

HENRY CLAY AND HISPANIC AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

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HENRY CLAY AND HISPANIC AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

By

Gladys Pippenger

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma University

Norman, Oklahoma

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Approved By:

T. H. Reynolds
Advisor in Charge of Thesis

T. H. Reynolds
Head of Department of History

D. C. Whitcomb
Dean of Graduate School

PREFACE

The purpose of this work is to make a study of the efforts of Henry Clay toward securing the recognition of the independence of the Hispanic American colonies. As the outstanding champion in the United States of the cause of recognition, Henry Clay led the contest in the United States House of Representatives. He believed that the interests of North and South America were separate from those of Europe; therefore, political ties should also be broken. While he was Secretary of State, Henry Clay continued his efforts to secure recognition in Europe and to promote friendly and commercial relations between the United States and the Hispanic American nations. In this latter connection he advocated an association of American nations similar to the Pan American Union of the present day. Henry Clay's influence reached even to South America where he was hailed as a hero of the cause of Hispanic American independence.

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CHAPTER I

Life and Public Works of Henry Clay

Henry Clay, the first great Pan-American, was born April 12, 1777, in Hanover county, Virginia. He was the seventh of nine children born to the Reverend John Clay and Elizebeth Hudson Clay. John Clay was an honest, respectable man of property, and his wife had inherited considerable property from her father. Hence, though he often stated that he was brought up amid poverty and ignorance, Clay was in fact reared in a home where the financial standing was above the average.¹ It is true that his education was scanty, for educational opportunities were scanty at that time. In 1781, Clay's father died, and a few years later Elizabeth Clay married Captain Henry Watkins.

When Henry Clay was fifteen, he was made a deputy court clerk in Richmond where he spent his leisure hours reading. In 1793, Henry Clay had the great fortune to become associated with George Wythe as his amanuensis. Wythe, the Chancellor of the High Court of Chancery, was a distinguished lawyer, a political leader, and a teacher of law and the classics at Williams and Mary where he had taught such distinguished men as Jefferson, Marshall, and others. Wythe encouraged Clay to study law, and in 1797 Henry Clay left the clerk's office and spent about a year studying law under Robert Brooke.

At this time Clay was developing his oratorical powers as one of the leaders of a debating club. Here, in debates over the political questions of the day, Clay formed his political ideals. He became a Jeffersonian Republican, sympathetic with the French Revolution and with the doctrine

¹ Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay, pp. 5-6, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1937.

of popular rights. He was alert, intent, keen-witted, and he had a facile mind that encouraged him to skim rapidly many things that should have had more application. His voice, at twenty-one, was already developing the perfection of the later years, when, like some superb instrument, it could be pitched at will to majestic denunciation, withering scorn, light pleasantry, or deep and tender emotion.² He had the voice of an orator, and an expressive face and emotional temperament which could easily move audiences to tears.

Henry Clay was not yet twenty-one when he was given his license to practice law. He decided to move to Kentucky, the paradise for lawyers. Here, in 1798, he was admitted to the bar in Lexington, where he gained renown as a lawyer. The next year he married Lucretia Hart, the daughter of wealthy Thomas Hart. This marriage added to his social position.

In 1803 Clay was elected to the Kentucky legislature where he served as the leader of his party until he was appointed to fill the seat in the United States Senate, vacated by John Adair. His record in the Senate was a good one, and in 1807 Clay was sent again to the state legislature. His career there had demonstrated his ability as a shrewd and clever parliamentarian, standing in general for wise legislation, and for the business interests.

Clay was again appointed to the United States Senate, 1809, where his fame as an orator continued. In 1811 Clay was sent to the national House of Representatives, where he was immediately chosen speaker. As one of the leaders of those who favored a war with Great Britain, he, with John C. Calhoun and a few other young Westerners, became known as the "War Hawks."

² G. Van Duesen, op. cit., p. 13.

In 1814 he was sent to Ghent as one of the commissioners to negotiate the treaty of peace with Great Britain. Upon his return, Clay received an enthusiastic reception, especially by the people of Kentucky. He declined the offer of a Mission to Russia that he might enter again the House of Representatives where he once more became Speaker. He felt that here he would have a greater opportunity to serve his country as a leader of his party.

In the election of 1824 Clay ranked fourth among the presidential candidates, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson and William Crawford. Since none of the men received a majority of votes, the election was thrown in the House. Here Clay and his followers voted for John Quincy Adams. Adams named Clay Secretary of State in the face of charges by Jackson and his supporters of a corrupt bargain. Clay's friends advised him to accept the secretaryship because his refusal would be used by the Jackson party as well as his acceptance. Jackson made no effort to tell the people of the nation that Adams had offered to him and to Crawford positions in the Adams cabinet, also.

Because of this unfair political opposition, the office of secretary of state, formerly regarded as a stepping stone to the presidency, proved an obstacle to Clay. His political opponents never forgot this means of defaming him.

Clay, however, continued to have hopes of becoming president until 1848 when the Whig Convention nominated General Taylor. He continued a leader of his party in the Senate until his death, June 29, 1852, in his seventy-sixth year.

While a member of the House, Clay had advocated a moderately protective tariff bill and the resumption of specie payments, internal improvements, the recognition of the South American Republics, and the

famous Missouri Compromise, 1820, earning the nicknames, "The Great Pacificator."

In the Senate from 1831 to the time of his death, Clay advocated the protective system, the Compromise of 1833, a United States Bank and the Compromise of 1850. This last series of resolutions postponed for at least a decade the outbreak of the Civil War.

When Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, visited the United States to secure our aid, Clay advised against such interference in the affairs of Europe. He said that the greatest service we could render was by continuing to set an example of the results of liberty.³ Thus his last published utterance was a plea for American isolation from Europe.

