number of wounded and dead.

Faced with the prospect of a long war, Seward was in a serious dilemma. If he pushed the French Emperor too far, the French government might extend diplomatic recognition to the seceding states, thus leading the way for the rest of the European nations to open diplomatic legations in the South.

Seward could not, on the other hand, afford to meekly acquiesce in the French demands, for to do so would lead to a destruction of the good Mexican–United States relations so carefully cultivated by Corwin, and to the possible establishment of a monarchy in Mexico. Such an action would be inherently distasteful to the American public, and the government which condoned the French sponsored monarchy would face the responsibility of repudiation at the polls in the 1862 congressional elections.

Seward decided to try a new approach to the problem of letting European powers know that the United States government did not condone their actions in Mexico. The new policy was essentially a policy of "kid gloves diplomacy," or in the words of Callahan, "masterful inactivity." Seward gave the
European nations their first intimation of his new policy through the State Department circular of December 4, 1861. Suspecting the defeat of the Corwin treaty in the Senate, Seward responded to the overture to join in the London Convention with the circular over the President's name. The first paragraph of the circular reassured the European powers that the United States government did not question the right of the allied powers to go to Mexico and resort to war against that nation for settlement of non-payment of debts. President Lincoln spoke of the desire of the United States government that none of the contracting parties would "seek or obtain any acquisition of territory or any advantage peculiar to itself, and not equally left open to the United States." Lincoln also declared that none of the allied powers were to exercise in the affairs of Mexico any influence which would impair the right of the Mexican people to choose and freely constitute the form of their own government. The government of the United States did not enter the convention because of its traditional policy of non-alliance with foreign countries, and its desire to maintain good relations with Mexico. Lincoln also expressed hope that a new treaty similar to Corwin's would pass the Senate and prove acceptable to the allied powers.  

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Seward made the views of the United States government regarding the intervention even more emphatic through a State Department circular of March 3, 1862. The Secretary of State re-emphasized the fact that the allied powers had the right to go to Mexico and seek redress for their grievances. The circular stated that from the information which was "grounded upon some knowledge of the political sentiments and habits of society in America," a monarchical government "has no promise of security or permanence . . . ." The final paragraph of the circular was especially revealing of the government's attitude. It conceded that the Senate had not given its sanction to the treaty desired by the State Department. The refusal of the Senate to ratify the treaty was, however, "only a question of domestic administration." It would be, stated the circular, very erroneous to regard the Senate's recalcitrance as indicative of serious differences of opinion in the government or among the American people in "their cordial good wishes for safety, welfare, and stability of the republican system of government in that country."

As if to add emphasis to the March third circular, Seward sent a dispatch to Dayton on March 31, 1862, telling him to see Thouvenel and intimate to the French minister that rumors of France's desire to march inland to the capital of Mexico had reached the President. Any explanations of the French

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18 Seward to Adams, March 3, 1862, ibid., pp. 207-208.
actions would, stated Seward, be welcome. The last paragraph of the dispatch contained a warning that the United States government did not favor the actions of the European powers in Mexico.

It will hardly be necessary to do more in assigning your reasons for this proceeding on your part than to say that we have more than once informed all the parties to the alliance that we cannot look with indifference upon any European intervention for political ends in a country situated so near and connected with us so closely as Mexico. 19

Forces from the three countries had landed at Vera Cruz on December 17, 1861. At the beginning of the intervention, the allied powers had been able to work together reasonably well. Unable to find evidence of the hoped-for monarchist uprising, the French plenipotentiaries, Admiral Jurien and Dubois de Saligny, gave their assent to a conference of commissioners from France, England, Spain and the republican government of Mexico. The allied commissioners were to meet with the Mexican commissioner, General Don Doblado, at La Soledad. 20

The allied powers at La Soledad agreed to withdraw their forces from Mexico, recognize Mexico's constitutional government as the legal government of Mexico and set up another meeting to be held at Orizaba on April 15, 1862. The Orizaba session was planned to conclude the intervention by a treaty

19 Seward to Dayton, March 31, 1862, ibid., p. 216.

20 Parkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 381.
guaranteeing the payment of debts owed by Mexico. In return for concessions granted at La Soledad, the allied powers were granted the right to venture into the interior beyond the yellow fever zone; but, even more important, the allied powers stipulated that they had no intention of infringing upon the independence and sovereignty of Mexico. As if to emphasize their determination to reach a conclusion and recognize the territorial integrity of Mexico, the allied powers agreed to have the Mexican flag raised at Vera Cruz and on the island of San Juan de Ulloa on the day their forces marched to Orizaba.\textsuperscript{21}

The French commander did not have the blessing of the French Emperor when he entered into discussions at La Soledad. Napoleon had already discussed plans with his advisor, Dubois de Saligny, and with an agent of the Conservatives, José Hidalgo. Napoleon was determined, with Hidalgo's support, to establish a monarchy in Mexico and wanted the Archduke of Austria, Maximilian, to assume the proposed throne.\textsuperscript{22}

Corwin wrote Seward that France had no intention of abiding by the La Soledad agreement. Events proved his prophecy was correct. Prior to the April 15 meeting at Orizaba, the French commissioner proceeded to put forth extravagant claims in behalf of the French government, for financial redress to French

\textsuperscript{21} Corwin to Seward, March 20, 1862, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States, 1862, II} (Washington, 1862), 731-732. Hereafter cited as \textit{Foreign Relations}.

\textsuperscript{22} Corti, \textit{Maximilian}, I, 158.
citizens living in Mexico. The commissioner also argued with the other allied commissioners over the future ownership of the customs house at Vera Cruz. He claimed that the customs house should revert to French ownership, the other powers wanted it to revert to Mexico.\(^{23}\)

The quarrel between the three powers was heightened by the French sponsorship of the Mexican Conservative, General Juan Almonte. Contrary to the desire of the Spanish commissioner, General Prats y Prim, Almonte was not detained by the French forces at Vera Cruz, but was permitted to advance into the interior under French escort. Mutual recriminations followed the French action and the dissolution of the alliance was assured. As the English and Spanish government learned that the real purpose of the French expedition was to establish a monarchy in Mexico, they quickly sought to secure a satisfactory agreement with the Juárez government and withdraw their forces.\(^{24}\) By April 10, 1862, they had signed such an agreement with the Juárez government, and began to withdraw from Mexico. At the end of the year the only European forces remaining in Mexico were French.

The French commissioners proposed a truce of three months duration to the Mexican minister of foreign affairs, but it was speedily refused. The result was a breaking out of

\(^{23}\)Corwin to Seward, March 28, 1862, Foreign Relations, 1862, pp. 733–734.

hostilities between the forces of Juárez and the combined forces of Mexican Conservatives and French imperialists. The city of Vera Cruz was reorganized under the auspices of French supervision and General Almonte was granted recognition by the French Crown as the President of Mexico.  

The action of the French Crown and French forces was followed by a presidential proclamation issued on April 12, 1862, by Juárez. He proclaimed a state of siege and issued a national call to arms. Corwin wrote Seward that Almonte was employed by some power to subvert the present government of Mexico and help establish in its stead a monarchy having for its representative some European prince. The American minister realized the French were determined to occupy and control the whole republic. Seward, still fearful lest he aggravate the situation and incur Napoleon’s anger and possible recognition of the Confederacy, wrote Dayton that "We do not desire to suppress the fact that our sympathies are with Mexico, and our wishes are for the restoration of peace within her border; nor do we, in any sense, for any purpose, disapprove of her present form of government or distrust her administration ...."

25 Corwin to Seward, April 28, 1862, Dispatches—Mexico, XXIX.

26 Plumb to Seward, April 28, 1862, ibid.

27 Corwin to Seward, June 3, 1862, ibid.

28 Seward to Dayton, June 21, 1862, Foreign Affairs, 1862, pp. 355-356.
On July 9, 1862, Dayton wrote Seward that the French had dispatched a force of 25,000 men and a large fleet. The destination of the fleet was the coast of Mexico.\textsuperscript{29} The action was taken despite assurances given by the French government that France had no aim in Mexico except to get her claims adjusted properly. All that France desired, said Thouvenel to Dayton, was a government in Mexico, not an anarchy with which other nations could have no relations.\textsuperscript{30}

Seward, realizing that war had begun in Mexico, wrote Corwin that it was not always easy to judge whether a new government would prove satisfactory to the people and become permanent. At the same time, wrote Seward, it was neither the right nor the duty of the United States government to prejudice or condemn any new constitution or administration which the fortunes of internal war called into being. In view of the condition of the Union in 1862, the President expected Corwin to suspend any definite act of recognition lest a dynastic change occur. The Secretary of State was determined to permit no recognition of any government other than the Juarez government. At the same time, he could not afford to antagonize Napoleon and win the enmity of the French government.

The remainder of 1862 saw Civil War raging in both the United States and Mexico. Although the French-Conservative

\textsuperscript{29}Dayton to Seward, July 9, 1862, \textit{ibid.}, p. 370.

\textsuperscript{30}Dayton to Seward, April 22, 1862, \textit{Dispatches France}, II.
forces did not begin their advance on the Mexican capital until the spring of 1863, sporadic fighting continued throughout the country. The policy of the United States State Department was, May 10, throughout the remainder of 1862, after Seward sent his letter to recognize only Juárez as President of Mexico and to wait and see what would develop in that unhappy land. The war effort in the United States was sapping the strength of the Union and even if the American government would have permitted such an action, no forces could be spared to fight a foreign war. No congressman would have allowed United States troops to be sent into Mexico in 1862. Thus it was that the United States government had to wait until 1863, when congressional discontent and action forced a change to formulate a new diplomatic policy toward Mexico.
CHAPTER III

CONGRESS AND THE CROWN

The year 1862 ended with the French expeditionary force in Mexico preparing for an assault on Puebla. That assault was attempted and was successful in the spring of 1863. The collapse of the Republican forces in Puebla led to the collapse of the defenses around Mexico City, and the forces of the Juarez government fled, along with the President, to San Luis Potosi. Although the French captured the Mexican capital, they were never able to win control of all Mexico.

