

DIPLOMATIC SERVICES OF J. B. PREVOST,  
SPECIAL AGENT TO BUENOS AIRES, PERU AND CHILE

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DIPLOMATIC SERVICES OF J. B. PREVOST,  
SPECIAL AGENT TO BUENOS AIRES, PERU AND CHILE

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## P R E F A C E

It is not my purpose to write a biographical sketch of the life of J. B. Prevost, but it is rather an attempt to show through his efforts as a diplomatic agent the policy of the United States toward the republics of South America following their declarations of independence from Spain and up to the time of their recognition as sovereign states. While this study treats only of the labors of Prevost it will be useful to students of the period covered in that Prevost's efforts and labors closely paralleled those of his contemporaries.

For the purposes of this work I have considered Prevost's services under a number of heads. Although he carried on his different duties concurrently, I have found it better to divide his labors into a number of different categories and then to consider them chronologically. These divisions, I think, fall naturally into the following description: First, a general introduction to the period studied and the background of Prevost; second, the efforts of Prevost to assist commerce and seamen of the United States; third, the appointment of consuls, a responsibility of much significance; fourth, reports on the attempts of European powers to establish a monarchy in South America and Prevost's attempts to check the conspiracies; fifth, recognition of independence of the republics and the Panama Congress, both early recognition by the United States and participation in the Panama Congress were urged by Prevost; and sixth, a survey and estimate of the services of Prevost.

R. E.

## PREVOST'S MISSION

### Chapter I.

The South American continent was conquered and ruled under the influence of the European doctrine of mercantilism. The natives were subdued and enslaved in order to fill the treasuries of Spain and Portugal. The elements of a civilization greater than that of the Iberian peninsula were destroyed in the ruthless efforts of the money-mad rulers sent out from the courts of Madrid and Lisbon. Nothing was given by the invaders in return for the punishment inflicted unless it was the Catholic religion. Whether it can be counted an asset to the natives is doubtful. The church by its ritual and teachings bound its believers to a corrupt foreign government during their lives, only promising them hope for the hereafter if they followed the dictates of the church hierarchy.

Little chance to throw off the yoke of the invaders occurred until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The American Revolution and the French Revolution both served as examples to the people of South America of what they would have to do in order to escape from subjection. The extent of the influence of these successful attempts to secure freedom and democracy is hard to estimate. The Declaration of Independence and the writings of French writers such as Montesquieu, Diderot, and Rosseau were read and distributed in South America. The intellectual leaders were probably the only ones influenced by these teachings but they were the ones who laid the groundwork that made possible a revolution when the opportune time arrived.

From the time of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, it was apparent that Spain was no longer the dominant power in world affairs.



Through the succeeding two centuries she continued to decline as a leader on the stage of world politics. The seemingly inexhaustible supply of precious metals that her colonies poured into her lap was all that kept the corrupt Spanish court in power.

The struggle between Napoleon and England in the first decade of the nineteenth century was the spark that lighted the conflagration of independence in South America. In attempting to make his continental system effective, Napoleon tried to force Portugal to break off relations with England. Portugal refused to accede to his demands and French troops overran Portugal. A secret clause in the Treaty of Fontaineblau, signed by France and Spain in October, 1807, provided that French troops should be allowed to march through Spain to Portugal. Difficulties in Spain in 1808, caused by a family struggle between Charles IV, the king, and Ferdinand VII, his son, gave cause for Napoleon's intervention in that country. Charles IV and Ferdinand VII renounced their right to the crown and Napoleon placed his brother, Joseph, on the throne. Napoleon immediately set about bringing the Spanish colonies under his dominion and rule as they had been under Charles IV.

The reaction in the American colonies was instantaneous. At first, many of the colonies set up local governments or juntas, which proclaimed their loyalty to Ferdinand VII. But at this time the leaders of the intellectuals began to take control of the movements. This was the opportunity which they had long awaited. These leaders began their struggle for independence and to establish sovereign governments. The efforts of Miranda, Bolívar, San Martín, and O'Higgins during the succeeding two decades were crowned by the recognition of the independence of the revolted colonies.

The United States maintained a sympathetic attitude toward the republics in South America. When news of the revolts reached Washington, Madison appointed agents to visit the places where revolts were in progress. One of these agents, Joel R. Poinsett,<sup>1</sup> was instructed to proceed to Buenos Aires. His mission was to create an impression that the United States cherished good will toward the people of South America as neighbors, and that if they should succeed in establishing independent governments it would coincide with the sentiments of this country. He was to encourage the most friendly relations and the most liberal intercourse between the inhabitants of this hemisphere but to assert that no interference would be made by this country between the South American republics and the European governments prior to their gaining success in their revolutions.

From the beginning of the revolutions their vessels were admitted into the United States under whatever flags they carried. On December 11, 1811, a resolution according belligerent rights to the provinces was introduced in the house of representatives.<sup>2</sup> But no formal declaration was made. That they were accorded full belligerent rights from the first is disclosed in President Monroe's messages to congress in 1817 and 1818 and in his special message of March 8, 1822.<sup>3</sup>

A strong sentiment of friendship toward and desire for recognition

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1 Robert Smith, secretary of state, to Joel R. Poinsett, special agent of the United States to South America, Washington, June 28, 1810. William R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations, I, 6.

2 American State Papers, Foreign Relations, III, 538.

3 James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, II, 13, 58, 116.

of the independence of the South American countries pervaded the United States. The outstanding leader for recognition was Henry Clay. As a member of congress and as secretary of state under Adams, he labored incessantly for recognition. The struggle with England in the War of 1812; the Holy Alliance; the attempts to purchase Florida and to settle the boundary of Louisiana; the complexity of party politics; and the lack of sustained military success by the revolutionists were factors preventing recognition until 1822.

Agents from these countries early arrived in Washington seeking recognition. At the same time agents from this country were dispatched to observe the revolutionary governments and to keep the United States government informed as to the efforts of England and other European powers to secure special favors.

The services of those individuals commissioned as agents, attachés, and consuls from the United States to various South American countries in the years following their declarations of independence from Spain and prior to the recognition of them as sovereign states forms an interesting study of American diplomatic policy. Among the more important of those in the southern region of South America were W. G. D. Worthington, Poinsett, Caesar A. Rodney, John M. Forbes and J. B. Prevost. Although some of them may not have been actuated by motives of diplomatic nature they were representatives of the United States either in an official or an unofficial capacity and were responsible in a measure for the opinion gained by the South American people of the intentions of the United States toward their Latin-American brethren. Likewise the opinion held by the people of the United States was in some degree influenced through the services of those individuals. Prominent among the individuals re-

presenting the United States in this period was J. B. Prevost. Acting as a private agent he represented the United States in the states of Chile, Peru, and the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata.<sup>4</sup>

Information concerning Prevost's life previous to his South American mission is limited. This much is readily ascertainable: That he was the step-son of Aaron Burr;<sup>5</sup> that he was an ensign in the British army during the Revolution; and that he served as judge of the superior court at New Orleans after his appointment by Thomas Jefferson.<sup>6</sup>

On the 20th of July, 1817, Prevost was instructed to sail from New York to Buenos Aires and then to proceed overland to Chile and Peru. But on the 29th of September, those orders were countermanded. By new instructions on the same day he was ordered to stop at Rio de Janerio to deliver to Mr. Sumter<sup>7</sup> dispatches from the collector of New York. He was then to proceed by boat around Cape Horn and to touch at the principal port in Chile and at Callao, the port of Lima. At these ports he was to collect information which was to be forwarded to Washington by available boats.<sup>8</sup>

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4 John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, to John B. Prevost, special agent to Buenos Aires, Chile and Peru, Washington, September 29, 1817. Manning, op. cit., I, 45.