³ G. Van Deusen, op. cit., pp. 421-422.

Early Efforts to Secure Recognition

The Napoleonic conquest of Spain furnished a legitimate excuse for the revolt of the Spanish American colonies in the western hemisphere, and the sympathies of the people and the government of the United States were apparent from the beginning. There were various reasons for this interest, namely, (1) feeling of brotherhood in the effort of the colonists to throw off the tyrannical yoke of the Mother Country. (2) Desire for more favorable commercial relations. (3) The apprehension of European policies for several years after the Congress of Vienna. (4) The break with Spain was in full accord with the policy advocated by Thomas Paine in his famous pamphlet "Common Sense." "It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions...."¹

This policy was later crystallized by George Washington in his Farewell Address, and has been the keynote of American policy ever since.

President Madison, as early as 1810, sent agents to South America to report on conditions there. The instructions prepared for Joel Poinsett, special agent to Argentina and Chile read,

The real as well as ostensible object of your mission is to explain the mutual advantages of commerce with the United States, to promote liberal and stable regulations, and to transmit seasonable information on the subject.²

The instructions to Robert Lowry, special agent to Venezuela, 1810, also show the early interest in commercial relations with Spain's rebellious colonies. From this time on, the United States maintained agents here though they officially recognized no commercial agent from the same regions until recognition of independence.

¹ Thomas Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, Common Sense, p. 25, Boni and Liveright, N.Y., 1922.

² W. R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of Latin America, I, p. 7, Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1925.

Near the close of 1811, Monroe, then Secretary of State, thought seriously of raising the question of recognition of the new states, and of exerting American influence in Europe to secure like action from the principal European powers.³ During this same period, Congress, in response to the decidedly friendly and sympathetic message of President Madison of November 5, 1811, passed the following resolution,

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 the monarchy to which they belonged; that, as neighbors and inhabitants of the same hemisphere, the United States feel great solicitude for their welfare; and that, when those provinces shall have attained the condition of nations, by the just exercise of their rights, the Senate and House of Representatives will unite with the Executive in establishing with them, as sovereign and independent states, such amicable relations and commercial intercourses as may require their legislative authority.⁴

The South American scene changed, however, after the downfall of Napoleon and the reestablishment of Ferdinand VII on the Spanish throne. By 1816 all the revolting colonies, save Buenos Aires, had been placed under the iron rod of the Spanish armies. As a result of the uncompromising attitude of the Spanish government, Chile and La Plata again rose in revolt, 1817, and American interest grew apace.

It was only natural that, in the United State, the champion of these oppressed and revolting colonies would come from the West, a region which had developed with little respect for authority or the usual mode of procedure. Henry Clay was typical of the region he represented. His was the voice of his own state of Kentucky and the whole Mississippi valley. Through him the West contributed a great deal to the cause of Hispanic American independence.⁵

³ Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826, p. 41, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1927.

⁴ American State Papers, Foreign Relations, III, p. 538, Gales and Seaton, edition, 1832.

⁵ Henry Clay made his first national appearance when he was appointed

Clay's early and consistent championship of the struggling South American nations during the critical period of their history earned him the love and appreciation of those oppressed people. Colton says that Clay was the earliest advocate in Christendom for the recognition of the independence of the Spanish American States.⁶

The chivalrous side of Clay's nature responded wholeheartedly to any struggle against tyranny, and aroused his sympathy for those striving for liberty. As early as 1810, while speaking in favor of the extension of the United States claims against Spain and France, Clay said, "I have no commiseration for princes. My sympathies are reserved for the great mass of mankind..."⁷ This statement colors Clay's attitude toward Europe throughout his life, and he felt that only a government like his own could guarantee the exalted liberties of freedom. However, Clay was also cognizant of the future benefits that might be accrued by friendly intercourse with South America. In January, 1813, he intimated that the internal politics of Europe had only a remote interest as compared with the movements for independence in South America.⁸ Throughout his championship of Hispanic American independence can be traced Clay's economic interest in those countries, and as secretary of state, his instructions to our representatives to South America emphasize the

to the United States Senate to fill the unexpired term of a Kentucky senator, 1806. Here the youngest member ever to sit in the United States Senate, he became known for his eloquent speech and evident sincerity in any cause he championed. As the leader of a group of impetuous young western politicians, Clay had a guiding hand in the period of the War of 1812.

⁶ Calvin Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, p. 238, A. S. Barnes and Company, N.Y., 1857.

⁷ Annals of Congress, 11th Congress, 3rd Session, p. 56, Gales and Seaton, 1853.

⁸ Ibid, 12th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 663.

importance of favorable commercial relations.⁹ Although Clay could hardly be called a territorial expansionist, he did keep a watchful eye on Cuba as is shown in a speech on Naval Establishment, January 1812, when he spoke on the uncertainty of Spanish power in South America, and warned against any other nation's securing Cuba.

What is to become of Cuba? Will it assert independence or remain the province of some European power? In either case the whole trade of the Western country, which must pass within gunshot of the Moro Castle, is exposed to danger. (He was not afraid of Cuba. He wished her independent.) But, suppose England gets possession of that valuable island? With Cuba on the south and Halifax on the north and the consequent means of favoring or annoying the commerce of particular sections of the country, would the most sanguine among us not tremble for the integrity of the Union? (If England should also acquire East Florida, she would have absolute command of the Gulf of Mexico.) Can gentlemen, particularly gentlemen from the Western country, contemplate such possible, nay, probable events...¹⁰

Such statements indicate Clay's interest in Cuba to be chiefly commercial with no especial desire to annex it to the United States.