American military personnel in Arizona feared the rapid French advance in Mexico. Brigadier General J. R. West, commanding general in Arizona, wrote Major David Fergusson that the designs on the French Emperor of Mexico were viewed by the Americans in Arizona with suspicion. West feared the French commanders in Mexico would attempt to gain the aid of Texas rebels in return for the recognition of the Confederacy and military aid. Seward also feared the French would attempt to gain the aid of Texas rebels and the news from the front did little to relieve his fears.

At the beginning of 1863 efforts were made to induce the administration to adopt a bolder, more belligerent policy.

than that proposed by Seward in 1862. The partisans of the Juárez government found a friend and strong ally in Senator James A. McDougal of California. McDougal, aided by Matías Romero, introduced a resolution in the Senate in favor of sustaining the Monroe Doctrine by giving military and financial assistance to the republican government of Mexico. Convinced that the United States policy of neutrality in the French-Mexican war only helped France, McDougal condemned the French actions in Mexico as contrary to international law and good faith. The resolution, had it been passed in the Senate, would have required the President to assure the Juárez government of United States aid in the struggle. McDougal claimed the French intervention was to be regarded by the United States government as "not only unfriendly, but as hostile."

The United States, stated McDougal, had a duty to require France to withdraw her forces from Mexican territory. To assure the fulfillment of the resolution and aid from the United States to Mexico, McDougal asked that a treaty embodying his recommendations be signed between the United States and the republican government of Mexico.2

Seward and the administration feared the passage of such a resolution because of its definite anti-French content. Had the resolution been passed, the United States would have been committed to a policy that would have strained relations

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between it and the French government. If the United States had required France to withdraw its forces from Mexico early in 1863, Napoleon would probably have turned to the Confederacy for aid in his Mexican scheme and offered, in return, to recognize the legality of the secession.

McDougal was not able to get his resolution passed in January, 1863. The resolution was, due to the effectiveness of the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Charles Sumner, tabled, and it remained so until February 3, 1863, when, by a vote of twenty-nine to sixteen, McDougal once again secured Senate consideration for it. McDougal defended his resolution at the February session by branding Napoleon III as a European tyrant seeking to seize lands belonging to the United States. Raising the spectre of French intervention in behalf of the South, McDougal urged his colleagues to consider the actions of France "as a fraud against the United States." The only way to put an end to Napoleon's schemes, said McDougal, was to wage war against the French Crown. McDougal closed his argument with a solemn proclamation that he was unwilling to avoid war between the United States and France.\(^3\)

After McDougal's speech, Charles Sumner took the floor in defense of administration foreign policy. Sumner claimed that the only way to evaluate such a resolution as McDougal proposed was against the "touchstone" of whether such action

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\(^3\)Congressional Globe, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Appendix, pp. 97-100.
would help suppress the rebellion. Judged against this
touchstone, Sumner had the following remarks to make concern-
ing the resolution:

Assuming the tone of friendship to Mexico,
they (the resolutions) practically give to
the rebellion a most powerful ally, for
Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
The present war is enough without adding a war
with France.4

Sumner then moved that the resolution lie on the table and
his motion was, with the aid of Senators Latham, Crises,
Wilson and Hale, adopted, and the administration thus averted
the crisis. On May 26, 1864, McDougal tried once again to
introduce his resolution in the Senate, but met with defeat
by a vote of twenty-three to five.5

The newspapers were quick to seize upon McDougal’s res-
olution as evidenced by the January 21, 1863, issue of the
New York Times. The editorialist of that paper commended the
resolution as the very thing that would force both France and
the United States to declare their true intentions regarding
the Mexican conflict.6

Napoleon feared the resolution and possible war with
América. He sought and was granted an interview with Dayton
on February 5, 1863, at which time the Emperor expressed

4Congressional Globe, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, pp.
695–697.
hope that the resolution would not pass. Dayton, wishing to follow Seward's policy of strict neutrality in the French-Mexican conflict, told Napoleon that no just inference as to the feeling of the Senate could be drawn from the action of one member. Each individual, said Dayton, was apt to act upon his impulses and often did so with no prior conferences with his fellow congressmen. Seward followed Dayton's interview with a dispatch assuring the minister that the United States would remain friendly toward France so long as United States rights and honor were respected. Seward did not want to get involved in a foreign war while the Union was engaged in a struggle for its life.

The furor over the resolution died down after the February attempt to reintroduce it in the Senate, and it did not become an important issue again until May, 1864. After his interview with Dayton ended in an assurance that the United States would not meddle in Mexico, Napoleon once again returned to his dual role. He assured the United States minister that France had no aims or desires in Mexico and, at the same time, went ahead with his scheme of feasting upon the Mexicans a foreign monarchy controlled by the French Crown. On April 9, 1863, Drouyn de Lhuys, the man who replaced Thouvenel as foreign minister, met with Dayton and assured

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7 Dayton to Seward, February 6, 1863, Dispatches-France, LIII, 56.
8 Seward to Dayton, March 2, 1863, Foreign Relations, 1863, II, 716.
him that the only purpose France had in Mexico was to satisfy her debts and then leave the country. Lhuys assured Dayton that the United States government did not have to worry about French desires to control the government of Mexico.\footnote{Dayton to Seward, April 9, 1863, ibid., pp. 726-728.}

French-American relations in regard to Mexico were further disturbed when Charles Francis Adams, American minister in London, issued a certificate to envoys of the Juárez government giving his assent to the purchase of war goods in the United States. Adams undoubtedly thought that he would be able to aid pro-Union forces, but his action almost brought French reprisals when it became known in Paris. Lhuys called on Dayton and, though the certificate which was presented bore no signature and therefore no authenticity, told him that the Emperor resented the action. Dayton told Lhuys that there was nothing new in Adams' action, but that the correspondence between Seward and Romero indicated a policy was being followed by the United States contrary to that of which France complained. The Secretary of the Treasury had refused to interfere in the application for wagons and mules for the French, but had stopped the exportation of 37,000 muskets purchased in New York for the Juárez government. The Mexican minister had felt justified in intimating that the United States discriminated against Mexico and favored France. It seemed, said Dayton, that the United States was doing far more

\footnote{Dayton to Seward, April 9, 1863, ibid., pp. 726-728.}
for France than for Mexico, and thus no complaints were justified from the French government. Lhuys told Dayton that if the war in Mexico was unpleasant to the United States, Washington should take into consideration the fact that her civil war was unpleasant and injurious to France, and if the United States encouraged France's enemies in Mexico, France would aid the rebels in the United States.\textsuperscript{10} The blunt warning was delivered in April, 1863, apparently because Napoleon thought that he could afford to use such language in light of the Union defeats.

Seward was assailed by both Corwin and Dayton regarding the selling of arms to the belligerents in Mexico. Corwin wrote that there were rumors in Mexico that the United States was selling arms to the French, yet denying the same privilege to the Juárez government.\textsuperscript{11} Seward was able to placate his minister in Mexico by granting Matías Romero an interview at which the Mexican official was told that the United States was, in the near future, going to forbid the selling of any type of supplies to both France and Mexico. The interview did much, wrote Corwin, to relieve the anxiety felt by the Juárez government over the rumored selling of arms to France.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Dayton to Seward, April 24, 1863, Dispatches-France, LIII.

\textsuperscript{11} Corwin to Seward, January 24, 1863, Foreign Relations, 1863, II, 1234.

\textsuperscript{12} Corwin to Seward, April 16, 1863, \textit{ibid.}, p. 1253.
The war in Mexico progressed and French forces took both Puebla and Mexico City. After General Forney's forces took the Mexican capital, Napoleon wrote a letter of congratulations to the occupying army. In the letter Napoleon stated that it was his intention to limit the growth and prestige of the United States by establishing a strong government in Mexico. His idea was to establish a government which would be directed by himself and "indebted to France for its repose and its prosperity."\(^{13}\)

The fall of Puebla brought comment from both Dayton and Corwin. Dayton wrote that since the taking of Puebla, the French government had been meeting with representatives from the southern states and the Emperor had, of his own seeking, a reception with Slidell, the Confederate representative in Paris.\(^{14}\) Corwin wrote a bitter denunciation of the French action in Mexico stating that he had always believed that the invasion of Mexico and the overthrow of Juarez by French forces was in some way connected with the rebellion in the United States. "If the French power is extended over the whole Mexican territory," wrote Corwin, "will not the Emperor find some reason for connecting Arizona and Texas with his Mexican Colony? Will not the South make terms with him in

\(^{13}\)Dayton to Seward, June 7, 1863, Dispatches-France, LIII.

\(^{14}\)Dayton to Seward, June 22, 1863, ibid.
such case?" Corwin urged the occupation of Texas lest French forces eventually move into United States territory.  

General Forney, before his occupation of Mexico City, organized a temporary government for Mexico. The French commander selected thirty-five Mexican citizens to form a supreme junta. The junta then chose an executive composed of three regents, the head of whom was none other than Almonte, and then chose 215 citizens of Mexico to associate with themselves and form an assembly of notables to which was assigned the authority to establish a permanent government. The day after the occupation of the capital, the assembly of notables voted in favor of a monarchy, and decided to offer the crown to Maximilian of Austria, or, if he did not accept, to any other prince whom Napoleon should indicate. Corwin was correct when he wrote Seward that the monarch would be a mere instrument of that power to which he owed his crown.  

When the official mayor of Mexico City invited Corwin to attend the installation of the new officials in the capital, the American minister refused. Corwin stated he deemed it his duty to abstain from any act which would be construed into a recognition of any other government than that to which he was duly accredited.  

