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The United States and the Independence of Buenos Aires

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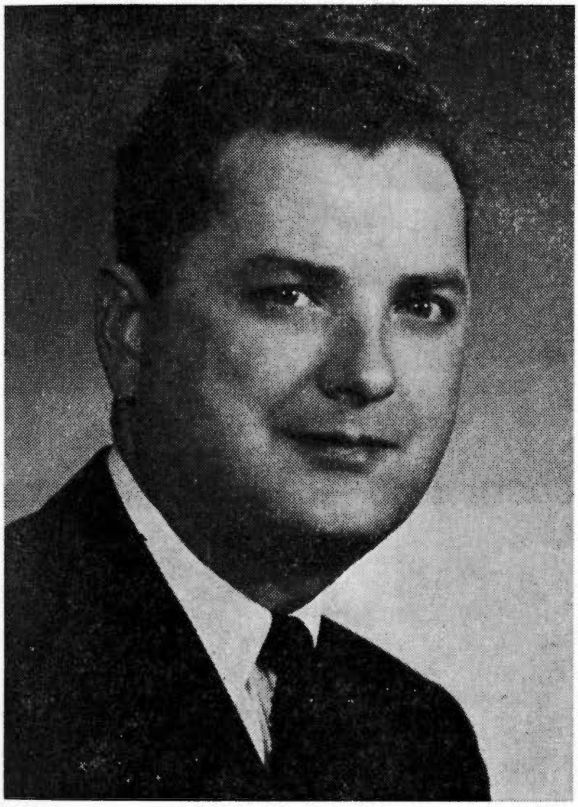

Dr. Eugene R. Craine

Biographical Sketch of the Author

Dr. Eugene Richard Craine has specialized for several years in American Diplomatic history relative to Latin America and the Far East. He received his advanced training as a historian at the University of Oklahoma, where he was granted his doctorate in 1954. He served with the United States Army in the Far East during the Second World War and is now Professor of History, Director of the Foreign Service program, and Adviser of the Department of History at Fort Hays Kansas State College. He has been associated with this College since 1946.

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The United States and the Independence of Buenos Aires

Table of Contents

Chapter I

A Panoramic View to 1810

PRIOR to the era of revolution the people and the government of the United States came into contact chiefly with the border regions of Spain's American empire. Such areas as Florida, Texas, and the Greater Antilles were absorbing the attention of American expansionists. There was, therefore, a widespread ignorance of those areas of Spain's empire that would take the lead in revolution. The *Gaceta de Buenos Aires,* a paper founded by Mariano Moreno to print revolutionary propaganda, published in 1810 an article by the editor of the Baltimore *Commercial Advertiser.* The account stated he had found it impossible to discover anything about Caracas except the name and situation, and this in spite of searching through ten or twelve modern geographies.[1] The press of the United State lamented the fact and numerous complaints were heard from the people. H. M. Brackenridge, in his two-volume *Voyage to South America,* was somewhat amazed that this was so, stating in his preface that "it would require at least six months to become master of all the information laboriously collected." [2]

There were those who believed, as did Brackenridge, that there was not a deficiency in the amount of information available. The fault, they argued, was the failure to use material within reach.[3] Numerous volumes dealing with the South-American countries as a whole and as individual sections were easy to obtain. They were voluminous and in many instances wearisome reading, but there also existed a number of abridgements and compilations which were just as instructive and made easier reading.[4]

1. *Gaceta de Buenos Aires* (1810-1821). *Reimpresión facsimilar dirigida por la junta de historia y numismática Americana* (5 vols., Buenos Aires, 1910-1914), I, 369. Hereinafter cited as *Gaceta.*

2. Henry M. Brackenridge, *Voyage to South America* (2 vols., Baltimore, 1819), I, vi. Hereinafter cited as Brackenridge, *Voyage.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

The only complaint with any justification was that satisfactory accounts of the actual state of the different countries of South America did not exist. What were the conditions of the Río de la Plata, its size, population, and products? The answers to these and other similar questions were not available. The press, particularly such publications as the *North American Review* and the *Niles Weekly Register*, slowly gathered this information and passed it on in the form of series of articles to enlighten the "reading public" on the history, geography, general culture, and events of South America.

Nor was this ignorance a monopoly of the United States. England, in spite of being the commercial power of the world, France, and other nations of Europe were in a similar situation. The reason was not so much the monopolistic and restrictive policies of Spain as the fact the Río de la Plata was not a great producer of gold and silver, was decidedly isolated from the normal trade routes of the period, and was in its early periods a poor, squalid territory. For some three centuries as a colony, under the control of the Kings of Spain, the region of the Río de la Plata was one of the most backward and neglected areas of the Spanish-American empire.

From its beginnings in 1536, there being no mineral wealth in the vicinity, Buenos Aires became an agricultural colony. The result of this was a new social organization that tended toward democracy because it tended toward equality. Thus, unlike Peru and Mexico where Spaniards were using Indians as serfs and there were two outstanding classes of society, the rich Spaniards and poor Indians, in the Río de la Plata most were on the same economic level. Everyone had to work and all were only slightly above poverty. Agriculture, however, was made somewhat unattractive by the discovery of the rapidity with which horses and cattle multiplied on the Pampas. Peoples of the Río de la Plata then lived off the exports of what today we call by-products: hides, horns, and tallow.

The territory which formed the Río de la Plata was colonized between 1536 and 1596 by three rival invasions of Spanish Conquistadores whose jealous hatred of one another was even more bitter than their hatred of the Indians who disputed their advance. The first invasion went directly from Spain to colonize the region of the Plata which included the territory between the 25th and 36th parallels and extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The second invasion was an extension of the conquest of Peru. It

moved southward through the Humahuaca Valley, following the trail of the Incas, who had carried their empire as far south as San Carlos and Tunuyán in Mendoza Province. This colonizing stream founded the city of Santiago del Estero, and later spread out over the provinces of Tucumán, Salta, Jujuy, La Rioja, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Córdoba, and part of the territory of the Chaco. The third invasion entered from Chile and divided into two branches. One of these continued the occupation of Tucumán. The other occupied the region then known as Cuyo, which included the present provinces of Mendoza, San Luis, and San Juan, and then extended itself into the territory of Nuequén and parts of the territories of La Pampa and Rio Negro. In these movements rested the original territorial claims which became the objectives of the embryonic national state in 1810. That new state chose to overlook the royal *cédula* of 1617, by which the Crown separated Paraguay from Buenos Aires, placing them under the jurisdiction of the viceroy at Lima as two distinct colonies, and correctly claimed that the establishment of the viceroyalty in 1776 had voided this *cédula.*

In 1776, partly owing to Portuguese aggression, the important resolution was taken to separate the provinces of the Río de la Plata from their dependence upon the government of Peru and to create a new viceroyalty with Don Pedro Cevallos, governor of Buenos Aires from 1757 to 1766, as the first viceroy. The capital of this viceroyalty was Buenos Aires, and it comprised the provinces of Buenos Aires, Paraguay, Córdova, Salta, Potosí, La Plata, Santa Cruz de la Sierra or Cochabamba, La Paz, and Puno, besides the subordinate governments of Montevideo, Moxos, and Chiquitos, and the Missions on the rivers Uruguay and Paraná.

Sir Woodbine Parish, Vice-President of the Royal Geographical Society of London and for many years British Chargé D'Affairs at Buenos Aires, saw in the choice of Don Pedro Cevallos as viceroy further indication of stiffening resistance on the part of Spain to Portuguese encroachments in the Banda Oriental. Cevallos, as Governor of Buenos Aires, had opposed the Portuguese with vigor, even to the point of war in 1762. Parish commented that "the most formidable armament which had ever been sent by Spain to America was placed at his [Cevallos] command: it consisted of 10,000 men, embarked in 116 ships, which convoyed by 12 men-of-war, sailed from Spain in 1776." [5] With this force Cevallos took

5. Sir Woodbine Parish, *Buenos Ayres and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata: From Their Discovery and Conquest by the Spaniards to the Establishment of Their Independence* (London, 1852), 64. Hereinafter cited as Parish, *Buenos Ayres.*

the island of Santa Caterina, after which he proceeded to Colonia,[6] driving the Portuguese from all their possessions in that area.[7]

Because of two deliberate policies of Spain, neglect and severe restrictions, Buenos Aires had grown very slowly.[8] The establishment of Río de la Plata as a viceroyalty gave impetus to trade and commerce, and broke down the old restrictions against migration into the area. The liberties granted must not, however, be interpreted too broadly, for as with all the Spanish colonies they were closely controlled. Even the history of their own country, unless written by an approved Spaniard, was withheld from them.[9]

Another impetus was given to life in Buenos Aires with the British invasion under Sir Home Popham. Even so, in 1810, Buenos Aires had a long way to go to reach the living standards of other cities of the world. The city itself probably had a population of about 46,000,[10] although Sir Home Popham reported 70,000 in 1806.[11] For the entire Río de la Plata the *Weekly Register* estimated about 1,900,000 "souls."[12] While the city was not pretentious, and life not as agreeable to those who "were accustomed to

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6. For the repeated capture and return of Colonia, see D. Antokoletz, *Histoire de la Diplomatie Argentine* (Paris, 1914), 54-60. Hereinafter cited as Antokoletz, *Histoire.*

7. Parish, *Buenos Ayres,* 64.

8. Its increase was about 130 persons a year according to V. F. López, *Historia de la República Argentina: su origen, su revolucion, y su desarrollo político hasta 1852* (Buenos Aires, 1883), I, *Cap.* xxvi. Hereinafter cited as López, *Historia.* López points out that in 1608 Buenos Aires had 2000 inhabitants and in 1778 had 24,205. Parish gives a tabluation of the Census of 1778 showing 15,719 Europeans and Creoles; 544 Indians; 674 Mestizos; 3,153 Mulattoes; 4,115 Negroes. In the country districts were 12,925 persons and 550 more in Ecclesiastical establishments. Total 37,680. Parish, *Buenos Ayres,* Appendix VIII, 418. To these numbers some additions should be made for short returns, particularly from the country districts, not only from the difficulty in collecting them but from the disposition of the people to evade any such attempt of the authorities to take a particular account of them. The military, too, are not included in the numbers given, although only two years before no less than 10,000 men were sent from Spain to carry on the war against the Portuguese, in addition to the troops already in the country.

9. The following Decree, by José de Gálvez, the Spanish Minister in 1779, prohibiting Dr. William Robertson's *History of America,* must be seen to be believed.

"Circular

El Exmo. Sr. virey de estas provincias en oficio de 7 del presente me dice lo siguiente. El Sr. D. José de Galbez, en carta de 22 de Deciembre del año próximo pasado, me dici lo siguiente: El Dr. Guillermo Robertson, Rector de la Universidad de Edinburgo, y cronista de Escocia, ha escrito y publicado, en idioma Ingles, la historia del discubrimiento de la America; y teniendo el rey justos motivos para que dicha obra no se introduzca en España ni sus Indias, ha resuelto su magestad, que con el mayor rigor y vigilancia, se impida su embarco para las Americas, y Filipinas, ni en el idioma Ingles, ni en ningun otra á que se ha traducido, ó se traduzca: y que si hubiese algunas partidas, ó ejemplares de dicha obra, en los puertos de unos ú otros dominios ó introducidos ya tierra á dentro, se detengan y embarguen á disposicion del ministerio de mi cargo. Y de su real orden, se lo participo á V. E. para que tomando las providencias mas estrechas y convenientes es esta jurisdiccion, tenga el debido cumplimiento esta resolucion: cuya real orden translado á V. S. literal, a fin de que espida las mas eficaces, y conducentes á su cumplimiento, en esta jurisdiccion de su cargo." Quoted in Parish, *Buenos Ayres,* 91.

10. For a discussion of the population see López, *Historia,* I, *Cap.* xxvi. Parish, *Buenos Ayres,* 111, shows 40,000, although he also gives the figure 72,000, in *ibid.,* 69.

11. *Niles Weekly Register,* V, 82.

12. *Ibid.*

English comforts," [13] still it boasted a cathedral, a viceroy's palace, and a fort which were called splendid and magnificent buildings.[14] Street paving had been started, as well as night illumination by candles.[15] There was at least one theater where the women all sat in the boxes and the men, regardless of station in life, sat in the pits.[16] The private homes were not of the type to please an Englishman, who would consider them dirty, damp, and moldy, with poorly "paved floors" and badly heated by small charcoal fires.[17] The butcher shops were disagreeable objects, being only covered carts, and the slaughter yard was just on the edge of the city, any edge.[18] One could hire a horse coach to take him to or bring him from the theater or one of the several *pulperías,* providing it was not raining.[19] In many respects life in the city of Buenos Aires in 1810 was not too different from life in other cities of the world, and dress and manners were the same as those of Spain.[20] While other large cities of the Río de la Plata were in smiliar condition, life in the country was on a par with that of the Indian. The prestige of being a viceroyalty, and the resultant increase in trade and commerce, plus the British invasion, created a new spirit in the Río de la Plata, particularly in Buenos Aires.

The British established many contacts with Spanish America between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Their earliest interest probably dates back to May 4, 1493, when exclusive title to what is now called Latin America was granted to Spain and Portugal by Pope Alexander VI. The hatred England held for Spain and jealousy of Spanish wealth and power resulted in men such as Drake and Hawkins raiding in the Caribbean as a means of destroying Spanish ambition in Europe. The great burst of energy and interest born in the Elizabethan period faded in the Stuart. There were intermittent periods from 1654 to 1804 which saw a renewal of interest, but these bore little fruit. The plans of Cromwell as projected in his "Western Design" in 1654, owing to the failure of his commanders, resulted in bringing into the English

13. Frances B. Head, *Rough Notes taken during Some Rapid Journeys across the Pampas and Among the Andes* (London, 1826), 30. Hereinafter cited as Head, *Rough Notes.*

14. *Niles Weekly Register,* V, 82.

15. This form of street lighting was introduced by the second viceroy, Juan José Vertiz, and was used until replaced by oil lamps in 1840.

16. Head, *Rough Notes,* 30.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.,* 32.

19. Horse coaches were still so scarce that those who let them would not permit them out in the rain. *Ibid.,* 32.

20. *Niles Weekly Register,* V, 82.

fold only Jamaica. The Scots attempted in 1695 to take over Darien, but failed. In 1739, under the leadership of Sir Robert Walpole, given impetus by a great public outburst, England entered into the War of Jenkins' Ear. At this time Walpole engaged in two expeditions against Panama, but the entire movement became absorbed in the larger and more important conflict, the War of the Austrian Succession. Cuba, the Floridas, and Manila had been seized by Pitt, the elder, but Cuba and Manila were given up in the Paris peace negotiations. England's interest in the balance of power, and her continental entanglements as a result of this interest, plus her concentration upon the French colonial empire, saved the Spanish colonies for Spain.

While the British lost their acquisitions in the Spanish empire in America, two factors caused the English interest to continue to develop. One was the British policy, many times displayed, of diversified risks. The continental policy of England could be balanced by the South-American colonies. In the thinking of the British government it would be pure folly to enter unreservedly any European conflict without an alternative plan to secure costs or possible losses. Second, because of weakness and internal rot which was robbing Spain of its strength, the English merchants were selling their goods to Spain, which was in turn sending these goods to the colonies. As this trade became increasingly important the English merchant had his eyes opened to the full possibilities latent in the vast territory of the Spanish colonies.

English interest in the area greatly expanded in 1715, after the Peace of Utrecht. At this time the English obtained the *Asiento,* or contract for supplying the Spanish colonies in America with African slaves. By virtue of this they had the right to form an establishment with not over six men to supervise it, to till the soil for the maintenance of the slaves until sold,[21] and to send to Buenos Aires four ships annually with 1200 Negroes,[22] the value of which they were permitted to export in produce of the country. They were strictly forbidden to introduce any goods other than those necessary for their own establishment. The temptation to evade the regulations was irresistible, particularly among a people who were in absolute want of clothing and willing to pay almost any price for it. The *Asiento* ships became the means of carrying on

21. J. B. Williams, "The Establishment of British Commerce with Argentina," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* XV (1935), 44. Hereinafter cited as Williams, "British Commerce" in *HAHR.*

22. As there were only 4,115 Negroes in Buenos Aires in 1778 the British apparently made little pretense of a slave trade in this region of Spanish America.

a contraband traffic which was justified by a necessity which recognized no other law. In this manner there developed a large and lucrative contraband trade which whetted the appetites of the British merchants,[23] and by 1736 "a hitt [hit] in the Illicit Trade" was considered to be "like getting a great prize in a Lottery." [24]

Spain's efforts to maintain her monopoly were not entirely unsuccessful, resulting in a violent fluctuation of volume and profits for those involved in carrying on contraband trade. In spite of this the feeling grew in England that there were great possibilities in the South-American market. By 1804, the magic wand of the Industrial Revolution had wrought great change upon English industry, and cotton, woolen, iron, and leather goods were pouring from the mills in ever increasing amounts. However, war upon the continent had forced consumption far behind production, making the potential markets of Latin America particularly inviting.

The difficulty with such an opportunity to relieve the English surplus rested in the problem of how to open the market. This problem was thrown into the hands of William Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pitt, faced with war on the Continent against Napoleon, with the Third Coalition hanging fire and Napoleon threatening an invasion of England, felt that the British could not afford the men, ships or money necessary to force open a series of new markets or risk an additional war with Spain. There was little hope that Spain would open them of her own accord. The only answer to such a problem was revolution; therefore, for a short time the English government somewhat surreptitiously toyed with the policy of aiding and abetting revolution between the colonies and their mother country.

Outstanding advocates of such a policy were Francisco de Miranda, William Burke, and Sir Home Popham.[25] It was quite possible for England of the nineteenth century to work with Miranda, who wanted independence for his homeland. British policy, in changing from conquest to one of commercial interest, placed in Miranda's hands something to offer England in return for English aid.

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23. The English were not the worst contrabandists in the Río de la Plata. The Treaty of Utrecht also secured to the Portuguese the important settlement of Colonia de Sacramento. This position afforded them every facility of communication with the neighboring settlements of the Spaniard, and although by the same treaty the Crown of Portugal was solemnly engaged to prohibit all smuggling, they abundantly supplied Buenos Aires, Paraguay, and Tucumán.

24. George H. Nelson, "Contraband Trade under the Asiento," *American Historical Review*, LI(1945), 62. Hereinafter cited as Nelson, "Contraband Trade" in *AHR*.

25. For a discussion of these men, their many plots and pleas, see William S. Robertson, "Francisco de Miranda and the Revolutionizing of Spanish America," *American Historical Association Report*, I(1907), 197-210.

In an effort to put an end to smuggling, Charles III had instituted a number of reforms in the old Spanish system, a system which had made the entire trade of Spain with America little better than a monopoly in the hands of the merchants of Seville and Cadiz. The major reform measures originated with Don José de Gálvez, minister for the department of the Indies. Gálvez had spent many years in America, and having personally witnessed the effects of the oppressive Spanish system was aware of how greatly Spain was the loser.

In 1764 periodical packets were established which left from Corunna for all the principal ports in the colonies with permission to carry out cargoes of Spanish manufactures and to import in return colonial produce. In addition, direct intercourse was also granted for the first time with Cuba and the other islands of the West Indies. In 1774 all the colonies were allowed to open trade with one another.

These reforms were followed in 1778 by a new commercial code given the title of "Free Trade Regulations." The Free Trade Regulations, however, continued to maintain the basic concept of monopoly as found in the old Spanish system. Trade was still exclusively confined to Spaniards and Spanish shipping, while the tariff was based entirely upon the principle of protection to Spanish industry. In spite of these features there were great changes in the regulation of colonial commerce. For ten years Spanish manufactures such as cotton, wool, linen, and glass were allowed to be shipped duty free for the colonies, as were the principal articles of raw produce from America imported in return, such as cotton, coffee, sugar, cochineal, indigo, and copper. Nine ports in Spain and twenty-four in the colonies were declared ports of entry.[26]

However, Spain's weakness and the size of her American empire forced her, in the years between 1796 and 1804, into a vacillating policy of opening and closing her ports to neutral trade. This policy was instigated as a result of war with England in 1796, forcing the Spanish government to issue a royal order, November 18,

26. There is little question that these reforms were of great benefit to Buenos Aires. When it is recalled that just at this time Buenos Aires had been made the capital of the Viceroyalty of La Plata, that a considerable portion of the trade of Peru was now diverted to Buenos Aires, and that Spain had turned her attention to the aggressive moves of the Portuguese in this region, these reforms were bound to result in increased commercial activity and immigration in Buenos Aires. Parish points out the result in one product, hides. He states that "before the new regulations of 1778 the exports to Spain were calculated to average not more than 150,000 yearly. Afterwards, they rose to from 700,000 to 800,000; in one year, 1783, upon the conclusion of peace with England, the extraordinary number of 1,400,000 were shipped to Europe. Prices rose in proportion to the increased demand, and instead of two or three ships, there sailed from seventy to eighty annually from the Río de la Plata for the ports of Spain." Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, 69

1797, which threw the ports open to trade with neutral nations.[27] These privileges, except for foodstuffs, were revoked April 18, 1799, but so many protests resulted that in 1801 a system was set up whereby licenses could be sold to neutrals.

The Free Trade Regulations were restored in 1802 as a result of peace, but because of war had to be abolished again in 1804. At this time the Spanish government introduced the contract system which granted to individuals the right to sell licenses. This was the system in operation at the time of the British invasion of Buenos Aires under Sir Home Popham. The British then took control, and by an Order in Council September 17, 1806, "Buenos Aires was declared British and open to trade in British and Argentine ships." [28] However, the British were pushed out and this opportunity was lost to them. Spanish authority reinstated the Laws of the Indies in July, 1807.[29]

The reforms, noble though they may have seemed to Spanish eyes, were not enough. Buenos Aires was a growing city, its wealth was increasing and so were the demands for manufactured goods which Spain was unable to supply. Smuggling persisted and the foreign powers continued to gather, as General Bartolomé Mitre has said, "the best fruits, which Spain in her blindness has denied herself"; he added that "the contraband trade constituted the true commerce, and its operations were carried on with the regularity of a lawful act for the protection of the common interest. The merchants of the ports had agents for this purpose in Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon and even in Seville." The authorities were not able to suppress it and had to tolerate it or consent to it, as a fact or as a necessity.[30] But this was not enough for the British, and they turned their attention to the numerous plans and schemes which had been placed before them. William Pitt was apparently greatly impressed with the possibilities he found in the plans of Miranda and, for a time at least, seemed to be ready to put them into operation. Nevertheless, shortly before his death, he used Miranda merely as a club over the head of the Spanish crown and sacrificed Miranda's plans on the altar of the Third Coalition.[31] The story of

27. Emilio Ravignani, *El virreinato del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires, 1938), 148. Hereinafter cited as Ravignani, *Virreinato.*

28. J. B. Williams, "British Commerce" in *HAHR*, XV (1935), 47.

29. Dorothy B. Goebel, "British Trade to the Spanish Colonies," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLIII(1938), 308. Hereinafter cited as Goebel, "British Trade" in *HAHR.*

30. Bartolomé Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano y de la Independencia Argentina* (3 vols., Buenos Aires, 1859), I, 42. Hereinafter cited as Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano.*

31. Sir A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1922-23), I, 341.

Miranda has been painstakingly recorded [32] and needs no recounting here; however, the effects of Pitt's decision upon Miranda were catastrophic and Miranda decided to organize his own revolution, leaving in July for the United States. In the meantime Miranda's ardent supporter, Sir Home Popham, had urged upon Pitt the seizure of the Cape of Good Hope, a Dutch colony, once taken by the English but restored to Holland at the Peace of Amiens. Pitt agreed to this plan, feeling that the Cape was an important way station on the route to India and therefore should be in English hands. In case of failure of the Third Coalition and a return to the plans of Miranda, such a move would greatly facilitate any actions required in that region. This policy Pitt explained to Popham, who sailed for the Cape of Good Hope with the understanding that if friendly negotiation failed to detach Spain from France, or if the Third Coalition should fail, then Pitt intended to go through with the project of Miranda.[33] Thus it was that Sir Home Popham was at the Cape and Miranda in New York, organizing his revolution, when Pitt received news of the crushing blow of the battle of Austerlitz, December 2, 1805, the death of the Third Coalition before it was completely on the field. This blow undoubtedly hastened the death of Pitt, but neither Popham nor Miranda heard of his death, a piece of news that would probably have changed the actions of both, until long after they had made their respective moves.

The death of Pitt brought in an entirely new administration, the so called Ministry of All the Talents, one of the "Talents" being William Windham, a disciple of William Burke, both of whom had a penchant for Buenos Aires. This administration, in the first days of power, aroused the highest expectations in England, but it soon became evident that it was engulfed in inertia and shot through with indecision and discord. This state of affairs was exploded with great suddenness by the actions of Miranda and Sir Home Popham.

The Lord Grenville-Charles James Fox combination of this new administration, faced with peace negotiations with France and, therefore, questioning the expediency of attack against the possessions of Spain at the same time, decided to ignore Miranda except for some slight secret assistance.

The actions of Sir Home Popham, however, were not so easy to ignore or reverse. In April, 1806, Popham, aware of the collapse

32. William S. Robertson, *The Life of Miranda* (2 vols., Chapel Hill, 1929).

33. *Minutes of a Court Martial, holden on board His Majesty's ship Gladiator in Portsmouth Harbor, on Friday, the 6th day of March, 1807, ... of Cap't Sir Home Popham* (London, 1807), 80.

of the Third Coalition but without knowledge of Pitt's death, left the island of St. Helena for Buenos Aires, after persuading the island's governor to lend him four hundred men.[34] Popham doubtless believed that the collapse of the Third Coalition meant that Pitt would go through with the original plans as discussed among Pitt, Miranda and himself.[35] Regardless of the correctness or incorrectness of Popham's thinking, he arrived June 8, 1806, at the estuary of the Plata and on the 27th entered Buenos Aires with fifteen hundred and sixty men.[36]

In the short time he was in Buenos Aires Popham grew to "like the South Americans prodigiously," [37] but this liking was not particularly returned, due to the humiliation felt by the people of that city and to the fact that the English had come as conquerors, not as liberators. On August 12, 1806, the people of Buenos Aires revolted against General William Carr Beresford, whom Popham had placed in charge of the city of Buenos Aires, and at the end of three days of hard fighting, Beresford was compelled to capitulate to the forces of Buenos Aires under the leadership of the French *émigré,* Jacques Liniers. Popham, after helplessly watching the fighting from his ships floating lazily in the Plata river, moved the remnants of the British forces into Maldonado and Colonia to await reinforcements which, to the number of 3000 troops, finally arrived under the command of Sir Samuel Auchmuty. Popham returned to England and eventual court martial.

In the meantime, word of Popham's attack on Buenos Aires had arrived in London and completely disconcerted the Ministry of all the Talents. When a search for secret orders from the previous administration proved fruitless, Lord Grenville attempted a series of evasive maneuvers to cover up his lack of competence to handle the situation. Under pressure he finally sent, under Auchmuty, the small force mentioned above.

This small reinforcement, however, did not solve the problem facing the British government. What should they do if Popham were successful? The policies and attempted actions of the Ministry in regards to the continent were abject failures, and all British proposals had to be discarded and new policies substituted.

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34. Alexander Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks Collected During Many Months of Residence at Buenos Ayres and Within the Upper Country* (Leeds, 1818), 28-29.

35. For the conversation and the records of this see *Minutes of a Court Martial . . . of Cap't Sir Home Popham.* For the plans of Miranda see Robertson, *Life of Miranda.*

36. There are numerous accounts of the British invasion. The details are not necessary here, but for an excellent brief account in English see Bernard Moses, *Spain's Declining Power in South America 1730-1806* (Berkeley, 1919), 341 ff. In Spanish see Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano,* I, 90 ff.

37. Letter to Miranda in Robertson, *Life of Miranda,* I, 323.

Then, September 12, 1806, came news of the success of the attack on Buenos Aires. The cabinet was in great confusion, not only because the issue must now be faced, but also because the strength and ability of Charles Fox had been lost with his death on September 13, 1806. Lord Grenville jumped from pillar to post, not knowing whether to give up Buenos Aires and concentrate British efforts on the Continent and Napoleon or to give up the Continent and concentrate on Buenos Aires. Napoleon answered the question for him by gaining control of western Europe with the defeat of the Prussians at Jena and Auerstädt on October 14, 1806.

Upon the news of Jena and Auerstädt, Grenville turned his back upon Europe and began to dream of the conquest, not just of Buenos Aires but of all South America. The ministers dreamed and talked over anticipated victories, but it all came to nothing. There were several reasons for this. They discovered that the means to carry out these great ideas were not at hand: the military was small and inefficient, and the navy, from many months of monotonous blockade duty, was low in both material and morale. On January 27, 1807, the news of Beresford's surrender reached London. It was now not a question of taking all of South America but of restoring lost prestige by recapturing Buenos Aires. For this purpose a large force was immediately shipped to Buenos Aires under the command of General John Whitelocke.

General Whitelocke, however, was not the man to vindicate British arms by recapturing Buenos Aires. Montevideo was in English hands, affording an excellent base from which to carry out any operations against Buenos Aires, and there were ten thousand troops at Whitelocke's disposal. Yet, to the surprise of the Spanish-Americans, after a few skirmishes Whitelocke asked for a truce and agreed to evacuate the entire region. The English as colonizers were out, but the policy which had been slowly developed by Pitt received added impetus. Dislike of the English did not last long in the region of the Río de la Plata, but dissatisfaction with Spanish rule and the desire for independence rapidly expanded. England was forced to return to the course which had been advocated by Pitt, trade not annexation, and by 1810 this became the objective of both England and Buenos Aires. The idea of conquest had vanished from ministerial minds.

The Portuguese were also interested in the region of the Plata. Prior to the establishment of the Viceroyalty of La Plata, the Portuguese, not satisfied with possession of Colonia, started a more important settlement in the vicinity of Montevideo. The Spanish

promptly dislodged them and in turn proceeded to make permanent settlements there and at Maldonado to maintain more effectively the rights of the Spanish crown and to put an end to Portuguese smuggling.

In this manner, in 1726, was started the present city of Montevideo, under the name of San Felipe, Puerto de Monte Video. Some families were transported there from the Canaries, and others moved from Buenos Aires, in order to secure the privileges offered to first settlers. Large sums of money were sent by the viceroy to carry on the work; and, in time, with the labor of the Guarani Indians, a fort was constructed which the Spanish government hoped would block and overawe the Portuguese. Such, however, was not the case; indeed, the opposite effect seemed to be true, for the Portuguese increased their own establishments and stationed themselves permanently on the Río Grande. From this base they overran the adjoining lands, pillaged the Spanish settlers, and carried on contraband trade with more impunity than ever.

New conflicts were the natural results. Finally, in 1750, a treaty was drawn up between Spain and Portugal, and one of the articles dealt with the question of the Banda Oriental. This article stipulated that Portugal should cede to Spain all the establishments she had formed in the Banda Oriental, including Colonia, in exchange for the seven missionary towns upon the Uruguay. However, the settlement was not successful, for the Indians rose in revolt against an arrangement which delivered them to a nation known to them only for their cruelties. Spain and Portugal joined forces to enforce by arms the submission of the Indians to the treaty. When the fighting ceased, the missions were depopulated and ruined; and the Portuguese refused to take possession of them, using this as a pretext for refusing to release Colonia to Spain. Thus, the Portuguese question was not settled. They continued to carry on contraband trade and to carry out aggressive action against Spanish territory.

In the Río de la Plata the continued encroachments of the Portuguese, the continuance of contraband trade, and the disputes arising with foreign nations as a result of such a state of affairs, emphasized the necessity for a change in the government of that colony. To deal with such difficulties was impossible for a viceroy residing at Lima. Such distances from the seat of government also hampered any effective or, if needed, immediate action on the part of subordinate officials at Buenos Aires.

There were other factors, as we have seen, which contributed

to the Spanish ministry giving fresh vigor to their administrative officials in the Río de la Plata. The defenseless state of the region had already attracted notice and there was every reason to believe that hostilities with England would bring almost immediate attack upon the Río de la Plata region. This fact alone would have been sufficient to force Spain to arrange proper means of defense, but the more immediate cause for so doing was the provocations of the Portuguese in the Banda Oriental. The result, as we have already seen, was the formation of the Viceroyalty in 1776.

In the year 1808, the Río de la Plata was threatened with a new invasion by the Prince Regent of Portugal, who, from the moment of his reaching Brazil, seems to have contemplated the possibility of increasing his domains in America by the annexation of the Provinces of the Río de la Plata in right of his wife, the Princess Carlota, a daughter of Charles IV and sister of King Ferdinand.

Over the signature of Dom Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, Minister and Secretary of State for War and Foreign Affairs, the Prince Regent, upon his arrival at Rio de Janeiro in 1808, sent a letter dated March 13, to the "Cabildo of Buenos Ayres" requiring them on the grounds that "now beyond a doubt" the Spanish monarchy was dissolved and the "Spanish Americans are totally abandoned," to submit themselves to his protection and to place themselves under his government. As added incentive to this union Coutinho pointed out quite bluntly that if the Cabildo of Buenos Aires refused then the Portuguese would, with the aid of her ally Britain, open hostilities which would in the end force the Plata under Portuguese control.[38]

A spirited answer came from the Cabildo, April 29, 1808, expressing its determination, under its distinguished General Santiago (Jacques) Liniers, to maintain the rights of Spain and to defend itself to the last drop of blood. With notable dignity the Cabildo of Buenos Aires advised the Prince Regent that his note was "an intolerable offense to her" and that the Cabildo "will never forgive such an affront."[39]

Nothing in the way of war resulted in the above exchange of notes, but the pride and nascent patriotism for Buenos Aires was given great impetus. Their antagonism toward Brazil and Portugal was cemented. Thus, by 1810, there could be little chance of peace between these two regions and both were desirous of maintaining possession of the Banda Oriental.

38. Coutinho to Cabildo of Buenos Ayres, March 13, 1808, in Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, Appendix I, 383-384.