5 Johnston D. Kerkhoff, Aaron Burr, p. 30; Albert H. Beveridge, Life of John Marshall, III, 182, cited by Isaac Joslin Cox, "Hispanic-American Phases of the Burr Conspiracy." Hispanic American Historical Review, XII (1932), 155.

6 Henry Adams, History of the United States of America During the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson, II, 220.

7 Smith to Thomas Sumter, Jr., United States Minister to the Portugese Court in Brazil, Washington, August 1, 1809. Manning, op. cit., I, 5.

8 Adams to Prevost. Ibid., pp. 45, 46.

In addition to his duties as private agent to the South American countries he was also directed to proceed to the Oregon country to receive Astoria which the British had taken in the War of 1812 and which was to be returned to the United States by a provision of the Treaty of Ghent. In compliance with his instructions in that connection, Prevost sailed from Valparaiso on the 13th of July, 1818, on board the British ship Blossom.<sup>9</sup> Arriving in Oregon, he received Fort George from the British officers on October 6, 1818,<sup>10</sup> Astoria having been previously restored to Captain Biddle on August 9, 1818.<sup>11</sup> In March, 1819, he returned to Valparaiso.<sup>12</sup>

During the next seven years Prevost saw service in Peru, Chile, and Buenos Aires. His efforts on behalf of American citizens, his representations and advice to his government, and his intermeddling in affairs of the countries where he was agent are illustrative of his work as private agent.

As a private individual<sup>13</sup> and not in an official capacity, Prevost travelled between the principal cities of the three countries gathering information and acting as unofficial observer for the United States.

- 9 Tomás Guido to the supreme director of the United Provinces, Santiago, September 30, 1819, enclosed in a letter from Prevost to Adams, Buenos Aires, June 8, 1820. Ibid., p. 553.
- 10 Annals of Congress, Appendix, 17th cong., 1st sess., II, 2136, 2137.
- 11 Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, II, 292.
- 12 Prevost to Adams, Buenos Aires, June 8, 1820. Manning, op. cit., p. 553.
- 13 Same to same, Santiago, January 6, 1821. Ibid., II, 1048. Same to same, Lima, January 10, 1824. Ibid., III, 1746.

While his requests might have had more force if he had acted as an authorized agent<sup>14</sup> to the countries he visited, yet his private capacity did not jeopardize his government and left him freer to meet leading government officials.<sup>15</sup>

At the outset Prevost's mission included not only the observance of the political and military plans of Chile, her plans for liberation, the attempts at execution of those plans and opposition thereto, but also he was to act as an assistant to and to check upon the special South American Commission composed of John Graham, Caesar A. Rodney, and Theodorick Bland.<sup>16</sup> On November 21, 1817, John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, instructed the members of this commission to act in cooperation with Prevost should only one of them go to Chile.<sup>17</sup>

Prevost's duties<sup>18</sup> were much the same as those of the South American Commission, previously mentioned, whose duties as outlined by Adams were:

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- 14 Forbes to Adams, December 4, 1820, MS. Department of State, Consular Letters, Buenos Aires, I, cited by Watt Stewart, "The Diplomatic Service of John M. Forbes at Buenos Aires." Hispanic American Historical Review, XIV (1934), 205.
- 15 Prevost to Adams, Lima, February 6, 1822. Manning, op. cit., III, 1733.
- 16 Tomás Guido to the supreme director of the United Provinces, op. cit.; Watt Stewart, "The South American Commission, 1817-1818." Hispanic American Historical Review, IX (1929), 31-59.
- 17 Adams to Caesar A. Rodney, John Graham and Theodorick Bland, special commissioners of the United States to South America, November 21, 1817. Ibid., I, 49.
- 18 A copy of Prevost's instructions was not available, but Adams, in a letter to George W. Erving, United States Minister to Spain, November 11, 1817, stated that Prevost was on a mission similar to that of the special South American Commission. Ibid., I, 46.

"To obtain and report to this Government, correct information with regard to the real state of affairs in that Country; to explain to the existing Authorities wherever they might land the principles of impartial neutrality between all the contending parties in that region which this Government had adopted and should continue to pursue, and to make reclamations in behalf of citizens of the United States who had suffered in their persons or property, by the agency of persons possessing or pretending authority from the various existing Powers whether derived from Spain or from the Provinces in revolt."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



## COMMERCE AND SEAMEN

## Chapter II.

The presentation of claims of American citizens for damages caused by seizure of ships and property, by illegal blockade, by action of privateers, or by illegal arrest and imprisonment is illustrative of the labors of Prevost as agent during the seven years he represented the United States in South America.

On February 12, 1818, the Royalist army was defeated at Chacabuco but they withdrew to Talcahuano and were reinforced by 1500 men from Peru. The reorganized forces defeated the army of San Martín and O'Higgins at Cancha Rayada on March 19, but on April 5, at Maipú, within a league of Santiago, the Royalist forces were so decisively beaten that they were never again a danger to the Patriot government in Chile. Following the battle of Maipú, when it was apparent that the port of Talcahuano in southern Chile would soon be conquered by the Patriots, Prevost made a complaint to Tomás Guido, the representative of the United Provinces, concerning American ships and sailors held in Talcahuano. Mr. Guido agreed with Prevost's assertion that it was not a subject for contention as to whether the ships had been legally or illegally seized and condemned by the Spanish government. He also promised that an order should be issued exempting American ships from capture notwithstanding any change of title in the property which might have previously taken place. Guido also promised an order from the supreme director designating delivery of the Beaver and the Canton, two captured vessels at Talcahuano, to any person whom Prevost might select. These ships had been condemned and robbed of their respective cargoes by the



Royalist government.<sup>1</sup>

When Prevost arrived at Callao, Peru, Talcahuano had not fallen to the Patriots; it was still held by the Royalists. On the next day, April 22, 1818, in an interview with the viceroy of Peru he presented his claims against the seizure of the ships, Beaver and Canton. The viceroy promised that an order should be sent immediately to the captain-general of Chile for the ships to be taken to Lima for final examination and that vessels engaged in the whale fisheries should receive their supplies without interference. On the next day the viceroy ordered the blockading officer at Valparaiso to permit American vessels to enter and leave the port without interruption if they were not carrying arms. He further ordered the release of seven Americans, held at Talcahuano, some of whom had been imprisoned for four years. Coincidental with these acts and undoubtedly influencing them was the request of the viceroy for the use of the Ontario to carry a minister of the Royalists to Valparaiso for the purpose of effecting an exchange of prisoners and of procuring a cessation of hostilities. Captain Biddle acquiescing in the request, the Ontario took the minister on board and returned to Valparaiso. Upon his arrival in that port Prevost learned of an order from the court of Spain to the viceroy of Peru asking for estimates of the amount of injuries sustained by reason of any supplies received by Miranda from Americans. These claims were to be used as a set-off of American claims for spoils against Spain. Prevost attributed the friendly attitude of the viceroy at this time to the recent defeat of the Royalist forces at Maipu.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Prevost to Adams, Valparaiso, April 9, 1818. Ibid., II, 921.