15 Corwin to Seward, June 26, 1863, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.  
16 Callahan, American Policy, pp. 290-291; Corwin to Seward, June 20, 1863, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.  
17 Corwin to Seward, July 20, 1863, ibid.
to address the new provisional government inaugurated under the aegis of Napoleon's forces, and granted him temporary leave of absence. 18

The American consul-general in France, John Bigelow, was extremely critical of Seward's policy. He wrote the Secretary of State and questioned the administration's actions in regard to the establishment of a French-sponsored government in Mexico City. Seward told Bigelow that with the forces of the United States retreating in Louisiana instead of marching toward Mexico, the time did not seem propitious to offer idle menaces to the French. "We have compromised nothing, surrendered nothing, and I do not propose," wrote Seward, "to surrender anything. But why should we gasconade about Mexico when we are in a struggle for our own life?" 19

Seward continued his policy of "masterful inactivity" by constantly reassuring the French Emperor that the United States would follow a policy of neutrality in regard to the war in Mexico. When Seward learned of rumors in Paris that the United States only awaited the termination of its domestic difficulty to expel the French from Mexico, he had Dayton tell Lhuys that nothing was further from the truth. 20 By the end

18 Corwin to Seward, August 8, 1863, Foreign Relations, 1863, I, 1256.


20 Dayton to Seward, September 14, 1863, Dispatches-France, LIII.
of September, however, Seward's dispatches began to carry a note of sarcasm and dissatisfaction. On September 21, 1863, Seward wrote Dayton that the French actions in Mexico were endangering the neutrality of the United States. "Owing to this circumstance," said Seward, "it becomes very difficult for this government to enforce a rigid observance of its neutrality laws." Seward asked Dayton to seek an interview with Lhuys and to suggest to him that the interests of the United States and the interests of France herself required that a solution to the Mexican problem be made, as early as possible, on the basis of the unity and independence of Mexico. The President, said Seward, believed that such were the sentiments of the Emperor in regard to Mexico. Seward warned the French Emperor that United States neutrality would be destroyed by French actions and, at the same time, emphasized the peaceful intentions of the United States in regard to the Mexican problem. It was a blunt warning tempered with peaceful language.

On October 8, 1863, Dayton wrote Seward that Maximilian had definitely decided to accept the throne of Mexico and would leave Austria for Vera Cruz in the spring. Dayton said that the Archduke would be sent to Mexico only on condition of a vote which portrayed the will of the Mexican populace. He, however, doubted that any vote would show the true feelings of the people since elections were going to be held only in the large cities. Since the large cities were controlled by
Conservatives with the aid of French forces, the vote would be in favor of the foreign prince.

When Dayton protested to Lhuys about the Archduke's action, Lhuys told the American minister that the principal opposition to the Archduke would probably come from the United States and the sooner she showed herself "satisfied" and manifested a willingness to enter into peaceful relations with the Maximilian government, the sooner France would leave Mexico and the new government to take care of itself. Dayton told the French foreign minister that the United States would not hastily decide to acknowledge a monarchy in Mexico, but he would repeat the French message at home.21

Seward's answer to Lhuys' intimation was as unsatisfactory to the French Emperor as it was adroit. He told Lhuys that the United States was determined to follow a policy of strict neutrality. The President, said Dayton, continued to regard Mexico as a theatre of war which had not yet ended in the subversion of the government long existing there and with which the United States remained in "the relation of peace and sincere friendship." For that reason the United States was, said Dayton, not at liberty to consider the question of recognizing a government which, in the further chances of war, might take the place of the republican government in Mexico.22

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21 Dayton to Seward, October 9, 1863, ibid., pp. 789-790.

22 Seward to Dayton, October 23, 1863, ibid., pp. 798-799.
Fears of retaliation for the refusal of the Secretary of State to recognize Maximilian's government were not abated by the dispatches which flowed into Washington from Mexico. Corwin wrote repeatedly of rumors that John Slidell had conferred with Napoleon once again about a secret treaty whereby the Emperor was to get a cession of Texas in return for French recognition of the Confederacy. Someone, wrote Corwin, had gone to Mexico City from Texas to meet with the Regency and left "expressing on his departure great satisfaction with his interview." Corwin warned Seward that the Mexican newspapers had columns devoted to the stories of aid from the Confederacy. One paper had an article stating that Jefferson Davis was expected soon to send an accredited representative to the capital who would be "authorized to propose that the Confederate Government shall recognize the government of the Regency, and the latter in return recognize the so-called 'Confederate States' and obtain a cession of Texas to France." 23

In November, Napoleon began to question his policy in Mexico. The defeats of the Confederate forces at Vicksburg, Port Hudson and Gettysburg, coupled with the battle of

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23Corwin to Seward, October 26, 1863, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI. William Preston was sent as Confederate minister to Mexico. He was instructed to negotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce with the Maximilian government. His mission was unsuccessful because he received word from Maximilian's foreign minister that he would not be welcome in Mexico. He never left Havana; Davis to Preston, January 7, 1864; Naval Records, Series 2, III, 154-155; Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, pp. 521-524.
Chattanooga seemed to portend the ultimate victory of the Union. Another factor that the French Emperor had to take into consideration was the fact that the Union forces had been put under the control of Ulysses S. Grant, the man who had successfully besieged Vicksburg and who would stop at nothing short of victory. At the November 6, 1863, opening of the French Chambers, Napoleon made no reference to affairs in Mexico. Napoleon suffered in the elections earlier in 1863, and opposition to his Mexican policy was especially evidenced by the votes of the Paris populace who refused to elect anyone advocating the foreign policy of the Emperor.\(^{24}\) Napoleon was cognizant of the complaints about his foreign policy, and Dayton wrote Seward that the more the Emperor's invasion of Mexico was complained of, the more anxious he seemed about his success.\(^{25}\) Though the Emperor was happy about the capture of Puebla and Mexico City, many in France worried about what would happen if the Confederacy collapsed, and the Union forces were turned against the French forces in Mexico. Those fears were to be intensified by the actions of the United States Congress in 1864, and by the military victories of the Union forces during the final months of 1864.\(^{26}\)

\(^{24}\) Dayton to Seward, June 5, 1863, Dispatches-France, LIII.

\(^{25}\) Dayton to Seward, June 26, 1863, ibid.

\(^{26}\) Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 413.
Seward still maintained a policy of strict neutrality toward the belligerents in Mexico for the remainder of 1863. On November 23, 1863, the Secretary of State wrote to the military commander at Brownsville instructing him as to the policy of the administration regarding relations with Mexico. The commander was ordered to maintain good relations with the Republic of Mexico. He was to regard Mexico as a field of foreign war, mingled with internal strife. He was instructed to prevent Union forces from giving aid to either side in the Mexican war, and was not to enter Mexico unless such entrance was absolutely necessary. General Banks was asked to assume no authority to protect United States citizens living in Mexico. Consuls should, wrote Seward, leave the country rather than invoke the protection of United States forces. On December 12, 1863, Seward wrote Banks that all intercourse between the insurgents in Mexico and the present government of Mexico was to be only through the general. 27

The last dispatch from Corwin to Seward for the year 1863 was one which dealt with the neutrality of France in the American Civil War. Corwin wrote Seward that the authorities in Mexico City had done nothing inconsistent with their assurances of neutrality. The letter closed with a note that the Liberals had lost San Luis Potosí and were fleeing to Monterrey. The victories of the Union forces in the South

27Seward to Banks, Official Records, Series I, XXVI, 815-816.
and Southwest, however, had surprised the Confederate sympathizers in Mexico and, said Corwin, given hope to the Liberals in Mexico. Thus the year 1863 closed with Seward still maintaining an attitude of strict neutrality toward the Mexican situation and, at the same time, trying to appease Napoleon while making the dissatisfaction of the United States over the affairs in Mexico well known in European cities.

The year 1864 opened on a note similar to that of 1863. Early in January, Senator McDougal attempted to re-introduce his resolution in the Senate, but it was sent to the Committee on Foreign Relations without any debate and there allowed to slumber. In a confidential, unpublished letter dated February 8, 1864, Seward foretold the future congressional action expected against the administration's foreign policy with the following words: "There will be a legislative demonstration against the establishment of a foreign government and a monarchy in Mexico. Only the influence of executive moderation holds the popular action under restraint now."

McDougal's action, as well as Seward's letter, were prompted by news from Mexico of French victories. French forces advanced as far north as San Luis Potosi and occupied all the cities on their route by February 26, 1864. Juarez and his government retreated first to Saltillo and then to

28 Corwin to Seward, December 26, 1863, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.
29 Bancroft, Seward, II, 428.
Monterrey where, according to Corwin's dispatch, the Liberal forces had to drive the dictator of the northern states, Vidaurre, from the city.³⁰

Though the administration was able to block passage of the McDougall resolution, with Charles Sumner taking the lead in the action, such was not the case of a House-sponsored resolution. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs, possibly worried lest the rumor that the administration was going to recognize the Regency as the legal government in Mexico if France promised not to recognize the Confederacy, revived the question of Congress directing foreign policy.³¹ On April 4, 1864, Henry Winter Davis reported from the committee a resolution which was accepted unanimously. The resolution spoke out against the foreign policy of the administration and said that the government should not acknowledge "any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government in America under the auspices of any European power."³² The Davis resolution was offered in the Senate, but it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations where the adroit Sumner allowed it to repose, and it was never seriously considered in that legislative body.

³⁰Corwin to Seward, February 26, 1864, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.

³¹Callahan, American Policy, pp. 294-295.