39. Cabildo of Buenos Ayres to Coutinho, April 29, 1808, in *ibid.*, 384-385.

The interest of the United States in the region of the Río de la Plata to 1810 was slight and trade was of small volume when compared to other regions of Spanish America. The early interest of the United States was, therefore, more closely tied to the Spanish West Indies, Mexico, and to a lesser degree the northern coastal region of South America.

Following the American Revolution most of the political leaders in the United States showed some interest in the future of Spanish America, and there developed a definite sentiment for the independence of Spanish America. This feeling was no secret as is indicated in a letter to John Jay, Secretary of State of the Confederation, from John Adams, the representative in England. Adams wrote on May 28, 1786, that "It is the fixed opinion in many minds here, that a revolution in South America would be agreeable to the United States, and it is depended on that we shall do nothing to prevent it, if we do not exert ourselves to promote it." [40] In the same year Jefferson propounded a different concept when he expressed fear that Spain could not hold Spanish America "till our population can be sufficiently advanced to gain it piece by piece," [41] and in 1808, an Englishman wrote that if England or France did not free South America, or if she did not free herself, the United States would probably do so.[42]

Many incidents of American interest in Spanish America are recorded for this early period, the outstanding ones being the intrigues of Citizen Genêt against Louisiana and Mexico; of the ambitious Miranda, who interested such men as Alexander Hamilton, Rufus King and other Federalists in his revolutionary schemes;[43] of Aaron Burr whose conspiracy [44] occurred while Miranda was in New York organizing his revolution and Popham was invading Buenos Aires.

It may readily be seen that while there was an American sentiment in favor of the independence of the Spanish colonies, some of it sincere, for the most part it was closely tied to American expansionist feeling or manifest destiny. A study of the newspapers of the period indicates also that public opinion in the United States

40. C. L. Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances* (Sewanee, Tenn., 1915), 8-9.

41. Jefferson to A. Stewart, Jan. 25, 1786 in Thomas Jefferson, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by Andrew A. Lipscomb (20 vols., Washington, 1904), V, 260. Hereinafter cited as Jefferson, *Writings*.

42. Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances*, 31.

43. See Robertson, *Life of Miranda*, I, 161-184.

44. See John Rydjord, *Foreign Interest in the Independence of New Spain* (Durham, 1935), 210. W. F. McCaleb, *The Aaron Burr Conspiracy; a History Largely from Original and Hitherto Unused Sources* (New York, 1903), 29 ff. I. J. Cox, "Hispanic American Phases of the Burr Conspiracy," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XII(1932), 146 ff.

followed party lines, with most Federalists favoring Spain and most Republicans taking the side of the Spanish-Americans.[45] Furthermore, the affairs of Spanish America assumed, in the eyes of the North Americans, a subordinate position to affairs in Europe.

While the American politician and most of the general public looked upon events in Buenos Aires as subordinate to Europe, a number of merchants had developed great interest in the region. As early as 1807, David C. DeForest wrote Secretary of State James Madison urging the appointment of a Consular Commercial Agent of the United States to Buenos Aires. He wrote that such a step would be "highly pleasing to the inhabitants, and sufficiently countenanced by this Government to answer all the purposes for which he would be admitted, although the laws would not allow of his being formally admitted." [46]

The hopes and ambitions of the commercial interests faced an uphill battle in spite of the fact that in two periods, 1797-1799 and 1804-1806, United States vessels occupied a favorable position and were welcomed as neutrals in the Spanish-American ports from which the British were barred.[47] The enmity of the British government as well as the British merchant was aroused, for the British government feared the growth of American shipping as a threat to British navigation as well as to her commerce.[48] In addition to this British resentment which led to a British embargo of the Río de la Plata,[49] there was Jefferson's embargo upon all shipping, December 1807 to March 1809, during which time only two United States vessels appeared in the ports of the Río de la Plata,[50] and the embargo by the government of Buenos Aires put into operation after the expulsion of the British. This embargo by the government of Buenos Aires about October 7, 1807, stated that all neutrals must leave the Río de la Plata within forty days, "loaded or not," [51] and apparently grew from the opinion of the people of Buenos

45. See the New York *Spectator* for June 6, June 27 and Sept. 8, 1810; Philadelphia *Aurora*, Sept. 10, Nov. 5, 1810; *Niles Weekly Register*, II, 71.

46. Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances*, 48-49.

47. See Goebel, "British Trade," in *HAHR*, XLIII(1938), 295; Roy F. Nichols, "Trade Relations and the Establishment of the United States Consulates in Spanish America, 1779-1809," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XIII(1933), 296, 301, 306. While dealing primarily with the Spanish West Indies, particularly Cuba in relation to agents, Nichols does show how blocking of the seaways during the periodic wars 1799-1808 caused the Spanish government to tolerate emergency trade with the United States. Buenos Aires shared in this trade. Hereinafter cited as Nichols, "Trade Relations" in *HAHR*.

48. Goebel, "British Trade" in *HAHR*, XLIII(1938), 296.

49. C. L. Chandler, "United States Merchant Ships in the Río de la Plata," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, II(1919), 36. Hereinafter cited as Chandler, "Merchant Ships" in *HAHR*.

50. *Ibid.*, 161.

51. *Ibid.*, 52. Taken from an extract in the *American Daily Advertiser* of Philadelphia for January 7, 1808.

Aires that the Americans were spies for the English. By this embargo no neutrals would be permitted in any of the ports of the Río de la Plata region for a period of two years "under any pretense whatever, even if they should have a royal license." [52]

In spite of these handicaps, in the period 1798 to 1810, one hundred and twenty-five merchant vessels of the United States touched at Buenos Aires and Montevideo,[53] and by 1810 at least one United States vessel had established a regular run between Río de la Plata and the United States.[54] In 1810, the United States was second only to England as an exporter to the Plata region.[55]

In the three decades following the American Revolution the merchants of the United States, in spite of severe hindrances, had tasted the fruit of the Spanish-American trade. In many instances great profits had been the rewards. Certainly, a large number of individuals had gained "on the spot" knowledge of conditions in Spanish America. By 1810, there were a number of United States businessmen in the Plata region who had learned first-hand that the business was there (Buenos Aires was then largely dependent on imported articles for all phases of life), and they had learned it was almost impossible to deal with a colony so arbitrarily ruled. The State Department of the United States had also learned that little or no satisfaction could be achieved from Spain in regard to her South American colony. Thus, when revolt came in 1810, both the mercantile class and the State Department welcomed the action as an opportunity to extend trade. Evidence for this is given in the speed with which Joel Poinsett was appointed "Agent for Seamen and Commerce" to Buenos Aires and the region of the Río de la Plata.

Following the defeat and withdrawal of the English from Buenos Aires, Don Santiago Liniers, as a reward for his gallantry, was appointed Viceroy of the Río de la Plata. Under other circumstances this might have been a happy choice, but with the explosive elements present in both Buenos Aires and in Europe, it proved otherwise. General Mitre describes Liniers as being a "high spirited" man with a "sensitive imagination, reckless temperament [and] with more good nature than energy." Mitre adds that Liniers had "more

52. *Ibid.*, 52.

53. See C. L. Chandler, "United States Shipping in the Río de la Plata Region, 1809-1810," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, III(1920), 159-176. Hereinafter cited as Chandler, "United States Shipping" in *HAHR*. See also his "United States Merchant Ships in the Río de la Plata (1801-1808), as shown by Early Newspapers," in *ibid*, II (1919), 26-54.

54. Chandler, "United States Shipping" in *HAHR*, III(1920), 160.

55. *Ibid.*, 160.

zeal in taking up projects than perseverance in carrying them out" and that "he was guided rather by his emotions than his judgment."[56] Then, too, it must be remembered that Liniers was a Frenchman.

In 1808, when news of the abdication of the King and the declaration of war against France was received in the Río de la Plata, Liniers found himself, almost immediately, an object of distrust to the old Spaniards. However, it was the city of Montevideo, under governor Francisco Xavier Elio, which reacted first. Elio refused to obey the orders of Liniers, called together the people, and established an independent *junta* after the pattern set up in Spain.[57]

Shortly after the action of Elio and the city of Montevideo, some of the leading Spaniards of Buenos Aires attempted to follow their example, a movement which was crushed by Liniers and his troops. However, there was as a result unrest in Buenos Aires; and the Central Junta at Seville, in an effort to calm the public mind, sent out an old naval officer, Don Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros, to replace Liniers as viceroy.

Buenos Aires, at this time, had an empty treasury and could not even meet the current expenses of the government. This, it was felt, was a result of the paralyzation of trade with Spain, with the decrease of custom-house duties as a consequence. The people, needing everything, and with a tremendous accumulation of produce, were crying out for at least a temporary opening of the ports. Into this situation came Cisneros, without money or troops and without permission to open the ports or relax in any way the Spanish colonial regulations.

The man who took up the cries of the people and placed them in the form of a memorial presented to Cisneros was Mariano Moreno. In September, 1809, Moreno published his *Representación á nombre del apodero de los hacendados de las compañas del Río de la Plata dirigida al excmo. Señor Virrey Don Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros en el expendiente promovido sobre proporcionar ingresos al erario por medio de un franco comercio con la nación*

56. Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano*, I, 128.

57. It is not the writer's intention to go into detail regarding the events of the revolution. Excellent accounts have already been written: Ricardo Levene, ed., *Historia de la Nación Argentina desde los orígenes hasta la organizacion definitiva en 1862* (8 vols. to date, Buenos Aires, 1939-1950), hereinafter cited as Levene, *Historia de la Nación Argentina;* Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano;* and Gervasio Antonio Posadas, *Memorias de Gervasio Antonio Posadas in Biblioteca Ayacucho*, XLVI (Madrid, 1920), 9-169. From these sources, has been drawn the brief account herein given, except for those parts so indicated by footnotes. For a brief description of Spain and her internal situation at the time, see W. S. Robertson, "The Juntas of 1808 and the Spanish Colonies," *English Historical Review, XXXI* (1916), 573-585.

inglésa.[58] Moreno advocated the entry of English goods; he was opposed to smuggling because no revenue was gained in this manner of trade; he exhorted free export of Argentine goods and wanted to destroy the commercial monopoly of the Cadiz merchants.[59] Moreno was clearly a revolutionary.

Cisneros heard the cries of the populace and with great reluctance opened the ports of the Río de la Plata to trade. This reluctance on his part to a matter which the people considered so important to them resulted in making him extremely unpopular and tended to give impetus to a crisis that had long been in preparation. This crisis was brought to a head when, greatly confused, Cisneros had to inform the people of the invasion of Spain by the French armies and of the dissolution of the *junta* at Seville.

The revolutionary spirit which had been smoldering in Buenos Aires for some time burst forth on May 15, 1810. Events moved rapidly from that point. On May 20th Cisneros was ordered to resign, which he did the following day. A *cabildo abierto* was called for May 22, which two days later announced the creation of a new *junta*, but its appointment was opposed by the people who objected to Cisneros as its President. On May 25, a new vote was held and a new *junta gubernativa* was elected with Cornelio Saavedra as President and Mariano Moreno as Secretary. In this manner was established the "provisional junta of the provinces of Río de la Plata, in the name of King Ferdinand the Seventh." This *junta gubernativa* was, in essence, the beginning of Argentina's independence, although no complete declaration of such was made until 1816 and political stability was not achieved until long after that.

Consequently, by 1810, Buenos Aires, in the midst of the turmoil created by the outside influences of Great Britain, France, and the United States, and by the internal problems of Spain, acted for herself. The latter part of that year saw the Plata region embroiled in the problems of establishing its own government and attempting to regulate its relations with the existing nations of the world.

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58. Mariano Moreno, *Escritos de Mariano Moreno, con un prólogo por Noberto Piñero* (Buenos Aires, 1896), 89. Hereinafter cited as Moreno, *Escritos*. This is the most complete edition of Moreno's writings.

59. A complete copy of the *Representación* may be found in Moreno, *Escritos*, 89-224.

Chapter II

The Formulation of Policies

By 1807, the United States knew it had a large stake and a great opportunity in Spanish America; unfortunately, it did not know how to protect the stake or exploit the opportunity. With Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian peninsula in 1808, the Jefferson administration was faced with the problem of shaping policy to cover the situation. In formulating his policies Jefferson ran into opposition from John Adams and other New England critics. Adams believed that the United States should support the Spanish patriots in their struggle to restore Ferdinand VII to the Spanish throne. This concept would not advance the cause of freedom in Spain and would deal a severe blow to freedom in Spanish America; to this Jefferson could not agree. The policy formulated by Jefferson foreshadowed the Monroe Doctrine in calling for the encouragement of independence in Spanish America and opposition to the transfer of an American colony from one European power to another, as well as resistance to the extension of commercial and political influence of any European power in America. The chief objective of Jefferson's policy was the exclusion of all European influence from the Western Hemisphere. Madison agreed wholeheartedly to this policy and was fully committed to it when he took over the presidency March 4, 1809.

At first glance this would appear to be a simple, straightforward policy in view of the penchant of the people of the United States to give aid and sympathy to any group they believed emulating them and their own earlier struggle to gain freedom and independence. It was, unfortunately, an impractical policy for the period, based almost entirely upon idealism and disregarding the internal circumstances and the international conditions of the time. The European conflict between the Tiger and the Shark, and the internal problems

created by a growing nation with its accompanying manifest destiny and need for immediate markets, brought forth a number of factors which prevented the administrations of Jefferson and Madison from carrying out the policy of 1808. These administrations were forced into acts such as the embargo, the development of the Peninsula trade, playing with the project of co-operation with France in revolutionizing Spanish America, and the War of 1812. In addition to these factors, the War Hawks and their manifest destiny turned the thinking of the people of the United States from the broader aspect of trade, commerce, and political influence in all of Spanish America to those in areas of Spanish territory immediately contiguous with the United States. The vacillations of the United States and its flirtations with, on the one hand, strict neutrality and, on the other, loose neutrality, resulted by 1815 in the loss of the opportunities presented in 1808 in all of Spanish America.

The news of revolt in Buenos Aires reached the United States at a time when the wars of Europe, with the various problems they created, monopolized the attention of the United States. This resulted in a great amount of confusion, for as previously stated, South American events were looked upon as subordinate parts of the European entanglements. In the early stages the revolt was regarded either as a Napoleonic plot or a British scheme. The Federalist newspapers urged the government to recognize the Patriot government of Spain and its representative, Luís de Onís,[1] seeing in the revolt an extension of national resistance to French domination in Spain and pointing out that there had been no formal declaration of independence.[2] The Republican Philadelphia *Aurora* rejoiced that the Napoleonic directed revolts would prevent the Spanish colonists from becoming allies of England. It bemoaned the fact that the control was not in the hands of France, but well settled in the market basket of Great Britain.[3]

There was an equal amount of confusion in the administration as President James Madison considered the movement for independence a *fait accompli* and that time alone would reveal whether it would be under British or French influence.[4]

At the first news of the revolt an agent, Joel R. Poinsett, was sent to Buenos Aires with instructions which emphasized the im-

1. New York *Spectator*, June 6, 1810.

2. *Ibid.*, June 27, 1810.

3. Philadelphia *Aurora*, Nov. 5, 1810.

4. Madison to Armstrong, Oct. 29, 1810 in *The Writings of James Madison*, ed. by G. Hunt (9 vols., New York, 1900-1910), VIII, 116. Hereinafter cited as Madison, *Writings*.

portance of developing trade relations with the region of the Río de la Plata.[5] The Madison administration thus paved the way for the adoption of an attitude which reflected the favorable interest that the revolutionists brought to the front in the United States. However, it must be noted that the official stand was more cautious. In placing the position of the United States before the world, Madison drew upon a body of precedent that had been created by President George Washington during the Anglo-French wars after 1793. Under Washington the United States had played an important part in the formulation of doctrine and practice on the subject of neutrality, although the American point of view had not been universally accepted. The foundation for American practice regarding neutrality and the enforcement of neutrality was summed up in the legislation of 1794, which prohibited Americans from engaging in or preparing for hostilities against any power with which the United States was at peace, from within the territory of the United States.[6] The Madison administration decided to apply "existing laws" which meant, therefore, the Neutrality Act of 1794. This was accomplished by executive orders directing that the shelter of American ports be extended to all ships, regardless of flag or nationality.[7] The official American policy was to be one of strict neutrality.

It must be remembered that Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian peninsula, in 1808, presented the United States with great political and commercial advantages in Latin America. From 1808 to 1813 Spain was rocked by a conflict that was both international and civil. The international phase involved France and England, with Spain as the battleground. The civil war involved two factions within Spain, one, the Francophile party which supported Joseph Bonaparte and had behind it the French army; the other, the Patriots who, with English patronage, set up a government in support of Ferdinand VII. Both groups claimed authority over Spanish America, and consequently there was a great amount of political and commercial freedom for the Spanish-Americans.[8] Add to this fact that most North Americans favored any struggle for

5. In regard to the agent, Poinsett, his instructions and his work see Ch. IV this paper. On the emphasis on the commercial importance of the revolution see Robert Smith to Armstrong, May 1, 1809, in *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations*, ed. by W. R. Manning (3 vols., New York, 1925), I, 4. Hereinafter cited as Manning, *Dip. Cor.*

6. John Bassett Moore, *Digest of International Law* (6 vols., Washington, 1906), VII, 1010. For a discussion of these laws and their weaknesses see Ch. VI, this study.

7. Instructions to collectors of customs, July 3, 1815, in *ibid.*, I, 170.

8. For a detailed account of this conflict and its effects see Levene, *Historia de la Nación Argentina*, V.

liberty from the tyrant monarchs of Europe and one may well question that the United States could follow a neutral course.

In spite of the restrictions of the Seville *junta* and Jefferson's embargo many American merchant groups were interested in the region of the Río de la Plata. A number of firms had established themselves there and were carrying on a lucrative trade. This was of value to Buenos Aires not only for the products and manufactured articles received but also for the revenue collected, which contributed funds necessary to maintain the revolution. Firms such as Blodget and Childs of Baltimore; William Gray, Elias H. Derby, the Crowninshields, Pickmans, Osgoods, and Ornes of Salem; Brown and Ives of Providence; and Miller and Van Beuren of Philadelphia, would not readily give up the trade they were developing in the Plata region.

The transactions of these shipping concerns and the activities of such individuals as David C. DeForest, William P. White, and Joel R. Poinsett could be called neutral only by an extreme stretching of the meaning of the word. They were constantly agitating for freedom from Spain. Poinsett even went so far as to accept a commission in the Chilean army.

Perhaps, in forming official policy toward the revolution and trade, the American government had in mind the risk of incidents that could lead to war with Spain. This risk had been clearly indicated in 1802, when some American citizens at Buenos Aires wrote to Charles Pinckney, the United States Minister to Spain, complaining of the difficulties the authorities in Buenos Aires were creating for them. In this petition, which had first been presented to the viceroy at Buenos Aires, they complained that all previous petitions had been passed over and that "Hospitality and justice have been denied us." They stated that they were ruined by delay or, indirectly, by the viceroy encouraging or compelling individuals to violate their contracts.[9] Minister Pinckney reported to the State Department on August 15, 1802, that these claims, added to some others from South America, amounted to not less than five million dollars and probably as much as eight millions.[10] The continuation of such enormous claims against Spain and the actions which precipitated them could, if permitted to go on, lead to war.

9. Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances*, 35-37. Those who signed this petition were: Thomas O'Reilly, Caleb Loring, John Ansley, Josiah Roberts, Robert Gray, Moses Griffin, Daniel McPherson, John Grant, Josiah Gould, Daniel Olney and William Todd, Jr.

10. *The Debates and Proceedings of the United States* (42 vols., Washington, 1834-1856), 3 Cong., 2 Sess., 948. Hereinafter cited as *Annals of Congress*.

The question of trade with Buenos Aires did not reach an explosive point in the United States owing to the development of what was termed the Peninsular trade. This term referred to the shipment of foodstuffs from the United States to the Iberian peninsula to supply not only the civilians but also the French and English armies. By 1811, domestic exports from the United States to the Iberian peninsula were worth more than three times as much as those to Spanish America.[11] Furthermore, the entire nation benefited by this trade as it included products from every quarter of the nation.[12] In this manner, the opportunities of Spanish-American trade were pushed into the background, and those with commercial interest concentrated more upon the Peninsular trade.

Although, in the period 1810 to 1815, the chief foreign influence in Buenos Aires was British, Robertson points out that British ideas worked principally for free trade, while the United States furnished the only example of an actual working experiment in statecraft based on the principle of popular sovereignty. American influence was most noticeable after the colonists were faced with specific problems of governmental organization.[13] The fact is clearly in evidence in the somewhat conservative *Gaceta* under the editorship of Mariano Moreno. While Moreno condemned the excesses of the French Revolution and distrusted North American political precedents,[14] he admired Washington[15] and was impressed with Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia.*[16] In other articles he discussed the freedom of the press[17] and the duties and functions of the Executive power in the United States.[18] Moreno was also an admirer of Chief Justice John Marshall, and by quoting him at length in the *Gaceta*[19] was largely responsible for the great esteem accorded him in Buenos Aires. While Moreno distrusted many of the American precedents, he wanted and searched for favorable opinions expressed by North Americans on the right of the Spanish-

11. *American State Papers, Class V, Commerce and Navigation* (2 vols., Washington, 1832-1834), I, 892. Hereinafter cited as *ASP., CN.*

12. Senator James Lloyd, Jr. of Massachusetts, *Annals of Congress, 10 Cong., 2 Sess.*, 34. The principal articles of this trade were flour, corn, corn-meal, rye-meal, rice, beans, pork, and tobacco.

13. W. S. Robertson, *Hispanic American Relations with the United States* (New York, 1923), ch. III. See also *Gaceta*, May 25, 1816.

14. *Gaceta*, July 3, 1810.

15. W. S. Robertson, *Rise of the Spanish American Republics as Told in the Lives of their Liberators* (New York, 1918), 157.

16. *Gaceta*, Nov. 28, 1810. Moreno devoted an entire page to translation of this work of Jefferson's.

17. *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1810.

18. *Ibid.*, July 28, August 4, 1813.

19. *Ibid.*, August 18, 1813.

Americans to revolt. These he presented to the people of Buenos Aires,[20] as well as warnings of the dangers of false security.[21]

The relations of the United States with Buenos Aires, through 1811, were auspicious. Examination of the period gives evidence of co-operation and understanding between the two that should have resulted in close commercial and political ties. In the political arena, the salient features of the democratic way of life in the United States were broadcast in the Río de la Plata by sailors, whalers, and by the American agents. Poinsett, while in Buenos Aires, translated the Constitution of the United States into Spanish, a copy of which reached the President of the *junta* in 1812.[22] David C. DeForest presented Manuel Belgrano with a copy of Washington's Farewell Address which Belgrano translated and published.[23] The same source made the people of Buenos Aires acquainted with the Declaration of Independence of the United States. The political concepts involved in these documents impressed the people of the Plata, and the representative assembly, which met at Buenos Aires in 1813, gave evidence of the effect of all this propaganda.[24]

The various expressions of North American sympathy and the very apparent belief that the people of the Plata had the right to revolt, plus the fact that the American agent, Poinsett, had made a very favorable impression in Buenos Aires,[25] created enthusiasm there and caused the *junta* to feel that the aid for which it was so eager could be had from the United States.[26] These relations between the United States and the Río de la Plata were greatly enhanced upon the return, in 1811, of its first agents to the United States, Diego de Saavedra and Juan Pedro Aguirre. They informed their government and the people of Buenos Aires of the very favorable attitude they found in the United States.[27] This feeling toward Buenos Aires which the United States, people, press, and political leaders, made no attempt to conceal led the *junta* at Buenos Aires,

20. In the *Gaceta*, June 21, 1810, is a translation from the New York *Evening Post* stating that "According to a letter from Cadiz, dated April 13th, the Spaniards complain that the United States approve of the revolutionary spirit that abounds in the American Dominions, and that we have openly recognized the rights those countries have to revolt."

21. The *Gaceta* quoted Fisher Ames saying "Those who govern should remember that to preserve a free government a supine security is almost treason" in *ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1813.

22. William G. Miller to Monroe, April 30, 1812, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 325.

23. William G. D. Worthington to Adams, March 7, 1819, *ibid.*, I, 533.

24. Miller to Monroe, July 26, 1813, Department of State, MS., Despatches of United States Consuls in Buenos Aires, I, pt. I. Hereinafter cited as DS., DUSC.

25. Miller to Monroe, Dec. 30, 1811, DS., DUSC., I, pt. I.

26. Cornelio de Saavedra to the President of the United States, June 26, 1811, MS., Department of State, Argentine Republic Notes, I. Hereinafter cited as DS., ARN.

27. Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 320.

in 1813, to suggest an alliance with the United States[28] in spite of the War of 1812 and Buenos Aires' almost complete dependence upon British trade. In addition, the United States was encountering considerable difficulty getting ships into Buenos Aires, as it made no attempt to enforce the neutrality of that port.[29] This desire for an alliance with the United States may be accounted for by disappointment about British aid.[30]

The suggestion of an alliance between the United States and the *junta* of Buenos Aires is not as unexpected or as out of place as appears at first. By 1811, interest in the cause of the revolutionists had increased in the United States in spite of the threat of war which was hanging over the country. Information from Buenos Aires had become more plentiful, and articles, proclamations and war news from the revolutionary gazettes were copied in the American press.[31] United States interest was greatly increased by the news of the abolition of the Inquisition and by the Declaration of Rights in Venezuela. The *Niles Weekly Register,* making quite a story of these, waxed eloquent on the possibilities of Spanish America.[32] Even the Federalist New York *Spectator* commended Venezuela for so regulating the suffrage as to make it appear "that the South Americans are not running quite so wild as might have been expected," and added that "In going from the extreme of tyranny they do not go to the extreme of licentiousness."[33] Joel Poinsett, the American agent to Buenos Aires, had stressed American sympathy and friendship, and it was well known that Madison had given instructions to Joel Barlow, American Minister at Paris, to urge the recognition of the new Spanish-American governments, although he was in no way to compromise American neutrality.[34] The commissioners from Buenos Aires to the United States who arrived in October, 1811, were amiably, though not officially received by the government,[35] and were successful in buying arms,[36] but not able to secure any formal answer to their communications

28. Nicholas Rodriguez Peña, *et. al.* to Madison, July 21, 1813, DS., ARN., I. See also Juan Manuel de Luca to Miller, Feb. 10, 1813, DS., DUSC., I pt. I.

29. Poinsett to Secretary of State, June 14, 1814, DS., Special Agents, III.

30. Miller to Monroe, March 25, 1812, DS., DUSC., I, pt. I.

31. New York *Spectator,* Aug. 29, 1811; *Niles Weekly Register,* Sept. 14, 1811.

32. *Niles Weekly Register,* Feb. 1, 1812; see also New York *Spectator,* Aug. 29, 1811.

33. New York *Spectator,* Aug. 29, 1811.

34. Monroe to Barlow, Nov. 27, 1811, Manning, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 12.

35. Aguirre and Saavedra to Monroe, Oct. 25, 1811, DS., ARN., I. They were, by instruction, not to ask for official recognition. For further discussion of this see ch. V of this study.

36. Antokoletz, *Histoire,* 204.

to the American Secretary of State.[37] With the existing friendly relations and good wishes of the United States, the successful purchase of some arms and the pressing need of additional supplies and munitions,[38] hope that an alliance would be acceptable to the United States is understandable. Of course, in view of Jefferson's warning of friendly relations with all, entangling alliances with none, still ringing in American ears, the United States would not accept the offer of the government of Buenos Aires.

In the meantime, the policy of Jefferson as formulated in 1808, professing American interest in the independence of Spanish America and the expulsion of all European influence, had not been carried out. Indeed, Jefferson's refusal to repeal the embargo and his interest in the domestic problems of the United States tended to transfer the control of Latin America from the two weakest powers of Europe, Spain and Portugal, to the strongest of them, England.

James Madison, on becoming President in 1809, accepted the Jefferson policy of 1808, and with the aid of Robert Smith and James Monroe, his two Secretaries of State, and Albert Gallatin, his Secretary of the Treasury, carried Jefferson's policy to a high point by 1811, after which time, owing to European complications and the War of 1812, the United States lost its advantage in Spanish America.

Through 1811, there was no timidity in the Madison administration's relations with Buenos Aires. There was caution to maintain a strict neutrality, and it was made clear that the United States looked upon the revolt as a civil war. In so doing the United States recognized the belligerency of the Plata, angering Spain but making it possible to keep American ports open.

The significance of the Peninsular trade must have been missed by Madison, for he took from the beginning an aggressive attitude toward Napoleonic France in regard to trade with Spanish America. Fearing that Napoleon would insist upon the suppression of that commerce, Robert Smith, Secretary of State, wrote General John Armstrong, the American Minister at Paris, that such action on the part of France would be a threat to peace between France and the United States.[39]

This proved to be the last thing that France wanted. France soon discovered that the United States was her best means of

37. Aguirre and Saavedra to Monroe, Jan. 20 and Feb. 5, 1812, DS., ARN., I.

38. All communications from Buenos Aires emphasized this need. See Ignacio Alvarez to Thomas L. Halsey, May 10, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, pt. I.

39. Smith to Armstrong, April 27, 1809, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 3.

communication with Spanish America and that American interest was well in line with that of France. That this opinion was correct and put to excellent use by France is evidenced by a letter written in January of 1810 by Luís de Onís, unrecognized Spanish Minister to the United States, to the Viceroy of Buenos Aires telling him to watch for French agents on all ships coming from the United States.[40] Onís later charged the United States government with conspiring with these agents and implied that the United States was trying to form an alliance with France, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden in order to carry on a war with England.[41] W. S. Robertson points out that while Onís was in error in some minor points, his account of Madison's policy was esssentially correct.[42]

The Madison administration made the first systematic effort of the United States to extend its agencies in Spanish America. Three types of agents were employed: special agents, agents for commerce and seamen, and consuls. Special agents were appointed to perform some specific mission, usually of brief duration. Agents for commerce and seamen were appointed under an act of Congress in 1796 for the protection of American seamen in foreign ports. John Quincy Adams summed it up neatly when he wrote that "This office of commercial agent is a substitute for that of consul in ports where consuls cannot be admitted, or to which from whatever cause they cannot be sent." [43] The use of consuls in Spanish America in this early period is quite interesting. By definition the consul was an official appointed to reside in a foreign country to care for the commercial interests of the citizens of the appointing government. As such, the United States sent consuls to Spanish America under the Madison administration. Adams, however, later refused to receive a consul from one of the Spanish-American countries on the ground that such action committed the United States to recognition.[44] Revolutionary agents from Spanish America were, however, permitted to reside in the United States.

On November 12, 1811, that part of the President's message regarding South America was referred to a committee of the House of Representatives with Samuel L. Mitchill of New York

40. Onís to the Viceroy of Buenos Aires, Jan. 5, 1810, MS., Archivo General de la Nación (Buenos Aires), Sala 1, Amario 2, Anarquel 4, Número 9. Hereinafter cited as AGN, S1-A2-A4.

41. Onís to the Captain General of Caracas, Feb. 2, 1810, enclosed in a message from Madison to Congress in *Annals of Congress*, 11 Cong., 3 Sess., 1273-1274.

42. William Spence Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence* (Baltimore, 1939), 84, 86, 93-95.

43. Adams to Anderson, May 27, 1823, in *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, ed. by W. C. Ford (7 vols., New York, 1913-1917), VII, 478. Hereinafter cited as Adams, *Writings*.

44. Adams to Monroe, Jan. 28, 1819, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 88.

as chairman. From this committee on December 10, 1811, came the first offer in a foreign legislative body of sympathy with the struggling Spanish-Americans. It took the form of a proposed public declaration to the following effect:

Whereas, Several of the American Spanish Provinces have represented to the United States that it has been found expedient for them to associate and form federal governments upon the elective and representative plan, and to declare themselves free and independent; Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That they behold with friendly interest, the establishment of independent sovereignties by the Spanish Provinces in America, consequent upon the actual state of monarchy to which they belong; that as neighbors and inhabitants of the same hemisphere, the United States feel great solicitude for their welfare; and that, when these provinces shall have attained the conditions of nations, by the just exercise of their rights, the Senate and House will unite with the Executive in establishing with them, as sovereign and independent states, such amicable relations and commercial intercourse as may require their legislative authority.[45]

While this is an official statement of sympathy for the Spanish Provinces in America, and the first statement of its kind made publicly by any branch of the United States government, it should be noted that it is a cautious but definite stand. There is nothing in it to arouse the enmity of Spain, no denial of her authority, and yet there is also an expression of ideas which play an important part in the development of United States policy down to the present—hemisphere solidarity.

The general opinion of the United States was that Spain was a decadent power, that Ferdinand VII was a tryant and opposed to everything the United States held dear. Why, then, this deference to Spain? It would seem that all factors were leading toward a close and strong relationship between the United States and Spanish America which would bring about the latter's independence and effectively block European influence, political and commercial, in the Western Hemisphere.

The answer lies, in part, in the unwillingness of many Americans to aid in bringing about revolution because they did not believe the Spanish-Americans could govern themselves. The greater part of the answer lies in the fact that, while Spain was a weak and decadent power, she had a powerful ally, England. The key, therefore, to Spanish America and American policy regarding Spanish America lies in the policies and actions of England. For a clear understanding of this complex period, 1810 to 1815, we must turn our attention to that nation and the somewhat erratic development of its policies.

45. *Annals of Congress,* 12 Cong., 1 Sess., 427-428.

Pitt had been too absorbed in the European conflict to develop a precise Spanish-American policy; Lord Grenville's administration had been too divided and irresolute to enforce one. Most believed that those who succeeded them would hardly remain in office long enough to discuss the question. This belief existed because the King had turned to his old Tory friends for advisers, and a cabinet led by the aged Duke of Portland and composed of Pitt's adherents took up the seals of office. Surprisingly, however, the members of the Duke's administration governed England for the next twenty years.

The task which faced them in 1807 was not auspicious, for there were defeats at Buenos Aires, the Dardanelles, and Egypt to be announced, and there remained the threat of Napoleon's shadow over England. The prospects for England, looked at in their entirety, were discouraging and yet, from the moment of its entry into office, the new administration presented a front of boldness and determination which was undiminished by the apparent nearness of disaster.