Although most of Clay's early speeches and writings were never saved for posterity, he probably could not have advocated Hispanic American independence before 1816 with too much zeal; for until Bolivar's prophetic letter in 1815, the Spanish colonies had not made formal declaration of independence from Spain. From this time, however, Clay labored enthusiastically for our recognition of their independence and for European recognition. While Speaker of the House, Clay, January 1816, speaking on preserving the system of internal revenue in order to increase our army and navy, favored some form of aid to South America. Our own safety, he believed, might rest to a great extent on the preservation of liberty in South America. The Congress of Vienna had carried ..Their ideas of legitimate government to an extent destructive

⁹ W. R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations, I, pp. 229-241, Oxford University Press, 1925.

¹⁰ Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 916-917.

of every principle of liberty. Do we know whether we shall escape their influence? Who can now say, with certainty, how far it might be proper to aid the people of South America in regard to the establishment of their independence?¹¹

A few days later, angered by John Randolph's sarcastic remarks about "quixotic crusades" and Clay's being near the field of Waterloo, having caught the infection; that he had "snuffed the carnage", Clay spoke again on the reduction of the army and navy. He warned that his lesson from the field of Waterloo had been that a combination of despots that were unfriendly to liberty might finally be able to subject the United States to tyranny and degradation, and that national independence was only to be maintained by national resistance against foreign encroachments. In the same speech he said,

It would undoubtedly be good policy to take part with the patriots of South America. He believed it could be shown that on the strictest principles of public law, we have a right to take part with them, that it is our interest to take part with them, and that our interposition in their favor would be effectual... the cause of humanity would be promoted by the interposition of any foreign Powers which should terminate the contest between the friends and enemies of independence in that quarter ... But on the question of general policy, whether or not we shall interfere in the war in South America, it may turn out that, whether we will or will not choose to interfere in their behalf, we shall be drawn into the contest in the course of its progress.¹²

Clay believed that the release of any part of America from the dominions of the Old World as adding to the general security of the new.

Such utterances as these lead the way for the pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine. Clay was earnestly trying to convince the nation of the interdependence of the countries of the Western Hemisphere politically and commercially. Recent developments have given added importance to Clay's views.

¹¹ Ibid, 14th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 724-725.

¹² Ibid, pp. 790-791.

Meanwhile the Spanish Minister in Washington, Luis de Onis, presented complaints against our neutrality laws. On September 1, 1815, President Madison issued a proclamation warning all citizens of the United States against the dominions of Spain with which country the United States was to peace. All civil and military officers and citizens were called upon to aid in stopping such expeditions.¹³ This proclamation in reality recognized the belligerency of the revolted colonies and amounted to neutrality. The South American agents in the United States, however, continued to ship contraband and to fit out privateers and expeditions hostile to Spain.¹⁴ This was possible under the old neutrality law of 1794 which contained no provision prohibiting an American citizen from accepting commissions from a foreign prince or state outside the United States, or nothing to prevent a citizen of the United States from arming and equipping a vessel within the United States and then selling it to a foreigner to be used for any purpose outside the United States.¹⁵ Luis de Onis at last persuaded President Madison to ask Congress, December 26, 1816, to pass a new neutrality law in order to prevent the fitting out of privateering vessels in our ports. On January 14, 1817, a bill for enforcing neutrality was introduced in the House of Representatives.

Henry Clay, believing this proposal was definitely an advantage to Spain over the South American colonies, vigorously opposed the bill. Colton says this bill is remarkable as Clay's "debut" for the independence of the Spanish American colonies. Clay declared that so long as our government abstained from taking any part in the contest in South America, it was its duty to maintain a strict neutrality; we must either take the

¹³ American State Papers, Foreign Relations, IV, p. 1.

¹⁴ S. F. Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, p. 199, Henry Holt and Company, N.Y., 1936.

¹⁵ Annals of Congress, 3rd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1461-1464, Gales and Seaton, edition, 1849.

part of a neutral or a belligerent. This new proposal contained two new principles that would cause us much concern. The first new principle was to require a bond from the owners of armed vessels, that persons to whom they might sell the vessels should not use them in the contest. The second was that power was to be vested in the collectors to seize and detain, under certain circumstances, any such vessels. Clay did not propose a violation of neutrality. He believed that the government could force its own citizens to be neutral, but he did not believe we had the right to force people who bought things from us, to use them the way we commanded. Our citizens had the same right to build armed ships for sale as to sell any other article to people of foreign countries. In answering the charge of a member of the House that the colonists were incapable, from the ignorance and superstition which prevailed among them, of achieving independence or enjoying liberty, Clay asked,

To what cause is that ignorance and superstition owing? Was it not to the vices of their government, to the tyranny and oppression, hierarchial and political, under which they groaned? If Spain succeeded in riveting their chains upon them, would not ignorance and superstition be perpetuated?.....(independence) was the first step toward improving their condition..... I wish them independence. I may be accused of an imprudent utterance of my feelings....I care not; when the independence, the happiness, the liberty of a whole people, is at stake, and that people our neighbors, our brethren, occupying a portion of the same continent, imitating our example, and participating of the same sympathies with ourselves, I will boldly avow my feelings and my wishes in their behalf....¹⁶

Clay declared that he could not vote for the measure because he believed the provisions were not necessary to the performance of our neutral duties.

We ought to perform our neutral duties, while we are neutral, without regard to the unredressed injuries inflicted upon us by old Spain on the one hand, or to the glorious object of the struggle of the South America patriots on the other. We ought to render strict justice and no more.¹⁷

¹⁶ Calvin Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, p. 102

¹⁷ Ibid.