³²Congressional Globe, 38th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1408.
Seward was embarrassed by the rashness of the House, and he sought to nullify the strong language of the resolution by instructing Dayton to tell Lhuys that the President and not Congress had charge of the foreign affairs of the United States. No change of foreign policy was contemplated, said the Secretary of State, and when a change was to be made in the United States foreign policy, France would be duly apprised.33 Frederic Bancroft, Seward’s biographer, wrote that without such a declaration by the Secretary of State, it would have been certain that the resolution would have made Napoleon feel compelled to attack the United States at a time when it was weak, and while he still had control of affairs in France and Mexico.34

The resolution was commended by the New York Times. The staff editorialist said that the resolution reflected truthfully the view of the American people. The avowed purpose of the French government and Maximilian, wrote the editorialist, was to destroy the Monroe Doctrine so essential to the preservation of power in the New World. The editorialist also warned that the people of the United States would not tolerate French troops in Mexico, and the republican element in France coupled with the then docile element in Mexico would some day rise up and destroy the imperialists in Mexico.35

33Seward to Dayton, April 7, 1864, Foreign Relations, 1865-1866, III, 357.
34Bancroft, Seward, II, 428-430.
Dayton feared that the results of the resolution would be disastrous for the Union. In his dispatch of April 10, 1864, he said that France had kept faith with the United States and it was needless to complain about the Mexican affair until the United States would be able to enforce reparation. He had previously written Seward that the United States could not afford a war with France "for the quixotic purpose of helping Mexico." 36

Dayton's fears proved groundless because Seward was able, by his conciliatory letter of April 10th, to calm the French Emperor. Nevertheless, Lhuys' opening remark at an interview on April 21, 1864, was "do you bring us peace or bring us war?" Dayton told Lhuys that France did not need to fear any war from the United States. The resolution, said Dayton, embodied nothing more than had been constantly held out to the French government from the beginning of its actions in Mexico. Dayton assured Lhuys that the United States could not be expected to acknowledge a monarchy built upon the foundation of a neighboring republic. However, no war was sought between the United States and France. Dayton told Lhuys that secessionists were using the resolution to stir up trouble and cause dissension between two good allies. Dayton ended his report of the interview with a postscript that the papers in Paris looked upon the resolution as an indication that the

36 Dayton to Seward, April 10, 1864, Foreign Relations, 1864-1865, III, 74-75; March 25, 1864, Dispatches-France, LIV.
United States government would not remain satisfied with the condition of things established by France in Mexico.\textsuperscript{37}

While Dayton and Seward were trying to soothe things over in the French capital, Corwin was keeping the State Department briefed on developments in Mexico City. The American minister refused a proffered leave of absence saying it would not be proper to leave Mexico. Such a coincidence might give rise to misconceptions as to the motives of the government, and possibly create hostile feelings in quarters where they would do the United States harm. Moreover, Corwin wanted to stay and make sure that "American interests of every description might be watched."\textsuperscript{38}

On April 10, 1864, Maximilian accepted the Crown offered him by regents of the Regency, and on May 23, the ship carrying the Archduke and his entourage landed at Vera Cruz. A convention had been signed in April between the Archduke and Napoleon whereby troops of France were reduced, but remained in Mexico. The cost of the troops was paid by the new monarch, the debt owed by Mexico to France was re-figure, and payments resumed on the principal and interest.\textsuperscript{39} Added to news of the assumption and the convention, were reports of

\textsuperscript{37} Dayton to Seward, April 22, 1864, \textit{Dispatches-France}, LIV.

\textsuperscript{38} Corwin to Seward, March 28, 1864, \textit{Dispatches-Mexico}, XXXI.

\textsuperscript{39} Dayton to Seward, April 18, 1864, \textit{Dispatches-France}, LIV, \textit{Foreign Relations, 1864–1865,} III, 74–75.
new defeats suffered by the Liberal forces. On May 17, 1864, the forces under command of General Doblado were defeated between San Luis Potosí and Monterey.

By May of 1864, public opinion in the United States was strongly opposed to the French actions in Mexico and people were worried lest French troops totally defeat Juárez. The turn in public opinion was very important because 1864 was a presidential election year and political candidates had to state their position on the French actions in Mexico.

The Radical Republicans met on May 31, 1864, and adopted a plank which lauded the Monroe Doctrine as a recognized principle and declared that the establishment of any anti-republican government on the continent by a foreign power could not be tolerated. The similarity of the plank to the Davis resolution was very striking. The Union Party Platform of 1864 contained a plank which stated, albeit in guarded language, that the actions of France were fraught with dangerous consequences for the nation. The United States, stated the platform, could not view with indifference the attempt of any European power to overthrow by force or supplant by fraud any republican government on the "Western Continent...sustained by foreign military force, in near proximity to the United States." 41

40 Callahan, American Policy, p. 297.

Seward wrote to the American minister in Vienna after the Republican Convention that all that could be done regarding the intervention in Mexico was to practice "prudence and good faith" and at the same time make preparations for self defense if, notwithstanding the effort of the administration to maintain neutrality, the government found itself involved in new complications. Seward was evidently fearful of a violent French reaction to the party platform. 42

The Democratic Party, seeking to capitalize on the war weariness of the nation, could not afford to advocate any policy inconsistent with their campaign issue, and thus its platform omitted any reference to the intervention in Mexico. 43

The diplomatic dispatches after July, 1864, were primarily of informative character in describing the military situation in Mexico. Some correspondence, however, centered around the activities of ex-Senator William M. Gwin of California, a Confederate sympathizer. Gwin had gone to France and, in an interview with Napoleon, convinced the French Emperor that there were rich mines of every kind awaiting exploitation in the Mexican state of Sonora. Gwin submitted a plan for the exploitation of the mines, sought Napoleon's support for that purpose, and dropped open hints to the effect that Napoleon might make the province into a sort of French colony.

42 Seward to Motley, July 14, 1864, Foreign Relations, 1864-1865, IV, 11.

Gwin's main idea was not exploitation of the rumored mines. He sought instead to lead Napoleon into such a course of action in Sonora that France would be bound to come into conflict with the United States. The outcome of the conflict would, thought Gwin, be a recognition of the Confederacy and a military alliance between France and the southern states to protect the Sonora venture.44

Gwin won consent for his venture and John Slidell wrote the Confederate Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin, that the scheme to colonize Sonora with Confederate sympathizers had won approval of the French Emperor. Slidell told Benjamin that "His scheme has been fully examined and approved and offers, as I believe, fair chance of success. If carried out, its consequences will be most beneficial."45

Corwin knew of Gwin's activities and notified Seward of Gwin's expected arrival. Corwin told Seward that the report of Gwin being called by Maximilian was without foundation. The monarch of Mexico was trying to avoid schemes that he knew would anger the United States government. Corwin also informed Seward that there was every reason to believe that Maximilian was fully "impressed with the conviction" that any

44 Corti, Maximilian, I, 326-327.
45 Slidell to Benjamin, June 2, 1864; Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington, 1895-1927), Series 2, XXIX, 1139-1141.
act on his part which encouraged the Confederates would increase the ill-feeling against him in the United States.\textsuperscript{46}

Gwin ultimately found that his project was an impossible one to attain. The Liberals, as well as many Conservatives, were opposed to any colony being established which would be inhabited by foreigners. One obstruction after another kept Gwin from his goal. Such resentment was aroused concerning the scheme that Maximilian finally requested Gwin to leave Mexico under escort in July, 1865.\textsuperscript{47} Seward did not protest the activities of Gwin in 1864, but in 1865 Seward was able to warn the French that the activities of the traitor held only danger for France.

Seward was constantly kept informed on the state of the Liberal forces in Mexico. Romero sent dispatches to Seward of the state of affairs in Mexico, and kept the administration informed as to rebel activities in Mexico.\textsuperscript{48} By September 18, 1864, the French forces had taken Monterrey and Matamoros and were preparing to lay siege to Durango. Juarez had attacked Durango on September 9, but had been forced to flee when part of his army was defeated just outside the city on October 1, 1864. On September 21, 1864, the forces of the Liberal government were overtaken and defeated by the French. Juarez

\textsuperscript{46}Gwin to Seward, June 29, 1864, \textit{Dispatches-Mexico}, XXXI.

\textsuperscript{47}Rippy, \textit{United States and Mexico}, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{48}House Executive Documents, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 73, pp. 512-514, 24-27.
managed to escape and moved his government to the state of Chihuahua. The defeat led to widespread desertion in Liberal ranks and many prominent leaders in the Juarez government returned to Mexico City under pardon by Maximilian. Generals Croatan, Iglesias, Urraza and even Dobrado defected to the Imperial forces. The American public learned of the defeats and desertions and the clamor which had been heard when Davis sought to get his resolution through Congress was raised again in late 1864.49

Before the end of the year, another threat to Seward’s policy of strict neutrality appeared. Copperheads in the North sought peace between the sections at the expense of the French. The idea advanced by leading Copperheads was that peace should be sought on the basis of an armed expedition composed of both confederates and federals going to Mexico to oust Maximilian. One of the advocates of such a plan was Francis P. Blair, father of the Union’s postmaster General.

Lincoln refused to listen to Blair’s plan, but did give him permission to cross Union lines and to talk to the rebel government at Richmond. Blair met with President Davis and suggested that an armistice be signed between the two governments and then Davis could collect an army composed of Union and Confederate soldiers. Davis was then to take the force

49. Gresl to Carlton, September 10, 1864, Official Records, Series 1, XII, Part 3, 245-246; Corwin to Seward, August 19, 1864, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI; ibid., September 29, 1864.
into Mexico, secure an alliance with Juárez, and between them, the two were to force Maximilian and the French from Mexico. Davis listened to Blair and then gave him a letter to take to President Lincoln. Davis' letter indicated a willingness to appoint commissioners for working out the proposed armistice "with a view to secure peace to the two countries."

Blair's report of the conversations did not interest Lincoln as much as did the note sent by Davis. Lincoln gave Blair a note to take back to Davis in which the President made known his willingness to receive any commissioners Davis sent with "the view of securing peace to the people of our one common country." After failing in his initial attempt to foster an invasion of Mexico, Blair suggested to President Davis that Generals Lee and Grant could arrange a suspension of hostilities and plan the invasion. Blair conferred with Lincoln and had to send word to Davis that the idea of a military convention was impossible.  