This new and spirited conduct of affairs was the particular responsibility of two of the Duke of Portland's associates. The first, George Canning, who entered the Duke of Portland's cabinet as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the second, Viscount Castlereagh, who became Secretary of War and Colonies.

For the first six months in power there was very little these men could do. It is interesting to note that Canning was relieved at Whitelocke's defeat at Buenos Aires, as he felt that had removed the necessity of his having to follow the policies of the Talents in this regard.[46] He informed the nations of Europe that England would look more closely at Continental affairs and did take action in two instances. He seized the Danish fleet to keep it from Napoleon, and helped the Prince Regent of Portugal escape the clutches of Napoleon by moving him to Brazil. These moves did not change affairs on the Continent, and he then turned toward Spanish America, asking Castlereagh to review that situation.

Castlereagh, who favored a continuation of war on the Continent, thought little of a policy that attempted to combine military occupation and commercial intercourse. Nevertheless, he investigated the problem and came up with what appeared to be an answer. Conquest was definitely out of the question, the Talents had given concrete evidence of that, but Castlereagh thought there was another way. His answer was basically Pitt's old scheme with an

46. A. G. Stapleton, *George Canning and His Times* (London, 1859), 128-129.

additional twist which Castlereagh believed would be acceptable to the Spanish-Americans. He advocated the creation of independent monarchies under European princes friendly to England. These independent monarchies would replace the old Spanish viceroyalties and, through their friendship with England, would destroy the commercial monopoly of Spain. By attracting the loyalties of the Spanish-American population, they would permit England to assume the role of a beneficent ally.[47] The cabinet approved this plan; and Castlereagh, for assistance in carrying it out, turned to a man who seemed unable to learn from experience, Miranda.

An excited and enthusiastic Miranda arrived in Portsmouth in December of 1807 and was received in January, 1808, by Canning, who thought Miranda's plans were "certainly very inviting."[48] According to Robertson, Miranda had excellent cause to be excited, for he was certainly given every reason to believe that this time the British government accepted wholeheartedly his plans and would carry them out. Colonel Willliamson and Joseph Pavia were dispatched to Mexico to bring about a pro-English revolution, and on June 6, 1808, Sir Arthur Wellesley was given his appointment to command an expedition against the Spanish colonies. Miranda wrote to Admiral Cochrane "that the thing is ultimately decided, according to our own wishes, and . . . I shall very soon have the satisfaction of taking you by the hand."[49]

Miranda's plans, however, were destined never to materialize. Two important factors had not been considered, France and Spain. Following the Napoleonic invasion of Spain and brutal suppression of a resistance movement in Madrid, France found herself faced with a national uprising in Spain. Delegates from Spain arrived in England and appealed to Canning for aid. Seeing in this an opportunity to get at France, Canning immediately turned the attention of the British government to the Continent and the cabinet accepted his change of plans.[50]

Canning's change of policy meant the death of English aid to Miranda and his plans. Sir Arthur Wellesley was given new orders, sending him to Spain, and only if there were no chance of success there was he to go to South America.[51] At the same time Castle-

47. Memorandum for the Cabinet, relative to South America, May 1, 1807, in *Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh; Second Marquess of Londonderry*, ed. by Charles W. Vane (12 vols., London, 1848-1853), VII, 315-326. Hereinafter cited as Castlereagh, *Papers*.

48. Canning to Castlereagh, Jan. 4, 1808, in *ibid.*, VIII, 158.

49. Miranda to Cochrane, May 5, 1808, Robertson, *The Life of Miranda*, II, 15-16.

50 J. Holland Rose, "Canning and the Spanish Patriots in 1808," *American Historical Review*, XII(1906), 39.

51. Robertson, *The Life of Miranda*, II, 18.

reagh's earlier instructions were canceled, and the new policy was set forth in a dispatch to the Governor of Jamaica which stated, "by the insurrection in the Asturias, some probability of restoring the Spanish monarchy is revived," and as this was "an object of the first importance in his Majesty's mind, it is wished to suspend any measure tending to divide and therefore weaken that monarchy." [52]

52. Harold Temperley, *Life of Canning* (London, 1905), 87.

Chapter III

Policies Re-adjusted

THE beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed a greatly renewed interest in the Western Hemisphere by the French government under Napoleon. This interest came from the desire of France to regain a colonial empire and through Napoleon's effort to make effective his Continental System.

The French government had been informed by various observers that Spanish administration was weak and that the defensive system was such as to make conquest easy. French émigrés were enthusiastic and untiring in informing Napoleon of the humiliation of the Spanish-Americans. These people were, in the opinion of the informers, controlled by a government which had neither the ability to govern them nor the power to protect them. These observers believed that the Spanish-Americans were in a state of apathy, which indicated a change would be welcomed, and who better than Napoleon could bring the change? It was suggested, as early as 1803, that Napoleon found a French mining colony in the Plata, a colony which would not only bring revenue to France and give France the beginning of a new colonial empire, but would at the same time threaten the flank of both the Portuguese and the Spanish holdings in South America. To the émigré observers the key to all of southern South America was the Plata.[1] French commercial agents such as François de Pons, agent in the Captaincy General of Venezuela in 1806, maintained that only the French could save Spanish America from the English.

In spite of what seemed to French commercial agents and émigré observers a golden opportunity to seize a rich colonial empire, Napoleon's actions were somewhat dilatory and, no doubt, in view

1. C. L. Lokke, ed., "French Designs on Paraguay in 1803," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, VII (1928), 396-401.

of the defeat of Le Clerc and the transfer of Louisiana to the United States, shocking. However, Napoleon had been busy on the Continent and not until 1807 did he develop his Iberian policy, thereby becoming the instigator of the movements in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies that eventually led to their independence.

The extension of the Napoleonic political system to the Iberian peninsula was a direct result of the struggle for supremacy between England and France. Napoleon's Iberian policies were aimed at destroying England and English power and were predicated upon English actions. Napoleon's combined French and Spanish fleet had been defeated October 21, 1805, by Lord Nelson at Trafalgar, putting to rest British fears of invasion. However, scarcely a month later came Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz. Thus, by the end of 1805, England controlled the seas and Napoleon held the Continent. As they could not get at each other, they were driven to indirect devices. Both powers turned to the use of the blockade. England established a naval blockade against French controlled ports, using a system of fees and licenses to curb neutral trade. Napoleon, in turn, ordered a "paper" blockade against England, and closed European ports under his control to English goods, thus instigating his Continental System.[2] His concept was that by stopping British trade he would close British factories, causing bread lines to appear, riots to develop, and revolution to spring up, which in turn would force England to accept French terms.

For this plan to be successful the nations of the Iberian peninsula must also close their ports to British trade. An agreement had been made with Portugal in 1800, and supplemented in 1801, to the effect that Portugal would not give aid to the enemies of France and that her harbors would be closed to English trade. This requirement was not fulfilled, and no real attempt to enforce it was made until February, 1805. At that time Talleyrand sent General Junot to remind the Prince Regent of the agreement and to inform him that France now expected him to honor and enforce it. Junot's mission failed, but Napoleon did little about it until July of 1807, when he requested the Portuguese ambassador to inform his government that France wanted the ports closed, all Englishmen arrested and their property taken. The result was the opposite of that desired by Napoleon. The requests frightened the Prince Regent John and tied Portugal more closely to England. As the

2. For a complete list of restrictions, orders and decrees on neutral trade see A. C. Clauder, *American Commerce as Affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1793-1812* (Philadelphia, 1932), 9-14.

Prince Regent made no effort to carry out Napoleon's requests he was informed to do so immediately or France would declare war.

Napoleon's objective, when he determined to occupy Portugal toward the end of 1807, was to seal off from the British the last ports of Western Europe and thus complete his Continental blockade. In this, his immediate objective, he was completely successful; however, in depriving England of one market he was instrumental in giving her another which was perhaps of greater value.[3] When Canning was made aware of the Napoleonic threat to Portugal, he entered into negotiations with Souza Coutinho, at that time the Portuguese Ambassador to London, regarding the creation of new relations between England and Portugal. The result of these negotiations was the Convention of October 22, 1807, by which the two States agreed to friendship and alliance. England assured the Prince Regent that if it were necessary for him to leave Portugal for Brazil the British navy would escort him. It was understood that if such a move occurred the Prince Regent would take with him the Portuguese navy and merchant marine, thus keeping them out of Napoleon's hands. It was also understood that if Prince John arrived in Brazil there would be further negotiation in regard to British commerce. The Prince Regent, however, did not ratify the agreement until after the English instituted a blockade of the Portuguese ports and word was received that Napoleon had crossed the border.[4]

In the meantime, Napoleon had negotiated with Spain the Treaty of Fontainebleau, October 27, 1807. By this treaty Napoleon agreed to recognize Charles IV as the Emperor of the two Americas, and both parties agreed to the dismemberment of Portugal. For this purpose, a supplement to the treaty granted permission for Napoleon to move French troops through Spanish territory into Portugal.

Using as an excuse the malign influence of Britain and the subservience of the Portuguese ruler to England the forces of Napoleon, under the command of General Junot, entered Lisbon November 29, 1807. He was, however, too late to make a prisoner of the Prince Regent John, as he had embarked on the 27th, and left Lisbon harbor early on the 29th, for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, under the protection of the British navy. Upon his arrival in Rio de Janeiro the Prince Regent immediately opened the Brazilian ports to the com-

3. Alan K. Manchester, *British Preeminence in Brazil, Its Rise and Decline* (Chapel Hill, 1933).

4. Temperly, *Life of Canning*, 80-81.

merce of friendly nations. This was followed by negotiations with Lord Percy Strangford, the British envoy to Portugal, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro July 22, 1808, which resulted in a treaty of commerce being signed February 10, 1810. This treaty was "to make the Brazils an emporium for British manufactures destined for the consumption of the whole of South America." [5] The treaty was a reward for British aid and granted to them a special preference of fifteen per cent on their goods entering Brazil. British manufactured goods, long bottled up by Napoleon, poured into Brazil, and by 1812, four-fifths of England's exports to South America were passing through that colony's ports.[6] In the long run Napoleon's policy here backfired and proved quite beneficial to the British.

Jefferson's embargo prevented the merchants of the United States taking advantage of the opening of the Brazilian ports. In spite of the bitter denunciations by the New England Federalists, Jefferson insisted that the embargo was necessary to maintain peace—a state of affairs Jefferson believed should be maintained at any cost. Napoleon was delighted with Jefferson and felt that the United States was playing his game. He rejoiced over the widening gap between the United States and England and was quite happy, since he could not successfully blockade England, to receive American aid along this line. Napoleon even went so far as to pretend to help the United States enforce the embargo. The same day that Canning wrote to Strangford regarding Brazil becoming an emporium for British manufactures, Napoleon issued his Bayonne decree, April 17, 1808, which ordered the seizure of all American ships in French harbors. Thus, between the embargo and the Orders in Council of England and Decrees of France, American shipping all but ceased and American policy, temporarily at least, played directly into Napoleon's hands.[7]

The incidents just discussed aided the English government in finding a solution to the difficult problem of English policy toward the Spanish-Americans and Spain. England's ability and her ardent desire to supply the South Americans, both Portuguese and Spanish, with goods was looked upon by these people as an outright expression of British good-will. Neither the encouragement nor the

5. Canning to Strangford, April 17, 1808, in Manchester, *British Preeminence in Brazil*, 78.

6. Manchester, *British Preeminence in Brazil*, 90-97.

7. There are two excellent studies of the embargo: L. M. Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo* (Durham, 1927) and W. W. Jennings, *The American Embargo: 1807-1809* (Iowa City, 1921). A very detailed treatment of the problems here involved may be found in Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (9 vols., New York, 1889-1891).

example of the North Americans, nor the French propaganda which Napoleon poured upon them, competed with the stream of badly needed English goods. If the British, to carry on their war effort against France, needed trade, the colonists needed English goods to survive. The revolutionary *juntas* had no effective means of taxation and were, therefore, dependent upon the customs duties to maintain their revolts. Commerce alone assured the British an initial deference in the minds of most Latin Americans.[8]

The adroit and elastic English mind was well able to see ways of increasing any favors granted them without great risk of offending or raising the outright enmity of Spain. English ministers could state, off the record and quite confidentially, that England would protect the colonists from France should Spain collapse. Revolutionary leaders could quietly receive private funds. The Foreign Office could receive, as had been done in the past, revolutionary agents at the back door and permit them to purchase arms and supplies, and the Royal navy could very discreetly protect such commerce. These attentions were extended to the Latin Americans as evidence of British intentions and were of great significance in Anglo-Spanish-American relations, as well as in the aid given to the development of English policy.

Napoleon, after the escape of Prince John, turned his attention toward Spain, and in January sent his troops into that unfortunate country. Manuel Godoy suggested that the royal family move from Madrid to Seville, thinking of this step as being the first in a long journey to Buenos Aires. The French Emperor, however, had no intention of letting the Spanish monarch slip through his fingers as had the Portuguese ruler. Ferdinand, the Well Beloved, played directly into his hands by forcing the abdication of Charles IV and placing himself upon the throne. Napoleon lured both Charles IV and Ferdinand to Bayonne, France, where they were forced to cede to Napoleon sovereignty over Spanish dominions. This phase of Napoleon's policy was completed by May 10, 1808. It was followed immediately by French merchants being encouraged to trade with the Spanish colonies. Napoleon was ready for the next step, to take over the control of the Spanish colonies.

On June 15, 1808, an Assembly of Notables, composed of some one hundred and fifty Spaniards, influenced by Murat, met at Bayonne. The following June 20th, this Assembly recognized Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and the Indies. It is interesting to note that also present, and for the first time in their history,

8. Goebel, "British Trade" in *HAHR*, XLIII(1938), 311.

were selected persons to represent the Spanish-American colonies of Mexico, La Plata, Venezuela, and New Granada.[9]

Napoleon's plans now materialized in great clarity. He did not intend to take the Spanish colonies by conquest and tie them by chains of war to France; apparently, Toussaint L'Overture had taught him something. Instead, he would give them a legal monarch, and control through his influence over the throne. In this manner British trade could be blocked and the French would have wide open markets. To assure these markets to France, Napoleon and Joseph signed a treaty stating that Napoleon ceded the right of the crown of Spain and the Indies to Joseph. Included in the treaty was a French guarantee of the territorial integrity of the colonies which Spain possessed and an agreement allowing the introduction of French goods with no heavier duties or charges than Spanish vessels paid.[10]

From June of 1808, until December, 1809, Napoleon expended a great amount of time, energy, and money in an effort to win to his side the American colonies of Spain. Through Joseph, Napoleon gave to every province in the Spanish dominions the right to send deputies to the Cortes. For the first time, the colonies were to enjoy the same rights as the Mother country. Reforms in other lines were caried out, *e. g.*, one legal code was adopted applicable to Spanish America as well as Spain; one commercial code was put in force which included such attractive items as reciprocity between the colonies and Spain, no special privileges to any party in regard to exports or imports, and agriculture and industry without molestation in the colonies. In an effort to convince the Spanish-American colonists that Spain as a nation maintained the integrity of her dominions and her independence, Napoleon decided to leave the governing personnel in the colonies as it had been under Charles IV and Ferdinand VII; however, under the cloak of being the protector and restorer of Spain, he placed in the positions of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Indies and Minister of the Treasury, individuals who were partial to French interests.

Napoleon's policy toward Spanish America was now a two-fold affair. He wanted to convince the colonists that the dynasty in Spain had changed, but that the monarchy remained, and he

9. For a detailed discussion of the actions of Napoleon and Murat and an account of the gratitude and appreciation of the deputies from Spanish America, see: W. S. Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence* (Baltimore, 1939), 25-38. For the pages on French policy that follow, the writer is largely indebted to this excellent study by W. S. Robertson.

10. *Ibid.*, 38-39.

wanted to check English gains and intrigue. A tremendous propaganda campaign was instituted to enlighten the colonists to the advantages which would come to them by the regeneration of Spain. He sent muskets, sabres, powder and lead, and ordered the creation of a navy for the protection of Spanish America. To make certain that the Spanish-Americans gained knowledge of all that was being done for them, and who was responsible for it, as well as to see that they were informed of the greatness and power of Napoleon, French missions were sent to the viceroyalties.

Among these missions was that of the Marquis de Sassenay [11] to Buenos Aires. Sassenay, a French royalist, had been an émigré to the United States, during which time he had engaged in commercial activities which had twice taken him to Buenos Aires. On his first voyage, Sassenay remained in Buenos Aires six months; the second, two years, September, 1801, to May, 1803, during which time he became quite intimate with his compatriot, Santiago Liniers, who, by 1808, had become viceroy of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. De Sassenay's career as an émigré was well known to the French authorities from the close scrutiny of his affairs entailed in granting him amnesty in 1804. Thus, Sassenay was chosen because he had lived in Buenos Aires, knew the language, and was well acquainted with Liniers. He was summoned to Bayonne immediately after Charles IV and Ferdinand VII ceded to Napoleon Spain and the Indies, arrived there May 29th, was given his instructions dated the same day, and put to sea for Buenos Aires the next day aboard the *Consolateur*. Napoleon was wasting no time.

Sassenay's instructions, signed by Champagny, Duke of Cadore, May 29, 1808, informed him that he was to deliver his despatches to Liniers and to explain, as if he had been an eye-witness, what had been done at Bayonne, and how happy the Spanish people were with the prospect of regeneration under Joseph Bonaparte. He was to observe carefully the effects produced on the authorities by the news of the changes which had occurred in Spain, to gather all the information possible about Spanish America, particularly the Viceroyalty of La Plata and, if possible, information of the same kind regarding Chile and Peru. He was to gather this information and return as rapidly as possible.[12]

Landing at Maldonado on August 9, Sassenay proceeded to

11. For the Sessenay mission the writer is indebted to C. H. E. Marquis de Sassenay, *Napoleon Ier et la fondation de la République Argentine* (Paris, 1892). Hereinafter cited as Sassenay, *République Argentine*.

12. *Ibid.*, 132-134.

Montevideo where he found Elio, the governor, on the point of administering to the people the oath of fidelity to Ferdinand VII. To the envoy's suggestion that the governor await the news from Bayonne at Buenos Aires, Elio gave an emphatic refusal. Sassenay went on to Buenos Aires, arriving at the capital August 13, where he expected to be received by his old comrade with open arms; instead, he was treated with a cold formality and left to cool his heels in ante-chambers before being granted an audience by the viceroy. Liniers, in order to avoid any appearance of working with the French, chose to receive him in company with members of the *cabildo* of Buenos Aires. For this assembly the despatch box was opened and Sassenay read the acts by which Charles IV, Ferdinand VII, and the infantas renounced the Spanish throne and the despatches of Champagny in which Joseph's recognition as king was recommended. To these were attached the formal command of the Spanish Ministers and the Council of Castile that the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand VII should not be administered.[13] Of the immediate results of this reading Sassenay says:

> When the members of the junta became aware of the contents of the despatches, I was informed that they had no desire whatever for any other king than Ferdinand VII. Several members were of the opinion that they should take violent measures against me and that I should be detained; but finally the view prevailed that I should be required to embark immediately for Montevideo . . . I am convinced that, if the viceroy had had the means or perhaps if he had more audacity, and if I had been able to return to Europe, events might have taken a different course.[14]

Sassenay was forced to leave Buenos Aires immediately, but Elio was not as generous as the people of Buenos Aires, informing the French envoy that news from Cadiz reported that war had broken out between France and Spain, and, therefore, Sassenay was a prisoner of war. It was clear that the people of the Plata considered the actions of Napoleon as interference with their own independent action, and that they preferred to conduct their own affairs without foreign meddling. After twenty-one months Sassenay escaped and made good his return to France.

Napoleon's missions to other parts of Spanish America met with similar fates, but probably the most emphatic protest against Napoleon's policy came from the Plata. The viceroy Liniers was ousted almost immediately and Dean Gregorio Funes, acting Bishop of Córdoba, took up his pen and blasted Napoleon's hopes as far as the Río de la Plata was concerned, stating that while they had been

13. *Ibid.*, 245-249.
14. *Ibid.*, 251-252.

in doubt Napoleon had made their decision for them and they belonged to Ferdinand, not Napoleon.[15]

In the meantime, the Central Junta at Seville formally declared war upon France, and addressed despatches to officials in Spanish America to maintain inviolable the bonds with Spain. The *junta* also sent delegates to England asking Canning for English aid against France.[16] Thus it was Napoleon's Iberian policy which again came to the aid of the somewhat stumbling attempts of England to form a Spanish-American policy.

This appeal for English aid seemed to Canning such a great opportunity that he did not hesitate to send it in spite of the complex situation. It is a recognized fact that Canning was not in favor of nationality, but in this case we have at least one instance where he stepped out of character. Not only did Canning himself step out of character, but it appears that England adopted methods she despised and denounced, for England ignored the official organ of state and entered into relations with sectional rebels or organizations within that state. Canning helped the struggling *juntas* of each province with money, arms and equipment, but he would not recognize the provincial *juntas* as political entities, for he wanted to foster the formation of a Spanish national assembly. This policy meant allying with a nation, not with a government; it meant breaking with a government which most Spanish did not trust, and negotiating with individuals who were patriots. War, indeed, makes strange bedfellows.

The efforts of Joseph and Napoleon Bonaparte to control Spanish America through alliance with Spain, rather than rivalry with her, were abandoned after the stands taken by the Seville *junta* and Canning. Napoleon, forced to modify his policy, decided to use secret agents to foment revolution in Spanish America. His approach now was to be that of a liberator who wanted in return nothing but friendly relations and commerce. For this he would ship the Spanish-Americans arms, ammunition, and other supplies needed for their revolution. The Emperors' propaganda reminded the Spanish-Americans that it had been France that aided in the independence of the United States, and his agents emphasized the difference between a progressive United States and an enslaved

15. For a discussion of this proclamation see Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, 60. For the proclamation see Gregorio Funes, *Proclama al clero del obispado de Córdoba de Tucumán por su provisor gobernador* (Buenos Aires, 1808). The above information will be found in pages 2 to 7 of Funes' proclamation.

16. See pages 32 and 33 this paper.

Spanish America.[17] Use was also made of the United States as a base of operations for the secret agents of Napoleon.[18]

In the meantime, Joel Barlow had been appointed Minister to France, and had been instructed by Secretary of State James Monroe that the Ministers of the United States were to promote the recognition of Venezuela by other nations.[19] Barlow's instructions, as far as France was concerned, were hardly necessary, for even as they were being drawn up conversations were taking place between Jonathan Russell, American Chargé d'Affairs at Paris, and the Duke of Bassano, the new French Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarding French policy toward Spanish possessions in America. On August 20, 1811, Sérurier stated that the Emperor had decided "to acknowledge and confirm the independence of every portion of these possessions which should have the spirit and the physical means to assert it." [20]

The conversations between Russell and Bassano apparently covered ways and means of aiding the Spanish colonies, for in his report to Monroe, Russell stated that France was disposed to send arms, ammunition, and "military skill (officers)." Russell added that it had been intimated by Bassano that the "only mode in which this aid could be officaciously furnished was through the concurrence and agency of the United States." Assurances were given Russell that Count Sérurier "would be instructed to submit to the American Government precise propositions on this subject." [21] At the suggestion of Russell, Bassano agreed that East and West Florida could not maintain independence and that "their annexation to the United States would entirely accord with the policy of His Majesty."

The willingness of France for close cooperation with the United States regarding Spanish America was made quite clear to Joel Barlow who, shortly after his arrived in Paris, sent the following to Secretary of State Monroe:

The Emporer has determined to declare the Spanish Americans free and

17. This reformulation of policy was formally presented to the Corps Législatif on December 12, 1809. *Le Moniteur Universel*, December 14, 1809, quoted in Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, 73.

18. For a discussion of the establishment of these centers for revolution in the United States see *ibid.*, 67-104. The unrecognized Spanish Minister to the United States, Luís de Onís, was well aware of Napoleon's agents and their schemes. He wrote to the Spanish officials to watch for these French agents slipping into Spanish territory and considered Americans blind for not seeing what was going on. See Onís to Captain General of Caracas, Feb. 2, 1810, *Annals of Congress*, 11 Cong., 3 Sess., 1273-1274.

19. James Monroe, *The Writings of James Monroe, including a Collection of his Public and Private Papers and Correspondence now for the First Time Printed*, ed. by S. M. Hamilton (7 vols., New York, 1898-1903), V, 364. Hereinafter cited as Monroe, *Writings*.

20. Russell to Monroe, Sept. 2, 1811, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 1371.

21. *Ibid.*

independent and to give them arms and ammunition to defend themselves; this however on condition that they shall not connect themselves with England by exclusive privileges of trade. He probably means, tho' the Duke did not say it, that they shall adopt the Continental system of Europe and exclude the English trade altogether. He wants American aid in transporting the arms and ammunition.

Secondly, the Emporer wishes the United States to establish regular packets between them and France, to run monthly, and he will pay half the expence.[22]

On January 8, 1812, Minister Barlow wrote Bassano that the Provinces of Venezuela had declared their independence and had proposed that the United States recognize them. He informed Bassano that although recognition had not yet been extended, a friendly and conciliatory answer had been returned. Barlow also told Bassano the Venezuelans had been notified that the Ministers of the United States would be instructed to promote the recognition of their Independence by other powers. He stated how "happy" President Madison was that the Emperor "is animated with the same good will towards the Spanish colonies in America, and that he harmonizes with the President in the desire to see them independent." Barlow also expressed the belief Buenos Aires would soon follow the example set by Venezuela.[23]

These conversations and the notes exchanged between the United States and France prepared the way for a *rapprochment* between these two powers in regard to Spanish America and Spanish-American policy. When viewed in conjunction with the public declaration of the United States of December 10, 1811,[24] it would appear that the United States favored American and French support of independence for Spanish America. The United States was moving toward opposition to Ferdinand VII and England.

American ambitions along this line met two disasters. One was the terrible earthquake of March, 1812, in Venezuela, which was the beginning of a series of misfortunes ending in the defeat of Miranda; the second was the treaty acknowledged by the Emperor in December, 1813, which restored to Ferdinand VII the throne of Spain and the Indies.[25] These two events forced the United States back into a more conventional neutrality. The war of 1812 effectively checked any serious consideration of Spanish America, other than contiguous territory such as Florida.

British policy was altered by the actions of the Spanish *junta,*

22. Barlow to Monroe, Sept. 29, 1811, in *ibid.*, II, 1372. Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, 93, gives the date Sept. 20, for this document, which is probably a typographical error. Barlow had not yet arrived in Paris at that date.

23. Barlow to Bassano, Jan. 8, 1812, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 1373.

24. See page 30 of this paper.

25. See Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, 103.

France, and the United States. Canning, as we have seen, committed England to aid the Spanish patriots, and the British government stuck grimly to this promise in spite of early disasters upon the peninsula. Not only did England sign a treaty of peace, friendship and alliance with the central *junta* of Seville,[26] but it dropped the single-minded policy it had followed in the early period of the Spanish-American uprising and even arranged for the expulsion of one plotter against Spanish possessions, Aaron Burr, from England.[27] Canning continued to insist that England would countenance no effort to interfere in the government of Spanish America, a warning quite disturbing to American policy makers.

The British hoped that the Seville *junta* would generously reward them by granting them direct trade through open ports or by sanctioning their existing contraband trade. To British chagrin, the Seville *junta* was not so inclined and actually tried to prevent the colonists from learning that England was giving assistance to Spain.[28] In spite of all Canning did, the Spanish *junta* stood on its argument that the colonies had been elevated to a status of legal equality with Spain and nothing further need be done. Spanish officials were fully aware that England was now wholly committed to the Continental struggle, and were impervious to all appeals.

The British government now faced a real dilemma; they could not withdraw from the Peninsular War, and they could not drop their interest in Spanish America. In regard to the latter, British policy makers found themselves faced with revolutionists who, for the sake of trade and commerce, must be pleased. On the other hand, Spain was her ally and England could not afford to create further disturbances in the form of revolution in the colonies. To do so would detract from Spanish efforts against Napoleon. Additional problems came from three other sources: English merchants who were clamoring for Spanish-American trade, the growing interest in Latin America, and the drawing together of the United States and France. British policy, indeed, needed to be readjusted. The question was, how could it be done? It was clear even to the uninitiated that no single solution existed for these diverse probems.

The United States was warned by Canning that the British government could not see with indifference an attack upon Spanish

26. January 14, 1809.

27. This was done at the instigation of the Spanish envoy. Isaac J. Cox, "Hispanic-American Phases of the 'Burr Conspiracy,'" *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XII (1932), 171-172.

28. J. Holland Rose, "Canning and the Spanish Patriots in 1808," *American Historical Review*, XII(1906), 47.

holdings.[29] For the rest, the British government was content for a time to follow a program of threats and contraband well mixed with special pleading based upon all that England was doing for Spain.

In October, 1809, Canning and Castlereagh broke with one another, fought a duel and resigned their posts; the Duke of Portland resigned also. Spencer Perceval emerged to establish a new administration, placing in the Foreign Office Lord Wellesley, whom he recalled from Spain to fill the position. The chief characteristics of Wellesley were indolence and irresponsibility, shrouded with an absence of method, and yet he possessed a powerful intellect. Wellesley, faced with a Peninsular War and the economic problems involved, attempted to avoid the Spanish-American question.

The very factors, however, that prompted Wellesley's desire to avoid the question of Spanish America, forced him to make some gesture, at least, toward solving the problem. The British were now convinced that only uninterrupted access to the Latin American market could support their credit and pay for the Peninsular War. Wellesley, therefore, again brought forth the old appeal of Canning's that England be allowed to trade directly with South America. This appeal was repeated time after time, and always received a flat rejection from the Spanish Cortes, which, under the domination of the Cadiz merchants, wanted to keep their virtual monopoly of the colonial markets.

The Spanish Cortes, however, feeling perfectly safe, and certain that England would not withdraw from the Peninsular War, failed to weigh properly the discontent and dissatisfaction within the Spanish Empire. It also overlooked the fact that the favor which England was asking could come from another source. England would take no overt step which would anger Spain, but there were other steps that could be taken.

To the British, attempting to find a way out of their dilemma, the revolutions were a godsend. Wherever rebellion appeared in Spanish America two factors accompanied it: one, the newly formed *juntas* opened their ports to trade with friendly nations, and, two, they swore allegiance to Ferdinand VII. As far as the British were concerned the major part of their problem was solved. The English argued that difference of opinion had arisen between the colonies and Spain, not revolution. They could carry on unrestrained com-

29. Canning to Jackson, July 1, 1809, in "Instructions to the British Ministers to the United States, 1791-1812," *American Historical Report*, Bernard Mayo, ed., III, 292. See also Morier to Smith, Dec. 15, 1810, *Annals of Congress*, 11 Cong., 3 Sess., 1261-1262.

merce with the colonies and yet avoid breaking in any way their treaty obligation to maintain intact the Spanish Empire.

This policy of pretended ignorance of the state of Spanish-American affairs was pointed up by conversations, in July of 1810, between Lord Wellesley and the Venezuelan agents, Simón Bolívar and Luís López Méndez. The meeting was a ticklish one, for if Wellesley gave an unrestrained welcome and encouragement to the two agents, relations with Spain would be endangered. On the other hand, English relations with South America would be endangered if the agents were turned away. Wellesley refused to permit the topic of independence to come before the group, but instead discussed the question of local self-government within the framework of the Spanish Empire. To England this was a perfect way out, as it would serve a multiple purpose. Wellington and the English forces in Spain had to be considered, for if Spain turned against England these forces would be caught in hostile country.

The discussions as directed by Wellesley would provide a compromise between Spain's determination to retain full sovereignty and the colonists' desire to assert their independence. Both, therefore, could look upon England as a friend. At the same time England, by a careful use of such a plan, could keep out French and American influence and gain for England the benefits of the trade and commerce of Spanish America.[30] This was not a simple and uncomplicated policy to follow. It was, indeed, a tightrope, with deference having to be paid to the prejudices of Spain and sympathy afforded to the colonies.

The problem, however, was not yet settled, for Spain refused to accept the new conditions and planned, at the first opportunity, to reassert her full control over the colonies. Although the Spanish government could find nothing definite to protest in British actions, it had no intention of permitting the British to entrench themselves commercially within the Spanish Empire. The upsetting fact to the British government was that Spain refused to accept as final the dissolution of her colonial monopoly, thereby destroying Wellesley's dream of England inheriting by default the Spanish-American market. The Regency and the Cortes in Spain refused to understand the financial problems facing England and, being so-called Liberals, thought they had solved all the colonial troubles by

30. William S. Robertson, "The Beginnings of Spanish-American Diplomacy," in *Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner*, ed. by Guy S. Ford (New York, 1910), 247.

granting them equal rights with Spain. They, therefore, disregarded the material grievances of the colonial *juntas* and, in spite of the Peninsular War, determined to enforce their control in Spanish America.[31]

The re-establishment of Spanish control over the colonies would mean a return to the definitely restricted trade of the earlier period and the dependence for the most part upon contraband. It was clear to England that the most Spain would give would be temporary concessions. If England were to have her markets then English policy must once again be readjusted. Wellesley, tired of having his warnings ignored and his advice rejected, now decided to insist upon settlement, comprehensive in scope, of the Spanish quarrels. He changed his stand to one which stated that the colonists had an argument, and insisted that Spain recognize their claims. He now took the position of insisting upon a certain measure of self-determination for the Spanish colonists and of mediation between them and Spain. England, of course, would be the mediator. Thus was established the British policy that would carry them through the Napoleonic war.

Lord Wellesley did not push through this new policy for in March of 1812 he resigned, and Lord Castlereagh became his successor. This was a happy choice, for Castlereagh was already acquainted with the problems of Spanish America and was possessed of an infinite supply of patience. The latter was an attribute greatly needed in dealing with Spain.