2 Same to same, Santiago, June 10, 1818. Ibid., pp. 925-927.

When Prevost returned to Lima from Oregon in January, 1819, the vessels, Beaver and Canton, had been restored to their owners and were prepared for sea, but the government was not in a position to refund the value of the cargoes. Therefore, Prevost directed that the claims be itemized in order that they might be transmitted to the department of state.<sup>3</sup>

The Chilean naval forces under Lord Cochrane in April, 1819, drove the Royalist fleet into the port of Callao for protection. A blockade of the coast of Peru was announced by the Patriots. In reply to Prevost's protest against what amounted to a paper blockade, the director disavowed any claims of forfeiture for any infraction where the blockade was not maintained by an actual force and declared that the form of the blockade was maintained to prevent unfriendly neutrals from carrying information. In order to give better assistance to American whalers, the director also ordered that Paita, in latitude about 5° south, be exempt from all provisions of the blockade. Since this was the port most frequently resorted to in the winter season and was the most convenient for the whalers, this order was quite a concession.<sup>4</sup>

On July 3, 1819, Prevost requested information concerning the effect of a blockade upon ships of war. At the same time he volunteered the opinion that if vessels of war of neutrals had been allowed to enter blockaded ports under the law of nations, such action had been acquiesced in from want of consideration only. He expressed the opinion that al-

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3 Same to same, Lima, January 15, 1819. Ibid., III, 1728.

4 Same to same, Santiago, May 16, 1819. Ibid., II, 1037.

though the blockade was intended to exclude supplies yet the principle upon which it was based would justify its extension to war vessels of neutrals.<sup>5</sup>

The question of piracy and privateers was a matter of much importance to America as a maritime power and the suppression of this practice was one of the important tasks of the North American agents to South America.

On February 14, 1820,<sup>6</sup> Prevost acknowledged receipt of a copy of the orders addressed to Captain Perry concerning certain articles in the ordinance of Buenos Aires for the regulation of privateers.<sup>7</sup>

These orders were to serve as a guide to Prevost in so far as he could follow them.<sup>8</sup> In a letter to Adams, September 29, 1820,<sup>9</sup> written before the arrival of Forbes and the instructions as to a representation concerning piracy and privateering (mentioned later in the paragraph), Prevost condemned piracy as odious warfare when conducted under any terms and especially so when engaged in by a neutral under a foreign flag. He also referred to the fact that Baltimore was a center for the outfitting of many of those engaged in the business of privateering under another flag.<sup>10</sup> On July 10, 1820, Adams wrote to

5 The request to Adams was occasioned by the renewal of the blockade of Lima. Santiago, July 3, 1819. Ibid., p. 1039.

6 Buenos Aires. Ibid., I, 540.

7 Adams to Prevost, July 10, 1820. Ibid., p. 136.

8 Adams to Smith Thompson, secretary of navy, May 20, 1819. Ibid., p. 106.

9 This letter was written by Prevost before receipt of the letter of Adams dated July 10, 1820.

10 Prevost to Adams, Buenos Aires, September 28, 1820. Ibid., p. 556.

Prevost,<sup>11</sup> who was then at Buenos Aires, in the following manner:

A very earnest Representation should be addressed immediately to the Government there, recurring to these events as affording a demonstration of the great inconveniences resulting from those articles of the Prize Code; and insisting upon the adoption of measures which shall hold the Captains and owners of privateers sailing by their authority, under a real responsibility to them.<sup>12</sup>

The articles of the prize code which caused the United States the most concern were those allowing the privileges of and a right to the flag of Buenos Aires to any foreigner whether he had ever been in the country or not, and that of allowing a licensed privateer to take his prizes wherever he chose. It did not fall to Prevost's lot to make these representations. John Forbes, who had been commissioned agent for commerce and seamen for either of the provinces of Buenos Aires or Chile, was to reside at whichever place Prevost did not wish to remain.<sup>13</sup> A letter of Prevost written in March, 1820, had been published in the United States. This publication reached Buenos Aires a short time before the arrival of Forbes and occasioned unfavorable criticism of Prevost in that place. The Buenos-Airean government ordered Prevost from the province. He awaited the arrival of Forbes before taking his departure on a vessel bound around the Cape on October 30 of that year.<sup>14</sup> It

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11 Within a few months above fifty persons sailing under the Buenos-Airean flag and bearing commissions from that country were convicted of murder and piracy and had the death sentence passed upon them in the United States. Few of this number were natives of Buenos Aires. *Ibid.*, p. 137. From 1816 to 1819, Pueyrredón was supreme director of the United Provinces. Until 1825 there was disorganization among the various provinces but by mutual consent necessary relations with foreign governments were carried on by the government of the province of Buenos Aires.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Adams to Forbes, July 5, 1820. *Ibid.*, p. 130, 131.

14 Forbes to Adams, December 4, 1820. *Loc. cit.*

was left for Forbes to carry out the instructions of Adams relative to piracy and privateers.<sup>15</sup>

Following transmittal of a letter from Sir Thomas Hardy to British merchants in Santiago which stated that the Chilean government considered the whole coast of Peru south of the capitalas under blockade, Prevost on June 18, 1821, addressed an inquiry to Echeverría, secretary of state of Chile, as to the force of the blockade. He called attention to the fact that no force was used to support the blockade except at Callao, and that a blockade to be legal had to be maintained by a force strong enough to control the entrance to the mouth of a river or harbor.<sup>16</sup> Five days later Bernardo O'Higgins, supreme director of Chile, addressed a letter to him containing assurances that the blockade would be enforced by enough vessels to make it legal in the ports from Pisco to Ancón,<sup>17</sup> (a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles).

One of the most interesting cases in which Prevost was instrumental in securing relief for an American was that of the detention of the Tea Plant. This vessel was held by the junta at Guayaquil. While the Royalist government was in power Captain Robinson of the Tea Plant violated some law for which the penalty was not paid during the Royalist period of control. After the overthrow of the Royalists the local junta seized the vessel to compel its master to furnish security that he would stand trial for a recovery of the penalty incurred under the previous

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15 For a full description of Forbes' services as an agent see, Watt Stewart, loc. cit., pp. 202-218.

16 Santiago. Manning, op. cit., II, 1051, 1052.

17 Ibid., p. 1052.

government. Prevost in pushing the claim for release of the vessel held that dissolution of the former government extinguished both the right of inquiry and punishment. This view was concurred in by a minister of the government at Lima and the vessel was released.<sup>18</sup>

The subject of disregard of the blockade of Royalist ports by American war vessels gave Prevost much worry. In 1819, as previously mentioned, he had requested information as to the law of nations of this point.<sup>19</sup> The motive impelling violation of the blockade was the desire to transport specie and to protect certain interests. This action on the part of American war vessels produced unfriendly feelings and irritation towards the United States besides working a hardship on the Patriot cause.<sup>20</sup> Prevost refused to accompany Captain Ridgley on the Constellation from Lima to Valparaiso in the spring of 1822 because of the latter's determination to stop at the ports under close blockade.<sup>21</sup>

During the spring of 1823 the Patriot government of Peru decreed that neutrals should give bond prior to their sailing. Likewise in March of the same year they ordered another blockade of several degrees of the coast, but the blockade was not to be binding unless supported by enough warships to render it efficient. After an exchange of notes between the minister of the government and Prevost, the decree requiring

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18 Prevost to Adams, Lima, December 7, 1821. Ibid., III, 1730. Same to same, February 6, 1822. Ibid., p. 1731.