The outcome of Blair's efforts was the Hampton Roads peace conference. At the conference Lincoln refused to renege on his original demands. Any peace must include acceptance of the supremacy of the national government over the states; no backtracking on the slavery question, and no armistice. Fighting was thus to continue until one side agreed to end

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the war. The conference was absolutely valueless, except
that it proved to Lincoln that the South could not hold out
much longer and ultimately would have to surrender. Neither
side was willing to concede at the conference. Both North
and South felt they were fighting for a just cause and neither
was willing to surrender.51

Thus 1864 ended and 1865 began with an effort to find
peace at the expense of the French-sponsored empire in Mexico.
Events in 1865 were to further weaken the hold of Maximilian
upon Mexico. It remained for the Union victory to convince
the French Emperor that his scheme of aggrandizement was not
destined to last.

51 Samuel Flagg Beers, editor, American Secretaries of
State and Their Diplomacy, 10 vols. (New York, 1928), VII,
103, 104.
CHAPTER IV

REACTION AND RETREAT

The years 1865 and 1866 represented a new phase in the diplomacy of the administration in Washington. During the two years, there was a gradual abandonment of caution. The tone of the dispatches from the State Department changed from the policy of "masterful inactivity" to a policy of insistence that the French forces leave Mexico. Perhaps the greatest reason for such a change was that the Civil War was terminated in the spring of 1865. With the war at an end, Seward could afford to demand that all French support of Maximilian's activities in Mexico be terminated.

Maximilian began late in 1864 to realize that events in the United States might force the French Emperor to desert him. In an effort to stall such action, Maximilian informed Napoleon that if the French forces remained in Mexico until such time as an adequate imperial force could be built, he would be willing to give France either a lien on or a cession of the state of Sonora. When word of the proposed transaction reached Bigelow, Seward was immediately informed. The Secretary of State sent Bigelow word that he was to have an interview with Lhuys and inform the French minister that such a cession, or even a lien upon the mineral resources of Sonora would not
be looked upon with favor by the United States. The Secretary of State used no stronger language than the reference to American disfavor of the proposition. He was still trying to avert a foreign war.¹

Seward received notice from Bigelow that the French Emperor wanted to get out of Mexico altogether.² Knowing this, Seward tried to make the path of retreat as easy as possible. He sought to find a way for the French to withdraw from Mexico and, at the same time, keep their honor. The Secretary of State absolutely refused, however, to recognize Maximilian as the price for a French promise to leave Mexico. It was his policy from beginning to end not to recognize the legality of the puppet monarchy in Mexico.

When Seward received word from the American Consul General in Tampico that Maximilian was sending an emissary to Washington, he wrote Bigelow that the government would receive no such emissary. Seward said that it was not the practice of the United States government to hold interviews, public or private, with persons from any country, "other than the agents duly accredited by the authority of that country which is recognized by this government." Though Seward sought to be conciliatory, he went a step further in the dispatch and said

¹Seward to Bigelow, February 7, 1865, Foreign Relations, 1865-1866, III, 363.
²Bigelow to Seward, February 9, 1865, Dispatches: France, LVI.
that the government had not, and would not recall for political reasons any consular officials from Mexico who were sent to the republican government in that country. On the contrary, wrote the Secretary of State, if consular officials were impaired in the function of their duty, they were to withdraw from their legations rather than submit to any thing which would be construed into recognition of the Maximilian regime.  

A dispatch to Bigelow dated March 6, 1865, revealed the attempt by Seward not to purposefully add fuel to the fire by "rasping the pride of an embarrassed government and of a sensitive people." The March 6th dispatch along with the March 17th dispatch contained assurances that no aggressive action was intended in regard to the Mexican affair, that the United States intended no attacks on Mexico, and that time and reason would, in all probability, heal the breach of French-American relations. The March 17th dispatch contained assurances that the United States had not and would not interfere in France's actions in Mexico. For the United States to interfere in Mexico would be only to reverse its own principles. The last two sentences especially portray Seward's policy of allowing the government of France an easy out for withdrawing from Mexico, and at the same time, portraying American dissatisfaction with the situation in Mexico.

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I remain, however, of the opinion that I have often expressed, that even this vexatious Mexican question in the end will find its solution without producing any conflict with the United States and France. The future of Mexico is neither an immediate, nor even a vital question, for either the United States or France. For both of them it is a foreign affair, and therefore time and reason may be allowed their due influence in its settlement.\textsuperscript{5}

Though Seward hoped thus to use tactful language and ease the way for French withdrawal from Mexico, events early in 1865 made it clear that public attitude would dictate a change. The Blair venture was followed by a similar military venture. General Lew Wallace thought that peace could be attained by a joint expedition to Mexico. Through personal correspondence with an old friend residing in Texas, Wallace received word of the possibility that Confederate forces in Texas and Louisiana would come to terms with the Union on the basis of a joint attack against the French in Mexico. Wallace wrote to Grant and received authorization to go into the Rio Grande area\textsuperscript{6}. While there he got in touch with two Confederate officers: Colonel John S. Ford and Brigadier-General James E. Slaughter. The three held a meeting at Port Isabel and it appeared that plans for the proposed expedition would be rapidly formulated. Correspondence between the three revealed hopes that such an expedition would terminate the war. However, when Ford and Walker reported of their meetings with

\textsuperscript{5}Seward to Bigelow, March 17, 1865, \textit{Foreign Relations, 1865-1866}, III, 387.

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Official Records, January 22, 1865, Series 1, XLVI, 201.}
Wallace to their commanding officer, General J. G. Walker, they were ordered to hold no future meetings, and thus the plans for an expedition were destroyed. Walker sent Wallace a letter in which he said the Confederate forces in Texas would accept nothing less than an honorable peace, and that the terms for the formation of such an expedition were totally unacceptable to the Confederacy.7

Military ventures such as Wallace's were augmented by the hostility toward the French of both Andrew Johnson and General Grant. When nominated for the vice-presidency, Johnson made some violent statements in regard to the French occupation in Mexico. In his Nashville speech of June 10, 1864, he said that the time was not far off when the rebellion would be put down, and then the United States could attend to the Mexican affair and demonstrate to Louis Napoleon that he could not found a monarchy on the American continent. Johnson ended his speech with a warning that the French forces and Maximilian would be wiped out if they remained in Mexico.8

General Grant wrote Johnson a letter which was exceedingly critical of Seward's past record in the Mexican affair. The general wrote, "All agree that, besides a yielding of the long-proclaimed Monroe Doctrine, non-intervention in Mexican affairs will lead to an expensive and bloody war hereafter or

7 Walker to Grant, March 27, 1865, Official Records, Series 1, XLVIII, 1275-1276.
yielding of territory now possessed by us." Grant proposed to alleviate the problem by demanding that all foreign troops be withdrawn from the continent, and the Mexican people left free to govern themselves in their own way. The general also advocated the open selling on credit of arms to the republican government of Mexico. All ammunition and clothing it needed, and aiding it with officers to command troops. The final sentences of his dispatch reveal his conviction that prompt action was necessary to remove the French from Mexico:

In fine, I would take such measures as would secure the supremacy of the republican government in Mexico. I hope you will excuse me for the free manner in which I address you, I but speak my honest convictions, and then, with the full belief that a terrible strife in this country is to be averted by prompt action in this manner with Mexico.9

Grant sat in at a cabinet meeting of June 16, 1865, and told the cabinet it was important that they take decisive measures in regard to the Mexican affair. He told the cabinet that Maximilian and the French should be warned, at once, to leave Mexico. Seward rebuked Grant, saying the Empire was rapidly perishing and, if left alone, Maximilian would leave in less than six months, perhaps in sixty days. But, said Seward, if the United States interfered, Maximilian would probably prolong his stay, and the Empire would last longer.10

9 Grant to Johnson, June 19, 1865, September 1, 1865, Official Records, Series I, XLVIII, 923-924, 1221.

Grant was not satisfied with Seward's reaction to his proposals, so he decided to take matters into his own hands. The ending of hostilities between North and South had been followed by the gradual mustering out of the armies; but despite the mustering out, a considerable force was maintained in Texas and it was increased in July of 1865. All in all, the number amounted to nearly 40,000 men.\textsuperscript{11} Grant had taken it upon himself in May, 1865, to dispatch troops under General Sheridan to the Rio Grande. He hoped to impress the French government with a show of Union might and thus speed the withdrawal of foreign troops from Mexico. He wrote Sheridan that he looked upon the invasion of Mexico by Maximilian as a part of the rebellion itself because of the encouragement the French had received from the Confederacy. Grant was positive that the Union success would never be complete until the Austrian and French troops were compelled to quit Mexico. Grant told Sheridan that it would be necessary to act with circumspection, since Seward was much opposed to the use of United States troops along the border in any active way that would be likely to involve the United States in a war with European powers.\textsuperscript{12}

Grant looked upon the task of driving the French from Mexico as part of his duties as head of the army and it never


occurred to him to get distinct and full instructions in regard to it. Thus he felt that he was authorised to send troops to and across the Rio Grande. On July 25, 1865, Grant wrote Sheridan that Lieutenant-General Schofield was receiving a twelve-month leave of absence, in order, as he himself wrote, "to organize in Mexican territory an army corps under commissions from the government of Mexico, the officers and soldiers to be taken from the Union and Confederate forces, who were reported to be eager to enlist in such an enterprise." 13

Schofield consulted with Romero and Grant. Before he left Washington, however, Secretary of War Stanton sent word that Seward wished an interview with him. Seward very cleverly disorganised the whole undertaking by flattering Schofield into believing that his services were needed at once in the field of diplomacy. Seward told Schofield that he wished the general to get his legs "under Napoleon's mahogany and tell him he must get out of Mexico." 14 If Napoleon could be made to understand that the United States would not tolerate any foreign government in Mexico, he would withdraw his troops and there would be no need for war. Not only did Schofield have full authority from the War Department and the General-in-Chief of the army, given with the knowledge and consent of the President, to organise and equip an army, he also had a request to


14 Ibid., p. 385.
enter into diplomatic negotiations with the French Emperor in behalf of the State Department. Luckily for Seward, the Lieutenant-General chose the latter task. Thus Seward was relieved of another threat of armed forces crossing the Rio Grande.