The idea of mediation proved a happy one. The Spanish, finally beginning to realize that England was more necessary to them than they were to England, felt as long as the conversations continued English policy would remain limited and, in time, Spain might regain the allegiance of her colonies through force. Castlereagh was also content to spin the negotiations out interminably. He discovered that they tended to prevent Spain from taking more than a few thousand troops from the Peninsular War and sending them to the colonies. They had also made somewhat easier the flow of trade and had to a degree restrained the colonists themselves from going to the extreme of independence, which at this time would have played into the hands of the United States and France. Thus, Castlereagh used mediation as a device which, while it settled nothing, prevented the tensions within the Spanish Empire from manifesting themselves too violently for the duration of the war. If England came out of the war as the victor, then the time gained would have eliminated France. With the United States involving

31. *Ibid.*, 238.

itself in a painful and fruitless conflict with England the Americans would have few, if any, resources left over to devote to Latin America. Talk was cheap, and, to all intents and purposes, would in the end pay off better than action.

Chapter IV

Early United States Missions

THE decade following the overthrow of the Spanish viceroy in the Río de la Plata found the government of the United States torn between conflicting desires and policies toward Spanish America. The negotiations of the struggling Buenos Aires government to obtain recognition from the United States were complicated by unwillingness of the United States to extend succor and recognition for fear of offending the great European powers and blocking negotiations with Spain that would give Florida to the United States.

In spite of all this caution and "watchful waiting," the United States government did intend to recognize the government of Buenos Aires when it could be done in accordance with what were considered the best interests of the United States. From 1810 to 1823, the story of the relations between the United States and Buenos Aires is concerned with the attempts of the latter to get aid and recognition through various quasi-diplomatic agents. At the same time the commercial and political interests of the United States motivated the sending of special agents and commissions from the United States to the Río de la Plata to look after the commercial interests of North Americans, as well as to report on the progress of the revolution, the political stability of the country, and the ability of the Buenos Aires government to maintain its independence from Spain.

In 1808, when the news reached Buenos Aires that Napoleon's brother had become King of Spain, several *criollo* leaders of that region immediately became interested in winning independence from Spain. Consequently, on May 20, 1810, under the leadership of Manuel Belgrano and other *criollo* leaders, a demand was made that the viceroy, Cisneros, resign. The Spaniards attempted to compromise, but on May 25, 1810, the *criollo* leaders overthrew the

viceregal government and set up a *junta* to govern in the name of the deposed King of Spain, Ferdinand VII. At the same time, they sent men to England to ask for aid.

Although the newly created *junta* at Buenos Aires was presumably working toward unity of action with the Cadiz Regency, it soon became evident that some of the leaders were moving steadily in the direction of complete independence from Spain. The leaders of the Buenos Aires *junta,* Cornelio de Saavedra, Belgrano, Moreno, and Bernardino Rivadavia, became involved in the question of whether the monarchial or republican form of government would best meet their needs and whether or not complete independence from Spain should be proclaimed. As was inevitable, however, dissensions arose within the *junta,* and different ambitions came into play. The democratic Moreno, finding himself opposed by the conservative Saavedra, finally resigned from the *junta.* Meanwhile, military expeditions from Buenos Aires failed to bring Upper Peru, Paraguay, and the Banda Oriental under the control of the Río de la Plata capital.

It soon became apparent that the provinces of the former Viceroyalty lacked internal unity. The people of the province of Buenos Aires, who took the lead in the unification movement, were not trusted by those of the other provinces. Within a short time after the formation of the *junta,* the inhabitants of Buenos Aires were seeking to establish a centralized state in which their province and their capital city should hold first place; whereas, the provinces in other parts of La Plata, as well as certain elements in the rural population of Buenos Aires province, tended to favor a federal government along the model of the United States in which all members of the federation might have equal rights. The refusal of either side to compromise led to a long period of conflict which seriously checked all efforts to form a federal government.

During the four years following 1810, the *junta* at Buenos Aires was, by popular demand, replaced by a Triumvirate, which in turn was replaced by a Council and a Supreme Director.

While the people of the Plata were trying to establish a stable government, there arrived from Europe a brilliant native son, José de San Martín. San Martín had served in the Spanish army and navy since 1789 and had won fame and honor for his military ability. Avoiding politics as much as possible, San Martín saw that he might best serve the cause by attempting to drive the Spaniards from Peru, their greatest stronghold in South America. Accordingly, he was

appointed governor of the province of Cuyo at the eastern border of the Andes, where he prepared a well-drilled army which he could lead into Chile and, using that country as a base, strike at Peru by sea. From 1814 to the end of 1816, San Martín molded a cosmopolitan body of men into a military machine.

While San Martín was thus occupied, the leaders in the various provinces were gradually coming to the point where they desired complete independence from Spain. This desire reached a culmination with the restoration of the conservative Ferdinand VII to the throne of Spain. His intent to rule with despotic power was quickly evidenced by his proclamation setting aside the liberal constitution of 1812, which recognized the colonies as an integral part of the nation. Ferdinand's policy caused the liberals in Buenos Aires to turn against him and to unite with the revolutionaries in seeking complete independence.

Finally, on July 9, 1816, a congress of delegates meeting at Tucumán made a formal declaration of complete independence from Spain and organized the country into the "United Provinces of South America." An able statesman from Buenos Aires, Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, was given power as Supreme Director to govern the country until some form of constitutional government could be devised. At this time there was still much divergence of opinion as to whether a monarchy or a republic would prove more satisfactory. Various French, Portuguese, and Spanish persons of royal blood received consideration. Some desired the United Provinces to become a British protectorate, while others wanted to place a descendant of the Incas upon a throne. Finally, it was agreed to discard all these schemes and to establish some form of republican government. This resulted in a bitter struggle between the centralists of Buenos Aires and the federalists of the provinces.

By 1819, the United Provinces were in such a chaotic political condition that Pueyrredón became discouraged and resigned his office as Supreme Director. General José Rondeau was quickly chosen to replace him. Also, in 1819, a congress met at Buenos Aires and attempted to draw up a new constitution, but this constitution was considered centralistic by many of the interior provinces, which rose in opposition to it. The people of Buenos Aires then called in General Belgrano to check the separatist movements of the provinces with military force, but Belgrano's men deserted him when he attempted to take the field against several of the interior provinces. In 1820 the cause of the unitarists suffered a

severe setback at Cepeda, where they were defeated by the federalists. Thereafter little progress toward unity was made for several years because the various provincial leaders did not sincerely wish to see the establishment of any form of strong national government. Between 1820 and 1824, the dozen "United Provinces" went their separate ways, while Buenos Aires existed as a distinct state under its own governor, Martín Rodríguez. When Bernardino Rivadavia became Rodríguez's minister, the province of Buenos Aires prospered in many ways and a degree of stability was achieved.

In the meantime, efforts to solve the problems of ridding southern South America of Spanish domination were meeting with success. Under the leadership of San Martín, the "Army of the Andes" was quietly trained for the projected campaign into Chile and Peru. San Martín was convinced that the Río de la Plata would never be free as long as the Spanish held Chile and Peru. By 1814 Spain had been freed from French rule and Ferdinand VII had been restored to his throne. His efforts to re-establish the Spanish Empire by advocating better relations seemed to bear fruit in some areas of South America, and in these areas the royalists gained some strength. The people of the Plata had little hope of establishing good relations with Ferdinand VII. He believed the only way to handle the Plata was with a military force, a threat he constantly held over their head and futilely tried to make a reality. He was able to send some aid to northern South America and to check for a short time the separatist movement there. But in the South, San Martín crossed the Andes and defeated the Spanish in two decisive battles, Chacabuco, February 12, 1817, and Maipú, April 5, 1818.

The history of the Río de la Plata from 1810 to 1823 is, therefore, one of almost complete chaos, anarchy, and foreign war. In view of this the United States, domestically involved with a twofold problem of territorial expansion and development of stability, and in the foreign field struggling to make known its concepts of neutrality and arbitration, moved with great circumspection. The policy of the United States was neutrality, but its desire was for the independence of the Plata and the ousting of European political influence.

The year 1810 saw the first planned effort of the United States to extend its agencies in Spanish America. Such agencies were badly needed as Thomas Sumpter, Jr., United States Minister at the Por-

tuguese Court in Brazil,[1] was the only formal diplomatic representative in Latin America. The news of the May revolt in Buenos Aires spurred Secretary of State Robert Smith to appoint Joel Roberts Poinsett special agent of the United States to South America, that is, to Buenos Aires, Chile, and Peru. Poinsett's instructions of June 28, 1810, indicate that he was being sent for reasons other than merely to look after the commercial interests of the United States. He was informed in his instructions that a crisis was approaching which "must produce great changes in the situation of Spanish America" and might "dissolve altogether its colonial relations to Europe." It was felt by the government of the United States that the geographic position and "other obvious considerations" made it the "duty" of the United States to "take such steps, not incompatible with the neutral character and honest policy of the United States, as the occasion renders proper." [2] The instructions given to Poinsett set the pattern for all agents and consuls sent to Spanish America during the period 1810 to 1822. For this reason, if no other, they are worthy of at least partial quotation:

> . . . You will make it your object, whenever it may be proper, to diffuse the impression that the United States cherish the sincerest good will toward the people of Spanish-America as neighbors, as belonging to the same portion of the globe and as having a mutual interest in cultivating friendly intercourse; that this disposition will exist, whatever may be their internal system or European relation, with respect to which no interference of any sort is pretended; and that, in the event of a political separation from the parent country, and of the establishment of an independent system of national government, it will coincide with the sentiments and policy of the United States to promote the most friendly relations, and the most liberal intercourse, between the inhabitants of this hemisphere, as having all a common interest, and as lying under a common obligation to maintain that system of peace, justice and good will, which is the only source of happiness for nations.[3]

In addition, Poinsett was instructed to learn the conditions existing in the colonies, to explain mutual advantages of commerce with the United States, "to promote liberal and stable regulations, and to transmit reasonable information on the subject." [4] To make possible his carrying out these instructions with the greatest degree of protection and respectability, Poinsett was furnished with a credential letter as used by similar United States agents in the West Indies.

The concepts expressed by the United States Government in the instructions to Poinsett were not its monopoly. It is interesting to

1. Thomas Sumpter, Jr., of South Carolina, was appointed United States Minister to the Portuguese Court in Brazil March 7, 1809, and continued as such until July 24, 1819.
2. Smith to Poinsett, June 28, 1810, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 6-7.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

was reluctant to receive him, objecting to the form of his commission because it was not directed to it and did not bear the signature of the President of the United States. Poinsett overcame the misgivings entertained by the *junta,* explaining to them that he bore the credentials used by American agents in the West Indies and, probably his best card, that he carried the same papers and authority held by the agent recently sent to La Guaira, Venezuela. When this explanation had been made and accepted, the *junta* in part to strengthen its own independent position, sent President Madison a formal acknowledgement of the arrival and acceptance of "Don Josef R. Poinsett" as a commercial agent of the United States. It stated further that he would be permitted to carry on "the full exercise of his agency, which it considers as a preliminary to the Treaties between Nation and Nation, which will be Rules of a permanent Commerce . . . between the two States." [10]

Shortly after his arrival in Buenos Aires, Poinsett wrote that the Plata was greatly disturbed over Napoleon's aggression in Spain and the ambition of the Princess regent of Portugal to become regent of all of South America.[11] He also wrote that, with the exception of Paraguay, all the provinces of the Viceroyalty of La Plata had joined the *junta.*[12] A few days later he wrote regarding the formation of a Congress in Buenos Aires that the towns of Santa Fé, Corrientes, Córdoba, Tucumán, Catamarca, Salta, Jujuy, Mendoza, San Luis, and San Juan had already sent deputies to Buenos Aires and that deputies were on the way from the towns of Rioja, Potosí, Santa Cruz, and Oran, as well as from the province of Cochabamba, the Presidency of Chuquisaca, the Intendency of La Paz, and Chile.[13]

While the *junta* of Buenos Aires assured Poinsett that when this Congress of Buenos Aires should meet a declaration of independence would be forthcoming, Poinsett was of the opinion that it would be postponed until a later date.[14] At the same time he was also assured that Buenos Aires wished to establish close ties with

10. Governing Junta of the Provinces of the Río de la Plata to Madison, Feb. 13, 1811, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I. See also Mannings, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 320-321. An Argentine historian comments that the statement in this document regarding a treaty between "Nations" indicates the boldest political statement by the *junta* of its desire for ultimate independence that appeared to that date. See Juan F. Lázaro, *Las vinculaciones de nuestro país con los Estados Unidos en la primera decada de la revolución reflejadas a través de la prensa periodico* (Buenos Aires, 1937), 5.

11. Poinsett to Silas Atkins, Feb. 13, 1811, MS., Poinsett Papers, Historical Society, Pennsylvania, I, 31. Hereinafter cited as Poinsett Pap.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Poinsett to Department of State, Feb. 16, 1811, *ibid.,* I, 93.

14. Memoranda of Poinsett, *ibid.,* I, 98.

the United States and was informed that the commerce of the United States would be that of the most-favored-nation.

From the beginning of his mission Poinsett experienced anxiety in regard to the conduct and intentions of the English at Buenos Aires. He was constantly watching and attempting to thwart British plans. This attitude probably accounts for the British labeling Poinsett as the "arch enemy of England." [15] He wrote that England was steadily gaining commercial power, and he viewed with a great deal of scorn what he considered the "double dealing" of the British, for they were supporting Spain openly against Napoleon, and yet were striving to gain commercial advantages from Spain's discontented colonies. He believed that the revolutionary groups feared and, at the same time, courted Britain. Therefore, in Poinsett's opinion, if the revolutionary states could be brought to declare their independence before the existing relations between Spain and England ended, there would be an excellent opportunity to substitute American for English influence in Buenos Aires and, through Buenos Aires, all of southern South America. With this in mind he advocated sending aid to Buenos Aires in the form of guns and munitions. He also asked for instructions to cover any declaration of independence by the *junta,* and suggested a letter of credence from the President of the United States.[16]

Secretary of State Monroe refused Poinsett's request for a letter of credence, believing the presentation of such a letter would constitute a recognition of those governments. Monroe also made it clear that the United States would not actively aid in their struggle for independence. One of Poinsett's frequent requests to his government did bear fruit, however, for President Madison appointed a resident consul for Buenos Aires and promoted Poinsett to the position of Consul-General for Buenos Aires, Chile, and Peru.[17]

Monroe's reply to Poinsett's recommendations, while perhaps not entirely satisfactory to such a strong advocate of the revolution, may have been interpreted as something of a concession to his great ardor for the cause of the revolutionists. It contained no definite promise of immediate recognition but did give a strong hint that a successful revolution would meet with the approval of the United States. There could be no mistaking this implication in Monroe's letter:

> The disposition shown by most of the Spanish provinces to separate from Europe and to erect themselves into independent States excites great interest

15. Joseph Johnson, "A Sketch of Mr. Poinsett's Life," *ibid.*, XXI, 71.
16. Poinsett to Department of State, Feb. 16, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 93.
17. Monroe to Poinsett, Apr. 30, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 101.

here. As inhabitants of the same Hemisphere, as Neighbors, the United States cannot be unfeeling Spectators of so important a moment. The destiny of these provinces must depend on themselves. Should such a revolution however take place, it cannot be doubted that our relation with them will be more intimate, and our friendship stronger than it can be while they are colonies of any European power.[18]

It seems almost certain that Poinsett did everything in his power to encourage a complete break between the *junta* at Buenos Aires and the provisional government of Spain. But the complete story of the extent of his activities in this connection is not, and probably never will be, fully known. To a man of his nature, correspondence such as that cited above would give every encouragement to agitate for independence, but other than the friendship of the United States he had little to offer them in a material way. England was mistress of the seas, and it appeared that the United States was moving toward war with that nation; if so, no aid could be expected from North America. Another factor that probably effectively checked his efforts to encourage pronouncements of independence was the adroit maneuvering of the British through Lord Strangford, and the British care to do nothing to offend seriously the Spanish Regency or to disrupt their trade with Buenos Aires.

For many weeks Poinsett busied himself with attempts to gain commercial advantages for the United States and to block the British. From time to time he reported to the Department of State on revolutionary events in the Plata. He also suggested that William Gilchrist Miller be appointed as the resident consul at Buenos Aires. This would make it possible for him to move on to Chile. He wrote to his friend, Albert Gallatin, then Secretary of the Treasury, calling his attention to the qualifications of Miller, which he stated were his honorable character, knowledge of Spanish, and business ability, and asked Gallatin to use his influence in securing the appointment.[19] Poinsett's desire to move to Chile and the opposition of some forty British merchants to his attempts at inducing the *junta* to adopt liberal and stable commercial regulations, led him to ask the State Department to place a resident agent in Buenos Aires. When he was appointed Consul-General on April 30, 1811, he had already named one Luis Goddefroy to work under him.[20]

Goddefroy was appointed at the suggestion of several Baltimore merchants who sent a petition to the President on April 1, 1811. The petition remarked that the commerce of the United States

18. *Ibid.* See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 11.
19. Poinsett to Albert Gallatin, March 9, 1811, Poinsett Pap., I, 47.
20. Memoranda of Poinsett, *ibid.*, I, 67.

with the Plata had become very lucrative and important. It requested the appointment of a consul or commercial agent at Montevideo or Buenos Aires and recommended Goddefroy.[21]

Although Goddefroy and his family came to the Río de la Plata, he never served as consul. There were two reasons for this. First, between the time of his appointment and his arrival at Montevideo in August, 1811, Elio in Montevideo had been appointed Viceroy of the Río de la Plata and was recognized as such by Britain.[22] Elio, angered that the *junta* of Buenos Aires would not accept him, blockaded the river and planned to attack Buenos Aires.[23] When Goddefroy and his family arrived en route to Buenos Aires, Elio refused to permit them to land, and Goddefroy, not wishing to endanger his family's lives in Buenos Aires, decided to go to southern Brazil until conditions improved.[24] Second, his recess appointment was rejected by the Senate, November 18, 1811.

When Poinsett was appointed Consul-General for Buenos Aires, Chile, and Peru in April, 1811, he was given authority to appoint vice-consuls wherever he thought they were needed. With the rejection by the Senate of Goddefroy's recess appointment, Poinsett, still feeling that a consul was needed at Buenos Aires, appointed William G. Miller of Philadelphia as vice-consul. His commission asked the government of Buenos Aires to permit him to exercise the duties of his office, adding that the United States would grant the same rights to its agents. The commission was signed by President Madison and Secretary of State Monroe.[25] Apparently this was an "on the spot" appointment. From the letters in the "Appointment Papers" it appears that Miller lived with Poinsett in Buenos Aires and, while his presidential appointment was not made until June 24, 1812, he signed consular dispatches from Buenos Aires as early as December 2, 1811, as "Your Obdt. Servant" and by December 31, 1811, as vice-consul.[26]

While Poinsett was greatly disposed toward the independence of South America, he was careful at times not to permit his own enthusiasm to get the better of his judgment. He recognized the difficulties facing the peoples of the Plata region and seemed impressed with their instability of purpose and procedure. He had hopes for their future and stated that eventually independence

21. Baltimore Merchants to Madison, April 1, 1811, MS., Department of State, Appointment Papers. Hereinafter cited as DS., AP.

22. Poinsett to Secretary of State, May 10, 1811, Poinsett Pap., I, 71.

23. Poinsett to Department of State, June 16, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 83.

24. Goddefroy to Poinsett, Aug. 26, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 125.

25. President of the United States to William G. Miller, June 24, 1812, DS., AP.

26. Miller to Monroe, Dec. 2, 9, 10, 20, 31, 1811, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

would be achieved. The aggressiveness of the Portuguese did not disturb him, for he felt the overall effect of that would serve to bring cohesion and tend to destroy the existing chaos and anarchy, that the people of the Plata would band together against an outside force. Even in 1811 he foresaw the ultimate success of their movement for independence.[27]

Toward the end of October news began to seep into Buenos Aires that there was to be a revolt in Chile and that Paraguay was apparently coming around to the point of view held by the people of Buenos Aires. Poinsett felt that the differences which had existed between Buenos Aires and Montevideo, if not already adjusted, were about to be settled.[28] With possible revolution in Chile and a vice-consul in Buenos Aires, Poinsett believed the time for his trip to Chile had arrived.[29] Apparently he left Buenos Aires around the middle of November, 1811.[30] The first of a series of North American consuls to Buenos Aires was officially recognized by the government of Buenos Aires on November 23, 1811, just a few days after Poinsett left for Chile.

When Poinsett reached Chile, he quickly became a partisan of the insurgent leader, José Miguel Carrera. Poinsett assisted Carrera's government in drafting a constitution and, accepting a commission as General in the Chilean army, successfully carried out at least two campaigns. These activities caused the British, whose ships both merchant and naval were making free use of the ports in South America, to put pressure on the government of Chile for his deportation. In the spring of 1814 Poinsett returned to Buenos Aires, thus escaping the defeat of the patriots at Rancagua that sent Bernardo O'Higgins and his handful of survivors across the Andes to join San Martín at Mendoza. From Buenos Aires he complained to his government of the British pressure for his expulsion from Chile.[31]

Upon reaching Buenos Aires, Poinsett discovered a British fleet in the Plata and was therefore forced to make arrangements for a Portuguese vessel to take him from Punto Indico to the Madeira Islands.[32] From there he sailed for the United States and arrived at his home in Charleston, May 28, 1815. On July 16th, his work

27. Poinsett to Monroe, Oct. 24, 1811, Poinsett Pap., I, 119.

28. Poinsett to Sumpter, Oct. 25, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 115.

29. Poinsett to Monroe, Nov. 2, 1811, *ibid.*, I, 111.

30. Miller to Monroe, Dec. 10, 1811, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

31. Poinsett to Monroe, June 14, 1814, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 395.

32. Joseph Johnson, "A Sketch of Mr. Poinsett's Life," Poinsett Pap., XXI, 71. See also Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 11, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

was acknowledged by Secretary Monroe with the following expressions:

> In acknowledging this communication which terminates your agency in a trust of much delicacy and importance, I have the honor to state that the ability and zeal with which you have discharged its duties, the success with which you have conciliated the good disposition of the local authorities and people where you have resided, in conformity with the amicable relations existing between the United States and Spain, and the information which you have communicated, have obtained the approbation of the President.[33]

This is, indeed, a strange letter, all facts of Poinsett's mission considered, coming from a "strictly neutral" nation. However, in spite of Poinsett's meddling in the revolutionary movements in South America, and despite his very apparent lack of diplomatic decorum,[34] he did lay the foundation for the United States-Buenos Aires relations. It might even be suggested that he had a better understanding of English policy in Spanish America, from his time spent there, than did our ministers sent to England. His mission also served official notice that the United States was interested in the movement of the people of the Río de la Plata toward independence.

Transportation in the period being examined was dependent chiefly upon horses on land and sailing vessels by sea. Communications, therefore, were carried on either by word of mouth or by letters and despatches carried by messengers. It is interesting to note that in the case of letters sent by ships the agents of both the United States and the Plata had little faith in the successful voyages of the vessels leaving their respective countries, and few are the letters or despatches sent that were not made in triplicate and sent by different vessels to assure the arrival of at least one copy at its final destination. Examination of the original documents reveals the number, usually in the upper left margin of the first sheet, of the copy. It was not only fear of loss by storm at sea that created this situation, but there was a more active danger at this time; the cruisers of the British navy, which were making quite free with the sea lanes, not only around Buenos Aires but between the Plata and the United States. Thus, owing to the means of communication, international affairs, especially among the young countries of the Americas, were much more a matter of personal relations among individuals than they are today. Therefore, the type of men sent to Buenos Aires, and their activities while there, to a great extent

33. Monroe to Poinsett, July 16, 1815, Poinsett Pap., I, 172.

34. Poinsett, in writing to a member of his family, pointed out that he had been without instructions from Washington for eighteen months, and that he had learned to accustom himself to his own approbation. See letter to Joseph Johnson, Sept. 2, 1813, *ibid.*, I, 140.

determined the basis for South-American opinion of the United States, its people and its policies. Although the United States did not recognize the government at Buenos Aires for over a decade after the overthrow of the viceregal government, these American consuls were generally well received. The officials of Buenos Aires were eager to deal with the representatives of the United States in any manner which would imply even a strained unofficial recognition of their independence.

The letters of vice-consul William G. Miller were mainly concerned with details of political unrest at Buenos Aires and the progress of the revolutionary armies in that area. In spite of the war between the United States and Great Britain, Miller managed to keep up a precarious correspondence with the United States government by means of the ships which still, though less frequently than formerly, sailed between the Río de la Plata and the United States. In the Plata ports, however, American shipping had practically disappeared for lack of naval protection. The significance of this fact must not have been missed by the people of Buenos Aires. Miller reported from Buenos Aires in July, 1812, that "the commerce of the United States to this port for the last six months has been trifling," and added that "the presence of a national ship would give security to the American trade . . . which would immediately encrease [*sic*]." [35]

Miller, like Poinsett, was also constantly disturbed by the growing influence of England. He believed the United States was throwing way its opportunity and endangering the lives of its citizens by not following the British example and stationing a "national ship" in the Río de la Plata. He reported that such a step would bring greater respect and security to American citizens and would also be "highly flattering to the government & people as it would have the appearance of protection and attention to their interests tho [*sic*] in fact be protecting our own . . . ." [36]

Feeling as he did toward the English, he reported, with a great deal of evident pleasure, the refusal of the government of Buenos Aires to accept the intended agent of the British government, General Robert P. Staples. He was informed by the *junta* that the British had not addressed it an "introductory letter or taken any

35. Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I. See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 329.

36. *Ibid.*

notice of the many letters written to them, a long time since." [37] While this evident rebuff to an English effort to extend friendship to Buenos Aires gave Miller a great deal of satisfaction, and seemed to indicate that he was watching very closely British as well as American affairs in Buenos Aires, it is extremely difficult to agree with him that he was wide awake. There is little in his correspondence to indicate that he was aware of the amount of British goods coming into the Río de la Plata via Brazil and Montevideo; nor is there any indication of his awareness of the significance of this trade. It is quite possible that he knew of it, but, if so, why did he not inform his government of this surreptitious trade and the effect it was having upon the inhabitants of the Río de la Plata?

Miller's reports paint a picture of the events in Buenos Aires and indicate that the year 1812 was a turbulent one for the Plata region. The conflict between the Executive and the Assembly was in full blossom,[38] and the peace which Poinsett predicted was disrupted by José Artigas who, "disgusted at the depredations of the Portuguese and the manifest intention of the Old Spaniards in conjunction with them to annoy the creoles as much as possible," decided to fight.[39] Miller informed his government that the demands for independence were growing stronger, but as yet had not become the desire of any large united majority. In view of this he did not believe that the Assembly, which would meet in August, would declare independence. He felt that such a declaration at this time would be brought about only if some of the restless patriots forced the government to make such a statement. He added that it seemed to be the opinion of the government that it would wait until after the fall of Montevideo "unless an unexpected supply of arms should arrive in which case the congress . . . will immediately throw off the mask." [40]

Shortly after Miller wrote the above letter, a group of hasty patriots did attempt to force the government into independence. This group of "coffee house politicians" called for an immediate declaration of independence and banishment of all Europeans. After their return to their homes in the evening, they were arrested

37. Miller to Monroe, April 30, 1812, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I. It is interesting to note that, while the *junta* of Buenos Aires refused to issue a formal declaration of independence, it is insisting upon being treated as an independent nation. See also Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1811, *ibid.*, which hints that intrigue between the British minister and Carlotta was generally believed in Buenos Aires.

38. Miller to Monroe, April 30, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

39. Miller to Monroe, Jan. 10, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

40. Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. An interesting question might be, does Miller mean to imply that if the United States wants Buenos Aires to declare independence it need but send arms and munitions?

and sent off to the army. Miller reported facetiously that " . . . tranquility has since reigned. The executions have not yet stopt [*sic*]: 29 have been shot; 4 others are under sentence of death as accomplices in the consp[iracy] of 4 July." [41]

Miller also reported that on May 19, 1812, two Buenos Aires citizens, Diego de Saavedra and Juan Pedro de Aguirre, agents of the revolutionary *junta,* had returned home after a mission to procure arms in the United States. They brought with them a small supply of arms and reports of general interest and enthusiasm for their cause in the United States. This, said Miller, "has produced the effect expected: the U. S. are looked up to as the only sincere friends of their cause not only by the Government but by the people." [42]

Meanwhile, the officials of the government at Buenos Aires were striving to get still more definite aid from the United States. One plea addressed to President Madison admitted that in the "transition" from one form of government to another there had been anarchy in the Río de la Plata, but now order had been restored and the "Love of Liberty" had triumphed. Therefore, the plea continued, the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata and the United States had much in common and should have friendly relations with each other.[43] Again asking for definite succor in the form of arms and ammunition, the Supreme Director assured President Madison that the United Provinces would not be ungrateful for such relief and would be willing to grant commercial treaties advantageous to the United States.[44]

On August 30, 1814, Thomas L. Halsey, an enterprising young man of Providence, Rhode Island, relieved Miller of his duties at Buenos Aires.[45] Halsey was the son of Thomas Lloyd Halsey, a wealthy and prominent citizen and one-time French consular agent in Rhode Island. Shortly after graduating from the College of Rhode Island, now Brown University, he entered upon a commercial career and, sometime before 1807, arrived at Buenos Aires.[46] He was engaged in business at Buenos Aires for several years, buying a

41. Miller to Monroe, Aug. 10, 18, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. The conspiracy here referred to was a plot by one Don Juan Martín Alsega and 48 others who, for one million dollars, conspired to upset the government and massacre all the chiefs of the revolution and all patriots as well. The Princess Carlotta was eventually exposed as the prime mover of the conspiracy. See Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

42. Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

43. The Constituted Assembly of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata to Madison, July 21, 1813, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 332-333.

44. Gervasio Antonio de Posadas to President of the United States, March 9, 1814, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I. See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 334-335.

45. Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 11, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

46. For a brief biographical sketch of Halsey see *Dictionary of American Biography,* ed. by Dumas Malone (New York, 1930-1936), VIII, 162-163.

large estate outside the city, which he used to carry on a large and profitable business in sheep. He imported a number of blooded sheep from the United States and was responsible for the introduction, in 1810, of the Merino breed into the Plata.[47] In 1812, he left his import-export business for a brief trip to the United States, and it was at this time that President Madison appointed him consul for Buenos Aires.

Halsey was an ambitious man and was vitally interested in increasing American trade and prestige at Buenos Aires. He indicated the direction of his thinking along these lines a year before he left to take over his duties, suggesting among other things that great use could be made of the India shipping by having it stop at Buenos Aires. To increase prestige, he suggested the stationing of a frigate in the waters of the Río de la Plata, a point which he continually stressed until his recall in January, 1818.[48]

Halsey was delayed in notifying the State Department of his arrival because of the secret departure of Poinsett and the fact that Poinsett would not carry any despatches with him that might, if detected, impede his return to the United States. Thus, it was not until six months after his arrival that Halsey was able to send a letter to his government. He then informed Washington that he had been received with respect and found the government of Buenos Aires quite "favorably disposed to facilitate the trade and cultivate a friendly intercourse with the United States."[49] He had been instructed to press for the reduction of duties on many of the products and manufactured goods of the United States, as well as to arrange for the deposition in the American consulate of American ship papers. He informed the Secretary of State, in his first despatch from Buenos Aires, that he had deferred bringing either of these problems before the Supreme Director because there had been no American trade, as "no American vessel has entered this port since my arrival here."[50]

Halsey, in his first despatch, indicated some concern over the course of the revolution and its future possibilities. He called attention to the election by the assembly of a "young Gentleman of talents and promise," General Carlos Alvear, to the position of

47. *Ibid.*

48. Halsey to Monroe, May 3, 1813, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

49. Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 11, 1815, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. Gervasio Antonio de Posadas, Supreme Director, wrote the same thing to Madison, along with an appeal for United States aid. See Posadas to the President of the United States, March 9, 1814, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

50. Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 11, 1815, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

Supreme Director. He did not feel that this election would settle the chaotic conditions in Buenos Aires but did think that General Alvear would command respect. He pointed out that the Government of Buenos Aires was looking forward with "much anxiety" to peace between England and the United States. There seemed, in his opinion, two reasons for this: one, the increase in commerce that would follow such a peace and, two, an expectation that the United States would then send aid. He added that:

> Should this country succeed (which it can with difficulty effect without some assistance) in establishing a government independent of Spain, the trade of the United States here will be lucrative and important, but should it for want of assistance Succumb, the ports will be shut against foreign trade, more particularly against the flag of the United States.[51]

Halsey, like our other agents and consuls in Buenos Aires, was disturbed by the British influence and control over the Plata but, unlike the other agents, went further then suggesting sending a frigate to those waters. He not only asked for a frigate, but "strongly recommended" to the President of the United States a plan of attack which would destroy the British frigate stationed there, thus giving the United States control of the Río de la Plata. The success of the plan, he said, "would be sure." Apparently he had talked it over with the government in Buenos Aires for he states that "it would be agreeable to this government." He informed Richard Rush, Acting Secretary of State, that the English had only one frigate "anchored about ten miles from this town, which the Commanders declare to be out of the territory & jurisdiction of this Government." He added:

> The British Commander and one of the Lieutenants always live on shore; a frigate of the United States bringing a good pilot or taking one at Montevideo and proceeding up the river immediately between Banco Ortis and Banco Chico would be able to attack the British frigate before any information could be given to the commander or proper preparations be made for defence . . .[52]

Halsey never heard anything from Washington regarding this adventure on his part into naval affairs. In time he forgot the scheme, but he never gave up asking for ships of war for the Plata. In July of this same year he asked for a frigate and an 18-gun brig.[53] His appeals for ships were never answered, either in writing or in the form of the ships requested.

During Alvear's administration, Halsey struggled with such problems as lowering duties and transferring ship papers to the consulate. One unfortunate incident occurred, the murder of an American citizen, one Captain Richard Hughes of Boston, for which

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51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.* See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 337.

53. Halsey to Monroe, July 17, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I. See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 340-341.