Since this bill favored Spain, who had a recognized representative in Washington, at the expense of the struggling colonies, who had no recognized representatives, Clay felt that this bill would not render justice. He believed with Mr. Root of New York that England was behind the Spanish request for stricter neutrality, because it would make the United States seem to be an ally of Spain and opposed to the Spanish Colonies. England would thereby benefit from their friendship with her. England would take no step to alienate the affection of the South Americans for fear that it would throw the trade of that vast region wholly into the hands of the United States.¹⁸ The act was passed in the House by a vote of 83 to 62. Clay's fearless championship of the cause of the South Americans earned him their lasting gratitude, and the Supreme Congress of the Mexican Republic voted Clay an expression of thanks for his attitude.¹⁹

By 1817, the prospects for South American independence were very bright. On July 9, 1816, a congress at Tucuman issued a declaration of the independence of the United Province of the Rio de La Plata. In February of 1817, the Chilean revolutionists, with the aid of the Argentine general, San Martin, gained a decisive victory at Chacabuco and proclaimed their independence. In the United States, interest in favor of independence grew rapidly. The newspapers of the country printed numerous articles designed to increase public interest. Niles Register, especially, kept the public informed of the various activities in South America, and published remarks of the leaders in Congress on the subject.

¹⁸ Annals of Congress, 14th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 721-722.

¹⁹ Niles Weekly Register, XII, p. 208.

That Clay had the full support of his fellow Kentuckians in his efforts for freedom for South America is proven by the fact that Kentucky was the first state of the United States to declare formally its sympathy for the cause. In his message to the Kentucky General Assembly, 1817, Governor Gabriel Slaughter expressed his very earnest sympathy for the success of the South American colonies in their efforts for independence.²⁰ On January 31, 1818, the General Assembly of Kentucky passed a resolution, introduced by Mr. Bledsoe, declaring in favor of recognition.

Resolved... That the people of this state view with the most lovely emotion, the patriotic struggles of their South American republican brethren, to throw off and break in pieces the yoke of Spanish despotism; to take their stand amongst the nations of the earth; and to vindicate the exercise of those rights of self-government which the God of nature has given to man, as his inalienable right.... they are fully sensible of the importance to the United States of the establishment of the independence of the South American colonies, as respects the probable commercial and political relations between the two portions of the same great continent.....

...That it is....wise policy, as well as justice, for the government of the United States to acknowledge the independence of such of the former Spanish Colonies of South America, as shall have shown themselves capable of vindicating and maintaining the right of self-government....²¹

This resolution was presented to President Monroe and to each of the senators and representatives from Kentucky.

President Monroe was not unsympathetic toward the South Americans. In his Message to the first session of the fifteenth Congress on December 2, 1817, he said,

It was natural that our citizens should sympathize in events which affected their neighbors... Through every stage of the conflict the United States have maintained an impartial neutrality, giving aid to neither of the parties... Our ports have been open to both, and every article,....., which either was permitted to take, has been

²⁰ M. H. Thatcher, Address at Caracas, Venezuela, Feb. 1931, Bulletin of Pan American Union, LXV, p. 133.

²¹ Niles Register, XIII, pp. 371-372.

equally free to the other.²²

He stated that there were two important reasons for our maintaining a strict neutrality: First, it would not be safe to act on so important a matter without the support of at least one European power of importance; and second, any action favorable to the Spanish colonies would seriously delay, if not entirely prevent, the acquisition of the Floridas from Spain.

In answer to Monroe's statement of our duty of neutrality, Clay proposed in the Committee of the Whole, an amendment:

And that said Committee be instructed to inquire whether any, and if any, wheat, provisions of law are necessary to insure to the American Colonies of Spain, a just observance of the duties incidental to the neutral relations in which the United States stand in the existing war between them and Spain.²³

Clay charged that the courts of the United States had been employed by the agents of Spain to annoy the officers and agents of the Spanish Colonists when found within the jurisdiction of the United States. He cited the case of nine or ten British disbanded officers who had resolved to join the Spanish American revolutionary armies. On the way from Europe to South America they had stopped at Philadelphia. Here, dressed in military fashion and making no disguise of their destination and plans, they booked passage on a vessel bound for South America. However, our public authorities learned of these plans "perhaps at the instigation of some agent of the Spanish government," the men were prosecuted in our courts, and, because of their inability to secure bail, these British officers were placed in prison. Clay demanded,

What was the neutral obligation which one nation owed to another engaged in war? The essence of it is this; that the belligerent

²² James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908, National Literature and Art, Bureau of, II, p. 13, 1909.

²³ Annals of Congress, 15th Congress, 1st Session, p. 401.

means of the neutral shall not be employed in the war in favor of either of the parties... It certainly does not require of one nation to restrain the belligerent means of other nations.....²⁴

Other cases had occurred in which it appeared to him it became the Congress to interpose its authority. Clay then cited the case of persons sailing under the flag of the Southern provinces, who were tried for piracy in courts of Boston. They were acquitted on these charges, but, on the instigation of a Spanish agent, had been arraigned again for the same offense.

We admit the flag of these colonies into our ports; we profess to be neutral; but if our laws pronounce that the moment the property and persons under that flag enter our ports, they shall be seized, the one claimed by the Spanish Minister or consul as the property of Spain, and the other prosecuted as pirates, that law ought to be altered if we mean to perform our neutral professions.