19 Same to same, Santiago, July 3, 1819. Ibid., p. 1039.

20 Same to same, Santiago, June 12, 1822. Ibid., p. 1064. Same to same, August 22, 1822. Ibid., p. 1066.

21. Same to same, Lima, March 4, 1822. Ibid., III, 1735.

bonds was retracted. Since the blockade order was so loosely constructed, it was not protested.<sup>22</sup>

In July, when General Canterac of the Spanish rear guard was in control in Lima, Prevost inquired of him the status of merchandise of Americans in that place. He also advised the property owners to seek the assistance of Captain Stewart to secure their property.<sup>23</sup> A little later in the month, when General Canterac withdrew from Lima, he left in such hurry that he failed to collect impositions on merchandise and the fifteen per cent duty imposed on goods in private warehouses. The total loss to Americans was about three thousand dollars.<sup>24</sup>

Leaving Valparaiso for Peru, in December, 1823, Prevost instructed Michael Hogan, United States consul at the Chilean port, to inform any American ship of war which might arrive there of the blockade of Peru by war vessels of that republic.<sup>25</sup> His mission to Callao (upon outbreak of revolt there) to secure the release of several American vessels was unavailing, access both to the port and to American vessels being denied him. Whereupon he proceeded to Chancay and then to Trujillo.<sup>26</sup>

The attacks upon American and English merchantmen by Admiral Guise of the Chilean navy evoked a protest from Prevost. The attacks, in direct contrariety to the orders of the "liberator," evoked the marked disapprobation of the secretary-general. After several interviews with

22 Same to same, April 24, 1823. Ibid., pp. 1739, 1740.

23 Same to same, Callao, July 10, 1823. Ibid., p. 1743.

24 Same to same, Lima, July 21, 1823. Ibid., p. 1744.

25 Ibid., II, 1090.

26 Prevost to Adams, Trujillo, March 13, 1824. Ibid., III, 1748, 1749.



that official, Prevost expressed to Adams the feeling that correction of the abuses would be made promptly.<sup>27</sup>

Writing from Lima on January 10, 1825, Prevost informed Adams that a blockade of Peru had been commenced a few days before the date of the letter. The blockade was under the command of Admiral Blanco of the Chilean navy, who was to continue in charge until relieved by Admiral Guise then on his way from Guayaquil.<sup>28</sup>

Prevost's efforts on behalf of American commerce and seamen occupied a considerable portion of his time as an agent. His services in this regard often extended into the duties usually assigned to regular consular agents. As soon as consular agents arrived at their posts, Prevost was in a large measure relieved of such responsibilities.

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27 Same to same, June 10, 1824. Ibid., p. 1755.

28 Same to same, Lima, January 10, 1825. Ibid., p. 1777.



## APPOINTMENT OF CONSULS

## Chapter III.

The individuals who represent a nation in a foreign diplomatic post by their character and influence frequently create in the minds of the people where they are stationed a favorable or unfavorable impression of the country which they represent. Especially was this true in the early years of the nineteenth century when modern means of communication had not been developed. In many of the countries of South America the only knowledge of the United States was gained through contact with our sailors or traders. American traders and sailors were motivated by the desire for profit no less than those of other countries. The ability of the "Yankee trader" to secure the better of a bargain has often been remarked. It was essential to the development of good-will toward the United States that consuls be appointed to the cities of South America who would labor to secure a friendly feeling toward the country they represented. They needed to be men who would not pursue the collection of damages as the sole aim of their office, but would inquire into the justice of the claims. While carrying out their duties of protecting American interests they needed also to be ambassadors of good-will.

Prevost, during his service in the South American diplomatic field, made numerous appointments of consular agents and also recommended the appointment of others. His correspondence reveals his concern over the appointment of consular agents whose actions did not operate favorably to the good-will of the United States.

On March 2, 1818, W. G. D. Worthington appointed Henry Hill of New York as vice consul of Santiago. On March 31 he appointed Washington

Stewart of Philadelphia as vice consul of Guano and Coquimbo (Coquimbo is located in central Chile, north of Santiago).<sup>1</sup> Prevost concurred in the appointments and recommended to the president that they be approved. In recommending their appointment he made this significant statement:

It is all important in the appointments here that natives alone should be selected, there exists an american feeling which ought not to be checked and which no foreigner can ever reciprocate.<sup>2</sup>

Prevost wrote to Adams from Buenos Aires on December 12, 1819, concerning the appointment of William G. Miller of that place as consul at Montevideo. Miller's friends at Philadelphia assured him that he had been appointed but his commission had not arrived. Prevost wrote to ascertain if Miller had been appointed and if so whether or not his commission had been sent. He stated that he had but a slight acquaintance with Miller, but that he spoke the language fluently and appeared to be well qualified to discharge the duties of a consul.<sup>3</sup>

The papers of Mr. Halsey were found by Prevost deposited in the office of the consulate at Buenos Aires. The duties of the office were being exercised by Mr. Strong, an appointee of Worthington. Condemning the appointment of Strong, Prevost said that a more indiscreet selection could not have been made.

He was at that moment agent for the vessels built in New York, at variance with all or most of the members of the administration and subsequently party to a transaction which has excited more Odium and more ill will, than would have been produced by the destruction of the same vessels in the Harbor of New York.<sup>4</sup>

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1 W. G. D. Worthington, special agent of the United States to Chile, Peru and Buenos Aires, to Adams, Santiago, April 8, 1818. *Ibid.*, II, 919.

2 Prevost to Adams, Valparaiso, April 9, 1818. *Ibid.*, p. 921.

3 *Ibid.*, I, 539, 540.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 538, 539.

The office was transferred by Prevost to I. C. Zimmerman, a citizen of the United States, whom Prevost highly recommended, and whose appointment he asked the president to confirm. The government at Buenos Aires issued Zimmerman an exequatur as vice consul.<sup>5</sup>

In order to facilitate the exchange of communications concerning events of daily occurrence in Chile, Prevost on January 6, 1821, recommended that the president appoint consuls for Santiago and other ports as soon as the independence of Chile should be recognized by the United States. He pointed out that the effect would be beneficial to the United States because of the influence a respectable man would acquire from constant intercourse with the government officials.<sup>6</sup>

When Prevost was called to Guayaquil in 1821 to effect the release of the Tea Plant, he gave a temporary commission to act as consul to a Mr. Lynch. Lynch was not to receive any fees for his services and Prevost did not ask the president to continue or confirm the temporary appointment. He was a personal friend of Prevost and also the only American in Lima. His commission was to become effective only in case of some future incident affecting prospective visits or residence of Americans.<sup>7</sup>

Upon his return to Lima, Prevost asked Lynch to suspend his consular functions since there was no documentary evidence to justify his acts. Prevost also cautioned the president to inquire into the pursuits of the individuals who were at that time seeking consular appointments

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5 Ibid.