Halsey was unable to gain satisfaction, although he located a man who had Hughes' watch.[54] Another incident, one which for a time excited the government of Buenos Aires, arose with the seizure of Buenos Aires goods by a United States privateer. It seems that one Don Manuel Pinto of Buenos Aires, who held a commission from the Directorate, was returning from England on a British ship with arms and ammunition for his government. On December 19, 1813, within sight of the Island of Madeira, the English vessel was taken by an American privateer. Don Manuel was made a prisoner and taken to New York, while the property of his government, which was under his care, was taken before the prize courts. Nicolás de Herrera wrote Halsey one year later requesting the return of the arms on the grounds that they were illegally seized.[55]

The next day Halsey proceeded to give Herrera a lesson in international law and, to a degree, diplomacy. He informed Herrera of the "General Law of Nations," as set forth in the treaties of Madrid of 1667, Utrecht of 1713, Paris of 1763, and others, that "enemies property on board a Neutral ship is free from Capture (contraband of war excepted) & that the property of a friendly state found on board of an enemies ship is liable to Capture & Condemnation [*sic*] particularly so, articles Contraband of War." He also informed Herrera that the prize courts in the United States were "independent of the influence" of the President. However, he added, he would "with pleasure lend his aid to any measure" proposed by Herrera for the recovery of the property.[56] Apparently, Herrera had no suggestions to make, for here the matter ended.

Halsey, being a businessman, constantly attempted to get his government to see and take advantage of the great market in the Plata. When he wrote of the struggle between the officials of Buenos Aires and Artigas over the possession of Montevideo, he often stressed what that could mean to the United States. Finally, he wrote that the lack of commerce between these two Plata ports was causing prices to soar, that American goods would bring triple their price, and he advised United States merchants to take advantage of this profitable trade.[57]

In the period 1812 through 1816, the Government of Buenos Aires developed a new and original doctrine regarding seamen which proved particularly vexatious to Halsey and, eventually, to

54. Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 11, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

55. Herrera to Halsey, Dec. 19, 1814, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. Also see Halsey to Secretary of State, Feb. 14, 1815, *ibid.*

56. Halsey to Herrera, Dec. 20, 1814, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

57. Halsey to Monroe, July 17, 1815, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

the Buenos Aires government. This doctrine maintained that all men in the Plata were free. If sailors from another state chose to remain in the Plata they were absolved from allegiance to any other nation and from contracts previously made.[58] This led to many desertions from American ships and, in some cases, prevented ships from sailing from the port. Halsey called the attention of his government to these desertions and stated that they received encouragement and indirect protection from the government.[59] He also pointed out that the Director did not pretend to defend this doctrine, but connived at the practice under it.[60] The practice soon became so bad that when the Buenos Aires government continued to insist upon its doctrine, Halsey finally suggested that American ship captains be forced to place a bond of $400 for each sailor. Each sailor then was to be accounted for upon return, or the bond forfeited, plus some other penalty.[61]

Halsey was somewhat discouraged with the lack of leadership and the general chaotic conditions in the Plata. He felt that the conflicting parties were in part responsible for the above stated violations, and wrote that the parties or factions in this country were injuring the cause of independence.[62] He further lamented that no man had arisen among them of sufficient merit to direct with wisdom either the affairs of government or its armies, or who had the public esteem.[63] The problem of desertion of American sailors was quite suddenly settled July 4, 1816, when the Buenos Aires government took an about face, denied its original stand with high sounding phrases and, in co-operation with the American consul, blocked further desertions by removing its protection, and placed would-be deserters in safe custody until returned to their vessels.[64]

Throughout his stay as consul in Buenos Aires, Halsey was concerned with the success of the revolutionary movement in the Río de la Plata region and often recommended that his government give it aid. This insistence on his part did not stem from a lack of knowledge of American policy; in fact, he gave every indication of a clear understanding of the objectives that his government had in view when he wrote:

58. Halsey to Monroe, Apr. 20, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
59. Halsey to Monroe, March 14, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
60. Halsey to Monroe, April 20, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
61. Halsey to Monroe, June 17, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
62. Halsey to Monroe, April 20, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Manuel Moreno to Halsey, July 4, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

It would appear to be the Policy of the United States that the whole Continent of America should be united, at least in friendly intercourse & commercial relations, and these encouraged & strongly cemented, that at some future period, United they may be able in a measure to resist the proponderating influence of Europe. Spain must from the proximity of her most important Colonies to the United States sooner or later be at war with us, this will take place the first moment she feels herself sufficiently strong for the contest; why then it might be asked, suffer this favorable opportunity to pass, by seizing on the Floridas indemnify the Citizens of the United States for their heavy losses; & by assisting the inhabitants of these provinces in a righteous cause, which must have the wishes of all good men, would gain to the Government of the United States, the Glory of giving Freedom. . . .[65]

Thus, while he understood American policy, he suggested that an opportunity was being thrown away. Aid to Buenos Aires could bring nothing but advantages to the United States. He suggested a loan to Buenos Aires of $500,000 or, if this could not be done, one of 10,000 muskets, 2000 cavalry sabres, 2000 pikes, 100 tons of gun powder.[66] The next year he had fears for the success of the movement and wrote that the situation of the country was extremely critical. He felt that the Buenos Aires government would listen to almost any proposition of the United States, even to the point of giving advantages in trade, or perhaps place itself more immediately under the direction of North America, if the United States would afford assistance necessary to accomplish its independence.[67] His pleading fell upon deaf ears.

Sixteen days after Halsey expressed his fears, the representative Congress meeting at Tucumán declared the independence of the United Provinces. Immediate notice was sent to Halsey, who was reminded that this was the "moment to advance the commercial relations that have already begun." [68]

In 1816, another North American arrived on the scene. He was Colonel Joseph Devereux, who had planned to go to South America for business purposes. However, before sailing, he was appointed as Special Agent of the United States to Buenos Aires, with instructions to gather information on the political conditions of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. It was expected that Devereux would correspond with the State Department somewhat regularly, and that he would serve as Special Agent for some time.

Colonel Devereux took a lively interest in the cause of independence and became very much aware, whether through his own observations or by Halsey's suggestion is difficult to determine, of

65. Halsey to Monroe, July 3, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

66. Halsey to Monroe, Nov. 7, 1815, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

67. Halsey to Monroe, July 3, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

68. Miguel Yrigoyen, Francisco Antonio a Escalada, and Manuel Obligado, to Halsey, July 19, 1816, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. Halsey to Monroe, July 24, 1816, *ibid.*

the need of funds to continue the Revolution. As a result, Devereux, termed by Halsey "this Generous friend to mankind" and "Worthy Citizen," offered his service in the procurement of a loan to be raised in and guaranteed by the United States.[69] The loan, as finally agreed to by Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of Río de la Plata, was for two million dollars, and the House of John Devereux was to get a six per cent commission for underwriting it. In a letter of appreciation to President Madison, Pueyrredón reminded him that "there only remains for your Government to extend the protection needed to carry it into effect." [70]

As soon as word of Devereux's action reached Washington, he was recalled and replaced by William G. D. Worthington, who was appointed on January 23, 1817, Special Agent for Buenos Aires, Chile and Puru. Halsey had to defend his actions as consul. He denied that he had any part in the project, stating that it was Colonel Devereux's project and that he had placed his signature to it merely as the agent in Devereux's absence. He pointed out that as he received no salary as consul it was necessary to earn a living by commercial or other pursuits and it sometimes happened that his signature as an individual was unintentionally blended with the official capacity.[71]

Halsey's troubles, however, were just starting. As a businessman in Buenos Aires he had made enemies who were desirous of seeing him lose the position of Consul. In addition, in line of duty, he had made an enemy of the Supreme Director, Pueyrredón. The first indication of impending disaster for Halsey is found in his letter to Rush, acknowledging the information regarding Worthington's appointment. There he tells of having received repeated invitations from José Artigas, Chief of the Banda Oriental, to visit him. In the meantime, Halsey discovered that Artigas was entering into a commercial treaty with the English government. Halsey, therefore, decided a visit was necessary, if not to prevent the treaty, at least to see that England should not gain any advantages that the United States did not have. While there, he was received with marked respect, and given assurances that any advantages or protection given to English goods or nationals would also be extended to the

69. Halsey to Monroe, Jan. 30, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

70. Pueyrredón to Madison, Jan. 31, 1817, *ibid.*, I. Pt. I.

71. Halsey to Rush, Nov. 21, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I. Pueyrredón, in his letter of acceptance to Madison states, ". . . aid through Don Juan Devereux, to whom I was introduced by the Consul of the United States." See Pueyrredón to Madison, Jan. 31, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

United States. He also picked up a copy of the commercial treaty between England and the government of Artigas, which he sent under the same cover with his letter. However, he told the Acting Secretary of State Rush that Pueyrredón was "very jealous of the visit" even though Halsey had informed him in advance of his going and had offered him his services.[72] He feared there might be some reaction.

Halsey's fears were correct and he did not have long to wait for the reaction. On January 7, 1818, he received a note from Gregorio Tagle, Pueyrredón's Secretary of State, stating that his part in favoring the "insiduous endeavours of the factions and disturbers of the public" being known, he was, therefore, to get out of the territories of the Río de la Plata within twenty-four hours, failing which would result in "serious consequences to his person."[73] On the following day, however, the Supreme Director dropped all charges against Halsey. Halsey asked Tagle for an explanation, but received nothing further than the observation that "it was altogether a measure of the Supreme Director."[74]

Halsey was not so fortunate as far as his own government was concerned, for we find him writing in August of receiving a despatch from the State Department, dated January 22, 1818, informing him that the President had revoked his consular commission. The charges against him were that he was "interested in Privateers equipped and commissioned to cruise against a Nation at peace with the United States" and that he had "presumed to send to the United States Commissions to equip an armed vessel. . . ."[75] Halsey placed the blame for his discharge upon that "low fellow DeForest" about whom he had warned the Secretary of State.[76] Since the government had given him no instructions regarding its policy and had recalled his commission without advance notice, he believed he had good reason to complain.[77]

Halsey was told by Adams to turn the Consulate over to Worthington, but Worthington had gone to Chile. Consequently, Halsey remained as consul at Buenos Aires until September of 1819, when

72. Halsey to Rush, Nov. 21, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

73. Halsey to Tagle, Jan. 7, 8, 1818, and Halsey to Adams, Jan. 11, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. II. See also Worthington to Tagle, Jan. 7, 8, 1818, and Worthington to Adams, Jan. 10, 21, 1818, MS., Department of State Despatches of United States Ministers to Argentina, I, Pt. I. Hereinafter cited as DS., DUSM.

74. Halsey to Adams, Jan. 11, 1818, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II. Worthington reported that the ". . . revocation should be taken, to amount to a complete amnesty . . ." see Worthington to Adams, Jan. 21, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

75. Halsey to Adams, Aug. 21, 1818, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II.

76. Halsey to Adams, Feb. 25, 1818, Sept. 23, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. II.

77. Halsey to John Graham, Aug. 21, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. II.

he received word that Worthington was returning. He then left in his place a Mr. Dunn of Delaware and returned to the United States.[78] In 1820 he arrived in the United States, armed with papers from the naval department at Buenos Aires, signed by Juan José de Echevarria, certifying that he had no part in privateering and that he had not been an "Equipper or Agent." This evidence also called attention to the fact that the ships he was accused of being connected with actually belonged to David Curtis DeForest and a certain Higenbothom.[79] Halsey immediately went to Washington to persuade Secretary of State John Q. Adams to reappoint him to the consulship. Adams recorded in his diary that Halsey "told me that he came to justify his conduct, which he attempted to do without success."[80] Adams told Halsey that he was charged with extorting unlawful fees in his consular capacity, with sending blank privateering commissions to this country for which he was to receive a five per cent commission on the prizes captured, and with selling privateering commissions for Artigas of the Banda Oriental, the bitter enemy of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. Commenting to Adams on the conduct of Halsey, Henry Hills, United States consul at Rio de Janeiro, advised that the government at Washington could not expect to get the best type of men to fill these consular offices as long as they received no salary and, therefore, had to make a living in commerce.[81]

In the meantime, William G. D. Worthington had arrived in Buenos Aires, September 5, 1817. On September 13th he met with the Supreme Director and explained the noncompliance of the United States regarding Colonel Devereux's loan.[82] While he satisfied the Buenos Aires government regarding the loan, he had a harder time convincing it that he was only a Special Agent for Commerce. When he finally made it clear that his commission as such did not constitute recognition of independence, public opinion in Buenos Aires toward him became "luke-warm" if not actually "repulsive."

Worthington then proceeded as rapidly as he could to get himself in almost the same hot water that Halsey shortly found so scalding. All of the American agents and consuls to Buenos Aires recognized the British threat; only Washington seemed ignorant of it. All the

78. Worthington to Adams, March 7, 1819, DS., DUSM., I, Pt. II.

79. Affidavit of Juan José de Echevarria, Sept. 9, 1818, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II.

80. Adams, *Memoirs*, V, 77, 92-93.

81. *Ibid.* See also Hill to Adams, Dec. 21, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 704.

82. Worthington to Secretary of State, Oct. 1, 1817, DS., DUSM., I, Pt. I. The two men conversed in French, as Worthington did not speak Spanish! *Ibid.*

agents and consuls, like Worthington, "thought it necessary to do something for our safety and to watch our interests." [83] Worthington's "project" was an agreement regarding commerce and seamen. He made an outline of some forty-five articles, which he submitted to the United States State Department October 30, 1817, and to Tagle, the Secretary of State for the United Provinces.[84] He was very careful to point out that this was "unofficial," and only "my own personal opinion," and that the respective governments might think differently on the matter.[85] He also called attention of the United Provinces government to the fact that he did not have and did not "pretend to be clothed with any treaty-making powers or specific instructions. . . ." [86] On January 1, 1818, he wrote Adams that after a great amount of discussion the Buenos Aires government accepted his "project" for further consideration. His discussion had been with one Julián Alvarez, who came "well instructed on the subjects of the project." This fact seemed to disturb him somewhat, for he added, "there is only one thing I feel anxious about, which is, that I may not in any manner have involved my own country by these proceedings." He further stated to Adams that he intended "this project to be as a manual of what ought to be observed toward us." [87] Alvarez and Worthington cut the forty-five articles to twenty-five, affixed their signatures to them January 1, 1818, and in time they were approved by the government of Buenos Aires as of that date.

While Worthington did not intend to involve his country, Article eighteen created considerable difficulty. It stated that:

> Consuls, Vice Consuls, Commercial Agents & Vice Commercial Agents may reside in either country and enjoy all the rights & privileges belonging to them by reason of their functions.[88]

The project itself was virtually a treaty of amity and commerce. Under this article eighteen, the Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata wasted no time in appointing and sending as Consul to the United States David C. DeForest.

Having successfully completed his project in Buenos Aires, Worthington left for Chile, happily unaware of the explosion his "project" could cause in Washington. Upon learning of Worthington's ac-

83. Worthington to Adams, Jan. 1, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
84. Worthington to Tagle, Oct. 30, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
85. Worthington to Tagle, Dec. 17, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
86. Worthington to Tagle, Dec. 17, 1817, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
87. Worthington to Adams, Jan. 1, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.
88. Project signed by Alvarez and Worthington, Jan. 1, 1818, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

tions, Adams is reported to have spoken of the agent as having "broken out into a self appointed Plenipotentiary," and President Monroe shouted: "Dismiss him instantly. Recall him! Now to think what recommendations that man had." [89] Worthington's dismissal was dated February 25, 1819.

When Worthington returned to Buenos Aires, he discovered that the government there not only had refused to accept Dunn, whom Halsey had left in charge of the Consulate, but had placed the consular documents under its own care for safe keeping.[90] Worthington, unaware that he was no longer a Special Agent of the United States, but anxious to return, appointed Nathaniel W. Strong of New York as consul,[91] and left for the United States.

Nathaniel Strong accepted the position as consul only for six months, on the belief that in that time the State Department would have an opportunity to appoint another consul. The time, however, elapsed without any action on the part of the United States, and Strong's business made it necessary for him to leave Buenos Aires. He, therefore, appointed one John Zimmerman, Esq., of New York, as vice-consul.[92] Fortunately, Judge Prevost, Special Agent of the United States to Peru, happened to be in Buenos Aires and approved Zimmerman.[93]

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89. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 70.

90. Worthington to Adams, March 7, 1819, DS., DUSM., I, Pt. II.

91. Worthington to Tagle, March 4, 1819, *ibid.*, I, Pt. II. See also Strong's acceptance, Strong to Adams, Apr. 28, 1819, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II.

92. Strong to Adams, Dec. 9, 1819, *ibid.*, I, Pt. II.

93. *Ibid.*

Chapter V

Early Buenos Aires Missions

With the overthrow of the viceroy in May 1810, the governing *junta* of Buenos Aires, in need of an ally and munitions, turned to England for aid. This was a natural step, for American interest and commerce, while growing, was still slight; England was the great commercial nation and the significance of the attack by Popham had not been missed by the people of the Río de la Plata. Their appeal to England, however, went unanswered, for by this time England, led by Canning, had become the ally of Spain and was not willing to make any overt act that would endanger the Peninsular War effort. Following the very evident rejection of British aid, the *junta* turned to the United States, sending a letter informing the United States government of the steps taken in Buenos Aires and the reasons for such action. The *junta* pointed out that there would be some who would give an "odious interpretation" and who "will blacken with the mark of perfidy actions that have Truth for their bases." It added that "for the purity of our Intentions we appeal to the Tribunal of Reason," ending its somewhat hidden appeal by stating that this "Junta has too exalted an Idea of the high Character which distinguished the United States of America to doubt for a moment the equity of its decisions. . . ." It expressed belief of United States friendship to its cause and extended "with Pleasure the grateful Impressions of its friendship." [1]

Undoubtedly, the arrival of Poinsett and his acceptance by the *junta* on February 13, 1811,[2] stimulated the belief in Buenos Aires that the United States would supply it with arms and munitions. As we have seen, Poinsett had in numerous despatches advised his

1. Governing Junta of Buenos Aires to the President, Feb. 11, 1811, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

2. Junta of Buenos Aires to the President, Feb. 13, 1811, *ibid.*

government to send these badly needed supplies. It is reasonable to suppose that he had discussed this problem with members of the Buenos Aires government and it may have been Poinsett who suggested that they seek aid in the United States, much as the United States, in the early days of the American Revolution, sought aid from France. Certainly it was the presence of this impetuous and extremely partial American agent that gave impetus to the sending of the first mission from Buenos Aires to the United States.

Less than four months after the arrival of Poinsett, Cornelio de Saavedra, President of the Governing Junta of the Provinces of the Río de la Plata, informed the President of the United States that his son, Diego de Saavedra, and a merchant, Juan Pedro Aguirre, had been commissioned by their government to procure arms from the United States. He added that it was important that they "conceal from the Public their real names" because his son was a Captain of Dragoons and Aguirre was "the actual Secretary of the Most Excellent Cabildo."[3] Three days later, June 5, 1811, the *junta* addressed a letter to the President "in the name of Ferdinand VII, King of Spain and the Indies," and issued full powers and detailed instructions to its two agents. They were commissioned to purchase on public credit the following articles: 2000 pairs of pistols of one-ounce caliber; 4000 carbines, or short cavalry arms with bayonets; 8000 swords; 10,000 other guns with cartridges, and 1,000,000 flints for the carbines and pistols. They were further authorized to order on credit up to 30,000 additional guns, carbines and pistols, to be delivered at the risk of the sellers to Buenos Aires. The former articles would be paid for in Buenos Aires upon certification of purchase and shipment from the United States.[4]

It was not the intent of the governing *junta* to compromise in any way the government of the United States or any other nation. The agents were made fully aware of this and the United States was so informed.[5] This necessitated, therefore, the greatest secrecy as to their names and operations. The agents, accordingly, were equipped with two passports and represented themselves to be traveling as businessmen. They also carried a formal letter from the *junta* to the President of the United States informing him of their real names and the purpose of the mission.[6]

3. Saavedra to the President, June 2, 1811, *ibid.*

4. Commission of Diego de Saavedra and Juan Pedro Aguirre, June 5, 1811, *ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Governing Junta of Buenos Aires to the President of the United States, June 6, 1811, *ibid.* The names assumed by Saavedra and Aguirre were José Cabrera and Pedro López.

Unlike the United States agents and consuls sent to Buenos Aires who were expected to pay their own expenses, Saavedra and Aguirre were provided 20,000 *pesos* for the expenses of their mission. They were carefully instructed to ship their purchases on a packet to Buenos Aires, to Ensenada de Barragán, or to Montevideo. They were also informed that, if a war between the United States and England should delay the shipment of their purchases, they should make use of the letters-patent they carried and fit out a ship to send their purchases to Buenos Aires. If at all possible they were also to employ the services of cannon-makers and gunsmiths who had tools and models. If they could recruit such men for service in Buenos Aires, they could assure them a salary of 3000 *pesos* per year.

Saavedra and Aguirre made the long sea journey from Buenos Aires to the United States aboard the cutter *Tigre*,[7] leaving Buenos Aires in the latter part of July and arriving at Philadelphia, October 25, 1811. They immediately sought an interview with Secretary of State Monroe.[8]

The experiences of their first few days in the United States must have been bewildering and confusing indeed. The press in the United States was pouring out praise of the revolutionists in South America and their "glorious cause of freedom" and disparaging remarks about Spain and the "dissolute" Ferdinand VII. Before Congress, at the time, was the subject which, by December 10, 1811, took the form of the Mitchill resolution, stating for all the world the friendly interest of the United States in the establishment of independent sovereignties in Spanish America and the desire of the United States to establish amicable relations and commercial intercourse with the Spanish-Americans. All of this would seem to indicate that the two envoys from Buenos Aires would have little difficulty in achieving the purpose of their mission. Soon, however, they were to learn that in the United States, as elsewhere, there is a great difference betwen the wordy harangue of the politician and the publicist and definite action by the government. Unfortunately for Saavedra and Aguirre, they had arrived at an inopportune time. The United States was once again experimenting with non-intercourse measures; hard money was scarce and credit tight; and few were interested in speculation with unknown foreigners from a little known and remote region called the Río de la Plata.

A few days after their arrival at Philadelphia, the two envoys

7. The *Tigre* belonged to an American businessman in Buenos Aires, William G. Miller.
8. Saavedra and Aguirre to Monroe, Oct. 25, 1811, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

were given an interview with Secretary of State Monroe, who questioned them regarding the political and economic conditions of the Río de la Plata. Monroe then assured them that:

> . . . the United States of the North would be glad to see the emancipation of their brother peoples of the South under a liberal constitution, and that he believed they would continue their glorious career of liberty despite the presence of some risks which perseverance would overcome; that we could go about the land, and export freely such materials *[auxilios]* as we pleased, and that desirous of assisting us this branch of the Government would for its part dissemble knowledge of any contracts we had made with munitions makers; that assistance could not go any further than this, since we could not be considered other than one of Spain's old provinces; but if there were anything else in which the Government could serve us, it would do so with pleasure. Mr. Monroe, at the same time gave us important warnings and begged us to let him know ahead of time of our departure.[9]

Saavedra and Aguirre returned to Philadelphia after their interview with Monroe and placed an order with Messrs. Miller and Van Buren of Philadelphia for as much munitions as their money would purchase. All efforts to secure more on credit failed.[10] Madison and Monroe discussed the possibility of using some American merchant in imitation of the French Rodrigue Hortalez and Company of the American Revolution. They invited Saavedra and Aguirre with Telésforo de Orea, the agent of the Venezuelan government to a conference on this subject on January 7, 1812. At this time, Monroe informed them that "the Government was disposed to sell them the arms, at regular prices, and to satisfy itself with the responsibility for these by the credit of a respectable merchant of the country, that it was moved to do this by its desire for our independence. . . ."[11] The envoys were greatly pleased with the government's stand and immediately suggested Stephen Girard as the merchant.

Stephen Girard was quite willing to serve in this position, but he wanted definite instructions and approval of the United States Government. He also wanted the cooperation of his government, as he did not have the amount of material the agents wanted. He wrote to Monroe that Saavedra and Aguirre:

> . . . have applied to me to purchase and to ship on account of their respective governments Twenty Thousand muskets with their Bayonettes. Although I am disposed to be serviceable to these gentlemen, yet I do not wish to contract with them unless I am assured that the shipment alluded to will not be considered as unlawful or disagreeable to the President, . . .

9. Saavedra and Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Nov. 11, 1811, AGN, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

10. Saavedra and Aguirre to Miller and Van Buren, Nov. 11, 1811, *ibid.*, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

11. Saavedra and Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Feb. 16, 1812, *ibid.*, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

and that the Government will facilitate me the means of obtaining said muskets, etc., either by selling or lending them to me under such terms and conditions as will be judged reasonable.[12]

The government consented to sell him some eighteen to twenty thousand rifles, thus proving the sincerity of Monroe's promise, while putting a strain on the country's neutrality, but did not give Girard explicit instructions or approval, without which he would not act.

On the 20th January, 1812, Saavedra and Aguirre reminded Monroe of "the obligation which we have and our desire to accomplish the orders . . . received from our government" and recalled for him Girard's request for approval of the United States Government. They stated that their "proposition" with Girard and his request made it impossible for them to make other arrangements "to obtain the assistance which Buenos Ayres needs so urgently." They then appealed to Monroe to give Girard the answer he was waiting for.[13] This, their last attempt, received no reply, and thus ended their mission to the United States. They purchased what supplies their money would buy, and on February 5 notified Monroe that they were leaving for Buenos Aires within eight days and offered to carry any dispatches from the United States Government to their own. They added that "the liberality with which we have been considered by the United States Government and people, and their favorable disposition to the cause that ours sustain, remain engraved in our gratitude and respect." [14] They arrived at the port of Ensenada de Barragán on May 14, 1812, on the frigate *Liberty*, having been conducted through the Spanish blockade of the Río de la Plata by Captain David Seecht, of the American frigate *St. Michael.* They brought with them 1000 muskets with bayonets and 362,050 flints, which they had purchased in the United States.[15] They exaggerated somewhat their reception in the United States and so impressed their own people and government with the North American attitude and helpfulness that the American consul at Buenos Aires, W. G. Miller, reported that the effect of their mission was to cause the United States to be looked up to as "the only sincere friend of their cause not only by the Government but by the people." [16]

Although the United States officials did not formally recognize

12. Girard to Monroe, Dec. 2, 1811, as quoted in J. B. McMaster, *Life and Times of Stephen Girard* (Philadelphia, 1913), II, 168-171.

13. Saavedra and Aguirre to Monroe, Jan. 20, 1812, DS., ARN., I. Pt. I.

14. Saavedra and Aguirre to Monroe, Feb. 5, 1812, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

15. Saavedra and Aguirre to Supremo Gobierno, May 14, 1812, AGN, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

16. Miller to Monroe, July 16, 1812, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

Saavedra and Aguirre as agents from an independent country, it seems that their mission did help crystallize a policy in Washington that was in favor of the independence of Buenos Aires. After his first conference with the Buenos Aires representatives, Secretary of State Monroe wrote John Q. Adams, then United States Minister to Russia:

> Various considerations, which will readily suggest themselves to you, have induced this Government to look with a favorable eye to a Revolution which is taking place in South America. Several of the Provinces have sent deputies to this country, . . . but as yet a formal recognition of neither has been made.[17]

The Secretary of State's statement that no formal recognition of a minister from Buenos Aires or other rebelling Spanish colonies had been extended implies that the deputies from South America had been received informally. Nevertheless, the policy pursued by Madison and Monroe in these first relations with the rebellious South American colonies was an unquestionable recognition of belligerency and a very benevolent neutrality. However, the South American envoys actually enjoyed no more privileges in the United States than did the unrecognized Spanish Minister, Luís de Onís.

Late in 1812, the United States went to war with England. The government of Buenos Aires realized that there would be little chance of getting military supplies from the United States for the duration of the war and, as they had not as yet declared its independence, that it would be useless to press for recognition. There were, therefore, no missions from Buenos Aires to the United States from 1812 to 1816.

The absence of envoys from Buenos Aires does not mean the *junta* permitted the United States to forget it. It made use of the American consuls and agents in Buenos Aires and wrote constantly to the United States government. On February 10, Juan Manuel de Luca, Secretary of the *ad interim* government, wrote to W. G. Miller that "his Excellency desires nothing so greatly as to initiate with those free countries of North America those commercial relations of mutual interest and frankness which open the channels to industry and prosperity of States. . . ."[18]

On July 21, 1813, the triumvirate, Nicolas Rodríguez Peña, José Julián Pérez and Antonio A. Gómez, developed the ideas of de Luca into a suggestion for a "fraternal alliance" between their government and the United States. They pointed out they had been certain that the United States would never be indifferent to their

17. Monroe to Adams, Nov. 23, 1811, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 12.
18. Juan Manuel de Luca to Miller, Feb. 10, 1813, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

emancipation and that the time had now arrived when "the love of freedom has overcome all opposition" and an order had been produced which "will assure the results of our glorious Revolution" and will result in the declaration of independence. They went on to state that "The dispositions which arise from the analogy of political principles and the indubitable characteristics of a national sympathy, should prepare a fraternal alliance which would truly unite the Americans of the North and South forever." [19] Accompanying this letter was one from one Manuel Moreno, the private secretary, informing the President of the United States that under different cover was being transmitted the public papers of the government of Buenos Aires "by which your Excellency will be able to judge of the Political State in which the Provinces of Río de la Plata are at present." [20]

Among the vast amount of correspondence sent to the United States by its agents and consuls and by the *junta* and the various Supreme Directors of the government of the Plata during the years of the War of 1812, there appears an extraordinary letter from Gervasio Antonio de Posadas to the President of the United States. The occasion of this letter was his appointment as Supreme Director of the United Provinces. Posadas, following the pattern now established, was sending official notification of his appointment to that position and informing the United States, through public papers, of the condition of the region of the Plata. After the usual felicitations and the reminder that the United States, since the beginning of its struggle, had "manifested a desire to favor their glorious enterprise," he politely excused the failure to give aid on the basis that "it may be that distance has prevented them [United States] from giving us such succor as would ere now have ended our fatigues." He informed the President that, in spite of the lack of aid, they had maintained their freedom for four years. Posadas' perception of the entire international situation was then very clearly shown as he added:

> At the period when our independence was about to be confirmed the extraordinary victories of the Allied Powers of Europe again deranged our affairs. The victories of the North, which obliged France to cease oppressing Spain, may enable our enemies, with the assistance of Great Britain, to injure our cause, if some powerful arm does not volunteer her aid. Though humanity and justice are interested in the sacred cause defended by South America, four years of experience have taught this people that it is not for the interest of the Potentates of Europe to favor the independence of the colonies. Hitherto the greatneess of the powers of Europe has been founded on our degrada-

19. Nicolas Rodríguez Peña and others to the President, Jan. 21, 1813, ARN., I, Pt. I.
20. Manuel Moreno to the President, Jan. 21, 1813, *ibid.*, I, Pt. I.

tion. Perhaps the preponderance we should give to your influence in the commercial world has not a little influence. It is on you we place our present hopes, who have the happiness to govern the only free people in the world, whose philosophic and patriotic sentiments we are ambitious to imitate. I am sensible the war, in which you are at present engaged, will prevent your giving us that immediate aid that would end our troubles. The people of this country can as yet support their cause with dignity, could they procure a supply of arms and ammunitions. Your Excellency cannot fail of being able to afford us these supplies; and our prompt and ready payment cannot be doubted. Your Execllency may be assured that the Provinces of Rio de la Plata will not be ungrateful for such relief, and will be ready to engage in any treaties of commerce that will be advantageous to the United States. The interest that the inhabitants of said States have generally felt for the success of our Cause convinces me of the happy result of this request. . . .[21]

Following news of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814, ending the war between the United States and England, the *junta* and Supreme Director Alvarez made preparations to send again a formal mission to the United States. Before this new mission was readied there came to Buenos Aires, en route to the United States, Brigadier José Miguel Carrera, of Chile. Carrera, probably at the suggestion of Poinsett, was going to the United States in an effort to secure ships and arms. Alvarez decided to make use of Carrera's visit to the United States and asked Carrera to "expose the necessities of these people" and to explain verbally the situation in the Plata, as well as point out the glory it would bring the United States to "aid them in their heroic enterprise." Alvarez wrote the President that since the Treaty of Ghent had been signed the obstacles to United States aid "laid by the rupture with England" no longer existed and the United Provinces now looked forward to great generosity from the United States.[22]

About the thirteenth of November, 1815, the first official mission from Buenos Aires, after the War with England, left for the United States. This was a very business-like mission and was carried out by Thomas Taylor, who was a citizen of the United States employed by the government of Buenos Aires as a privateer. Although Taylor spent little time with the government of the United States, and

21. Posadas to Madison, March 9, 1814, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

22. Alvarez to Madison, May 26, 1815, ARN., I, Pt. I. The Mission of Carrera had an unfortunate ending. He returned to Buenos Aires at the time when everyone was anxious about the San Martín expedition to Chile and made himself *persona non grata* by referring to San Martín's plans as madness and folly. When news of the success of the expedition reached Buenos Aires, Carrera was greatly disappointed, and he called San Martín a scoundrel and talked of his ambitious designs on the liberties of Chile. The government of Buenos Aires ordered him out of the country. He then added insult to injury by joining Artigas. Carrera had been successful in getting two ships and their armament. These were sold to him on the understanding that they would not be delivered into his hands until paid for. Carrera lacked the necessary funds and would not permit the government of Buenos Aires to purchase them and as a result did not receive delivery of the ships. Carrera also brought French and American officers and artisans. See Halsey to Secretary of State, March 3, 1817, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I.

apparently offered no plea for aid, there is no doubt that his mission had the official support of the government of Buenos Aires. He was provided with a letter of introduction to the President of the United States from the Supreme Director Alvarez, and he reported his success by letter, February 8, 1816, to Alvarez.[23] The purpose of his mission was to get ships which could be used as privateers. Apparently he had no difficulty carrying out his task, for he arrived in Annapolis January 16, 1816, and in his letter of February 8, 1816, he informed Alvarez that "your intentions will be completely fulfilled." He added that "within a month a vessel ought to be perfectly armed for sea, and I believe I have to do no more than await the arrival of the frigate *Avispa* in these parts in order to go with all the rest." [24] Taylor's mission was clearly meant for the sole purpose of obtaining ships and arms for privateering.