Schofield's diplomatic task was never fulfilled. Seward was crafty enough to realize that Schofield could destroy the years of hard, patient work of the State Department. Schofield himself recorded the futility of his diplomatic task by writing "though I received several intimations that I would be invited to a private interview, no invitation came, and none was sought."\(^{15}\) Seward was able to keep Schofield feasting in the outer court and society and, at the same time, keep him from meeting with the Emperor. Finally the self-styled diplomat received instructions from the Secretary of State to return to the United States in May, 1866.

The actions of Wallace, Blair, Schofield and Grant were representative of a growing awareness of the feeling against the French in the high quarters of the military and government. Seward was forced, by their actions, to take a somewhat stronger tone in his correspondence with Bigelow. Bigelow had maintained a policy of not angering the French and had even suggested to Seward that it would be folly for the United States to champion the cause of the republican government in Mexico. Bigelow

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 389.
certainly did not see any sense in any armed forces being sent to the border. Judging from his correspondence, Bigelow was not averse to Maximilian's presence in Mexico if that government could maintain peace and order.\textsuperscript{16} Yet, the minister was forced to change his attitude by the dispatches of the State Department in the summer of 1865.

One of Seward's dispatches showing the gradual change in policy was concerned with the projects of William M. Gwin, the ex-senator from California. Seward had not protested very much about the activities of the ex-senator in 1864. When he received new notice of Gwin's activities from Romero on July 8, 1865, he decided to notify the French government of American interest in the activities.\textsuperscript{17} He wrote Bigelow a long dispatch containing the following warning:

That any favor shown to the proceedings of Doctor Gwin by the titular emperor of Mexico or by the imperial government of France, with reference to those agents, will tend greatly to increase the popular impatience, because it will be regarded, perhaps justly, as importing dangers to, or at least as a menace against, the United States . . . . Nor can it be necessary to say, that after having expelled insurgents from our own borders, the United States government could not look with satisfaction upon their reorganization as martial or political enemies on the opposite banks of the Rio Grande . . . .\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17} Romero to Seward, July 8, 1865, \textit{Mexican Affairs}, I, 529-530.

\textsuperscript{18} Seward to Bigelow, July 13, 1865, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 538-539.
Seward received a tart reply from Lhuys, and still he maintained a policy of warning France they had to withdraw from Mexico.

The letter regarding the Gwin activities was followed by even more vigorous action against the French government. The Secretary of State learned of raids made by Kirby Smith and other Texas troops who had refused to surrender to Union forces. The Confederates had enlisted in the service of Maximilian and had taken arms and ammunition into Mexico. Seward sent a dispatch to Bigelow telling him to inform Lhuys that instructions had been given to the general commanding the United States military forces in Texas to permit no "aggressive movements within his command within Mexican territory, unless instructions to that effect from the War Department should be rendered necessary by a condition of affairs not now anticipated." For the first time, Seward intimated that United States forces would cross the Rio Grande if necessary to uphold the honor and rights of the United States.19

Seward's warning was followed by another dispatch on September 6, 1865, in which the Secretary of State said that the policies and proceedings of the French government in regard to Mexico were at variance with the policy and sentiments of the United States. Though the United States government did not insist that the states of the American continent adopt a

19Seward to Bigelow, July 6, 1865, Mexican Affairs, II, 462-463.
republican form of government, it did not hold that the people of the continent were entitled to their own choice of government and that the United States could disassociate itself with the efforts of any party or nation to deprive the people of Mexico of such a privilege. Seward ended the dispatch with a warning that the time had come for both nations to consider whether the permanent interests of international peace and friendship did not require thoughtful and serious attention to the problem of the French occupation of Mexico. Seward could well afford to send such threats in his dispatches in the summer of 1865. He was receiving reports from General Sheridan of discontent in Mexico and the desire of the Mexican populace to be rid of the French overseers.

Seward's warnings bore fruit. On September 14, 1865, the French Emperor wrote to Maximilian seeking to withdraw the French troops in Mexico. Napoleon wrote Maximilian that it was to the Archduke's advantage to organize his own army from Austrian troops. When that was done, said Napoleon, the greater part of the French troops could be withdrawn from Mexico and thus France would "deprive the Americans of all pretext for their objections."
When Napoleon attempted to send troops from Egypt to aid Maximilian’s venture, Seward’s dispatches reached new heights of acidity. On September 20, 1865, the Secretary of State instructed Bigelow to inform Lhuys that any embarkation of Nubian troops to Mexico would be regarded by the United States government with deep concern. The dispatch was followed by a stronger dispatch of November 6, 1865, when Seward warned Napoleon that the presence of the French forces in Mexico, under the authority of a foreign prince, was in direct antagonism to the policy of the United States government and the principles upon which it was founded. Every day, wrote Seward, the United States government became more convinced of the futility of the French-sponsored monarchy. The government was not going to recognize any regime founded on principles contrary to justice and in opposition to the republican government with which she had constantly maintained relations of amity and friendship. Seward instructed Bigelow to again warn the Emperor that the United States could not remain indifferent to the plight of Mexico.23

On December 1, 1865, Grant wrote Sheridan that in view of the probable action relating to the affairs in Mexico by Congress, he was to do all he could to preserve strict neutrality along the border.24 On December 4, 1865, President

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23 Seward to Bigelow, November 6, 1865, Foreign Relations, 1865-1866, III, 421-422.

24 Grant to Sheridan, December 1, 1865, Official Records, Series 1, XLVIII, 1258.
Johnson in his first annual message referred to the Maximilian government, according to the New York Times, as a foreign monarchy forced on a sister republic. Such action was to be regarded as an insult and a standing challenge to the United States. The President's position was reiterated by Seward when, in answer to French requests to recognize Maximilian as prerequisite to the withdrawal of French troops, he wrote Bigelow on December 6, 1865, that the United States could not assure France that it could be either friendly or tolerant of Maximilian's government. The real cause of United States discontent, wrote Seward, was with the French actions in Mexico. The French army was invading a republican government that was established by Mexicans and recognized by the United States.  

Congress met on December 11 and asked the President to send information on the actions of Maximilian, specifically on the Archduke's proclamation that those aiding Juarez would be shot without trial. Senator Van Horn of Missouri introduced a resolution that called for the Committee on Foreign Relations to "inquire into and report what measures and means may be necessary to restore to the Mexican people the free and unrestricted form of government. . . ." Seward very adroitly used the threat of Congressional action to force the French government to consider withdrawing its troops from Mexico.

He instructed Bigelow to tell Lhuys that the Congress which was in session, was authorized by the Constitution and entitled to direct by law the action of the United States in regard to the Mexican issue. Seward told Bigelow to appraise the French foreign minister of the President's wish that Napoleon realize two facts. These were: (1) the United States earnestly desired to continue and cultivate friendship with France and (2) that friendship, however, would be in jeopardy unless France deemed it consistent with her honor and interest to cease armed intervention in Mexico.27

Seward followed the December 16th dispatch with an action which proved that he meant to have the French out of Mexico even at the cost of war with France. On October 11, 1865, General Irwin McDowell issued a military order forbidding the sale of any arms or munitions of war to Mexican agents. His proclamation was protested by Romero. Seward submitted the proclamation to the Attorney General's office and on December 23, 1865, received advice that the proclamation was not valid. Attorney General Speed told Seward that filibustering attempts were not lawful, but that shipping arms to the republican forces of Mexico was. Grant revoked McDowell's order as soon as he heard of it. With the advice of the Attorney General, the way was open for legal selling of arms to Juárez's forces. President Johnson was not adverse to such transactions and,

27Seward to Bigelow, December 16, 1865, ibid., p. 429.
by December, 1865, neither was the Secretary of State. Seward threw aside all restraint and told Romaro that McDowell’s orders were officially withdrawn. 28

The year 1865 came to an end with the administration committing itself to any means possible to drive the French and Maximilian from Mexico. Seward, knowing that President Johnson and General Grant were in favor of strong action, was able to take the firmest stand he had since the beginning of the French intervention in Mexico. The results of his firm stand in the fall and winter of 1865 were reflected in the events within Mexico during 1866 and 1867, and it is to those events one must turn for the completed picture of Mexican-United States relations from 1861 to 1867.

Seward’s warnings of December, 1865, had their desired effect. On January 15, 1866, President Johnson and Seward took steps to have a minister appointed to the Juárez government. William Corwin had served as charge d’affaires since the retirement of his father. Seward advised Johnson that the time was ripe for the commissioning of a minister to the republican government. Thus it was that Corwin received notice that he was being recalled to the United States. 29

28 Seward to Speed, November 21, 1865, Mexican Affairs, II, 228-229; Speed to Seward, December 23, 1866. Ibid., pp. 229-230; Seward to Romaro, December 24, 1865. Ibid., p. 230.