.... From the proclamation of 1815, issued to terminate an expedition supposed to be organizing in Louisiana--an expedition only in the mind of Chevalier de Onis--down to the late act... for suppressing, as it was called, the establishment at Amelia Island and Galveston--all the acts of the Government had been on one side; they all bore against the colonies... It became us to look to the other side..... Let us recollect the conditions of the patriots; no minister here to spur on our Government, as was said in an interesting and.... very candid work recently, no minister here to be rewarded by noble honors in consequence of the influence he is supposed to possess with the American Government.²⁵

Clay demanded that, if our laws allowed such flagrant use to be made of them, it was the imperious duty of Congress to amend those laws. The amendment proposed by Clay was agreed to without opposition.

Clay intended bringing a motion to recognize the government of Buenos Aires, and perhaps of Chile. Crawford brought proposals from him to Monroe, expressing the wish for harmony with the Executive as to the manner of bringing it forward, but Adams and Calhoun dissuaded Monroe.²⁶

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 403-404.

²⁶ J. Q. Adams, *Diary*, pp. 189-190, Longmans, Green and Co., N.Y., 1929.

The day before Christmas, Clay, while at dinner party at Crawfords, violently denounced the government's South American policy. Adams wrote in his Memoirs that Clay had "mounted his South American great horse."²⁷ A week later Crawford told Adams that Clay, on an evening when he was gay and warm with wine, stated that he meant to follow up his attack, and exclaimed "I'll beat you, by ___!"²⁸ A day or two after this outburst at Calhoun's, Clay told Calhoun that he was anxious to avoid collision if possible and proposed to make merely an appropriation for a Minister to Buenos Aires.²⁹

On March 18, 1818, a new neutrality legislation was proposed. It provided that no ships were to be built in or outfitted with arms or men from the United States and used against the territory or dominions of any foreign prince or state, or of any colony, district, or people, with whom the United States are at peace; and

That the owners or consignees of every armed vessel sailing out of the ports of the United States, belonging wholly, or in part, to the citizens thereof, shall enter into bond to the United States, with sufficient sureties, prior to the clearing out the same, in double the amount of the value of the vessel and cargo on board, including her armament, that the said ship or vessel shall not be employed by such owners to cruise or commit hostilities against the subjects, citizens, a property of any foreign prince or state, or of any colony, district or people, with whom the United States are at peace.³⁰

Clay immediately came to the defense of the South Americans, declaring that the bill "instead of an act to enforce neutrality, ought to be entitled an act for the benefit of His Majesty the King of Spain."³¹ He

²⁷ John Q. Adams, Memoirs, IV, p. 28, J. B. Lippincott and Co., Philadelphia, 1874-1877.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 40.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 40.

³⁰ Annals, 15 Congress, 2nd Session, p. 1403.

³¹ Ibid, p. 1403.

proposed an amendment that would repeal the acts of 1797 and 1817, leaving in force the old law of 1794.³² He declared that the act was not necessary to preserve our neutrality. In its provisions it went beyond the obligations of the United States to other Powers, and that part of it was unprecedented in any nation which compelled citizens of the United States "to give bonds not to commit acts without the jurisdiction of the United States, which it is the business of foreign nations, and not of this government to guard against."³³

Clay stated that he did not like the origin of the act, because there had been some "disclosures, not in official form, but in such a shape as to give them credence," that made it evident to him that the act was the result of "teasing" on the part of foreign agents in this country.³⁴

Mr. Forsyth, who led the opposition to Henry Clay denied the "teasing" activities of foreign agents on the passage of the neutrality act of 1817, but admitted on the floor of Congress, that foreign ministers in Washington had remonstrated against the depredations on their commerce by United States ships.³⁵

In showing the unjustness of Spain's attitude toward our trade, Clay declared that the commander of one of our vessels to Cuba told him that Spain allowed us to trade with Cuba only for the sake of war supplies to be used against colonies.

The army of the Spanish general Morillo, whose career is characterized by all the enormities which have consigned to perpetual infamy the name of his great prototype, could not have been sustained but for supplies from Havana,.....³⁶

Spain, herself, was forcing us to be unneutral.

Clay then pointed to England's attitude toward the Colonies.

³² Ibid, p. 1404.

³³ Ibid, p. 1407.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 1406.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 1409.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 1407.

Great Britain had issued a proclamation which almost recognized the independence of the provinces, calling the war a contest between America and Spain, and forbidding her citizens to engage in it, but requiring no bond and security from them. No, she had gone a step further than she had ever before gone; her citizens, who constitute a part of the armies of Spain, she has forbidden from fighting against the patriots. I wish we might imitate her example, and observe a real neutrality, instead of that which exists in name only, to the prejudice of one party and not of the other.³⁷

The proposal to strike out of the neutrality act the parts reaffirming the acts of 1817 failed to pass; therefore, Clay dropped the other, and proposed another amendment, which, as modified by Mr. Tucker, and passed by the House read:

That in prosecutions, either against persons or property, sailing under the flag of any colony, district, or people, which shall be admitted into the ports of the United States, it shall not be deemed ground for the punishment or condemnation of such person or property, that the sovereignty of such colony, district, or people, has not been acknowledged by the Government of the United States. Provided, that the colony, district, or people aforesaid, have organized an existing Government, claiming to be independent at the time of the commission of the fact of which the persons are charged.³⁸

The South American policy of the administration depended to a great extent upon Monroe and Adams. Neither was unfriendly to the Spanish Americans, and both believed that we would recognize them eventually. Monroe probably would have proposed recognition had he not been restrained by Adams and Calhoun.³⁹ John Quincy Adams was friendly, but rather skeptical concerning the capacity of these colonists for an independent or a liberal form of government.

At this time Monroe and Adams felt that the affairs of state demanded prudence with regard to the formal recognition of the South American countries. Adams was in the midst of negotiating a treaty with de Onis

³⁷ Ibid., p. 1417.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 1433 and 1434.