The changes which had come about in the European situation with the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of legitimate governments, including that of Ferdinand VII, called for another mission to make clear to the United States the situation in Buenos Aires. Another factor behind this mission rested in the strong feeling that the Congress, which was now assembling at Tucumán, would result in a formal declaration of independence. If this should occur, there should be an agent in the United States to take full advantages of any opportunities such a step might effect. Therefore, early in 1816, Alvarez appointed Colonel Martin Thompson as agent to the United States. Thompson was chosen for the uncomplimentary reason that his personal qualities would not excite suspicion of his mission's importance.[25] Thompson was sent as an agent not yet invested with public character, nor was he to exceed the specific object of his mission without an understanding beforehand with the United States Government. He was sent to implore "the protection and aid necessary for the defense of a just and sacred cause." [26]

Thompson's instructions imposed upon him absolute secrecy as to his voyage and mission.[27] Theoretically, no one was to know of it, except the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, the President

23. Taylor to Supreme Director, Feb. 8, 1816, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9. This is the only letter of Taylor's in regard to this mission.

24. *Ibid.* Two vessels were fitted out, leaving port as merchant ships and later armed as privateers.

25. Alvarez to the President, Jan. 16, 1816, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I. Also AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Juan Martín Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, to Monroe, Jan. 1, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I. Herein Pueyrredón explained the secrecy of this mission as being necessary because of "the suspicion that might otherwise have arisen concerning its object." Apparently, great fear of England and English action still existed in Buenos Aires.

of the United States, whom Alvarez would inform by letter, and Thompson himself. He was to inform the President of the state of affairs in Buenos Aires and the desire of the Plata region to tighten its relations with the United States by a "pact of reciprocal interests." Thompson was to order, in the name of the government of Buenos Aires, every kind of material assistance, pledging his government to compensate the United States with every commercial advantage. If he could not get munitions on credit, or could not arrange a loan, he was to guarantee cash payment. He was particularly instructed to request at least one, and to strongly recommend two, United States frigates to protect the trade of the United States and to permit a preponderance of North Americans over English nationals. His instructions also invested him with the task of procuring from the United States government officers of all classes. He was to urge that the United States induce those European powers without colonies to take a part in the destiny of the Plata; and he was to attempt to establish secret relations with the government in Mexico.[28] In short, Thompson was to do everything possible to obtain support for the Buenos Aires government and its cause. It is interesting to note, however, that all such aid was to be obtained through the United States Government.

In his credential, presenting Thompson to the President, Alvarez asked that the agent be given the same consideration granted United States agents in Buenos Aires. Alvarez called attention to the failure of the Plata to declare its independence and to the interruption of communication by the War of 1812 between the United States and England, stating that "well known circumstances" had prevented the United Provinces from establishing with the United States the relations of "amity and strict correspondence which reciprocal interest and a common glory ought to have inspired." He excused this failure to declare independence by stating that "a series of extraordinary events and unexpected changes, which have taken place in our ancient mother-country, have constrained us not to make a formal declaration of national independence." However, he specified, "our conduct and public papers have sufficiently expressed our resolution." Alvarez added that by the time the President had this letter, the General Congress would have met, and he concluded with assurances that one of its first acts would be a declaration of independence.[29]

28. Instructions for the Deputy to the United States, Jan. 16, 1816, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

29. Alvarez to the President, Jan. 16, 1816, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I. Also AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

Thompson was also the bearer of a separate note of a more personal character and a gift for President Madison; a sample of the first arms manufactured in the provinces of "Buenos Aires and Tucumán under the auspices of a free Government." Alvarez also enclosed a manuscript essay on the new mineral discoveries of the province. His communication ended with the old but apparently sincere refrain: "the expressions of the sentiments of a people, who amidst the struggle in which they are engaged to secure their rights, reflect on the natural relations which are one day to unite them with that people over whom you so worthily preside." [30]

By 1816, the United Provinces were willing to establish closer relations on any terms the United States might want. The advantage, however, of such a consummation was not, in the eyes of the United States, great enough to compensate for the risks involved. The United States wanted Florida; she did not want war with England, Spain or a European coalition. Closer relations with Buenos Aires might bring about war with any one of them, or possibly all three. Moreover, recognition of the Thompson mission was made impossible by the actions of Thompson himself.

Thompson arrived in New York May 3, 1816, but delayed going immediately to Washington as the summer heat had driven the President and most of the cabinet from that city.[31] While in New York, he and Carrera contracted with several French and Polish officers to serve in Buenos Aires thereby exceeding his instructions. He also speculated on the use of a steamboat in the Plata waters. When not engaged in this fascination, he wrote long despatches to Buenos Aires requesting more salary and more secretarial aid.[32] He also requested public rank, as his present standing as private deputy prevented his being officially received.[33]

The actions of the government of the United Provinces are at this point somewhat vague and contradictory. While Thompson was exceeding his instructions in the United States, the Congress of Tucumán appointed Juan Martín Pueyrredón as Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. Pueyrredón wrote the President of this, and announced his changing of Thompson's status from secret to public agent.[34] At this time Pueyrredón was fully aware that in contracting with French and Polish officers di-

30. Alvarez to Madison, Feb. 9, 1816, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

31. Martin Thompson to the Supreme Director, Aug. 23, 1816, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Thompson to Supreme Director, Nov. 14, 1816, *ibid,* S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

34. Juan Martín Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata to the President, Jan. 1, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

rectly, and not through the United States government, Thompson had violated his orders.[35] In spite of this, Pueyrredón's government honored the contracts he had made with such officers and did not recall him for another nine days.[36] The charges that he had granted licenses for privateering indicates that Pueyrredón had become aware of Spain's protests to the United States regarding these violations of neutrality and feared that United States embarrassment over the situation might cause unfavorable reaction toward the United Provinces. Pueyrredón must have been thoroughly disgruntled when he dismissed Thompson, for he told him quite bluntly that it would be unnecessary for him to return to Buenos Aires.[37] Thus, we have an interesting episode of an agent who was appointed, then reappointed and dismissed before he ever reached the official seat of the Government to which he was sent.

If Thompson had not furnished Pueyrredón sufficient grounds for dismissal in making direct contracts with foreign officers, granting privateering commissions, and entering into negotiations with shipping firms before reaching an understanding with the Washington government, his meddling in regard to East and West Florida and Amelia Island would have served the purpose. The order for his dismissal had been written, but not received when he joined with the agents from Venezuela, New Granada and Mexico in commissioning one Gregor MacGregor to take possession of East and West Florida. Although the act was disavowed at once by the three countries involved, MacGregor went ahead and the United States then became involved in a lengthy and distasteful problem. All in all, Thompson did a thorough job of mishandling the duties given him by his government. His successor, Manuel Hermenejildo de Aguirre, felt he had the answer when he reported to Pueyrredón that "Thompson is in a hospital, hopelessly crazy." [38]

Three factors combined to bring to the United States the best known of the early agents from Buenos Aires, Aguirre, Commissar General of War and Navy for the United Provinces. The first, of course, was the dismissal of Thompson; the second was the fact that having made, on July 9, 1816, an express declaration of independ-

35. *Ibid.* Pueyrredón stated: "I have learned by communications concerning the above mentioned agent, [Thompson] that he has arbitrarily departed from the line of the Duties which was marked out for him, in not squaring his conduct by the advice of your Excellency, by whose judgment he was to be guided as to the appropriate manifesting or not manifesting, his official character, but on the contrary, that he has acted in a manner directly repugnant to those principles."

36. Pueyrredón to Madison, Jan. 10, 1817, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

37. Instructions to Martin Thompson, Feb. 9, 1816, *ibid.*, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

38. Manuel Hermenejildo de Aguirre to Pueyrredón, Aug. 17, 1817, *ibid.*, S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

ence from Spain, the United Provinces now desired recognition of their new status; the third centered around General San Martín and his plans for the emancipation of Peru by sea. Aguirre, in March of 1817, was recommended to Monroe for his "qualities of probity, capacity and patriotism."[39] As agent of the United Provinces to the United States, he was granted "privileges, pre-eminencies and prerogatives" as to suggest his having diplomatic character, but neither his commission nor any of his instructions delegated him any power as a public minister nor any power to negotiate as such. Instead, the decision as to his actual position seems to have been left entirely with the United States government. Accompanying Aguirre on this mission was one Gregorio Gómez, who served as his assistant.[40]

The primary purpose of Aguirre's mission was the purchase of ships for a naval squadron. Although his original instructions stated only that his duties were to promote "whatever conduces to the progress of the cause in which these Provinces are engaged, to their honor and the consolidation of the great work of our Liberty,"[41] subsequent instructions and his credentials make clear that the navy was the primary concern of both Pueyrredón and San Martín.

San Martín, having defeated the Spanish Royalists at Chacabuco, February 12, 1817, was planning to attack the Spanish forces in Peru. This step made necessary a navy which could control the Pacific, and transport and convoy the army to Peru. For this purpose he returned to Buenos Aires and agreed with Pueyrredón on the choice of Aguirre to carry out the task he wanted accomplished. Thus it was that San Martín using powers granted him by Bernardo O'Higgins, Supreme Director of Chile, drew up a contract which, if carried out, would give him at least the beginnings of a naval squadron and would at the same time place *pesos* in the pocket of Aguirre. Apparently San Martín worked on the principle, if not for himself, for his associates, that a degree of self interest would aid in achieving the desired ends. He gave Aguirre 100,000 *pesos* in cash and a promise of 100,000 more in three months time. With these sums Aguirre was to purchase or have constructed in the United States two 34-gun frigates. These frigates were to meet detailed specifications given by San Martín and to be fully equipped and armed. San Martín also required that they be sent to Valparaiso, by way of Buenos Aires, under the flag of the United States.

39. Pueyrredón to Monroe, March 28, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*

Perhaps to speed the transaction, San Martín agreed to grant Aguirre a bonus of 100,000 *pesos* if Lima should be taken with the aid of these ships.[42]

It is interesting to note that Aguirre was provided with fifty privateering commissions, twenty-five from each government, and in addition was instructed to engage naval officers, offering them the salary which they would be paid in the American navy in time of war plus fifty per cent of the proceeds from the sale of any prizes which they might take.[43] One wonders if Thompson went to the hospital, of which Aguirre wrote, after talking to Aguirre with regard to his instructions.

In addition to his formal credentials signed by Pueyrredón, Aguirre carried with him letters to the President from San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins, Supreme Director of Chile. San Martín's was a simple, dignified letter alluding to the similarity of the movement for freedom in both Americas and explaining that the Supreme Director of Chile believed that a principle instrument to secure the liberty of America was the armament in the United States of a squadron destined to the Pacific Ocean which:

> . . . united to the forces that are preparing in the River La Plata, may cooperate in sustaining the ulterior military operations of the army under my command in South America; and convinced of the advantages which our political situation promises, I have crossed the Andes in order to concert in that capital, among other things, the guaranty of my Government, and in compliance with the stipulations between the Supreme Director of Chile and its intimate ally, to carry into effect the plan which has been confided to Don Manuel Aguirre. Your Excellency . . . will, I hope, deign to extend to the above named person such protection as is compatible with the actual relations of your Government; and I have the high satisfaction of assuring your Excellency that the arms of the country under my orders will not fail to give consistency and respect to the promises of both Governments.[44]

It would seem certain that the mission of Aguirre was one of the strangest ever to come to the United States. On the surface he was replacing an agent who was dismissed for granting privateering commissions and for recruiting officers to serve in Buenos Aires; yet, Aguirre had definite instructions to recruit such officers and was officially given twenty-five privateering commissions from each government sending him. In the letter presenting Aguirre to Monroe, Pueyrredón stated that Aguirre was sent in the character of agent, but at the same time requested for him "all the protection

42. Alberto Polomeque, *Orígines de la diplomacia Argentina, misión Aguirre á Norte América* (2 vols., Buenos Aires, 1905), II, 123-128.

43. Francisco José Urrutia, *Páginas de historia diplomática; los Estados Unidos de América y las repúblicas hispanoamericanas de 1810 á 1830* (Bogota, 1917), 58-59.

44. José Francisco de San Martín, General of the Army of the Andes, to James Monroe, April 1, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I. See also Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 352.

and consideration required by his diplomatic rank and the actual state of our relations." It was well known that an unrecognized agent had no diplomatic rank, but Pueyrredón seemed to want to ignore such a fact, or perhaps he was leaving the entire question to the United States government. Pueyrredón, however, seemed to know what he meant, for he added that this would be a "new tie, by which the United States of the North will more effectively secure the gratitude and affection of the free provinces of the South." [45] In spite of what Pueyrredón may have had in mind, or what Aguirre later came to believe, he had no diplomatic character, for he had no commission as a public minister of any rank, nor any power to negotiate as such.[46]

Aguirre and Gómez sailed from Buenos Aires late in May, 1817, and arrived in Baltimore in July. As President Monroe was not in Washington and the new Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, had not yet arrived from London, Aguirre met with Richard Rush, Acting-Secretary of State. The meeting was an informal affair with great friendliness shown on both sides. Rush assured Aguirre of the good will of the President and the people of the United States, but he also made clear to him that the government of the United States, because of its treaty of amity and commerce with Spain and its policy of strict neutrality, could take no part in the struggle. Rush informed Aguirre that the policy of neutrality followed by the United States was the policy best suited and most likely to be of benefit to the South Americans. In regard to the purchase of ships, the United States government would not sell them to him, but the laws of the country would not prevent a person from purchasing arms and munitions from private individuals. The entire transaction, said Rush, must be placed under a situation as a mercantile speculation, and under a neutral flag; in this manner a trade in vessels, guns, arms and warlike stores would not only be permitted but protected by the government. According to Rush, Aguirre was satisfied, stating that he would leave for Baltimore the next day to begin his career as a "merchant." Before leaving, however, Aguirre dropped a bomb with a slow fuse into Rush's lap by rather guardedly stating that the people of Buenos Aires were not fitted to be republicans and implying that they would not be able to establish

45. Pueyrredón to Monroe, Apr. 28, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

46. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams to House of Representatives, March 25, 1818, in *American State Papers, Class I, Foreign Relations* (6 vols., Washington, 1852-1859), IV, 173. Hereinafter cited as *ASP., FR.* Adams further stated that: "The character in which Mr. Aguirre presented himself was that of a public agent from the Government of La Plata, and of a private agent from Chile. His commissions from both simply qualified him as agent."

a democratic form of government. He added that he thought they would extend an offer to Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand VII, to come to Buenos Aires as an independent King.[47] Aguirre's parting statement was true, a fact which added to the worries of Monroe and his administration which, following policy set by Jefferson, was opposed to the extension of monarchy to the Western Hemisphere.

When Aguirre and Gómez returned to Baltimore, where they hoped to purchase or build their ships, they soon discovered that neither Buenos Aires nor Chile had any credit and that without the sanction of the United States government there was no possibility of gaining it. They were forced to contract for the building of two 34-gun frigates in New York, with the understanding that 100,000 *pesos* would be paid at the beginning of construction and the balance, also 100,000 *pesos*, before the ships left the port. Aguirre, expecting daily to receive from Chile 100,000 *pesos*, was quite optimistic and wrote that the ships could be expected in Valparaiso by March, 1818. In addition to contracting for the two ships, Aguirre gave out several privateering commissions and sent three ships, the *Ellen Tooker*, the *Colomb* and the *Araucan*, to Chile loaded with munitions, their owners taking the risk of receiving their money from either the government of Buenos Aires or of Chile.[48]

According to Aguirre it was impossible to build these ships with any secrecy because of the enthusiasm of the American people for the South American cause.[49] Aguirre would probably have been more correct if he had said it was impossible because of the alertness of Luís de Onís. Certainly the Spanish Minister was behind the move to prevent the building of these ships and also the subsequent four days Aguirre spent in jail. Aguirre informed Adams that while the formal contracts for the construction of his two ships was being drawn up he was presented with a copy of "an Act of Congress, prohibiting under heavy penalties all persons from fitting out vessels of the description of those he had ordered." Apparently fearing that this would prevent his ships from reaching their destination, he appealed to Adams for some further information.[50] Adams suggested that he get legal advice, which Aguirre did, only to learn that the neutrality law permitted vessels of any size to be built in the country and sent out of it, provided they

47. Richard Rush, Statement in relation to conversation with Aguirre, Nov. 22, 1817. This apparently was written out on the order of John Q. Adams to make clear the Letter of Aguirre to Adams, Nov. 14, 1817, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

48. Gómez to Pueyrredón, Nov. 13, 1817, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.

49. Aquirre to Adams, Nov. 14, 1817, DS., ARN., I. Pt. I.

50. *Ibid.*

were not armed, or if armed, that the intent was not to use them against a power with which the Unitd State was at peace. He was further informed that the Director of Customs was empowered to detain and confiscate such ships, the owner to be imprisoned for ten years and fined $10,000. Aguirre decided to take the risk and the work went forward. In the meantime, he appealed to his government to send the 100,000 *pesos,* as promised, so that the ships could put to sea as soon as possible.[51] His initial mistake, according to Monroe, lay in communicating to the Department of State his intention to contravene the law.[52]

The ships were finished and anchored in the harbor at New York, for the contractors would not turn them over to Aguirre until they received the balance of their fees. Aguirre sent Gómez to Buenos Aires to explain the situation and to get the money which was due according to the terms of San Martín's contract. In the meantime, he was arrested and then released when it was found impossible to prove he had armed the ships.[53] Believing it impracticable to get the ships out of American waters, and faced with the great expense of caring for them, Aguirre offered to sell them to the United States.[54] Monroe refused to purchase the ships, as he did not think he had the power to do so, and believed that even if he had the power such an action would be highly improper.[55] Then in an effort to clear the ships from the United States, Aguirre had them registered, to give them a mercantile appearance, in the name of his captains, Joseph Skinner, to whom he gave command of the *Horatio,* and Paul Delano, to whom he gave the *Curiacio.* Fortunately, he was able at length, through the assistance of an American citizen, to borrow enough money to satisfy his creditors and get the ships away from New York. The cannon and other armament were removed from them and placed on board merchant vessels, which took them to Buenos Aires where the vessels were put in fighting trim.

They left New York early in September, and reached the Río de la Plata early in November. Again Aguirre ran into difficulty, as the funds necessary to complete the purchase of the vessels were still not available. After some delay the *Curiacio* was purchased, renamed the *Independencia,* armed and sent to Chile, where it arrived on June 23, 1819. Captain Skinner refused to turn

51. Aguirre to Supreme Director, Nov. 25, 1817, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 9.
52. Monroe to Adams, Aug. 17, 1818. Monroe, *Writings,* VI, 64-66.
53. Adams to Aguirre, Aug. 27, 1818, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.
54. Aguirre to Adams, Aug. 10, 1818, *ibid.,* I, Pt. I.
55. Adams to Aguirre, Aug. 27, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 76.

over his ship until payment was received and, as that did not seem to be forthcoming, took the *Horatio* to Rio de Janeiro and sold it to the Portuguese government.

Had Aguirre been satisfied to stay within his instructions it is quite possible that he would have played the part of gaining the recognition so much desired by his government. It can be said that he accomplished the real object of his mission, but as a diplomat he was not a success. Apparently, while struggling with the problem of getting his ships and munitions from the United States, his judgment was warped by the attempts of Henry Clay to embarrass and harass the administration. Under Clay's influence he demanded recognition for the government of Buenos Aires, asked for a new neutrality law, and protested the seizure of Amelia Island by the United States as being unfair to the revolutionists.[56] In addition, he voiced the opinion that the chances of the United States becoming involved in war presented no valid reason why he should not solicit the recognition of his nation. As the United States was disturbed over the possibility of war with Spain, still fearing that Spain might find European support, and as the question of Florida was the very heart of American foreign policy, Aguirre did more than just exceed his instructions, he was indiscreet and importunate. His actions turned an administration, which had been favorably inclined toward recognition, against such a step, and the combined work of Clay and Aguirre forced the issue before Congress, where it was defeated on March 28, 1818, by a vote of 115 to 45.[57] The following day, March 29, Aguirre received a despatch from Pueyrredón, for Monroe, in which he formally requested recognition.[58] Aguirre's mission did serve to bring before the American people the questions of neutrality and recognition.

56. The question of neutrality is discussed in chapter VI, and recognition in chapter VII, this paper.

57. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1646.

58. Peuyrredón to Monroe, Jan. 14, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 370.

Chapter VI

The Neutrality Question

THE controversy over the rights and duties of the United States as a neutral in the Spanish-American revolution played only a minor part until 1816. Until this date, the United States relied upon the Neutrality Act of 1794, which prohibited Americans from engaging in, or preparing for, hostilities against any power with which the United States was at peace, from within the territory of the Union. The law, with the sanctions and penalties provided, had been effective.

The Spanish-American revolution, however, presented a new problem, and one which consequently led to controversy upon a number of points. This conflict was not between two organized and independent states, but between a nation and various provinces within its territory. The Madison administration, by executive orders, put into effect the Neutrality Act of 1794 and directed that American ports be open to all ships, regardless of their flag or nationality. In so doing, Madison virtually recognized the belligerency of the rebelling colonies. While this action was disappointing to a few of the Spanish-Americans, it was the greatest help that the United States could render at the time. With few exceptions, neutrality placed the insurgents upon the same level as Spain, and in practice benefited them more than it did the Spanish.

Following the War of 1812 the maritime aspect of the question became the center of controversy. The United States maintained, and insisted upon the acceptance of its view, that it had the right to carry on commerce with both belligerents. This trade, it asserted, should be free from seizure, except for contraband of war and forced entry of a legally constituted and effective blockade. The United States also asserted that a "paper blockade" was no blockade at all. Spain opposed the American stand and maintained

that foreign ships had no right to trade with her colonies, whether in revolt or not, except where such a right had been granted by Spanish decrees. Spain also claimed that ships sailing under the flags of the rebellious colonies were pirates, and should be treated as such.

In Spanish eyes American neutrality was made even more favorable to the South Americans by an order of the Treasury Department dated July 3, 1815. This order specifically stated that ships flying the flags of any of the insurgent governments were to be admitted to the ports of the United States.[1] The indefatigable Onís vigorously protested this ruling.[2] Onís was quite correct in pointing out that the law made it much easier for the Spanish-Americans to obtain war supplies, but the American feeling was that it was only strict and impartial neutrality which, in effect, granted both parties access to American ports on equal terms.

Before 1815 Spain's naval power in the Caribbean and the South Pacific was greater than that of the Spanish-Americans, and Spain was able to harass the "illegal" trade with her colonies. With the ending of the War of 1812, and the resultant unemployment of both men and ships in the United States, the Spanish-Americans were given an opportunity, through the use of privateers, to destroy Spain's naval supremacy. Thus, the action of the Treasury Department, which made United States ports a haven for the privateers of all Spanish America, was a bitter blow to Spain.

Privateers licensed by Buenos Aires began their activities with a single vessel that brought two prizes into the home port in 1815.[3] The next year Thomas Taylor appeared in Baltimore, where he purchased two ships and experienced little trouble disposing of a number of privateering commissions. New Orleans and Baltimore became centers for privateering activity, the former for ships operating under the colors of Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico, and the latter serving those from Buenos Aires.

Among the first privateers equipped in Baltimore were two swift schooners of about one hundred and seventy tons, the *Romp* and the *Orb*. At that time, it was customary for merchant ships bound for distant points to carry some armament, and by falsifying the destination and number of the crew, they easily avoided trouble, especially in ports such as Baltimore, where public opinion was

1. John Bassett Moore, *A Digest of International Law* (3 vols., Washington, 1906), I, 170.

2. Onís to Monroe, Dec. 30, 1815, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 423.

3. Theodore S. Currier, *Los corsarios del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires, 1929), 23. Hereinafter cited as Currier, *Corsarios*.

greatly in favor of the Spanish-American movement. The *Romp* and the *Orb,* following this pattern to avoid difficulties with the authorities, cleared as merchantmen with crews of normal size, taking on the rest of their complement after leaving port. These vessels, and others, had very successful cruises, and instances of great profits were reported. It was claimed that by March of 1817, the *Romp* had taken prizes amounting to $290,000.[4] Reports and rumors of such privateering profits led to large scale desertions from the American Merchant Marine, especially at Buenos Aires, where many vessels were stranded.[5] It has been estimated that as many as 3500 American seamen became privateers in the period 1816 to 1821.[6]

The privateers usually cruised in the West Indies where they declared and effectively maintained a blockade of Cuba and Haiti,[7] but their operations extended to both sides of the Atlantic. In 1816, it was reported that:

> The Buenos Ayrean privateers still vex the coasts of Spain—with great efforts, *Ferdinand* lately sent . . . two frigates and a sloop of war, to capture them or scare them away; but after being at sea 15 or 20 days and seeing nothing, they returned into port to refit! in the meantime one of these privateers actually chased a ship into the bay of Cadiz. They make many captures.[8]

Occasionally prizes were sent to the United States, but more often to St. Thomas or St. Bartholomew, where marks were changed and papers falsified in such a way as to make it possible to send them to any port.[9]

As the Spanish-Americans did not have the men, ships, or capital necessary to carry on privateering, the backing for such enterprises came from interested merchants and shipowners in the United States. The State Department received note after note from Onís, giving the names of merchants involved. Onís went so far as to accuse officials of the federal government—the postmaster at Baltimore, and the collectors of the ports of Baltimore and Savannah—of playing a part in the business.[10] A number of the first prizes sent to Buenos Aires were consigned to W. G. Miller, formerly the American agent at that port.[11] The United States Consul, T. L.

4. Onís to Adams, Mar. 26, 1817, Manning, *Dip. Cor.,* III, 1923.
5. Halsey to Tagle, July 31, 1815, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. I, Halsey to Monroe, March 14, 1816, *ibid.* See also chapter IV this paper.
6. Currier, *Corsarios,* 32.
7. *Niles Weekly Register,* Apr. 5, 1817; June 7, 1817.
8. *Ibid.,* Nov. 9, 1816.
9. Adams, *Memoirs,* V, 15.
10. *Ibid.,* IV, 186, V, 151.
11. Currier, *Corsarios,* 20.

Halsey, made a large fortune in privateering.[12] Onís bitterly complained of these violations of neutrality, and the courts, whose records give sufficient and conclusive proof of American participation, show that his complaints were well founded.

While privateering was the major feature for Onís' protests against United States violations of neutrality, others attracted his attention also. He objected, time after time, to American-based filibustering expeditions against Spanish territory. There were a number of these expeditions, the most important being those of Francisco de Miranda against Venezuela, Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus Magee against Texas, and Francisco Javier Mina against Mexico. These activities disturbed Onís so greatly that he made them the principal subject of his first note to Secretary Monroe after his formal reception as the minister of Spain.[13] President Madison responded with a proclamation of neutrality prohibiting such military expeditions against the dominions of Spain.[14]

Additional difficulty for the United States came through the seizure of the port of Galveston and Amelia Island by bands of privateers. At the time these two areas were focal points of dispute between the United States and Spain, and their occupation by forces other than those of the United States occasioned considerable apprehension that they and Florida would pass from Spanish to English control, should the latter aid Spain to regain her colonies. There is evidence to prove that, while this was not the case, the adventurers who occupied these two locations intended to establish a government independent of the United States.[15]

The establishment at Galveston was made early in 1817, by Commodore Louis Aury, who founded his own government and set up an admiralty court to condemn captured vessels.[16] This action was purportedly taken in the name of Mexico, but testimony of men who served in Galveston indicated that the main purpose of their enterprise was the capture of Spanish vessels and property, and that no thought was given to the idea of aiding the revolution in Mexico or in any of the other Spanish colonies.[17] It is interest-

12. See chapter IV this paper.

13. Onís to Monroe, Dec. 30, 1815, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 422-423.

14. Proclamation of Sept. 1, 1815, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 1. The important documents relative to the question of neutrality may be found in *ASP., FR.*, IV, 1-4; blockade, 144-159; illegal armaments and Amelia Island, 184-202; Florida question, 422-625; Spanish colonies, 217-348.

15. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1787.

16. *Ibid.*, 1790.

17. *Ibid.*, 1798.

ing to note that by this time Spanish shipping had been almost entirely swept from the seas, that the privateers had turned against the shipping of other nations, and that, by 1819, complaints of depredations on British and American commerce were common.

Commodore Aury abandoned Galveston for Matagorda, April 5, 1817,[18] but Galveston was re-occupied within ten days by a group from New Orleans. This group, originally bound for Matagorda, had taken two ships of supplies to Galveston and, upon finding it abandoned, decided to remain there instead.[19]

About the same time that Aury was operating at Galveston an adventurous Scot, Gregor McGregor, who had served with the patriots in Venezuela, and for a time had been in the good graces of Bolívar, became interested in taking control of East Florida. Having failed to obtain English support, he approached Acting-Secretary of State Richard Rush. The plan presented by McGregor to Rush was for the United States to purchase Florida after the filibusters had taken it from Spain. Officially, Rush refused to have anything to do with this scheme, but his strong sympathies for the patriots allowed him to leave McGregor with the impression that personally he would not be sorry to see such action take place.[20]

Failing to get aid either from the United States or England, McGregor turned to the Spanish-American agents resident in the United States. Here he was successful, and on March 31, 1817, received a commission from three deputies: Lino de Clemente of Venezuela, Pedro Gual of New Granada, and Martin Thompson of Río de la Plata.[21] By this commission McGregor was to procure both East and West Florida for the governments granting the commission. The plan he was to follow was to conquer Amelia Island first and then move into the Floridas. This was to be accomplished in the name and under the auspices of the Spanish-Americans, who then planned to sell the territory to the United States for $1,500,000. The scheme eventually simmered down to an attack on Amelia Island.

McGregor made his landing on Amelia June 30, 1817, and with little difficulty took control of the poorly defended island, establishing an independent government. McGregor could not control his followers, and after a short time withdrew from the enterprise, his

18. *Ibid.*, 1786.
19. *Ibid.*, 1796.
20. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 53.
21. Sir Gregor McGregor's commission, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 415.

place being taken by Louis Aury. Under Aury's control Amelia Island became a hotbed of intrigue, smuggling and piracy.[22] Onís did not protest the actions of McGregor until July 9, 1817. By that time it was, of course, too late for the United States to take any legal action, although proceedings were started against him. John Quincy Adams considered the "tardiness of Mr. Onís's remonstrance" to be "of itself a decisive vindication of the magistrates of the United States against any imputation of neglect to enforce the laws." [23]

McGregor's and Aury's occupation of Amelia Island was important to the State Department because of its plans for Florida. When Spain took no action to remove the expedition, Monroe, using powers granted to the President by a secret session of Congress, in 1811,[24] sent the army and navy to take over the island. This was accomplished on December 23, 1817.[25]

Onís entered a strong protest against American action regarding Amelia Island as soon as he heard of the President's plans. His protest was based upon the fact that both Amelia Island and Galveston were in territory still belonging to Spain.[26] The South-American propagandists made extensive use of this act to show that the administration was against the liberty of the Spanish-Americans.

The French also protested American action regarding Amelia Island, but interestingly enough, their protest was based upon the part that Americans were playing in pirate enterprises. In reply to the French Minister, Hyde de Neuville, Adams stated that the United States had made and was making every effort to keep its citizens from taking part in these expeditions, but:

> If in these endeavors they have not been entirely successful, the Governments of Europe have not been more so, and among the occupants of Amelia Island, for the practical purposes complained of in your notes, natives or Subjects of France have been included no less than citizens of these States.[27]

Various groups in the United States who were ardent advocates of independence for the Spanish-Americans, or were just looking for something which could be used to embarrass the administration, also criticized this action of the President. They even went so far as to present claims in the newspapers that the United States had

22. Monroe to Congress, Nov. 16, 1818, *ibid.*, IV, 213-214.

23. Adams to Congress, March 14, 1818, *ibid.*, IV, 184.

24. John Bassett Moore, *History and Digest of the International Arbitrations to which the United States has been a Party* (6 vols., Washington, 1898), IV, 3978-3980. Hereinafter cited as Moore, *International Arbitrations.*

25. *Annals of Congress,* 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1806.

26. Onís to Adams, Dec. 6, 1817, *ASP, FR.,* IV, 450-451. See also Adams to Congress, March 14, 1818, *ibid.*, 184.

27. Adams to de Neuville, Jan. 27, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 53.

allied with European powers favoring the return of the Spanish colonies to Spain.

The Spanish-American governments, however, refused to accept responsibility for the acts of their agents in granting commissions for the establishment of independent states.[28] The Buenos Aires government was quick to disclaim any participation in the scheme, pointing out that its agent, Martin Thompson, had been dismissed before signing the commission, and if that had not been the case would certainly have been recalled because of it.

These flagrant violations of neutrality, plus the protests and threats of Onís, led Monroe to propose a modification of the neutrality laws of the United States. At the same time, the relative importance of the issues involved in the dispute between Spain and the United States assumed greater significance in the eyes of the Spanish Foreign Office. Since the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1815, the relations of the United States to the rebelling Spanish-Americans, a matter which had been considered minor in 1816, had become by 1817 of major importance, chiefly owing to the alarming reports of Onís. It was through the incidents just discussed, and the reports of Onís, that Spain came to realize that its quarrel with the United States was not a local issue, but an aspect of the colonial revolt. This realization deepened and became a conviction as the movement for recognition of the Spanish-Americans gathered momentum in the United States. By 1817 the objectives of the Spanish Foreign Office were to prevent the recognition of the Spanish-Americans and to secure strict observance of neutrality by the United States.

In view of the changing Spanish attitude, and the very apparent need for legislation regarding neutrality enforcement, Madison recommended a new law to correct the defects of the Act of 1794.[29] John Forsyth, of Georgia, introduced in the House of Representatives a new bill designed to reinforce the earlier act by prohibiting the sale of armed vessels to foreigners to use in a way that would be illegal for any citizens of the United States and which would require that individuals involved in any suspicious cases must give bond before departing from United States ports.[30] Forsyth explained that neither the Act of 1794, nor the supplementary Act of 1797, contained any provision forbidding a citizen from arming and

28. Monroe had expressed a number of times his belief that the Spanish-American agents had exceeded any instructions from their governments. His message to Congress of December 2, 1817, is one example.