29 Corwin to Seward, January 15, 1866, Dispatches-Mexico, XXI.
Seward's warning combined with the sending of a new minister to the Juarez government alarmed Napoleon. On January 22, 1866, the French Emperor addressed the Chamber upon its opening and his speech indicated that France was going to withdraw her troops from Mexico. The Emperor's speech contained a phrase that the government wanted to release itself from the entanglement in Mexico. Bigelow assessed the importance of the speech by the comments in the Paris newspapers concerning it. His dispatch to Seward described the effects of the speech in these words: "In conclusion, let me say that the language of the Emperor, and the reception it has met with from his people, have left no doubt upon my mind of his intentions to wash his hands of Mexico as soon as he possibly can."30

Seward sought to hasten the decision of the Emperor by writing a lengthy letter to Napoleon's personal adviser, the Marquis de Montrichard. Seward summarized all the arguments which the French had used in defense of their actions in Mexico. He admitted that France had a right to go to Mexico, but said Seward, she did not have the right to meddle in Mexico's internal affairs. Seward used the dispatch to warn Napoleon that the United States had a right to insist that France stop the war and leave Mexico.31

When Seward received word from the American minister in Vienna that Napoleon's agents were recruiting Austrians to go

30Bigelow to Seward, January 25, 1866, Dispatches-France, LVI.
to Mexico, he ordered Motley to instruct the Austrian government that the United States could not regard with unconcern a proceeding which would bring Austria into an alliance with the invaders of Mexico to subvert the domestic republic, and build up foreign imperial institutions. When, in spite of Motley's warning, the Austrian government negotiated a pact with France to send volunteers to Mexico, Seward had Motley tell the Austrian minister of foreign affairs that in the event of any Austrian forces disembarking from France for Mexico, the United States would feel at liberty to regard a state of war existing between Austria and Mexico and "could not engage to remain as silent or neutral spectators." Seward's warning could not be misinterpreted by the Austrian government, and in response to it, the Austrian troops that were supposed to sail from France to Mexico, were never allowed to embark at the French ports. On May 8, 1866, Seward learned that the troops that were supposed to have been sent from Austria to Mexico had been sent instead to other parts of the Austrian Empire.

Napoleon finally realised that political pressure at home combined with the threat of the United States force abroad was too much for him to deal with. On April 5, 1866, Napoleon

32Seward to Motley, February 15, 1866, Abid., p. 823.
33Seward to Motley, April 6, 1866, Abid., pp. 823-833.
34Canisius to Seward, May 8, 1866, p. 844.
made an agreement with Maximilian by which French troops would be withdrawn from Mexico in three installments. The first contingent was to leave Mexico in November, 1866. The second was to leave in March, 1867, and the third in November, 1867. The Secretary of State expressed hope that the agreement would be carried out, although he admitted that such a large force as was in Mexico would require dexterity in withdrawing. It seemed that Maximilian's empire would crumble without intervention by the United States forces.

In the journals published in St. Thomas and Havana on May 12, 1866, mention was made of the new troops being sent from France to Mexico. To Seward such information meant only that the determination of Napoleon to leave Mexico was not fixed and thus the United States could not rely upon the word of the French government. Seward then played his trump card. He wrote to Bigelow and instructed the minister to tell Lhuys that the American public was in such a condition of anger in regard to the stalling of the French government that it would not be a matter of surprise to the President if Congress adopted some proceeding which would entirely change the attitude of the United States in regard to the war between France and Mexico. Seward left Napoleon a way out of the threat of war by saying that assurances from the French government would alleviate the situation if they were immediately forthcoming.35

35Seward to Bigelow, May 12, 1866, Foreign Relations, 1866-1867, I, 306.
Seward's threat worked. On May 16, 1866, Seward received word from Bigelow that the embarkation of troops of Austrian volunteers had been definitely called off. When Bigelow met, on May 31, 1866, with Napoleon and discussed rumors of fresh troops leaving France for Mexico, Napoleon assured him that the troops were merely to take the place of others whose terms of service had expired, and were not as large a number as had previously been sent to Mexico. When Bigelow got ready to leave the interview, Napoleon assured him that French troops would be withdrawn as soon as possible.

On August 17, 1866, President Johnson declared null and void a decree of Maximilian's closing certain ports in Mexico. Johnson warned that any attempt to enforce the illegal decree would be disallowed and met with force. The presidential proclamation only served to convince the newspaper editors in Paris of the futility of the French venture in Mexico. M. Gueroult, editor of the Opinion Nationale and a member of the Corps Legislatif, urged the Emperor to withdraw from the Mexican venture of Maximilian. France should, wrote Gueroult, withdraw her troops and establish good relations with whatever government might follow Maximilian. The editorialist of the Temps urged the same course of action.

36 Seward to Bigelow, May 15, 1866, Dispatches-France, LII.
37 Seward to Bigelow, August 24, 1866, Foreign Relations, 1866, I, 338-339.
38 Bigelow to Seward, September 7, 1866, ibid., pp. 340-348.
On November 8, 1866, Seward received a dispatch from the American minister in Paris informing him that the Emperor had decided to postpone the recall of French troops until spring. Napoleon's reason for the departure from his earlier agreement was military consideration. Napoleon said that the increasing size of the "dissidents" made it apparent that the withdrawal of troops would jeopardize the lives of those remaining behind. Bigelow warned the minister of foreign affairs that the confidence of the United States government in French assurances would be seriously threatened by Napoleon's action, and that Congress would not look with favor on the French postponement. Bigelow also told Seward that Napoleon had advised Maximilian to abdicate. Bigelow thought that Napoleon's departure from the agreement could be worked out somehow.

Seward reacted to Bigelow's message with vigorous protests. He immediately sent a dispatch to be read to the Emperor. The United States would not accept any departures from the agreement for three reasons: Seward wrote:

We cannot acquiesce:

First. Because the term "next spring" as appointed for the entire evacuation, is indefinite and vague.

Second. Because we have no authority for stating to Congress and to the American people that we now have a better guarantee for the withdrawal of the whole expeditionary force in the spring than we have heretofore had for the withdrawal of a part in November.

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39 Bigelow to Seward, November 8, 1866, ibid., pp. 364-365.

40 Bigelow to Seward, November 8, 1866, ibid., pp. 364-365.
Third. In full reliance upon at least a literal performance of the Emperor's existing agreement, we have taken measures, while facilitating the anticipated French evacuation, to cooperate with the republican government of Mexico... Mr. Campbell, our newly-appointed minister, attended by Lieutenant General Sherman, has been sent to Mexico in order to confer with President Juárez on subjects which are deeply interesting to the United States and of vital importance to Mexico... we cannot recall Mr. Campbell, nor can we modify the instructions under which he is expected to treat, and under which he may even now be treating with the republican government of Mexico.41

Seward was absolutely opposed to any change in the agreement whereby France was to withdraw her troops from Mexico, and the administration was just as determined that the French would leave Mexico.

On December 19, 1866, French ships set sail for Vera Cruz to remove the first contingent of French troops from Mexico. The Emperor, however, still sought to have the United States guarantee that Juárez would not be allowed to totally destroy Maximilian's influence in Mexico. On January 16, 1867, Lhuys sought and was granted an interview by Bigelow, successor to John Dix. The French foreign minister requested that the United States government refuse to grant Juárez any part in the reconstructed republican government of Mexico... Seward, in keeping with his policy of recognizing only the Juárez government as the legal government of Mexico, told Dix that "Our well-considered reply in substance is, that we must

41 Seward to Bigelow, November 23, 1866, ibid., pp. 366-367.
continue to recognize the respect and authority of President Juárez and the republican government, and that we can in no way intervene or interfere with the people of Mexico in the regulation of their own political affairs. thus 1866 closed and 1867 began with the French troops committed to leaving Mexico. the government of the United States refused to get involved in the internal affairs of Mexico, and, at the same time, became committed to using action as a means of destroying a monarchy founded on the American continent by a European power.

\[42\] Seward to Dix, January 18, 1867, Foreign Relations, 1867, I, 218-219.
CHAPTER V

LIFE AND DEATH

It was in 1867 that the last tragic act of the drama of the Mexican empire took place at Querétaro, Mexico. Events in late 1866 gave clear warning of Maximilian's ultimate defeat. The Secretary of State forced Napoleon to honor his promise to withdraw French troops from Mexico. Seward also urged President Johnson to appoint J. D. Campbell as minister to the republican government of Mexico, further emphasizing the fact that the United States recognized only Juárez as the legal head of state in Mexico. The President ordered that Campbell be accompanied by General Sherman to Mexico in order to render more impressive the formal recognition of Juárez. Seward, stating that the United States did not desire the future conquest of Mexico, but only to see her left alone without foreign interference, ordered Campbell to go to Chihuahua or any other place in Mexico not occupied by the French where he would be able to find Juárez. Campbell was instructed to forward all news that could be obtained of events in Mexico.¹

In November, Campbell, accompanied by General Sherman, left New York and arrived at Brazos by December 13. Finding that the Gulf ports were still held by French troops, the

¹Seward to Campbell, December 13, 1866, Foreign Relations, 1867, II, 334.
minister decided to remain at New Orleans to watch developments from a distance.

At the same time, the Juarez government was winning a significant number of military victories. Juarez divided Mexico into four military commands, giving the South and East to General Porfirio Diaz, the North to General Miriano Escobedo, the Center to General Nicholas Regules and the West to General Ramon Corona. By the end of 1866, Saltillo and most of northern Mexico were in the hands of the Liberals. Moreover, the Liberal forces were able to recruit more adherents to their cause with the passage of time, while the imperialists were constantly faced with the problem of massive desertions.

Seward, by December, 1866, had thrown off all restraints on the sale of arms to the Liberal government, and a flourishing trade in arms continued through 1867. The arms received from agents in the United States helped the Liberals in their drive to annihilate the remnants loyal to Maximilian. On February 11, 1867, the Liberals captured Zacatecas and those captured were summarily shot without trial to warn Mexicans aiding Maximilian what awaited them.

On February 5, 1867, the last of the French troops in Mexico withdrew from the capital to Vera Cruz and there

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2George Creel, *The People Next Door* (New York, 1926), p. 239.

3Sheridan to Grant, February 11, 1867, *Dispatches-Mexico*, XXXI.

4Ibid.
embarked for France.\textsuperscript{5} Napoleon gave a speech in the Chamber defending the action by saying the sacrifices necessary went beyond the interest for which France had gone to Mexico in the first place. He also said that he had decided upon the action because he wanted to improve French-American relations.\textsuperscript{6} Regardless of the motives for the withdrawal, Napoleon, in direct violation of the terms by which Maximilian accepted the crown of Mexico, left the man who owed his crown to France without French support. The result proved to be disastrous to both France and Maximilian.