³⁹ John H. Latene, A History of American Foreign Policy, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1927, p. 172.

over the continental boundary and the cession of the Floridas; therefore, he advised Monroe to wait until this treaty was ratified. In January, Adams had also learned of the projected mediation by European powers between Spain and the new states, and he wished to know the outcome of this effort.⁴⁰ This was right in line with the British policy which was skillfully directed toward keeping the United States from winning undue credit and influence in South America. Lord Castlereagh, British Foreign Secretary, conveyed the impression that European mediation between Spain and her colonies was probable, and precipitate American action might give unnecessary delay.⁴¹

In his speech of March, 18, 1818, Clay had intimated that foreign agents had had undue influence on the policy of the administration, and sarcastically referred to Adams' policy of "watchful waiting."

We are told very good-naturedly by the Secretary of State... that we have patiently waited for the settlement of our differences with Spain, and it will require no very great effort to wait a little longer..... Admirable, Job-like patience... I thank my God that I do not possess it.⁴²

The fact that Adams realized the importance of Henry Clay's activities and ability is recorded in his *Memoirs*, IV, page 64:

Mr. Clay pushes for the repeal of laws which trammel the means of giving aid to the South American revolutionists, and there is no member of the House of Representatives friendly to the Administration who has spirit and ability and mastery of the subject adequate to withstand him.

Meanwhile, President Monroe, on his own responsibility, had sent Messrs. Rodney, Bland, and Graham to South America to investigate and report on the political and economic conditions of the Spanish provinces.

⁴⁰ J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, p. 49.

⁴¹ Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay*, Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, 1937, p. 1212

⁴² *Annals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1417-1418.

In his instructions Adams stated the purpose of their mission in nine articles including a form of government established, population, financial situation, military forces and defenses, leading men, dispositions among people and governments toward the United States and toward European nations, commercial prospects (principal imports and exports, prices, duties on imports and exports), and the prospects of final issue of the present struggle.⁴³

He outlined our policy as one of strict neutrality; we would allow no privileges of any kind to one party that was not extended to the other. We had considered the contest in the light of a civil war in which the parties were equal. But to know what further course to pursue, the President needed more information on the state of affairs. For that purpose he had appointed the Commission.⁴⁴ President Monroe brought the matter before Congress when he asked for an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars compensation for the commissioners.

Clay objected to the commission because he asserted that it was useless and unconstitutional. He stated that the fact of the independence of Venezuela and Buenos Aires was already a matter of history and their conditions were already well known. They were not to visit the parts of Mexico and New Granada, from which information was most needed. Then the manner of their appointment was not constitutional. They were appointed while the Senate was in recess, but did not sail until after the Senate was in session; therefore, their commissions should have had the consent of that body. The manner of appointment also was not advisable. Their appointment and intentions had been reported by the newspapers months before their departure (they had been appointed in June), also declared by

⁴³ Wm. R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations, I, p. 44, Oxford University Press, 1925.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

the President and made known to the whole world, and then the commissioners departed with all the paraphernalia of public ministers. Naturally, as soon as they arrived at any South American port, they would be surrounded by all the factions in the country who would strive to prejudice the commissioners in favor of the various interests, to mislead their judgments, and to prevent their getting correct information on the real conditions of things. Furthermore, since they were only given seven or eight months for their trip, the time was inadequate even if they had been acquainted with the language, manners, and habits of the country. Clay then explained that the proper course would have been

to dispatch an individual unknown to all parties; some intelligent, keen, silent, and observing man, of pleasing dress and insinuating manners, who, concealing the object of his visit, would see and hear everything, and report it favorably.⁴⁵

He then proposed

to insert in this appropriation bill a provision to appropriate the sum of eighteen thousand dollars as the outfit and one year's salary of a minister to be deputed from the United States to the independent provinces of the River Plata in South America.⁴⁶

This proposition resulted in a debate which lasted several days. On March 24, Clay, the leader of the debate favoring emancipation of the South American colonies, made his most widely quoted speech on South American policies.

the outburst of argument from the mouth of Mr. Clay on this occasion came down with tremendous effect not only upon the House of Representatives, but upon the country; and not only on this country, but it burst on Spain herself, and on all Europe, as a clap of thunder from the skies. It was republican America, from Cape Horn to Hudson's Bay, against monarchical Europe, from the Mediterranean to Finland, that suddenly started up before the surprised imagination of men....⁴⁷

In his effort to arouse sympathy for the South Americans, Clay com-

⁴⁵ Annals, 15th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1465-1468.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 1468.

⁴⁷ Calvin Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, p. 137.

pared their plight to ours as colonies, but declared that their conditions were much worse than ours had been. The political prospect was an interesting one, for the revolution in Spanish America was the first step in making the entire American continent a republican empire, "in contrast with the European continent groaning under a variety of despotisms." Clay criticized the manner in which our negotiations with Spain had been conducted.

If ever a favorable time existed for the demand, on the part of and injured nation, of indemnity for past wrongs from the aggressor, such is the present time. Impoverished and exhausted at home, by the wars which have desolated the peninsula, with a foreign war calling for infinitely more resources in men and navy, than she can possibly command, this is the auspicious period for insisting upon justice at her hands, in a firm and decided tone.⁴⁸

The Administration was playing into Spain's hands, however, by its procrastinating policy, for time was what Spain then needed.

And the Secretary of State, in a late communication with Mr. Onis, after ably vindicating all our rights, tells the Spanish minister, with a good deal of sang froid, that we had patiently waited 13 years for redress of our injuries, and that it required no great effort to wait longer!⁴⁹

Clay listed various wrongs for which he would have demanded indemnity. At the same time he said that he would have recognized any established government in Spanish America, leaving Spain to draw her own inferences as to the ultimate step this government might adopt, if Spain longer withheld justice from us.