29. Madison to Congress, Dec. 26, 1816, *Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1900*, ed. by J. D. Richardson (11 vols., New York, 1909), 582. Hereinafter cited as *Messages and Papers*.

30. *Annals of Congress*, 14 Cong., 2 Sess., 715.

equipping a vessel within the United States and then selling it to a foreigner to be taken outside the limits of the United States and used contrary to law. He also explained that the existing laws failed to authorize the interference of the Executive in preventing the commission of the offence, or punishing the offenders prior to conviction.[31] The bill presented by Forsyth, and drawn up by the Committee of Foreign Affairs, was designed to meet the suggestions of Secretary of State Monroe, who believed the correction of these defects in the existing neutrality laws would make those laws effective.[32]

Considerable and heated discussions arose in regard to the details and the necessity of such legislation. Representative Erastus Root, of New York, spoke against the bill and with great zeal denounced the "Tyranny of a bigotted Sovereign" (Ferdinand VII). Root expressed the opinion of one group when he stated:

> The belligerent has the power of punshing offences committed at sea; and our laws provide for the punishment of offences against neutrality committed in our waters. What more . . . could the belligerent demand? [33]

Root also attacked the change in neutrality laws as preventing the South Americans from obtaining supplies in the United States and thus favoring imperialism over independence. He questioned the right of Spain to demand such a law.

Representative Samuel Smith, from Maryland, answered Root's charge that such a law favored Spain over Spanish America by stating that the main purpose of the legislation was to clear the government of any implication in the supplying of arms. He added that "arms might still be exported to any extent, but in the common way of merchants, not by force of arms, but by swift sailing." [34] One of Root's fellow citizens of New York, Thomas P. Grosvenor, tried to simplify the entire question by stating that "it was simply a question whether the United States would or would not compel its citizens to adhere to their duties as the people of a neutral nation." [35] John Randolph called the proposal a bill to make peace between the town of Baltimore and His Catholic Majesty.[36] The debate afforded the members of Congress an opportunity to show their knowledge of history, their eloquence as speakers, and their sentiments in favor of the Spanish-American revolution. In spite of the strong argu-

31. *Ibid.*, 719.
32. Monroe to Forsyth, Jan. 6, 1817, *ibid.*, 717.
33. *Ibid.*, 722.
34. *Ibid.*, 724.
35. *Ibid.*, 727.
36. *Ibid.*, 732.

ments of those opposed to the legislation, the bill was passed by the House on January 29, 1817, with a vote of 94 yeas to 60 nays. It later was returned from the Senate and, with a few minor changes, became law on March 3, 1817.[37]

The neutrality act of 1817 was not perfect, and many, like Jefferson, considered it contrary to the wishes of the people. The pressure of those opposed to it became so great that another law was passed, April 20, 1818, in an attempt to make a policy more satisfactory to those who were advocates of South American independence. The supplement of 1818 removed the provision of the act passed the previous year which permitted a foreign state to increase the strength of her armed ships in United States ports in order to commit hostilities against any colony, district or people. The supplement also provided for the arming of American vessels outside the continental limits of the United States. This provision included those that were to be used in warlike action against a power at peace with the United States.

While the Amelia Island question was being cleared up, Onís continued his protests against privateering out of American ports. He had expressed gratitude for the passing of the neutrality law of March 3, 1817,[38] but it soon became evident that the law would not be enforced in the manner he expected. On April 5, 1817, he offered the oath of two Spanish seamen that the privateer *Almegda* had robbed an English vessel on the high seas.[39] The *Almegda*, Onís claimed, was fitted out in an American port. On July 9, 1817, he complained quite heatedly regarding the actions of American officials in the port of Baltimore. In this instance Onís, at the request of the Spanish consul in Baltimore, sent all the necessary orders and warrants for the arrest of two privateers, a Captain Taylor and a Captain Stafford. Onís alleged that it was "notorious" that these privateers were manned and armed in the United States. He informed the Secretary of State that the Spanish consul had issued a warrant to the marshal of the city of Baltimore and that the collector of customs had granted a gunboat to aid in the arrest, but that the marshal had taken no action. After eight days of waiting, the Spanish consul demanded the execution of the orders. The marshal informed the consul that he could not make the arrest as they had not entered the bay. The consul then applied to the district attorney, who sympathized with him, stated that the marshal's action was indeed

37. *Ibid.*, 767.
38. Onís to Rush, March 15, 1817, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 189.
39. Onís to Rush, Apr. 5, 1817, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 1929.

unusual, but took no steps to remedy it or to enforce the laws of the United States.[40] The difficulty encountered in enforcing the new law is the most convincing evidence of its unpopularity, although this varied according to local prejudices and interests.

By 1817, as we have seen, the privateering problem had taken on new importance for the United States, and public opinion began to turn against brigandage. Privateers from South America, especially Buenos Aires, Venezuela, and Mexico, were taking an ever increasing number of American ships as prizes. Many of these privateers were sailing from Buenos Aires in direct violation of her privateering regulations and, looked at in even the most favorable light, could only be classed as pirates. The laws of Buenos Aires required that the captain and one half the crew of all privateers be citizens of Buenos Aires. As Buenos Aires required a period of five years residence before naturalization, it was quite evident that many of the crews and most of the captains could only be classed as pirates.

However, Buenos Aires had drawn up a special code to deal with privateering. The government at Washington placed the cause for much of the evil of the privateering system upon two articles found in this very liberal code, to that which (1) gave the privileges of a Buenos Airean and a right to that country's flag to a foreigner who had never been in the country, and to that which (2) permitted the privateers to send their prizes to any port they pleased.[41]

The establishments that had been made at Amelia Island and Galveston brought such an increase in privateering that many American merchants petitioned the government for naval protection for American commerce. Despatches from J. B. Provost, United States agent to Peru, and Caesar Rodney, agent to Buenos Aires, indicated that this was the only solution and for proof pointed to England, a nation which had maintained a squadron in the South Atlantic for some time.

Protests to the South American governments had little effect, so by a law of March 3, 1819, the United States followed Great Britain's policy of providing protection to her merchant ships. This new legislation was intended to deal partly with privateering from American ports, but its more important purpose was to give the United States Navy the authority to convoy American merchant men on the high seas and to retake any vessel which belonged to the United States, or its citizens, that had been unlawfully

40. Onís to Adams, July 9, 1817, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 441.

41. Adams to J. B. Provost, July 10, 1820, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 134-137.

captured.[42] The act clearly indicated that although American neutrality legislation as it stood at the time favored the Spanish-Americans, the United States intended to enforce it against the revolutionists just as strictly as against Spain.

This new neutrality legislation was followed by the appointment of Commodore Oliver H. Perry to go to South America for the express purpose of putting an end to the privateering practices then disturbing the United States. Perry died before he reached Buenos Aires and was replaced by Commodore Charles Morris, who arrived in Buenos Aires during the uprising which placed Rivadavia in power. John Forbes, in the position as American agent, was also sent to Buenos Aires. His instructions charged him to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the problem of privateers.[43]

Forbes arrived in Buenos Aires on October 24, 1820, a time of great political unrest in that city. It was very fortunate that Forbes was sent to Buenos Aires at this time as he was the most able of all the agents the United States had sent to that city and the only one who had had previous diplomatic experience. His despatches clearly indicate that the people of La Plata were greatly under English influence and quite put out with the temporizing policy at Washington. It took all of his very real ability as a diplomat, and considerable amount of time, to win the respect of the Buenos Aireans. Because of feeling against him, and the uncertainty of the government, he, for some months, delayed making his demands for changes in the privateering system of Buenos Aires.

On September 1, 1821, Forbes had a brief conversation with Rivadavia, at which time he reminded him that he was still awaiting an audience, and, though he understood how busy Rivadavia was, he would like to remind him of the seriousness of the question regarding privateers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs replied that the evil would no longer exist, that an order recalling all privateers would shortly be published. He explained his government's policy by saying that "governments seated in perfect peace and security reasoned calmly on these subjects," but his country had experienced so many difficulties in its struggle for independence that the Government had been compelled to adopt the strongest measures against Spanish commerce; but, said he, "this is now all finished." [44]

42. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 2 Sess., 2523-2524.

43. Adams to Forbes, July 5, 1820, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 130-131.

44. Forbes to Adams, Sept. 2, 1821, DS., DUSC., II Pt. II. See also *ASP, FR.*, IV, 821.

Rivadavia, in conference with Forbes, confirmed the statement and informed him a decree would be issued to that effect, a copy of which would be sent the American agent.[45] Minister Rivadavia's word was made good when, on the following October 6, the promised decree was issued.[46]

By this time, the original purpose of the privateers, that of driving Spanish ships from the seas, had been accomplished. The current opinion regarding the enforcement of strict neutrality laws was growing stronger as the depredations of the privateers became more wanton. Those who advocated Spanish-American independence had, by this time, found a new channel through which to direct their activities, and they began to bring forward their views in a movement for immediate recognition of the insurgent governments.

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45. Extract of a minute of a conference with Mr. Rivadavia, Minister of State, Sept. 17, 1821, *ibid.*, 823.

46. For the text of the decree see Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 590-591.

Chapter VII

The Recognition Question

PRIOR to 1816 the question of recognition of Buenos Aires by the United States was carefully and studiously avoided. The desire for recognition, on the part of Buenos Aires, was never outspoken but only implied or surreptitiously suggested, a necessary procedure in view of the fact that it hesitated to declare officially its independence from Spain.

Among the first Americans to arouse national interest on the subject was Henry Clay, who, on January 20, 1816, brought the question to the fore in a debate concerning the reduction of the army. Clay was quick to remind Americans of the concepts of legitimacy as put forth at the Congress of Vienna and to suggest that there might be a need for an army to defend and protect American interests. According to Clay, the independence of South America was very definitely an American interest.[1] Nine days later he pointed out that an army might be needed to aid South Americans in their fight to rid the Western Hemisphere of Old World domination.[2] At the time, Clay was not certain of the plans being made by European states, but, in retrospect, we can see that there was some reason for fear of European interference in Spanish America.

Clay's suggestion resulted in heated debates and discussion not only in Congress but in the press, and the American people received a liberal education in the conditions and fortunes of the Spanish-Americans. The United States was, for that period, flooded with pamphlets, books and an ever increasing volume of newsprint dealing with Spanish-American affairs.

Outstanding among these pamphlets was one addressed to the

1. *Annals of Congress*, 14 Cong., 1 Sess., 724.
2. *Ibid.*, 790.

President by H. M. Brackenridge,[3] an ardent advocate for the recognition of Buenos Aires. Brackenridge believed that recognition was due because Buenos Aires had maintained a *de facto* independence since 1810. He was somewhat disgusted with an administration whose policy he characterized as "overscrupulous." He felt that any other nation faced with the identical ill-conduct of Spain would have occupied Florida and Texas, and that the now powerful United States certainly had nothing to fear from Spain. This appeal to nascent nationalism, plus his highly prejudiced disparagement of Spanish rule found in the first few pages of the work, made the pamphlet highly popular in the United States, where it was widely read in spite of its lack of historical truth.

Pamphleteers were not the only propagandists who took up the cry for the recognition of Buenos Aires. William Duane, editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora,* used his paper unstintingly to educate the Americans in regard to Spanish America. Hezekiah Niles, the editor of *Niles Weekly Register,* devoted more space to reports from Spanish America than most of the other papers, a fact of which he was very proud.[4] Among his reprints of rebel proclamations and decrees were found articles upbraiding North Americans for their indifference toward Spanish America,[5] American reaction to the declaration of independence, and soul-stirring accounts of "Female patriots" who gladly and heroically gave their lives for the independence of their country.[6] Niles was not as critical of the administration as most of those favoring the recognition of Buenos Aires, but he was insistent in his appeals for that recognition.[7]

The question of recognition was more firmly impressed upon the American public by the unauthorized demand by Aguirre.[8]

Both sides of the question were given a good airing before the American public. The Philadelphia *Aurora* was attacked as a disseminator of false information about South America. In the *North American Review,* which opposed recognition, a reviewer of Dean Fune's work on the history of Buenos Aires wrote "that few subjects would awaken wider sympathy than the South American

3. Henry M. Brackenridge, *South America; a Letter on the Present State of that Country, to James Monroe, President of the United States* (Washington, 1817). Hereinafter cited as Brackenridge, *Letter to Monroe.*

4. *Niles Weekly Register,* Dec. 23, 1815.

5. *Ibid.,* Nov. 4, 1815.

6. *Ibid.,* Sept. 14, 1816, Sept. 28, 1816, Oct. 26, 1816, Sept. 11, 1819.

7. *Ibid.,* Sept. 14, 1811, Dec. 7, 1811, Feb. 1, 1812, Mar. 28, 1812, Sept. 11, 1813, July 20, 1816.

8. Aguirre to Adams, Dec. 16, 1818, Dec. 26, 1817, Jan. 6, 1818, Jan. 16, 1818, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

Revolution, in spite of declamation and poetry, the commercial and political relations of the United States with these people are insignificant compared to those of Europe." This writer argued that any policy of interference on the part of the United States in Buenos Aires would be against the traditions of the nation. Furthermore, he asked, "What sympathy or concern can Americans have for people of a different stock, law, institution, religion?" He felt that "their violence, laziness, are but the natural consequence of the degeneracy of a mixed race, ruined by tyranny, and afflicted by the evil influence of tropical climatic conditions." [9]

The journalistic tirades only tended to keep the question of recognition before the public without moderating either side. However, the attempts of the administration to enforce strict neutrality and to abolish privateering were discouraging to those favoring immediate recognition. The most depressing news for those clamoring for recognition, and the information with perhaps the greatest influence in moderating enthusiasm for welcoming Buenos Aires into the circle of independent states, probably came from reports of the Commission of 1817.

With the victory at Chacabuco, February 12, 1817, the revolution in South America assumed a new aspect. It was at this point in the revolution that President Monroe decided to send a commission to Buenos Aires and Chile to study conditions there and report to the administration. On April 25, 1817, Monroe asked Poinsett to carry out this mission,[10] but Poinsett declined the appointment. Later, however, he did consent, at the request of the President,[11] to make a report on South American affairs from the knowledge he possessed. With Poinsett declining, the administration decided to increase the membership of the commission to three men and one secretary. Those chosen were Caesar Augustus Rodney of Delaware, John Graham of Virginia, Theodorick Bland of Baltimore, and, as secretary, Henry M. Brackenridge, also of Baltimore.[12] The reasons for sending such a commission were at least three in number: one, the pressure of public opinion, two, the honest desire of the administration to gather correct information regarding conditions in that region, and finally, the desire to gain an excuse for delay in changing the government's Spanish-American policy.

The commissioners sailed on the frigate *Congress,* on December

9. *North American Review,* XII, 432 ff.

10. Monroe to Poinsett, Apr. 25, 1817, Manning, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 39-40.

11. Adams to Poinsett, Oct. 23, 1818, *ibid.,* I, 79.

12. For the discussion in Congress regarding this commission see *Annals of Congress,* 15 Cong., 1 Sess., II, 1464-1469.

3, 1817, and arrived in Buenos Aires February 28, 1818.[13] They were welcomed with great formality and considerable interest on the part of both the government and the people of Buenos Aires. Because of the public nature of their mission, and the attention that had been attracted to it, they were able to learn little that had not already been reported. For the most part, they had to accept the information that was presented to them. In this respect, a single commissioner, sent without all the fanfare which accompanied this commission, would probably have accomplished much more. Their return to the United States was announced to the President on July 30, 1818, by Adams, who informed the President that Rodney and Graham had returned, but that Bland had remained to go on to Chile before his return.[14]

The three commissioners were unable to agree in all details of their findings and submitted separate statements. Although all were partial to the insurgents prior to their departure, their reports to the government indicated disillusionment.[15] The essence of the reports was that it appeared to be impossible for Spain to regain control of South America, but, on the other hand, some doubt existed as to the ability of Buenos Aires to maintain a stable government.

While the official reports were merely informative, and made no recommendations, Bland, who was apparently fully aware of the difficulties faced by the governments of Buenos Aires and Chile, wrote that recognition of Buenos Aires was inadvisable. Rodney and Graham were more optimistic, and Brackenridge, in his account of the commission, was completely sympathetic to the Buenos Aires government, and, apparently, returned with his earlier views unchanged. The administration then consulted with Poinsett, who supported Bland's point of view. Poinsett, undoubtedly disgruntled because his close friends, the Carreras, had lost power in Chile, wrote Adams that since the people in those countries had no voice in the government, recognition would tend only to strengthen the group in power at the moment.[16]

These expressions of opinion and the propaganda which was circulating in the United States were, in part, responsible for discussions of the question in Congress. The debates there had an

13. Brackenridge, *Voyage*, I, 101.

14. Adams to Monroe, July 30, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 74.

15. For the texts of these reports see Rodney to Secretary of State, Nov. 5, 1818, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 217-224, 227-270, Graham to Secretary of State, *ibid.*, 224-227, Bland to Secretary of State, Nov. 2, 1818, *ibid.*, 270-323.

16. Poinsett to Adams, Nov. 4, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 439.

importance far beyond the walls of their chamber, for in this period Congressional debates made up a large part of the newspaper copy. In this manner, many Americans first had the question of Spanish-American independence and recognition brought to their attention.

The question of recognition of Buenos Aires was first brought up in the House of Representatives on March 24, 1818, by Henry Clay, who had great sympathy for the struggling Spanish-Americans. The House was considering a bill to appropriate money for the commissioners who were in Buenos Aires at this time. Clay proposed an appropriation of $18,000 for the "outfit," and one year's salary for a minister from the United States to the independent provinces of the Río de la Plata.[17] In defending his proposal, Clay called attention to the fact that the United States had been first established as a *de facto* government, and since that time it had been the policy to recognize such governments. If it were to continue this policy, Clay argued, it would have to recognize the South American nations at once.[18] This motion led to a discussion as to whether the power of recognizing foreign governments resided in the Executive or in Congress. The majority of the House seemed to be in favor of the Executive, and the motion was defeated on May 28, 1818, by a vote of 115 to 45.

The President was quick to reply to Clay's attempt to force his hand in foreign policy. In a message to the House the next day, Monroe stated that "the present acknowledgment of the Government of La Plata, in any mode was deemed by the President inexpedient . . . to their interests as to those of the United States." [19]

Those who supported the policies of the administration immediately attacked Clay's proposal. Forsyth, of Georgia, was especially critical, and pointed out that England gained more from La Plata than the United States and, therefore, England should take the risks, as well as the profits, of recognition. He attempted to show the damage a war with Spain could bring to American commerce, particularly if England remained allied with Spain. Forsyth could see no commercial advantage in recognition. He observed that United States vessels entered the Plata ports freely, and that the ships of Buenos Aires had free access to American ports. Forsyth also placed stress upon the fact that no minister had as yet arrived

17. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1468.
18. *Ibid.*, 1488.
19. Monroe to House of Representatives, March 25, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 60.

from La Plata demanding acceptance; therefore, he added, it was possible they did not desire recognition at this time. He was also critical of Clay for attempting to take from the President his constitutional power of conducting foreign affairs.[20]

Samuel Smith, of Maryland, attacked Clay and those who supported him from a commercial aspect. Smith argued that the United States had nothing to gain from recognition of South America, but, on the contrary, would suffer because of the competition of any states created there. Smith pointed out that the United States and La Plata produced many identical products; therefore, any goods they would need would be purchased from a nation which, in turn, would buy from them.[21]

A. Smyth, of Virginia, objected to Clay's proposal from a constitutional point of view, maintaining that the House of Representatives had no part or responsibility in establishing foreign policy, and stated that "You [the House] possess the power of impeachment, and consequently, may discuss, and, by resolution, express, an opinion on any past act either of the Executive or of the Judiciary; but you have no right to give a direction to either." [22]

John Quincy Adams maintained that recognition at this time was not to the best interests of the United States and staunchly held to his views as expressed in a report made to the President on August 24, 1816. In this report Adams stated:

> There is a stage in such (revolutionary) contests when the party struggling for independence has, as I conceive, a right to demand its acknowledgment by neutral parties, and when the acknowledgment may be granted without departure from the obligations of neutrality. It is the stage when the independence is established as a matter of fact, so as to leave the chance of the opposite party to recover their dominion utterly desperate. The neutral nation, must, of course, judge for itself when this period has arrived; and as the belligerent nation has the same right to judge for itself, it is very likely to judge differently from the neutral, and to make it a cause or pretext for war, as Great Britain did expressly against France in our Revolution, and substantially against Holland. If war thus results, in point of fact, from the measure of recognizing a contested independence, the moral right or wrong of the war depends upon the justice and sincerity and prudence with which the recognizing nation took the step. I am satisfied that the cause of the South Americans is just. But the justice of a cause, however it may enlist individual feelings in its favor, is not sufficient to justify third parties in siding with it. The fact and the right combined can alone authorize a neutral to acknowledge a new and disputed sovereignty.[23]

20. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1502-1518.

21. *Ibid*, 1541-1542.

22. *Ibid.*, 1569-1570.

23. Adams to Monroe, Aug. 24, 1816, published in Francis Wharton, ed., *A Digest of International Law of the United States* (3 vols., 2nd edition, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., *Senate Miscellaneous Document 162*, (Washington, 1886), I, 521. Hereinafter cited as Wharton, *Digest*.

Clay and his followers counterattacked vigorously with the reminder that Spanish-American independence meant the freedom of America.[24] The House maintained a greater calm than Clay, and, as we have seen, Clay's proposal was defeated when brought to a vote.[25] The refusal of most Representatives to accept this resolution was probably based on the danger of war with Europe. Spain alone was not feared, but the action of the other European powers was an important consideration. For most Americans, recognition of Buenos Aires was not important enough to risk the destruction of American commerce at the hands of Great Britain and the threat of privateers that would be released by Spain.

By the middle of 1818, events were occuring in Europe which would once again influence American foreign policy. Secretary of State Adams learned in May, 1818, that Great Britain had agreed to a general mediation of European powers between Spain and her colonies. As, shortly before this, the British minister had promised to keep the United States informed regarding the movement for mediation, such news was disturbing to Adams. The State Department was not particularly worried that Great Britain would take part in any mediation involving force,[26] but the government was interested in the plans of the European allies. On May 19, 1818, Adams instructed Albert Gallatin, United States Minister to France, to ascertain the intentions of the allies. Adams explained that the United States desired to maintain a just policy toward all, and its plans must be known in order to do this. Gallatin was warned that:

> we do not wish to join them in any plan of interference between the parties; and above all that we can neither accede to nor approve of any interference to restore any part of the Spanish supremacy, in any of the South American provinces.[27]

Adams sent similar instructions to Richard Rush in England. In case of an invitation to the United States to take part in these negotiations, Rush was instructed to

> let it be known that we have no desire to participate in it; and above all that we will join in no plan of pacification founded on any other basis than that of the entire Independence of the South Americans.[28]

Adams stated, in this same communication, that the administration

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24. *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1605-1643.

25. *Ibid.*, 1646. President Monroe's message of March 25, 1818, giving the papers in the Department of State relative to South American independence down to that date, may be found in *ASP., FR.*, IV, 173 ff. His message of January 29, 1818, on the same subject, with accompanying papers will be found in *ibid.*, 412.

26. Rush to Adams, March 21, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 1441.

27. Adams to Gallatin, May 19, 1818, *ibid.*, I, 66.

28. Adams to Rush, May 20, 1818, *ibid.*, I, 69.

was convinced the basic British policy was independence for South America and that as soon as England had satisfied her sense of duty to Spain she would establish a policy favoring independence.

Thus, by May, 1818, the administration had become convinced that independence for South America was assured. The American conviction that England would not participate in any action that would endanger her trade was partly responsible for the development of this belief, but the successes of the South Americans in defeating the Spanish forces must also be given its share in bringing the administration to such a decision.

It was during this flurry of activity concerning South American affairs that the President's Commission of 1817 returned. While their reports were not the encouragement expected by those agitating for recognition, they did serve to bolster the policy pursued by the administration. The commissioners did agree that it would be impossible for Spain to retake the colonies by force, but they did not agree on the conditions of internal affairs. The conclusion was drawn that considerable unrest and instability existed. Brackenridge, the secretary on the mission, developed a twofold thesis which he tried, with some success, to sell to the American Congress and people. He held that the United States would have to be the first nation to acknowledge the independence of any part of South America,[29] and that there was no danger Spain would consider recognition as a cause for war with the United States.[30]

By autumn, 1818, plans were being laid by France, Russia and England for mediation, but the position of England in such action was becoming more and more vague. By October, the chances of the allied powers reaching an agreement seemed remote. Rush, writing from England, stated that "there seems to be but little prospect of their coming to accord. . . ."[31] By November it had become apparent that England would take no part in joint mediation.[32] The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle had adjourned when the British refused to take part in the intervention as proposed by France and Russia. As the plan proposed by these nations involved coercive action by use of threats and economic sanctions, England's refusal to participate seemed good indication that she opposed the use of force of any type to settle the question.

Great Britain made one more overture to mediate between Spain and her colonies, but Spain again flatly refused the British offer.

29. Brackenridge, *Voyage*, II, 247.
30. *Ibid.*, II, 356.
31. Rush to Adams, Oct. 24, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 1978.
32. Rush to Adams, Nov. 20, 1818, *ibid.*, III, 1449.

By March, 1819, the English dropped their attempts to bring about a settlement, an act which almost forced all other powers to follow suit.[33]

The British position, in regard to mediation, actually assured the eventual independence of Spanish America. The British historian, C. K. Webster, points out that after the failure of English mediation on the principle of free trade the British regarded recognition "rather as a matter of time than principle."[34] Castlereagh made excellent use of mediation to delay the recognition of Spanish America, for he believed, quite correctly, that the United States would not take such action as long as the threat of British mediation was held before it. While England was actually interested in a peaceful settlement, but one which would guarantee England free trade, the French and Russian governments, not seriously interested in a settlement of the Spanish colonial policy, used mediation as a means of causing Spanish distrust of England.

By August, 1818, Monroe apparently was personally convinced that some of the Spanish-American governments should be recognized in the near future. However, there was hesitation on taking any action without some prior knowledge of the possible reactions of other nations. Therefore, in an effort to discover what these reactions might be, instructions were sent to the United States ministers in England, France and Russia to determine how each government would view an acknowledgment of the independence of the colonies by the United States.

The replies to this request were most encouraging. Gallatin, reporting on the attitude of the Continent, expressed the belief that protests could be expected but that no definite action would follow. Rush repeated his earlier opinion, "with increasing confidence," that Great Britain would not consider United States recognition of any of the Spanish colonies as in itself a cause for war. He also restated his belief that the British government was moving in the direction of a policy which favored independence for Spanish America.[35]

Toward the end of 1818, Monroe felt that a bolder policy could be adopted in regard to Spanish America and favored making a definite bid for cooperation with Great Britain. John Quincy Adams, his new Secretary of State, did not agree with Monroe in

33. Rush to Adams, March 22, 1819, *ibid.*, III, 1454.

34. Charles K. Webster, ed., *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, 1812-1830 (2 vols., London, 1938), I, 14.

35. Rush to Adams, Nov. 20, 1818, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 1449-1450.

this regard. Adams had just returned from his former position as United States Minister to the Court of St. James and could see no possibility for Anglo-American cooperation. This opinion came from his observations in England that the classes favoring Spanish-American independence were the classes most hostile to the United States, while the government, which was friendly to the United States, was definitely opposed to independence for the insurgents. In addition, Adams, in spite of his opinion, had earlier suggested joint action and cooperation to the British government,[36] only to have his suggestion rejected by Castlereagh. Catlereagh's reply was quite blunt, stating simply that he could see no way in which the policies of the two countries were identical, or could easily be made so.[37]

However, in accordance with the President's request, Adams drew up new instructions for Rush under the date of January 1, 1819. Rush was informed to notify Castlereagh:

> . . . that the President has it in contemplation to grant . . . and Exequatur, or otherwise to recognize the Government of Buenos Ayers, at no remote period, should no event occur which will justify a further postponement of that intention. If it should suit the views of Great Britain to adopt similar measures at the same time and in concert with us, it will be highly satisfactory to the President.[38]

On January 2, 1819, the Cabinet was informed of the President's intention of recognition of Buenos Aires "at no remote period." The result was immediate and somewhat heated discussion as to how such a step should be taken. The Cabinet was divided on the question, Calhoun being of the opinion that this country should act in concurrence with Great Britain, Crawford, that the United States should send a minister to Buenos Aires, and Adams, thinking that the minister should come from Buenos Aires seeking recognition. All favored recognition.

Rush presented the President's proposal to Castlereagh at a conference on February 12, 1819. The reception given the proposal by Castlereagh was far from that expected by Monroe. Castlereagh observed that the United States assumed that Great Britain favored the independence of Spanish America, which it did not, as the policy of the British government had always been, and continued to be, the return of the colonies to Spanish control.[39] When the report of this conference reached the United States, it was

36. Adams to Rush, May 20, 1818, *ibid.*, I, 66-70.
37. Rush to Adams, Aug. 3, 1818, *ibid.*, III, 1447.
38. Adams to Rush, Jan. 1, 1819, *ibid.*, I, 87.
39. Rush to Adams, Feb. 15, 1819, *ibid.*, III, 1451.

apparent to all concerned that Adams' appraisal of the policy and reactions of the British government was correct.

It is difficult to determine exactly the effect of this rebuff of Monroe's offer. It is probable that it had some influence in delaying American recognition of the insurgents, but other events occurred at the same time which pushed the British problem into the background. In Buenos Aires, the stability that existed under Pueyrredón came to an end with his exile and the revival of revolution and disturbing political conditions. Then, too, on February 22, 1819, Adams and Onís signed the treaty which was to settle the Florida question.

The negotiations for the Adams-Onís treaty had been long and tedious, starting unofficially with the recognition of Onís as Spanish Minister to the United States on December 19, 1815. Throughout the negotiations the Spanish government suggested over and over again that an article should be inserted in the treaty stipulating that the United States would not acknowledge the independence of the Spanish-Americans. Secretary Adams refused to give such a pledge,[40] and Forsyth, American Minister to Spain, so informed the Spanish Foreign Office, refusing even to discuss the question. Onís attempted, also, to tie the question of American neutrality to the treaty by insisting that the ships of the insurgents be kept from American ports. In this regard, Onís was informed that it was the policy of the United States to "allow any ship to enter as long as all duties, etc., are paid, and proper conduct is maintained." Monroe further informed him that "A ship is not to be judged by the flag it is flying," [41] and added that:

> All your Government had a right to claim of the United States was, that they should not interfere in the contest or promote, by any active service, the success of the revolution, admitting that they continued to overlook the injustices received from Spain, and remained at peace.[42]

Although the treaty was signed, and received unanimous Senate approval within two days, the worries of the Monroe administration were not ended, for the pact met with apparently deliberate delay in Spain. The press in the United States carried stories that England was attempting to block ratification. However, the main reason for the delay, other than personal intrigue, was Spain's fear that when the United States gained Florida, it would immediately recognize the Spanish-American governments. There was

40. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 115, 116, 199, 200, 209.
41. Monroe to Onís, Jan. 19, 1816, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 425.
42. *Ibid.*, 426.

some hope in Madrid that Spain might yet, through military force, bring the colonies back into the Spanish empire.

The treaty had scarcely been signed by Adams and Onís when Spain decided to hold up ratification. The United States Minister to Spain, John Forsyth, reported to Adams in August, 1819, that the Spanish desired a guarantee that the United States would not recognize any of Spain's colonies until such a step had been taken by Spain. Forsyth reported one reason for this renewed demand was that Spain had been informed of the conversation between Rush and Castlereagh, of February 12, 1819, in which the United States announced its intention to recognize Buenos Aires.[43]

When the attitude of Spain became known, American temper flared and became outright bellicose. Talk and rumor of war with Spain became common, and even mercantile New England, which had long been opposed to any violent measures, joined the rest of the nation in developing a warlike attitude.

Thus, by December, 1819, Monroe and his cabinet faced a delicate situation. The cabinet was divided on what action to take, with Crawford arguing for action and Adams for delay. Finally, Adams suggested a compromise, which was accepted by the cabinet and placed in Monroe's message to Congress. Monroe then recommended the passage of an act authorizing the President to take possession of Florida when, and if, he should find such a course necessary or desirable.[44] This was a happy thought and astute diplomacy, for the act indicated to the world that the United States was serious, and it increased the pressure upon Spain. At the same time, it left Monroe free either to use force or not as events might dictate. In some respects, this act could be considered an evasion of the issue, but there were excellent reasons for such evasion. Such a step could be considered an act of war, and while Adams did not think that Spain would fight over this issue,[45] there was uncertainty. Since the ultimate result of the armed occupation of Florida could not be determined, Monroe was happy to postpone action until he could gather foreign opinion on the subject.

Spain announced in August, 1819, that a minister would be sent to the United States to iron out questions relating to the Adams-Onís treaty, and the arrival of General Francisco Dionisio Vives in April, 1820, renewed hope for ratification. However, the principal

43. Forsyth to Adams, Oct. 22, 1819, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 1987.

44. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 446 ff.; Monroe to Congress, Dec. 7, 1819, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, II, 54-58.