6 Same to same, Santiago. Ibid., II, 1048.

7 Same to same, Lima, December 7, 1821. Ibid., III, 1731.

on the west coast of South America. Many of those individuals were looked upon as enemies by the republics because of aid given to the enemy and for violation of neutrality. Their appointment would not engender good feeling toward the United States.<sup>8</sup>

On June 12, 1822, Prevost wrote to Adams concerning correspondence with the officials at Santiago relative to the appointment of an authorized agent at that place. He replied to the note of the minister concerning the appointment, but did not mention the subject of power of appointment which he no longer possessed.<sup>9</sup>

Edward McCall, son of Archibald McCall of Philadelphia, was recommended by Prevost on November 15. He did not know if McCall was an applicant for a consulate but in the event he was, Prevost thought the government could place confidence in his actions.<sup>10</sup>

Stanhope Prevost, son of the special agent, was requested by his father to keep the government informed of affairs at Lima while he was absent at Guzco.<sup>11</sup> Young Prevost was also commissioned vice-consul at Lima, during January of that year, by William Tudor, United States consul at Lima. He received his exequatur from the "liberator" soon thereafter. Tudor recommended him as a young man who spoke the language fluently and had been for sometime a resident of the country.<sup>12</sup>

8 Same to same, February 6, 1822. Ibid., pp. 1733, 1734.

9 Same to same, Santiago. Ibid., II, 1065.

10 Ibid., p. 1072.

11 Stanhope Prevost to Adams, Lima, January 29, 1825. Ibid., III, 1778.

12 Tudor to Adams, Lima, February 25, 1825. Ibid., III, 1778, 1779.

The appointment of consular agents and the recommendation of others illustrates the varied duties Prevost performed while acting on the diplomatic stage for his country.

## ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH A MONARCHY

## Chapter IV.

The relations of European countries with the South American republics were of interest to the United States. Great Britain refused to cooperate with the Holy Alliance to recover the revolted colonies for the Spanish king. In the Polignac Memoir, Canning issued what amounted to an ultimatum to France and to Europe to leave South America alone. Although the United States did not cooperate with Great Britain on a policy toward the new republics, yet Monroe's message to Congress on December 2, 1823, coming just after the Polignac Memoir, had the force of preventing European powers giving assistance to Spain in her attempts to suppress the revolutions.

During the first years of his service in South America and before the intervention of the Holy Alliance was openly broached, Prevost noted carefully the endeavors and intrigues of European agents. He reported to Adams the efforts of the agents to negotiate trade agreements, treaties and negotiations relating to the establishment of a monarchy. Chief among the nations attempting to set up a monarchical order, ruled by some member of a royal house of Europe, was France. The efforts of this nation to align leaders in the republics with a European sovereign cover almost the entire period of years in which Prevost was special agent.

The work of an agent, ostensibly from Sweden but whom Prevost thought delegated by the Emperor of Russia, was reported to Adams on March 20, 1819. He was an acute observer, intelligent, industrious and spoke the language. He remained in Chile visiting the whole extent of the country. His purposes other than as an observer were not evident, although he did

make secret professions of friendship in the name of the king of Sweden.<sup>1</sup>

Adams in his report to President Monroe on January 28, 1819, stated that Pueyrredón had refused to negotiate a most favored nation article because Spain still held claims of sovereignty over Buenos Aires, and the right had to be retained in order to bargain with Spain.<sup>2</sup> Upon reading this report, Prevost investigated to learn if it were true. Pueyrredón denied the statements and a note from the secretary of state of the United Provinces disproved the idea of friendliness as reported by Worthington to Adams.<sup>3</sup>

On February 14, 1820, Prevost reported to Adams the flight of Pueyrredón to Brazil for protection. His flight added to the suspicions already held in regard to his interviews with General Le Cor. As to the character of Pueyrredón, Prevost wrote that not one virtue could he find to countenance the confidence reposed in him; that all of his actions and measures were in opposition to the best interests of the country, destructive of its quiet and its prosperity, and calculated to retard the revolution. At the same time Prevost reported that a peace with the Montonera was likely but that a declaration of hostilities would probably be made against the Portugese. Such action would certainly be resisted by the mercantilist class.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for Pueyrredón's flight to Brazil was given in more detail in a letter of March 9. In recently discovered documents it was

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1 Prevost to Adams, Santiago. Ibid., II, 1036.

2 American State Papers: Foreign Relations, V. 413.

3 Prevost to Adams, Buenos Aires, December 12, 1819. Manning, op. cit., I, 540.

4 Ibid., p. 541.

disclosed that Pueyrredón in conjunction with the congress of the United Provinces had formed a treaty with France, whereby a member of the Bourbon family then residing in Italy was to become ruler of the provinces. Upon his arrival the congress was to surrender the capital to him. France was to advance twelve million livres and Portugal was to guarantee the stipulations in return for the cession of the Oriental district, i. e., the territory now called Uruguay. This information was disclosed by the governor, whose integrity Prevost reported had not been impeached, but documentary evidence was not available.<sup>5</sup>

However, on March 20, Prevost included in a letter to Adams the aforementioned treaty, embodied in a "memorandum of Baron de Renneval, minister of foreign relations of France, to Doctor Don Valentine Gomez, agent accredited to the said court by the government of Buenos Aires." The memorandum relative to the establishment of a monarch shows the interest of France in the effort to establish a dynasty in South America.

Sir: The French Government is taking the most lively interest in the situation in which the government of Buenos Aires finds itself, and is ready to do everything possible to promote its measures for constituting itself into a constitutional monarchy; that being the only form of government that may suit their reciprocal interests and insure for the future all the necessary guarantees towards the powers of Europe and towards those that are near to the Rio de la Plata...the French Government proposes to take the necessary steps to secure from all the crowns their consent to placing on the Throne of South America the Prince of Luca and Etruria, to whom they will extend the necessary assistance both in sea and in land forces, so that he could not only force respect, but also maintain himself if need be against any power that might be adverse to his elevation. The Prince is eighteen years of age, belongs to the Bourbon family, and

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5 Ibid., p. 542.



although related with that of Spain there is no fear that his principles are in any way antagonistic to the interests of the Americas whose cause he will no doubt enthusiastically endorse...In order to establish and secure his dynasty, it is proposed in case the Prince is acceptable to the United Provinces to seek a marriage with a Brazilian Princess, in which both governments would find incalculable advantages being united by ties of blood would be interested in drawing them closer and closer...As regards the United States, since they have none to fear more than England, and as it is to their interest to live on good terms with South America, it is clear that it would not be difficult to overcome the obstacles that might be aroused by them to the establishment of a monarchical government. Furthermore, the French Government will take charge of the diplomatic negotiations in that respect and undertakes to grant to Prince de Luca all the support, assistance and protection it would grant to a French Prince.<sup>6</sup>

On April 21, Prevost received from Bernardo O'Higgins, supreme director of Chile, a letter expressing his republican sentiments and denying that Chile had any share in the establishment of a monarchy in the South American continent.<sup>7</sup>

In the summer of 1820, when Rodríguez was elected governor of Buenos Aires, Prevost's presence became a subject of great jealousy. His expression of opinion as to the surrender of the country to France was antagonistic to the parties elected to office. Chief cause of the ill feeling was the publication in the United States of Prevost's letter of March 20, of that year. When this publication reached Buenos Aires the junta ordered Prevost from the province. To Prevost was also attributed the publication of the secret minutes of the congress, an action which tended to destroy the schemes for a monarchy. Prevost's part in the dis-

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6 Ibid., pp. 545, 546.