That Clay had a great deal of information concerning South America is demonstrated by the lengthy descriptions of the continent and the political, economic, social, and educational policy of Spain that kept the people subjugated to her interests.

When the king of Spain abdicated, he gave the colonies the right to

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 138.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 139.

revolt.

The monarchy was dissolved; and each integral part had a right to seek its own happiness, by the institution of any new government adapted to its wants. Joseph Bonapart, the successor de facto of Ferdinand, recognized this right on the part of the colonies, and recommended them to establish their independence. Thus, upon the ground of strict right;....the colonies,.....had an indisputable right to set up for themselves. But.... I maintain, that an oppressed people are authorized, whenever they can, to rise and break their fetters. This was the great principle of our own (revolution).⁵⁰

The establishment of the independence of Spanish America held the deepest interest of the United States.

This interest concerns our politics, our commerce, our navigation. There cannot be a doubt that Spanish America, once independent, whatever may be the form of the governments established in its several parts, these governments will be animated by an American feeling, and guided by an American policy. They will obey the laws of the system of the New World, of which they will compose a part, in contradistinction to that of Europe.⁵¹

Here Clay voiced his Pan-American dream of free independent nations throughout the two continents, patterned, he hoped on our example. In discussing the nature of the governments the South Americans might form, he said that we should not prescribe for

Anxious as I am that they should be free governments, we have no right to prescribe for them. They are, and ought to be, the sole judges for themselves. I am strongly inclined to believe that they will, in most, if not all parts of their country, establish free governments. We are their great example..... They adopt our principles, copy our institutions, and, in many instances, employ the very language and sentiment of our revolutionary papers.⁵²

In refuting the claims that "they are too ignorant and too superstitious for free government," Clay mentioned their advancement in science and education, "they have 9 universities, and in the City of Mexico, it is affirmed by Humbolt that there are more solid scientific establishments than in any city even in North America." If ignorance were common, the

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 144.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 145.

⁵² Ibid, p. 145.

government of Spain was responsible; however, since the revolutions had begun, education had been attended to and genius developed. Self-government encouraged progress, because "self-government is the natural government of man." A great deal of his speech, however, concerned our commercial interest in South America.

The precious metals are in South America, and they will command the articles wanted in South America.... Our navigation will be benefitted by the transportation, and our country will realize the merchantile profits... The distribution of the precious metals has hitherto been made principally through the circuitous channel of Cadiz. No one can foresee all the effects which will result from a direct distribution of them from the mines which produce them. One of these effects will probably be to give us the entire command of the Indian trade.⁵³

He also pointed out that, should England continue in the West Indies her colonial monopoly, Venezuela, New Granada, and other parts of South America would furnish us instead.

In another lengthy explanation, Clay discussed the agricultural products and possibilities of South America in order to convince his listeners that these countries would not be commercial rivals. They would complement us. "Of the 80 odd millions in exports, only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million... can come into competition with us."

Clay also voiced the attitude of the West toward Spain's ownership of the country surrounding the Gulf of Mexico.

The immense country watered by the Mississippi and its branches, has a peculiar interest... Having but the single vent of New Orleans for all the surplus produce of their industry, it is quite evident that they would have a greater security for enjoying the advantages of that outlet, if the independence of Mexico upon any European power were effected. Such a power, owning at the same time Cuba, the great key of the Gulf of Mexico, and all the shores of that gulf, with the exception of the portion below the Perdido and Rio del Norte, must have a powerful command over our interests.⁵⁴

In defining our policy, Clay said that it should be one of strict

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 147-148.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 150.

and impartial neutrality. This pacific policy required recognition of any established government in South America. He declared that recognition alone, without aid, was no just cause for war. He did not advocate war, but, since there was no common tribunal to pass upon the sovereignty of new states, each nation had that right in itself. He cited various instances to prove that the previous practice of our government had been to recognize the sovereign de facto instead of the sovereign de jure. "Our own government stands on the basis of the right of the people to change their rulers." When General Washington was president he recognized, during the French Revolution, all phases of their government--republic, directory, and consuls. Messrs. Jefferson and Madison, while they were president, also acted on these principles, for they received ministers either from the Spanish Cortes or from Joseph Bonaparte, whichever was in power. Since not a single Spanish bayonet remained within the territories of La Plata to contest the authority of the actual government, it was a free, sovereign state. As such, we owed it recognition.⁵⁵

Clay continued with further principles that were later incorporated in the famous declaration of Monroe. He said, "We are the natural head of the American family. I would not intermeddle in the affairs of Europe. We keep wisely aloof from their broils."⁵⁶

Discussing the probability of war with any European nation as a result of the recognition of the Rio de la Plata, Clay showed a good knowledge of European affairs. He reviewed the report of the minister of the Hacienda to the King of Spain to show that Spain could not even borrow money to finance a foreign war. Russia was interested in gaining more territory in the Mediterranean. France was interested in extending her commercial interests and in regenerating her marine. England, de-

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 151-154.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

spised on the continent, was the only one really interested in South America. Because of the apprehension of the extension of Russian power in the Near East, France, an ally of Turkey and England, would probably hesitate to aid the Holy Alliance in either of the Americas. There was really no bond among the Allies strong enough to endanger us.

Since Clay believed that England, the only European country with a formidable navy, was the only European nation that could give us any real trouble over recognition, he proceeded to give sound reasons why she would not interfere.