45. Adams, *Memoirs*, V, 60.

aim in the negotiation now renewed was to prevent the United States from recognizing or giving aid to the rebel governments. Vives immediately protested American aid to South America and the unfairness of the neutrality laws of the United States. He informed Adams that he was prepared to promise ratification if the United States would close her ports to privateers, stop future aid, and:

> . . . form no relations with the pretended Governments of the revolted provinces of Spain situate beyond the sea, and . . . conform to the course of proceeding adopted, in this respect, by the others Powers in amity with Spain.[46]

Vives later wrote Adams that:

> . . . the belief generally prevailed throughout Europe that the ratification of the treaty by Spain, and the acknowledgment of the independence of her rebellious transatlantic colonies by the United States, would be simultaneous acts.[47]

Adams refused to see any connection between treaty ratification and the recognition of the Spanish-American governments. Typical of his replies is that of May 3, 1820, in which he stated that as a necessary consequence "of the neutrality between Spain and the South American provinces, the United States can contract no engagement not to form any relations with those provinces."[48] On May 6, 1820, Adams notified Vives that further delay in ratification could mean more indemnities and a refusal of the boundary line agreed to in the treaty.[49] In further effort to apply pressure, Adams remarked that recognition of the insurgents by the United States would probably follow Spain's refusal to ratify the treaty.[50]

As Spain continued to delay, Adams suggested the occupation of Florida and the recognition of Colombia,[51] in spite of Forsyth's information that the Spanish Cortes was meeting and, while some of the deputies opposed acceptance of the treaty, it would probably be accepted.[52] Monroe, however, remained calm, and his message to Congress of November, 1820, said little in regard to Spanish America, except to note its continued military successes. It was hoped that these successes would lead to peace and to a general recognition of Spanish America by all the powers.[53]

46. Vives to Adams, April 14, 1820, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 680.
47. Vives to Adams, April 24, 1820, *ibid.*, IV, 682.
48. Adams to Vives, May 3, 1820, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 113.
49. Adams to Vives, May 6, 1820, *ibid.*, I, 115.
50. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 380.
51. *Ibid*, V, 179.
52. Forsyth to Adams, July 13, 1820, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 2000.
53. Monroe to Congress, Nov. 14, 1820, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, II, 77.

Undoubtedly, behind Monroe's desire not to force the question at this time was an unwillingness to stir up Spain while there was any prospect of bringing a peaceful settlement to the differences between Spain and the United States. Then, too, the pressure of public opinion for United States recognition had subsided somewhat, owing to a growing irritation with privateers, to the discouraging reports of the commissioners, and to the rumors of a growing desire in Buenos Aires for a monarchial form of government.[54] At the same time, the very military successes of which Monroe spoke tended to weaken the efforts of those who were striving for the recognition of Spanish America. To these, it appeared that the insurgents would gain their independence through their own efforts, and recognition, as a means of assisting them, would not be necessary.

Time, however, proved Forsyth's prediction to be correct, and the Spanish Cortes accepted the treaty, which was signed by Ferdinand VII, on October 24, 1820, and sent to the United States for final exchange. As the six-month time limit for ratification had long been exhausted, the treaty was once more sent to the Senate, where it was again approved on February 19, 1821. Formal ratification and exchange took place February 22, 1821.

While the treaty was received with great acclaim in the United States, news of it created only resentment in Spanish America. Many Spanish-Americans felt that the United States had deserted them. The most generally accepted account among the Spanish-Americans was that the treaty contained a secret clause, by which the United States had traded recognition of their governments for Florida. The more conservative view was that the treaty would now make it possible for Spain to concentrate all of her power upon the problem of regaining her colonies. A small group, for obvious reasons, followed the lead of the British business men in Buenos Aires, who claimed that the United States had become the ally of Spain.

While Monroe's administration continued its cautious policy and the Spanish-Americans were losing hope of American assistance, Clay continued to carry on his campaign for recognition. On February 6, 1821, he introduced a bill to appropriate eighteen thousand dollars for:

54. John Provost to Adams, March 20, 1820, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 545 ff. Provost, American agent to Peru, informed Adams that negotiations were supposed to have taken place between Pueyrredón and agents of the French government regarding the establishment of a monarchy for the Plata under the Prince of Lucca, a Bourbon cousin of Ferdinand VII. Adams became quite bitter about these monarchial schemes.

. . . an outfit and one years salary to such Minister as the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may send to any Government of South America, which has established, and is maintaining its independency of Spain.[55]

After spirited debate, the vote on this measure was taken on February 9, 1821, and it was defeated 86 to 79.[56]

Clay then gave up the idea of an appropriation and on the following day offered a declaration of sympathy with the Spanish-Americans and of cooperation with the President by proposing a resolution that:

. . . the House of Representatives participates with the people of the United States in the deep interest which they feel for the success of the Spanish provinces of South America which are struggling to establish their liberty and independence; and that it will give its Constitutional support to the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence of any of the said provinces.[57]

This was debated and finally voted upon in two sections, with the division being made at the semicolon. The first section carried by a vote of 134 to 12, the second by 87 to 68. A committee of two members was appointed to lay these resolutions before the President, and Clay, one of these members, in his report of February 19, remarked that the President assured the committee that he felt a great interest in the success of the provinces of South America and that he would take the resolution into deliberate consideration.[58] Monroe considered this action of the House as an endorsement of his policies.

By the end of 1821, stability was once again returning to South America. The Republic of Buenos Aires had been formed under the leadership of Rivadavia, and other areas were enjoying similar freedom and independence. On January 18, 1822, Adams informed Manuel Torres, agent from Colombia, that Monroe was giving serious thought to recognition.[59] On January 20, 1822, the House of Representatives called upon President Monroe to send it the correspondence dealing with the Spanish-American governments. The House also requested information on the political conditions of this section of the Western Hemisphere and the state of war between the colonies and Spain.[60]

Monroe replied to this request with a special message to Con-

55. *Annals of Congress*, 16 Cong., 2 Sess., 1042.
56. *Ibid.*, 1055.
57. *Ibid.*, 1082.
58. *Ibid.*, 1091-1092.
59. *Annals of Congress*, 17 Cong., 1 Sess., 2099.
60. *Ibid.*, 825-828.

gress on March 8, 1822. In reviewing the progress of the colonies toward independence, Monroe stated:

> This contest has now reached such a stage, and been attended with such decisive success on the part of the provinces, that it merits the most profound consideration whether their right to the rank of independent nations, with all the advantages incident to it in their intercourse with the United States, is not complete. Buenos Ayres assumed that rank by a formal declaration in 1816, and has enjoyed it since 1810. . . . Thus it is manifest that all those provinces are not only in the full enjoyment of their independence, but, considering the state of war and other circumstances, that there is not the most remote prospect of their being deprived of it. . . . Of the views of the Spanish Government on this subject, no particular information has been recently received. . . . Nor has any authentic information been recently received of the disposition of other powers respecting it. A sincere desire has been cherished to act in concert with them in the proposed recognition. . . . In proposing this measure, it is not contemplated to change thereby, in the slightest manner, our friendly relations with either of the parties, but to observe in all respects, as heretofore, should the war be continued, the most perfect neutrality between them.[61]

The President concluded his message by remarking that, if the Congress should concur with the views he presented, he felt certain they would see the need of making the necessary appropriations for carrying recognition into effect.

Monroe's address and the documents submitted by Secretary of State Adams were turned over to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, who reported on March 19, 1822, that recognition of the Spanish-American governments would only be recognition of an existing fact. Thus, United States recognition would in no way furnish them assistance in breaking the bonds between Spain and her colonies, for no bonds actually existed. The committee also pointed out that Spain had not sent a company of soldiers to South America for three years. Upon hearing this report, the House passed on March 28, 1822, the following resolutions:

> That the House of Representatives concur in the opinion expressed by the President in his message of the 8th of March, 1822, that the American provinces of Spain which have declared their independence, and are in the enjoyment of it, ought to be recognized by the United States as independent nations.
>
> That the Committee of Ways and Means be instructed to report a bill appropriating a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, to enable the President of the United States to give due effect to such recognition.[62]

The second resolution was carried out with the enactment on May 4, 1822, of the following law:

> *Be it enacted, etc.*, That, for such Missions to the independent nations on the American continent as the President of the United States may deem

61. Monroe to Congress, March 8, 1822, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 818-819. See also *Annals of Congress*, 17 Cong., 1 Sess., I, 284-286. For discussion of message, see *ibid.*, 1241-1245.

62. *Ibid.*, 1403.

proper, there be, and hereby is, appropriated a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars to be paid out of any money in the Treasury, not otherwise appropriated.[63]

When the Spanish minister in the United States, Joaquín de Anduaga, heard of Monroe's March 8 message to Congress, he wrote a vigorous protest to Adams, stating that the condition of the Spanish insurgents did not entitle them to recognition and questioning the right of the United States "to sanction and declare legitimate a rebellion without a cause, and the event of which is not even decided." He declared that recognition of the Spanish-American provinces:

. . . can in no way now, or at any time, lessen or invalidate in the least the right of Spain to the said provinces, or to employ whatever means may be in her power to reunite them to the rest of her dominions.[64]

Secretary of State Adams replied that recognition was not "intended to invalidate any right of Spain," but was only an acknowledgment of the existing fact of independence.[65] The Spanish continued to protest, but the threat of war diminished. Forsyth wrote from Spain on June 23, 1822, that Spain would probably "not do more than break off their diplomatic intercourse with us." [66]

Anduaga's arguments, future events proved, were without avail. Although the die had not yet been cast, the machinery had been set up whereby the President, when he "deemed it expedient," could recognize the independence of the Spanish-American governments.

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63. *Ibid.*, 2603-2604.
64. Anduaga to Adams, March 9, 1822, *ASP., FR.*, IV, 846.
65. Adams to Anduaga, Apr. 6, 1822, Manning, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 157.
66. Forsyth to Adams, June 23, 1822, *ASP., FR.*, V, 374.

Chapter VIII

Achievement of Recognition

While Aguirre was making his unauthorized demands for the recognition of Buenos Aires, and Congress was debating the issue, the insurgent government sent its last agent, David Curtis DeForest, to the United States. DeForest, a merchant of Huntington, Connecticut, established himself at Buenos Aires in 1802, and except for a short period, 1809-1812, when he was expelled by the viceroy, Cisneros, had a prosperous and successful career until 1818. In 1817 he decided to return to the United States. Hearing of his planned return, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tagle, offered him the position of Consul General in the United States, and DeForest accepted.

DeForest's instructions of February 24, 1818, gave him the authority to appoint vice-consuls and to undertake to secure the recognition of independence. He was also given power to distribute privateering commissions, a number of which he carried with him. In this regard, a supplementary instruction authorized him to deal with any country where privateers could be fitted out.[1] DeForest also carried with him a letter from Pueyrredón to Monroe which stated that he had been appointed Consul-General, as agreed in Article 18 of the articles drawn up by the American agent, William G. D. Worthington. Thus, DeForest's credentials were based upon an unauthorized agreement which had already been disavowed by the United States.

In addition to his instructions and the letter to Monroe, DeForest carried some despatches for General William H. Winder, of Baltimore. Pueyrredón was attempting to enlist the aid of Winder in securing the recognition desired by Buenos Aires. Apparently,

1. Instructions for DeForest as Consul General in the United States, Feb. 24, 1818, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 8.

Winder's reputation had suffered in no way as a result of his career as a general in the War of 1812, for he was a successful lawyer and a prominent politician in Baltimore. More important, perhaps, was his close friendship with Monroe. It would seem, however, that the political leaders of Buenos Aires knew little of the man or his character.

DeForest's first act in the United States was to deliver the despatches to Winder. Winder immediately wrote to Monroe, telling him that he had been asked to serve as a deputy or agent for the government of Buenos Aires. He informed Monroe that he had made no effort to bring about such an appointment and that it was quite unexpected. He asked Monroe what he should do. Monroe dissuaded Winder from accepting such a position.[2]

Adams received DeForest on May 7, 1818, at which time the Secretary of State explained that it was not thought prudent to recognize the Government of Buenos Aires. He further explained that the Worthington treaty had not been approved by the President. He told DeForest it would, therefore, be impossible to receive him formally in the character of Consul General, adding that the agent was at liberty to act in his official character just as though he had been received in due form.[3]

DeForest pointed out that Pueyrredón felt, since a consul had been appointed to Buenos Aires, there would be no difficulty in the United States accepting a consul from Buenos Aires. While not emphasizing the point at this time, DeForest went on to assure Adams that Buenos Aires had no part in the Amelia Island affair and no desire to embarrass the United States regarding action taken there. The latter, no doubt, was an attempt to cover Aguirre's ill-advised charges.[4]

It is clear that DeForest, in his initial interview with Adams, did not disclose the objects of his mission. No mention was made of his seeking recognition, of his instructions to give out privateering commissions or to find a base for privateers. The following day, however, he touched upon the latter when he asked Adams if the United States would take any action if the Government of Buenos Aires should attempt to establish a base in Florida. He explained that such a base would be of great value as a means of attacking

2. General William H. Winder to Monroe, May 3, 1818; Monroe to Winder, May 11, 1818, "Correspondence between General Winder and President Monroe with reference to proposals made by the United Provinces of South America," ed. by Mary M. Kenway, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XII (1932), 458-460.

3. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 88-90.

4. *Ibid.*

Spanish shipping. Adams informed DeForest that there was no intention of injuring the interests of Buenos Aires, but the same law used in taking possession of Amelia Island applied to Florida.[5]

Following the conversations of May 7 and 8 with Adams, DeForest let the matter drop until Congress met in November. At that time, DeForest returned to Washington and, influenced by Clay, decided to push the Government into formal acknowledgment of his diplomatic character.[6] With this in mind, he wrote Adams, informing him of his return to Washington and desire to renew his solicitations to be accredited.[7] This solicitation resulted in a long conference between the two men on December 14, 1818. Adams again informed DeForest that the United States did not consider this the time for recognition and, in an effort to prevent DeForest from making the same error as Aguirre, cautioned him that recognition would come at the proper time. Adams also referred to the unrest in the Plata region, asserting that any recognition by the United States would in no way determine the extent of territory claimed by Buenos Aires, particularly such areas as the Banda Oriental, Paraguay and Sante Fé.[8]

DeForest greatly displeased Adams by renewing his solicitations for acceptance as Consul General from Buenos Aires. Adams clearly understood the reason behind DeForest's new insistence, and recorded in his *Memoirs* that in this affair "everything is insidious and factious." He noted that the action was taken for the purpose of "baiting the Administration," and especially aimed at placing the blame for failure to receive South American ministers and consul generals upon the Secretary of State. He added that, "DeForest's notes are cunning and deceptive."[9]

Adams and the administration had definite reasons for their stand, but Adams felt these could not be fully revealed; they would be offensive to Pueyrredón and his government and, perhaps, bring failure to part of the administrations plans. Adams felt that, although Rodney's report was a strong argument in favor of recognition, the facts disclosed in it, as well as in the reports of the other commissioners, gave valid reason for postponing acknowledgment of the government of Buenos Aires. Also tending to support the

5. *Ibid.*

6. DeForest to Tagle, Dec. 12, 1818, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 8.

7. DeForest to Adams, Dec. 9, 1818, *Annals of Congress,* 15 Cong., 2 Sess., II, 1614-1615.

8. DeForest to Tagle, Dec. 18, 1818, AGN., S1-A2-A4, No. 8. Adams to DeForest, Dec. 31, 1818, *Annals of Congress,* 15 Cong., 2 Sess., 1616.

9. Adams, *Memoirs,* IV, 223.

policy of postponement was the attempt at mediation between Spain and South America, which the European powers were carrying out at this time. Adams believed the attempt would fail because it was based upon the principle of restoring the colonies to Spain without any application of force. In Adams' thinking, if the United States permitted this effort to run its full course without attempting to disturb it, the United States would, on its failure, be able to recognize any of the Spanish-American governments without collision with the Allies. Another reason for postponement rested in the internal conditions of La Plata. Adams felt that the pretense of the government of Buenos Aires to the sovereignty of the whole of the old Viceroyalty of La Plata operated against acknowledgment. He pointed out to Congress and to DeForest that such could hardly be the case while Portugal was in possession of Montevideo and Artigas of the remainder of Banda Oriental, and with Paraguay establishing and maintaining its own government.[10] These points were, of course, exclusive of the Worthington embroglio.

These facts, and the knowledge that DeForest was working with Clay and the opposition, led Adams to the decision to keep DeForest at arm's length. But DeForest was determined to press his cause and attempted to carry on lengthy correspondence with Adams.

DeForest built his attack around two points. One, that without an *exequatur,* he could do nothing about the claims of the United States regarding irregularities and excesses committed by armed vessels sailing under the flag of Buenos Aires. Two, that the United States was unfair to the Spanish-Americans in that it recognized the agents and consuls of Spain in the period 1808 to 1815 but not those of Spanish America. Following the end of the European war, the United States received Luís de Onís, but continued to refuse to accept representatives from Buenos Aires in spite of the fact that Halsey, the American agent, was formally received by Buenos Aires.[11]

Adams, however, refused to be drawn into a lengthy correspondence, and settled the Deforest problem in a letter and a conversation. In his letter to Congress, January 28, 1819, Adams pointed out that the Consul of the United States at Buenos Aires had no other credential than his commission. This commission implied no recognition by the United States of any particular gov-

10. *Ibid.,* 166-167.

11. DeForest to Adams, Jan. 8, 1819, *Annals of Congress,* 15 Cong., 2 Sess., 1619-1621.

ernment. Furthermore, the commission was issued before Buenos Aires declared its independence, and at a time when all the acts of the authorities at Buenos Aires were in the name of the King of Spain. Adams called attention to the fact that during the period the United States refused to accept Onís, no consul from Spain had received an *exequatur*. Those who had been received before the struggle for the government of Spain had been permitted to continue the functions of their office. For this, no new recognition was necessary. Adams then stated:

> The equality of rights to which the two parties to a civil war are entitled, in their relations with neutral Powers, does not extend to the rights enjoyed by one of them, by virtue of treaty stipulations contracted before the war; neither can it extend to rights, the enjoyment of which essentially depends upon the issue of the war.[12]

He pointed out that Spain was a sovereign and independent power, a fact not contested by Buenos Aires. Furthermore, Spain was recognized by the United States and the United States was bound by treaty to receive Spanish consuls. On the other hand, acceptance of DeForest would necessarily be based upon the unauthorized and disavowed articles of Worthington, and would imply a recognition, not only of the Government of Buenos Aires, but of a compact as binding to the United States, which was a mere nullity.[13]

The question of irregularities and excesses of armed vessels was brushed aside quite lightly by Adams with the statement that the acceptance of DeForest as Consul General would give him no additional means to suppress the evil. The difficulty, Adams stated, came from the fact that the cruisers of Buenos Aires were manned and officered by foreigners who had no permanent connection with that country or real interest in its cause.[14]

Shortly before sending his papers to Congress, Adams, in a conversation with DeForest, cleverly put an end to his aspersions as a diplomat. On January 22, 1819, he reminded DeForest of his United States citizenship, implying that he was liable to prosecution for violations of the neutrality laws. DeForest then informed Adams that he was building a home in New Haven,[15] and presumably returned there at once.

The government at Buenos Aires was informed of the reasons for the non-recognition of DeForest, and that government promised his commission would be revoked,[16] but it was not until March of

12. Secretary of State to Congress, Jan. 28, 1819, *ibid.*, 1608.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, 1611.
15. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 225-226.
16. Minutes of a conference of Rivadavia and John M. Forbes, Sept. 17, 1821, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II.

1823 that the promise was fulfilled. Thus, from 1818 through the actual recognition, Buenos Aires had no agent in the United States.

Although no agents from South America were present in the United States after 1818, American agents continued their activity in that region, with Worthington and Prevost still in charge. When Worthington left Buenos Aires, Prevost spent a short time in that city, only to become involved in politics.

There was a growing irritation with the United States, undoubtedly due to the supposed sentimental tie between the people of Buenos Aires and the United States. This led them to expect more from the United States than from Europe. When the expected aid was not forthcoming, dissatisfaction grew. In addition to this, Pueyrredón, while supporting the movement for independence from Spain, was, by 1818, thinking along the line of monarchial rather than republican form of government. In 1820 this became public knowledge and was partly responsible for the collapse of Pueyrredón's influence and his government. Prevost made the mistake of showing his approval of the overthrow of Pueyrredón and his party.[17] About a year later, under Rodríguez as governor, and Rivadavia as secretary, the *Unitarios* were again in power. One of their first acts was to expel the American agent, Prevost.[18]

Before word of this episode reached the United States, Adams sent another agent to South America. With the recall of Worthington, the American Secretary of State considered it necessary to have resident agents both at Buenos Aires and on the west coast. For this purpose, John M. Forbes was sent to Buenos Aires, arriving October 24, 1820.[19] The understanding was that Forbes would take whichever of the two areas Prevost did not want. The question of station, as we have just seen, was determined by the government of Buenos Aires, which had given Prevost but four days to get out of the province. He had but one day remaining when Forbes arrived.[20]

Eventually, Forbes was able to establish normal relations with Rivadavia, although, shortly after he arrived, he saw little to be optimistic about. He wrote Adams that:

> This Country is lost both Politically and Commercially—there never was anything like education among the Natives of this Country, consequently there are no materials for forming a public opinion and without public opinion how is it possible to form a Republic? the government will long continue a merely

17. Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano*, III, 128 ff.
18. Forbes to Adams, Dec. 4, 1820, DS., DUSC., I, Pt. II.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*

military despotism which will pass from the chief of one party to that of another, the people having no part or voice in it. . . . Commercially viewed, the resources of this Country are daily disappearing. . . . Commerce, with everything belonging to civilized life, may, and probably will relapse into utter barbarism; unless by the special grace and favour of heaven a reform in the personal habits and Political tendencies of the people should be effected and a total regeneration take place.[21]

While, through his great ability, Forbes was able to bring about better relations between the United States and Buenos Aires, his despatches clearly indicate that he was working under difficult conditions. The United States was not regarded as highly as it had been previously, and the Buenos Aires press was very critical of the nation. According to Forbes, there were numerous anonymous articles which insulted not only the character of his government, but questioned the want of religion and honor among its peoples.[22] His despatches also indicate that he was constantly having to combat the British, whom he found commercially and politically well entrenched in Buenos Aires.

Forbes' early pessimistic view of the Plata region changed with time, a fact which Forbes asserted was due to the great improvements brought about by the very able Rivadavia. It is quite possible that Forbes had some influence on the final decision for recognition, for his despatches describing the great improvements made by Rivadavia were submitted to Congress in March, 1822, along with President Monroe's special message announcing his intention to recognize the new states.[23]

By the end of 1821, it was evident that rapprochement had not been achieved between the United States and Buenos Aires. In spite of the conciliatory acts of Forbes, the Plata government continued to move away from the United States and toward Great Britain. Agitation for recognition in the United States met strong opposition in a Congress which was satisfied with the administration's Spanish-American policy, and the campaign for recognition seemed to have passed its climax. Yet, in a few months, recognition was granted. Why?

A number of factors combined to bring about the act so long discussed and so assiduously avoided by the United States government. In the first place, by the end of 1821, there could be no doubt of the final result of the wars of independence. This made recognition necessary if the United States was to be consistent with

21. Forbes to Adams, Apr. 1, 1821, *ibid.*
22. Forbes to Adams, Dec. 4, 1820, *ibid.*
23. See *Annals of Congress*, 17 Cong., 1 Sess., 2061-2074.

Adams' view that recognition was not a matter of right but of fact. By 1822 it was also clear that mediation by the European powers was a failure, and that the Alliance of the European powers did not appear as great a threat as it had in the past. English aloofness toward the Alliance, as evidenced at Troppau, seemed to Americans to indicate that England would resist any overt act on the part of the European powers.

While no evidence exists of any organized effort for recognition on the part of the commercial interests, and while we have seen that the trade of the United States with the Plata was slight, the potential was great. The United States agents repeatedly reported the trade possibilities in the Plata and at the same time called attention to the growth of British interests. Recognition might counteract this trend.

Finally, recognition could be used as a political tool in the United States. Since Clay had attempted to make political capital out of the question, others might try. Such a step would bring credit to Monroe and his party and block the use of the question by their opposition.

All of these factors were taken into consideration by Monroe, Adams and Congress; and when the House of Representatives, on the motion of Hugh Nelson, of Virginia, called for information regarding South America,[24] opportunity for the first step toward recognition was offered. On January 31, 1822, David Trimble, of Kentucky, moved that the President be requested to recognize the Republic of Colombia and to exchange ministers with it and any others that were actually independent.[25] The resolution came before the committee of the whole, and the author spoke in favor of it.[26] However, it was carried no further and no vote was taken, owing to expectations of administrative action on the question. The action expected was Monroe's message of March 8, 1822, which has been discussed in the preceding chapter.

The House, as we have seen, passed the necessary legislation on March 28, 1822, but the Senate was more cautious. This body, fearing repercussions from Europe, insisted that no money should be drawn until the President was completely satisfied that such a move would not interrupt peaceful relations with other powers.[27] The resolution was then passed by a vote of 39 to 3.[28] On May 4, 1822,

24. *Annals of Congress*, 17 Cong., 1 Sess., 825.
25. *Ibid.*, 854.
26. *Ibid.*, 1382 ff.
27. *Ibid.*, 430.
28. *Ibid.*, 431.

Monroe signed the bill which appropriated $100,000 to defray the expenses of missions to the independent nations on the American continent. In this manner was announced by the government of the United States its intention to acknowledge the independence of the Spanish-Americans.

While Congress was debating the effects of the acknowledgment of Spanish-American independence, the cabinet was confronted with the steps that should be taken in formal recognition. Adams' point of view carried here, and it was decided to immediately receive the Colombian chargé, the only Spanish-American agent in the United States at the time, and to reciprocate when the new government sent ministers to Washington.[29] The illness of Manuel Torres, the Colombian chargé, held up his official reception until June of 1822.

Recognition of the Government of Buenos Aires came in January of 1823. On January 13 Monroe sent to the Senate the nomination of Caesar A. Rodney, of Delaware, as Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at Buenos Aires, an appointment confirmed by the Senate on January 27. The Minister from Buenos Aires was General Carlos de Alvear, who, while appointed in 1823, did not arrive in Washington until October 2, 1824.[30]

The action taken by the United States was the natural result of the policy which had been followed for over a decade, a policy expressed by Adams in his assertion that:

> In every question relating to the independence of a nation two principles are involved, one of *right* and the other of *fact;* the former exclusively depending upon the determination of the nation itself, and the latter resulting from the successful execution of that determination. This right has been recently exercised as well by the Spanish nation in Europe as by several of those countries in the American hemisphere which had for two or three centuries been connected, as colonies with Spain. In the conflicts which have attended these revolutions the United States have carefully abstained from taking any part, respecting the right of the nations concerned in them to maintain or reorganize their own political constitutions, and observing, wherever it was a contest by arms, a most impartial neutrality; but the civil war in which Spain was for some years involved with the inhabitants of her colonies in America has, in substance ceased to exist. . . .
>
> Under these circumstances, the Government of the United States, far from consulting the dictates of a policy questionable in its morality, yielded to an obligation of duty of the highest order by recognizing as independent states nations which, after deliberately asserting their right to that character, have maintained and established it against all the resistance which had been or could be brought to oppose it. This recognition is neither intended to invalidate any right of Spain, nor to affect the employment of any means which

29. Adams, *Memoirs,* V, 492.

30. Carlos de Alvear to Adams, Oct. 4, 1824, DS., ARN., I, Pt. I.

she may yet be disposed or enabled to use with the view of reuniting those provinces to the rest of her dominions. It is the mere acknowledgment of existing facts with the view to the regular establishment with the nations newly formed of those relations, political and commercial, which it is the moral obligation of civilized and Christian nations to entertain reciprocally with one another.[31]

31. Wharton, *Digest*, I, 523-524.

Chapter IX

Retrospect

In retracing the period of our study one point is outstanding, the United States had little or nothing to do with the independence of Buenos Aires. It is true that the United States expressed its sympathy, gave an example of a working republic and recognized the belligerency of Buenos Aires. These points are often stressed by those who wish to develop an idealistic view of the part played by the early United States in the spreading of republicanism and democracy. Sympathy, however, won no battles; the example of a republican form of government, not yet firmly established in the United States, could not be emulated by a people whose background would not permit an understanding of the basic principles; and while recognition of belligerency opened the ports and the markets of the United States, purchases could not be made without money, and loans were not permitted.

The period examined by this study was one of great transition for the United States. By 1810 the United States had been in fact a united nation for only twenty-one years. There was little of the strong nationalistic feeling that was manifest after the War of 1812. Two outstanding trends are apparent in the United States during the period covered by this study, the emergence from its preoccupation with the affairs of Europe and a growing attention to internal affairs. The central factor was national aggrandizement, expressed by some in dreams of unrestrained manifest destiny, with others, in terms of new markets and greatly expanded foreign trade. While these two objectives in reality were not in conflict, it was some time before this fact was clearly understood. During the period of our study, the consequence of this misunderstanding was the creation of opposing factions. In a nation whose industry, navy and merchant marine were only potential, the drive

for territory became predominant. Mercantile interest was, therefore, subordinated to this dream of a nation of continental proportions which was more appealing to the nineteenth-century American.

In spite of the confusion created by this needless conflict in the United States and the chaos created in Buenos Aires by the May Revolution, plus its hesitancy to make a definite declaration of its stand until 1816, a definite pattern is suggested by the main lines of development.

It is clear that throughout the protracted struggle of the Spanish-Americans for emancipation from Spanish rule, the policy of the United States was to investigate conditions in Buenos Aires and to maintain neutrality. This was accomplished by sending agents who were authorized by the government of the United States, though not accredited to the government of Buenos Aires. Agents of the same type from Buenos Aires were permitted entrance to the United States. From this arrangement came a series of misadventures, the cause of which lay in the enthusiasm of agents of both countries. The Spanish-American agents desired to gain aid for their cause and the American agents, all businessmen, saw what they considered great trade possibilities. These American agents were actively engaged in commercial pursuits and failed to realize that Americans at home were little interested in the potential trade so discernible to them.

The boundary controversy with Spain and the War of 1812 completely overshadowed United States interest in Buenos Aires in the period 1810-1815. The Madison administration continued the traditional policy of the United States, that of taking advantage of Europe's difficulties to promote American national interests. This meant land expansion. Land expansion meant either war or negotiation with Spain. In this, all interests in the United States agreed, for the commercial and financial interests also stood to gain from territorial expansion. Negotiation was favored, not only because war was not wanted with Europe, but also because those who had benefited from the peninsular trade and trade with Cuba did not yet see clearly their interest in expansion. In addition, those who held claims against Spain favored a policy which would bring a peaceful settlement. While certain ports had already started a trade with Buenos Aires, this trade was slight when compared with Spanish or Cuban trade and, therefore, exercised less political pressure. It should also be pointed out that as the

United States was a small nation, negotiation and arbitration constituted the only sensible course.

At the beginning of its struggle the government of Buenos Aires turned to the United States for aid, feeling that its cause was the same as that of America. Other than its desire to break with monarchy, it had nothing to offer which could compete with American manifest destiny. When the War of 1812 severed its contact with the United States, it turned to England, which nation established a dominating influence in the Plata that has not even yet been overcome by the United States.

The changing status of Spanish America was brought forcibly before the United States through the declartion of independence from Spain by the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata at Tucumán on July 9, 1816. By this time, the Spanish policy of delay had created an anti-Spanish sentiment in the United States which had turned into a movement for the recognition of the Spanish-Americans.

In an effort to avoid an armed clash with Spain and to adhere to the American policy of absolute neutrality, the United States passed the Neutrality Act of 1817. To satisfy the Spanish-Americans, the act was amended in 1818. These neutrality acts did not speed negotiations with Spain. Spain was hoping to make use of any treaty to prevent American recognition of the insurgents. However, the period of 1815 to 1819 saw a change in character in both American land hunger and commercial interest in relations with Spain. Regarding territory, interest in Texas was growing and Florida was wanted for military defense and national pride. Commercially, the West began to think of Spanish America as a market for the produce of the Mississippi Valley. These, plus the effectiveness of privateers, made the treaty of 1819 possible. With the ratification of the Adams-Onís treaty in 1821, the boundary dispute and other irritating controversies with Spain were ended. The way now seemed clear for recognition of the Spanish-Americans. But recognition did not come. Why not?

It is true, by 1821, there was little popular pressure within the United States for recognition. Most people seemed willing to allow the administration to handle the situation as it chose. It is also true that the influence of the United States in Buenos Aires had been on the wane since 1815. Buenos Aires was headed by military men who were not greatly impressed by American political experience, and who were unhappy over the misadventures of their

agents in the United States. These men were convinced American neutrality legislation was unfair and believed that the United States had traded recognition for the Adams-Onís treaty. The answer to our question, however, does not lie in these points. It seems to this writer that it rests with John Quincy Adams and his theory of recognition.

The argument most frequently heard is that the United States was following the experiences of its own revolution for independence in establishing policies in regard to the United Provinces of Buenos Aires. This, however, was Clay's plan. Clay would have sent them guns, powder, and ammunition. He would have compared the battles of Chacabuco and Maipó to Saratoga and would possibly have advocated unlimited aid for Buenos Aires as France did for the United States. At least that was his implication and so expressed by his followers. It would be interesting to know if he would have carried it out. However, Adams, not Clay, became Secretary of State in 1817, and it was Adams' concept which was put in operation.

The doctrine supported by Adams had been stated by Vattel and implied by other writers on international law. Adams insisted that recognition of a government depended on its established authority, not right but fact. It is to be remembered that the legitimate state system of Europe, which was reaffirmed at Vienna in 1815, was basically hostile to this concept. The United States was itself a breach, and the only one, in this European system. If the United States had followed Clay's plan, it could have been considered a cause for war. However, by formulating a policy of neutrality, strictly enforcing that policy and refusing to recognize any Spanish-American state while doubt of its future still existed, Adams paved the way for the acceptance of his doctrine. If his doctrine was accepted by other states, then a great crack would be made in the principle of legitimacy, and recognition could be made without fear of war.

When recognition came, accusations were thrown at the United States by the Spanish-Americans and Spain that only self interest motivated such action. The insurgents reminded Americans then and later that they alone were responsible for their independence. Such arguments only support Adams' stand. His position was strictly legalistic with cognizance of international law, a point ignored by Clay.

Thus, not only by action but by basic policy, the United States was opposed to contributing to the independence of Buenos Aires.

While we see in this period the beginnings of relations between the United States and the Plata, it is unfortunate that this new relationship was established with such little enthusiasm on the part of Buenos Aires, and even more unfortunate that to this date such relations have not greatly improved.

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