Seward, although he sanctioned the sale of arms to the Liberal government, refused to have United States forces cross the Rio Grande. When Dix met with Lhuys' successor, the Marquis de Monstier, the foreign minister was told the United States would not interfere in Mexico's internal affairs. The official attitude of the United States was to let events take their course and to recognize, as in the past, only the Juarez government. Dix ended his report to Seward by congratulating the Secretary on the triumph of his diplomacy regarding Mexico "the wisdom of which is so triumphantly vindicated by the results."

\textsuperscript{5}The \textit{New York Times}, February 19, 1867, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{6}Dix to Seward, February 15, 1867, \textit{Diplomates-France}, LXII.
\textsuperscript{7}Dix to Seward, March 16, 1867, \textit{Ibid}.
Meanwhile, the position of Maximilian had steadily worsened. On February 13 the Archduke left Mexico City and started for Queretaro. He and his entourage arrived at the same mountain town only after driving off two attacks by Liberal forces. After arriving, Maximilian proclaimed himself commanding general of his army and began preparations for a siege. Desperate attempts were made to destroy the Liberal forces before they were able to meet at Queretaro, yet the strife between officers in the Maximilian camp made such efforts impossible and the attempts came to naught.\(^8\) Thus Escobedo and Corona had time to effect a junction before Queretaro, and close in around the city with close to 25,000 men.

Anticipating the general chaos which would follow the final victory of the Liberals, Campbell cabled Seward that it would be prudent to have all gunboats not on duty cruise the Gulf of Mexico to protect United States citizens in Mexico.\(^9\) Campbell, however, was not the only person concerned with what would happen in the event of Maximilian's defeat. The Austrian government was very much concerned about the possibility of the Zacatecas episode being repeated at Queretaro. On April 5, 1867, Baron Wydenbruck, the Austrian minister in Washington,\(^{10}\) wrote Seward asking that the Secretary of State use his influence to have Maximilian spared in the event of the fall of

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\(^9\)Campbell to Seward, March 20, 1867, *Dispatches-Mexico*, XXXI.

\(^{10}\)The *New York Times*, April 14, 1867, p. 5.
Querétaro. Seward wrote a letter to Campbell on April 6 instructing the minister to request Juárez, in the event of the capture of Maximilian, to treat the latter as civilized nations treated prisoners of war. Campbell sent a message to the Liberal foreign minister that expressed satisfaction at the withdrawal and, at the same time, contained the message of Seward regarding Maximilian. A repetition of the Zacatecas episode would, wrote Campbell, shock the United States and check the current of its sympathies.

Such requests fell on deaf ears, for Juárez was determined to assert his independence of both the United States and Europe. He returned a polite answer to Campbell’s note, but refused to consider the American minister’s request. On May 15, 1867, Seward received word that Maximilian would probably meet the same fate as the prisoners of Zacatecas. Campbell had received a letter to that effect from the Liberal foreign minister, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada. On May 26, 1867, Campbell received a message from the Liberal foreign minister which had been signed by Juárez on May 15, 1867. The message told of the fall of Querétaro on May 15, and the capture of Maximilian and his generals.

On June 1, 1867, Dix received an urgent message from the Tuileries to come at once to the Emperor’s room. He went to

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11 Campbell to Seward, April 6, 1867, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.
12 Tejada to Campbell, May 15, 1867, ibid.
13 Campbell to Seward, May 26, 1867, ibid.
the palace and there the Emperor asked him to telegraph Seward. Napoleon wanted Seward to use all the influence of the United States government to have Maximilian spared. Dix assured Napoleon that the government had already taken steps in that direction. Nevertheless, the American minister did send by telegraph a dispatch expressing the Emperor's wishes. 14

One June 1, 1867, hearing that Maximilian and his leading supporters had been captured, and in response to the appeals of Austria and France to endeavor to avert the execution of the ill-fated "Emperor," Seward telegraphed Campbell to go to Mexico immediately and earnestly urge Juárez to adopt a policy of clemency. Under various pretentions, including lack of transportation, Campbell delayed his departure from New Orleans until June 15, when Seward telegraphed for his resignation. Seward requested Romero to tell Juárez that the United States, apprehending no future European intervention in Mexico, strongly commended clemency toward Maximilian. 15

On June 12, Seward received a dispatch from E. L. Plumb, secretary of the legation at Mexico City. The dispatch told of Maximilian being tried by court martial. Plumb told Seward that Maximilian would receive the maximum sentence, death. 16 On June 19, 1867, the State Department was able to hold out

14 Dix to Seward, June 1, 1867, Dispatches-France, LXII.
15 Callahan, American Policy, pp. 229-230.
16 Plumb to Seward, June 12, 1867, Dispatches-Mexico, XXXI.
some hope that Maximilian would be spared. Seward received word that the decision of the court martial would be postponed until the Liberals possessed Mexico City in order to prevent retaliation by the imperialists in the capital. The hopes were dashed, however, when, on July 2, Seward received word that Maximilian had been shot before a firing squad on June 19, 1867.17

On July 8, 1867, Congress was again involved in affairs in Mexico. The Senate adopted a resolution requesting the President to submit information relative to any correspondence concerning the "recent events in Mexico." It was the last time in 1867 that either the House or Senate made such a request pertaining to diplomatic correspondence between the State Department and the Mexican legations.18

After the death of Maximilian, the insurgent movement died and the Liberal forces soon crushed all armed opposition and re-established the constitutional government. Santa Anna tried once again to start a rebellion against the government by returning to Mexico aboard an American ship early in the summer of 1867.19 His attempt failed, he was arrested, and sent into banishment. On July 15, Juárez entered Mexico City and assumed his office and control over the entire country from the capital.

17Plumb to Seward, July 2, 1867, ibid.
19Corti, Maximilian, II, 624; Callahan, American Policy, p. 330.
On June 10, 1867, Seward offered, through Romero, the use of a man-of-war for transportation to Mexico of the Juárez family which had been in exile in the United States. Seward extended the same courtesy to Romero who left the United States in October. Before leaving the United States, Romero told Seward that he would do everything possible to promote the best understanding between Mexico and the United States. 20

President Juárez called for an election for October, 1867, and he announced as a candidate saying that he had had no opportunity to inaugurate his own program due to the battle and exile. Tejada, Juárez's foreign minister, also ran for the presidency. He claimed that constitutional principles were more important than the Juárez program, and that a third term was unconstitutional. Porfirio Díaz also was a contender, running on a platform which called for more participation for the military in the government. Juárez was, on October 12, 1867, elected the constitutional president of Mexico by a resounding majority. Tejada received a majority of votes between the remaining contestants to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a post that automatically made him vice-president. Díaz was thoroughly defeated. 21

The diplomatic policy followed by Seward throughout the years of the war in the United States and in Mexico, was deeply

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20 Romero to Seward, October 14, 1867, Foreign Relations, 1867, II, 558.
21 Creel, People Next Door, p. 253.
appreciated by the Juárez government. The non-recognition of Maximilian during the French intervention won praise from the Mexican press. On December 9, 1867, Juárez made a speech to the Mexican Congress in which he commended the United States for standing by Mexico through her years of tribulation and said that Mexican citizens would always be grateful and have deep regard for the actions of the United States. 22

Seward had a chance to test the feeling of Mexican citizens when he visited Mexico after his retirement from the State Department. He made speeches at Colima and Guadalajara urging a "moral alliance" between the United States and Latin America. 23 Though he was not successful in his last efforts, the diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico during the period of 1861 to 1867 proved mutually beneficial to both nations.

The French intervention in Mexico placed a great deal of responsibility upon the Secretary of State. The success of Seward in keeping France from being antagonized and thus preventing the recognition of the Confederacy by France and Europe cannot be over estimated. The Union defeats during the first few years of the Civil War offered a temptation for France to give recognition to the South. The cotton which could have been used by French industrialists was a great temptation. Seward's adroitness in stalling the recognition of a

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22 Plumb to Seward, December 9, 1867, Foreign Relations, 1864-1869, II, 380.
monarchy in Mexico and, at the same time, keeping diplomatic relations with France so elastic that France and the United States could avoid war, was remarkable.

Had the United States been involved in a foreign war during the disastrous years of 1861 to 1863, the defeats might have been magnified by similar disasters abroad. The skill with which Seward was able to stall proposed invasions of Mexico such as the plans of Francis P. Blair, Lew Wallace, U. S. Grant and others, helped the United States in its post-war diplomatic relations with Mexico. Even the foes of Maximilian would have been hostile to American troops entering Mexico and going into the interior. Long suspicious of the United States, the people of Mexico would have questioned occupation of any Mexican cities by American troops, regardless of motives.

The adroitness of the State Department spokesman in sending a minister accredited to the Juárez government at just the time that the tide was turning against the French intervention cannot be underestimated. It was not an accident that Campbell was commissioned as minister to Mexico late in 1866. Seward chose an opportune time to let the Juárez government know that the army and navy of the United States were at the disposition of the constitutional forces. At the same time, Seward took pains to let Juárez know that the United States desired no aggrandisement of Mexican territory, but only sought to see Mexico freed from foreign military intervention,
able to conduct her own internal affairs, and left "in the enjoyment of perfect liberty." Seward chose the right time for a show of force and a formal reassurance that the United States did not intend to take up where the French left off.

Relations with Mexico during the period 1861 to 1867 served to make nations of Europe take a new look at the Monroe Doctrine. The repeated warnings that the United States would not tolerate any European intervention on the American continent, although Seward never mentioned the Monroe Doctrine by name, served to give new meaning to principles which had been formulated in 1823. The United States rose from the ashes of its Civil War able to resist successfully domestic disunion and foreign intrigue, and it could thus speak with new authority. The doctrine enunciated by Monroe, and endowed with new vitality by Polk, was consolidated and vindicated by the Secretary of State through diplomatic relations with Mexico during the period 1861-1867.

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24 Ibid., pp. 470-471.
26 Ibid., p. 543.
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