7 Santiago. Ibid., II, 1045.

closure is given in his letter to Adams of January 6, 1821.

I do not arrogate to myself the sole merit, but I really had a great agency in determining the measure, from a belief that the disclosure would defeat the Intrigue and give an ascendancy to the politics of the Interior where they are entirely Republican.<sup>8</sup>

Further information concerning the proposed establishment of a monarchy at Buenos Aires was forwarded to Adams on June 12, 1822. Although living in Santiago, Prevost had learned that those in control in Buenos Aires were trying to inveigle the government into an offensive and defensive alliance with Brazil as an independent power under a prince who could not sustain himself. The consequence of this alliance would have been the subjection of the interior provinces to whatever government or measures that comported with the interests of the dependents of foreign courts. Prevost predicted that no union on terms of equality would be possible under the members of the government then in power. The most important provinces, those adjoining Chile, were receiving their supplies from that country and becoming more independent of the government at Buenos Aires.<sup>9</sup>

In support of the information in the previous letter, Prevost notified Adams on October 9, of the application by Baron Le Cor in the name of his master, King John of Portugal and Brazil, to the government at Santiago for a similar agreement as that proposed at Buenos Aires, i. e., an offensive and defensive alliance.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Santiago. Ibid., pp. 1047, 1048.

9 Ibid., p. 1065.

10 Ibid., p. 1068.

The government at Santiago, without touching upon the subject of the proposal, simply declined any negotiation unless through the medium of a public agent to be sent to Santiago by King John, clothed with powers to negotiate with Chile as an independent state. Prevost's opinion of the probable outcome of the negotiations was very pessimistic.

I doubt whether the Baron will retain his Government of Montevideo long enough to learn the answer of his Master, but if such should be the case and Portugal assent to the mode prescribed I am persuaded that the Director will never lend himself to its insidious and corrupt views-- The Disposition to resist European Influence under any shape daily acquires strength and I am sincerely gratified that such also is the decided policy of Columbia.<sup>11</sup>

Stanhope Prevost, son of the special agent, in a letter from Lima, of November 27, 1822, revealed to his father that the ministers sent to Europe under the corrupt administration of Monteaquedo had been recalled. At the time of the dispatching of the ministers Prevost intimated to some of those in control of the government his suspicions as to the intent of the ministers. His hints were not heeded but the recall of the ministers by the congress at Lima, together with attempts to defeat the intrigues to establish a monarchy show the knowledge that Prevost had of events. General San Martin was injured much in public estimation by the intrigues of the ministers but Prevost thought he had not been a party to the instructions.<sup>12</sup>

From Lima on March 13, 1823, Prevost wrote of the presence on the western coast of South America of a French sloop of war and the rumor that a ship of the line was on its way around Cape Horn from Rio de Janerio. Their purpose was a matter for speculation. If, as reported,

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11 Ibid., p. 1071.

12 Santiago, January 24, 1823. Ibid., p. 1077.

their presence was to advance the intrigues for securing a throne for the Prince of Luca, Prevost said they were less to be feared than if they seized the ports. The support of the Prince of Luca would be only temporary but seizure of the ports would probably be permanent.<sup>13</sup>

The plan to set up a monarchy in South America was quite extensive; reaching to most of the countries of that continent. Secret agents were in every part of the continent. Two French agents were sent to Peru. The Count of Landos, brother-in-law of the Duke of Montmorency<sup>14</sup> died on the trip. The other agent, Requier de Sauvignac,<sup>15</sup> was reported on March 13, 1824 to have been in Lima for six months. The intrigues were supported not only by the aristocracy and clericals but also by the Spanish generals, La Serna and Canterac. The aristocracy and clergy hoped thereby to save their privileges. The intrigues embodied the old plan of Pueyrredón, which those in Buenos Aires still cherished. The purposes of the agents of the French government were: to defeat the project of union of the different states as advocated by Columbia; to resist republican ideas and treaties with the United States until France had time to explain her views; to impress the South American nations with the warm interest which that power took in their happiness together with her desire to give them one of her sons who might preserve inviolate the holy Catholic religion. Prevost could not answer as to how the agents were received in Mexico, but the chief of Columbia hated them as much as

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13 Ibid., III, 1738, 1739.

14 Trujillo, April 4, 1824. Ibid., p. 1749.

15 Ibid.

he hated the Spaniards.<sup>16</sup>

On November 9, of the same year, Prevost reported that the "liberator" had received information from the Abbe Dupradi of the intrigues throughout America. The Abbe further stated that France would not at that time support a war.<sup>17</sup>

An extraordinary letter from one of the French ministers to the "liberator" proposed immediate recognition on the part of France should the "liberator" consent to the establishment of a monarchical system throughout America. The "liberator" sent the letter to General Santander without other notice, spurning both the author and the proposal.<sup>18</sup>

A number of factors contributed to the failure of the European powers to establish a monarchy throughout South America. Chief among the causes was republicanism, which embodied a hatred of the church, a fear of being again subjugated to European rulers, as under the Spaniards, and the refusal of the leaders of the revolutionary movement to accept a crown. Prevost's influence in preventing the fruition of the plans for creation of a monarchy in South America is problematical. But during his entire period of service he constantly attempted to secure the success of the republics and fought the monarchical movement wherever he encountered it.

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16 March 13, 1824. Ibid., p. 1748.

17 Chancay. Ibid., p. 1772.

18 Prevost to Adams, Lima, January 10, 1825. Ibid., p. 1777.

## RECOGNITION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE PANAMA CONGRESS

## Chapter V.

From the time of the first uprisings against Spain in 1810, the different states of South America had attempted to secure recognition from both North America and Europe as sovereign states. The United States government at the time Prevost left on his mission had not yet seen fit to recognize the states as sovereign. Various considerations associated with the new internal conditions in the United States and in Hispanic American countries, and the exigencies of foreign policy prevented recognition by the United States prior to 1822.<sup>1</sup>

When Prevost first arrived in Chile, the supreme director expressed the hope that he could obtain the confidence of the president of the United States as it was the only power on whose friendship he could rely.<sup>2</sup> Although Great Britain had furnished Chile considerable protection he would much have preferred that it come from the United States. He further stated that the interests of the two powers must ever unite them against European influence which was necessarily hostile to republics. Prevost informed him that his country took the greatest interest in the revolution, but that their collisions and party dissensions did not inspire confidence as to permanent separation which would justify recognition by the United States--a step which might lead to war. Prevost thought that for the moment they ought to be satisfied with the commerce which made possible their prosecution of the war, but when Lima should be taken and a political government should take shape, then the United States

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1 Reasons for non-recognition are enumerated on p. 4 above.

2 Same to same, Santiago, February 13, 1818. Ibid., II, 914.

would be the first to recognize.<sup>3</sup>

The incalculable sources of wealth which were open to the United States if it could be the leader in the commerce of South America were pointed out by Prevost. Calling attention to the advantage possessed by the Americans in the shipping of manufactured goods from every port on the globe, he expressed the opinion that recognition of the independence of the South American countries would exclude all competition to the United States in those countries. This consideration he thought should hasten recognition by the United States, since he regarded it as only a matter of time in any event until his government would recognize the major portion of South America.<sup>4</sup>

When Prevost arrived in Chile all was consternation and dismay. The squadron of the enemy was in sight and five thousand Spanish soldiers were penetrating the country. The flag of Chile was not then known in its ports, but a year later, upon his return from the northwest coast, he spoke of the change that had come over the country. Then all was confidence; the patriot flag waved defiantly on the ocean and over forty large vessels at Valparaiso were evidence of its success. A force of troops was in preparation for an invasion of Peru.<sup>5</sup>

The meeting of the deputies from the several provinces of the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata at a place about seventy leagues from Buenos Aires in May, 1820, had been reported by Prevost during his stay

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3 Ibid.

4 Same to same, Valparaiso, April 9, 1818. Ibid., p. 920.

5 Same to same, Santiago, July 3, 1819. Ibid., p. 1039.



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at that place. The peculiar location and dependence of the provinces upon each other made it seem unlikely that there would be a collision from distinct interests unless it was in regard to hostilities against the Portugese.<sup>6</sup> The selection of those constituting the electoral body who were friendly to the former Spanish rule, Prevost regarded as unfortunate.<sup>7</sup>

He was informed by the government at Buenos Aires, that no matter what Pueyrredón had intended in the ill-fated treaty negotiated by Worthington, the privileges of the most favored nation would be granted to the nation first to acknowledge the independence of the United Provinces.<sup>8</sup>

In all the Americas not a Spanish feeling existed. Modifications of the government by Spain would not produce a change of sentiment among her revolted colonies as to separation and independence. Early recognition by the United States would settle the matter and American institutions would become models for South America. These thoughts were expressed by Prevost in a letter to Adams of January 6, 1821.<sup>9</sup>

After an agent had been sent to England, Prevost advised General San Martin against sending an agent to the United States until Peru had been possessed. He thought that when Peru should have been conquered, the United States would probably recognize the independence of Chile and

6 Same to same, Buenos Aires, April 30, 1820. Ibid., I, 550.

7 Same to same, May 24, 1820. Ibid., p. 551.

8 Adams to Forbes, July 12, 1820. Ibid., I, 140.

9 Same to same, Santiago. Ibid., II, 1047.



attempt to secure recognition in Europe for it. He made this statement to overcome the impressions created by foreign agents that the United States could never be friendly to the independence of South America because of commercial jealousies.<sup>10</sup>

Reporting on March 4, 1822, the fall of Lima, he stated that the politics of the whole coast and of South America were in opposition to everything European. Everything was American. Even the Brazilians had felt the influence. Buenos Aires, long distracted by the corruption of the Portugese and the visionary French, was rapidly returning to the principle to which she gave birth and would probably be among the first to set up a government on a basis of equality and general representation.<sup>11</sup>

Writing on April 1, he reported that the Spanish offers of recognition were thought by the leaders in Lima to have been made only as a subterfuge. The revolution had not reformed Spanish feeling toward the former colonies but defeat of Spanish arms had strengthened its distaste and enmity for them. Commercial intercourse between the colonies and Spain had ceased with the change of sovereignty and had not been revived.<sup>12</sup>

The meeting of deputies in Santiago in May and June, 1822, to organize a government caused Prevost to hasten there from Lima. The cause of freedom was being well pursued by the deputies. Liberality as

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10 Same to same, Lima, February 6, 1822. Ibid., III, 1733.

11 Lima. Ibid., p. 1735.

12 Ibid., p. 1736.

to mode of representation, glory acquired by the army and navy, and absorption of party spirit in the general prosperity were factors favoring self-government.<sup>13</sup>

Unofficial communications giving confirmation of rumors of early recognition caused great rejoicing and celebration in Santiago. Prevost expressed to Adams the belief that when official announcement of recognition should be made, duties on goods imported in American ships would be reduced ten or fifteen per cent below those of Europe.<sup>14</sup>

The Chilean government in anticipation of the official announcement of recognition appointed a minister to the United States who was to leave Santiago as soon as the announcement was made.<sup>15</sup> On October 17, Prevost reported that opinion in Santiago was becoming daily more American. It was this public opinion upon which he had placed reliance for the effecting of the revolution.<sup>16</sup>

Delay in communicating to Chile information of official recognition by the United States had an unfortunate bearing on relations between the two countries. A report had reached O'Higgins from his agent in Europe that the French were sending a minister for the purpose of recognition.<sup>17</sup>

An agent appointed by Colombia to conclude treaties of offensive and defensive alliance with Peru and Chile added a clause pledging each of the contracting parties to send delegates to the Isthmus of Panama

13 Same to same, Santiago, June 12, 1822. Ibid., II, 1063.

14 Same to same, Santiago, August 22, 1822. Ibid., p. 1066.

15 Same to same, September 11, 1822. Ibid., p. 1067.

16 Ibid., p. 1069.

17 Same to same, Santiago, November 2, 1822. Ibid., p. 1070.

within a limited time for the purpose of forming a union in support of a representative system throughout the continent and of preventing partial associations with any of the powers of Europe. A representative was also sent to Mexico and it was intended that as soon as Colombia should ratify the treaties, an invitation should be extended the United States to preside at a meeting to assimilate the politics of the South with those of the North.<sup>18</sup> The treaties contained a pledge not to enter into partial arrangements with Spain and not to listen to overtures on its part unaccompanied with an acknowledgment of the independence of all.<sup>19</sup> The Colombian deputy to Peru and Chile proceeded from Santiago to Buenos Aires for the purpose of negotiating a similar treaty with them.<sup>20</sup>

The liberation of Peru would have come much sooner than it did, had the leaders in that state been disposed to cooperate with the troops of Buenos Aires and Chile. As it was, their dilatory practices and disinclination to cooperate caused the loss of numbers of soldiers, and at the same time left Lima open to attack by the Royalists if they had so desired. The rulers in Peru neither pursued one policy nor confided in the agency of the people for fear of increasing the influence of those who might endanger their rule and their privileges.<sup>21</sup>

The signing of an armistice by Buenos Aires in 1823, was disapproved of by Peru and Chile as not being necessary to maintain the peace and quiet of the province, and because it was in violation of the treaties

18 Same to same, Santiago, November 15, 1822. *Ibid.*, p. 1071.

19 Same to same, Santiago, December 14, 1822. *Ibid.*, p. 1074.

20 Same to same, Santiago, November 28, 1822. *Ibid.*, p. 1073.

21 Same to same, Santiago, March 13, 1823. *Ibid.*, III, 1738.

providing that no partial arrangements should be made with Spain. Prevost thought the signing of the armistice was part of the intrigues growing out of a visit of the French squadron. These intrigues, which were also active in Chile, were fostered by the Holy Alliance and directed against the United States. The silence of the United States on the policy of recognition was still a matter of concern to Prevost. The reason commonly given in Peru and Chile for delay in American recognition was the oft-repeated story of commercial jealousy.<sup>22</sup>

Writing from Chancay, on November 19, 1824, Prevost informed Adams of his stay there to await the capture of Lima by the Patriots. The event had at that time been delayed for some weeks because of lack of ammunition. Bolivar himself was to conduct the attack.<sup>23</sup>

The silence of the United States as to the conference on the Isthmus prevented Prevost from expressing the concurrence of the president. No invitation could be extended the United States until the concurrence of that nation in the project was received. The congress of deputies was originally scheduled to meet during the summer of 1825 under the leadership of Bolivar.<sup>24</sup>

The efforts of Prevost in regard to recognition and the movements for independence consisted of reports as to the state of affairs, both civil and military. He regularly wrote of the conditions in the countries to which he was sent. If Prevost's policy of early recognition had been followed, the position of the United States in regard to

22 Same to same, Santiago, November 27, 1823. *Ibid.*, II, 1089.

23 *Ibid.*, III, 1777.

24 Same to same, Lima, January 10. *Ibid.*, p. 1777.

South American trade and commerce might have been different. Many factors influenced the United States in its policy of recognition, yet it was the first non-Hispanic nation to recognize those countries as independent.

## ESTIMATE OF PREVOST'S SERVICES

## Chapter VI.

In his capacity of special agent Prevost rendered an effective service to this country. Not only was he occupied with representations more or less successful concerning commerce and seamen but he kept the United States government informed of the growth of the spirit of independence,<sup>1</sup> of the progress of the revolution,<sup>2</sup> of the diplomatic policy of European powers,<sup>3</sup> and the movement for the Panama Congress.<sup>4</sup> He also appointed consuls to represent the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Prevost was not entirely unbiased in his handling of the claims of Americans and he may have been too friendly to the South American countries,<sup>6</sup> but his retention as an agent for the length of time he served indicates that his government regarded him as efficient. If he had made too flagrant a violation of his instructions, his recall would have been in order. During his period of service, representations were made to his government to have him recalled, but nothing came of the attempts.<sup>7</sup> A letter relating to his actions was forwarded to him by Adams.<sup>8</sup>

- 1 Prevost to Adams, Lima, March 13, 1823. Ibid., III, 1738. Same to same, March 4, 1822. Ibid., p. 1735.
- 2 Same to same, Santiago, October 28, 1823. Ibid., II, 1087, 1088.
- 3 Same to same, Buenos Aires, March 20, 1820. Ibid., I, 545, 546.
- 4 Same to same, Santiago, November 15, 1822. Ibid., II, 1071.
- 5 Same to same, Lima, February 6, 1822. Ibid., III, 1733, 1734.
- 6 Adams to Prevost, July 10, 1820. Ibid., I, 135, 136.
- 7 Prevost to Adams, Lima, April 24, 1823. Ibid., III, 1740, 1741.
- 8 Adams to Prevost, July 10, 1820. Ibid., I, 136.

He was on friendly terms with a number of the leaders in Peru and Chile as is evidenced by his numerous contacts with the supreme director of Chile, the "liberator," and others.<sup>9</sup> When Prevost prepared to leave Chile for the last time, he asked the supreme director for his passport. The director ordered an audience of leave and instructed his minister to announce it to Prevost as a personal compliment. Prevost was first moved to decline such an honor which would probably cause him to be censured at home, but overcoming that reluctance, he prepared an address for the occasion, which he transmitted to Adams.

Sir: Born in a country, the Cradle of Liberty and this the best Inheritance of its Laws, I should feel myself unworthy of my birthright, could I have witnessed with indifference the struggle of Chile to emancipate herself from European oppression. No Sir! I have followed with unceasing interest the Footsteps of the noble dramarians [sic] and I have with pride contributed to extend the fame of their Sacrifices, their patriotism and their prowess. They have given to Humanity another Triumph, and History will record in its fairest page their deeds of Glory. Chile, Sir, disenthralled and free may place herself alongside of her Sister Republic of the North and claim from the World that consideration as a nation, to which she is so preeminently entitled by the virtues of her Sons and the Beneficence of Nature.

The benign and liberal policy you have adopted Sir, by producing an oblivion of wounds inseparable from a revolution, add to your claims of Gratitude from the good people whose happiness you thus assure. That such result may be permanent and that your Excellency may enjoy the Grateful Satisfaction of an uninterrupted confidence is the ardent wish of my Heart.<sup>10</sup>

Prevost, in a message to Adams, stated that his address was confined to the expression of individual feelings, and if they were not in accord

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9 Prevost to Adams, Valparaiso, February 13, 1818. Ibid., II, 914. Same to same, Lima, January 10, 1824. Ibid., III, 1746. Same to same, Santiago, October 28, 1823. Ibid., II, 1088.

10 Same to same, Lima, January 10, 1824. Ibid., III, 1746.

with the views of the president, he would very much regret it.<sup>11</sup> Considering this address in connection with his efforts on behalf of South American independence, one feels that it expresses the actual sentiments of Prevost and was not just an ordinary diplomatic farewell speech.

Guido speaks of his relations with Prevost in the most cordial of terms:

I discovered him to be a person of strong democratic principles, a warm friend of our Independence and well disposed to prepare the American Government to adopt a course favorable to the happy conclusion of our Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

Although he violated the principles of neutrality in his relations with the republics, he always acted on behalf of independence and in opposition to those governments which wished to ally themselves with European powers to establish a monarchy. Although Prevost's actions so incensed the government at Buenos Aires that it asked his recall, yet Forbes in some measure vindicated the course pursued by Prevost. A Franciscan Friar, Casteñada, for many months previous to Forbes' arrival at Buenos Aires, had been maltreating everything North American in a paper called Despertador. His attacks had been repulsed at the time by a writer under the title of "North American." These replies were accredited to Prevost, but Forbes believed they were written by another individual who vindicated North America in articles after Forbes' arrival. Forbes did not wish to reply to the charges himself and maintained an attitude of contempt for the libellant. He wrote Adams that he presumed similar motives influenced Prevost in declining all such

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11 Ibid.

12 Tomas Guido to the supreme director of the United Provinces, Loc. cit.



contests.<sup>13</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Chile, Worthington wrote Adams of the friendly and amicable way in which he had been received. Part of the credit for the creation of this friendly feeling he attributed to Prevost.<sup>14</sup>

Worthington charged Prevost and Captain Biddle of the Ontario with being the principal ones implicated in the purchase of the Lautaro for the government at Buenos Aires. Worthington said that without their open, personal aid in the affair it was generally thought the purchase would never have been made. He did not charge them with giving pecuniary aid for he thought neither of them gave a single dollar of their own but they did everything else in their power to egg on the Patriots.<sup>15</sup> This statement of Worthington is substantiated by a letter of Tomás Guido to the supreme director of the United Provinces. Guido, at the request of San Martín, purchased and equipped the Lautaro. He asserted that Prevost gave him everything that could be spared from the Ontario and also exerted himself actively among the foreigners to secure assistance for him.<sup>16</sup> This action further demonstrates the violation of true neutrality by Prevost, but also shows his partisanship for the cause of independence.

One thing is certain in an estimation of Prevost's services and that is his faithfulness to duty. He labored unceasingly in the countries of

13 Forbes to Adams, Buenos Aires, December 4, 1820. Ibid., I, 559, 560.

14 Santiago, February 27, 1818. Ibid., II, 915.

15 Buenos Aires, March 7, 1819. Ibid., I, 526, 527.

16 Santiago, September 30, 1819. Ibid., p. 553, 554.

Chile, Peru, and the United Provinces. He gave his life to his country's service, dying in the early months of 1825, while on a journey from Arequipa to Cusco.<sup>17</sup>

Prevost was neither the greatest nor the least of our agents in South America. A concise estimate of the value of his services is impossible. The fact that he served as long as he did in a field where the tide of war was so constantly changing and the governments were so unstable is an indication of his worth.

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17 Forbes to Clay, May 6, 1825, MS. Department of State, Consular Letters, Buenos Aires, II. (From notes lent by Professor Watt Stewart).

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