England is alike restrained by her honor as by her interest from waging war against us... for an acknowledgment of the independence of the new state. England encouraged and the revolt of the colonies as early as June 1797. Sir Thomas Picton, governor of Trinidad... on orders from British minister of foreign affairs, issued a proclamation, in which he expressly assured the inhabitants of Terra Firma that the British government would aid in establishing their independence, 'be it with forces or with arms and ammunition to any extent!..⁵⁷

He also stated that Great Britain paid the expenses of the expedition of Miranda in Venezuela; and when England had assumed the attitude of mediator between Spain and her colonies, one of her terms was perfect freedom of commerce, allowing only some degree of preference to Spain.

And would not England stand disgraced in the eyes of the whole world, if, after having abetted and excited a revolution, she should now attempt to reduce the colonies to unconstitutional submission, or should make war upon us for acknowledging that independence which she herself sought to establish?⁵⁸

In addition to this personal interest, England's commercial considerations would keep her neutral. Her trade with the two Americas was worth more to her than that with all the rest of the world, and "no commercial advantages which Spain may offer by treaty, can possess the security for her trade, which independence would communicate." To

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 158.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 159.

emphasize, with even greater force, the neutral attitude of England, Clay quoted from an article in the Quarterly Review of November, "a work devoted to the Ministry," in which England warned Spain that England could not and would not help her, because,

by abstaining from interference in the affairs of South America, we are surrendering to the United States all the advantages which might be secured to ourselves from this revolution; that we are assisting to increase the trade and power of a nation which alone can ever be the maritime rival of England. It appears to us extremely doubtful, whether any advantage, commercial or political can be lost to England by a neutral conduct.... Far better would it be for Spain, instead of calling for our aid, to profit by our experience; and to substitute, ere it be too late, for efforts like those by which the North American colonies were lost to this country, the conciliatory measures by which they might have been retained.⁵⁹

Clay felt, too, that England, with her unsurpassed sea power would black any interference by the other European governments.

Edward H. Tatum in "The United States and Europe, 1815-1823," says

little has been said of Clay's estimate of the power of the European states. Though it is granted that Clay was pleading a cause, and that he wished to minimize the danger which might result from the recognition of the South American states, there remains the soundness of his views on Europe and the unquestioned influence which his utterances had on the public. Conversely, account should be taken of the fact that Clay was very sensitive to public opinion, and that he reflected the views of the people in his speeches and debates.⁶⁰

A few days later, March 28, Clay spoke again on the emancipation of South America. In this reply to the opponents of his amendment, he continued with the same principles that he had used on March 24. Recognition would give Spain no just cause for war; some Americans trading with the province under royal Spanish license opposed recognition; although La Plata had already enjoyed independence for eight years, we yet refused her formal recognition. Clay vehemently attacked the policy of the administration

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 160.

⁶⁰ Edward H. Tatum, Jr., The United States and Europe, 1815-1823, p. 47, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1936.

by stating

Contrast this conduct of ours with our conduct in other respects. No matter whence the minister comes, be it from a despotic power, we recognize him;..... Yes, from Constantinople, or from the Brazils; from Turk or Christian; from black or white; from the dey of Algiers or the bey of Tunis; from the devil himself, if he wore a crown, we should receive a minister. We even paid the expenses of the minister of his sublime highness, the bey of Tunis, and thought ourselves highly honored by his visit. But let the minister come from a poor republic, like that of the La Plata, and we turn our back on him.... We have exchanged ministers with the Brazils. The one, however, is a kingdom, the other a republic; and if any gentleman can assign any other better reason why a minister should be sent to one and not to the other of these powers, I shall be glad to hear it disclosed, for I have not been able myself to discover it.⁶¹

The House was not willing to thus arrange for a minister to a foreign country without the request of the President, and a majority of the members probably preferred to wait for the report of Monroe's commissioners to South America; hence, Clay's motion was defeated by a vote of 115 to 45. Clay was disappointed but not discouraged for he continued to work for the recognition of the Spanish American colonies.

According to John Quincy Adams, President Monroe was quite upset by Clay's violent attack on the administration policy. "The subject which seems to absorb all the faculties of his mind is the violent systematic opposition that Clay is raising against his Administration."⁶²

In South America, however, Clay became a hero. His speech of March 24 was translated into Spanish, and used at the heads of different regiments of the Hispanic American armies of independence, where it was received with great applause.⁶³ Calvin Colton said that the South American patriots recognized Mr. Clay's early advocacy of their cause by voting him thanks, translating and circulating his speeches, in erecting

⁶¹ Annals, op. cit., pp. 1615, 1617.

⁶² John Quincy Adams, Diary, p. 194.

⁶³ Glyndon Van Deusen, Life of Henry Clay, p. 131.

monuments to his honor, and celebrating his name in patriotic songs.⁶⁴

To show their approval of his efforts, Clay was invited by his immediate constituents to a public dinner at Lexington, Kentucky, "in testimony of respect for his character and service, generally, but especially in evidence of their approbation of his exertions in favor of the patriots of South America." There were 150 gentlemen present.⁶⁵

Schurz in his "Life of Henry Clay" stated, "Clay would have served better the cause he had at heart had he maintained friendly relations with the administration."⁶⁶

Clay's efforts would probably have born fruit earlier had it not been for the attitude of Adams. In his Memoirs, July 1818, Adams admits that he "restrained President Monroe from proposing to England a cooperation in behalf of the South Americans,"⁶⁷ and in his Diary, July 25, he wrote:

The President two days ago very abruptly asked me to see Mr. Bagot (British Minister) and propose through him to the British Government an immediate cooperation between the United States and Great Britain to promote the independence of South America. I asked him what part of South America. 'All South America, and Mexico, and the islands included.' I told him I thought Great Britain was not yet prepared for such a direct proposition, and, entering into details, I immediately found it was a crude idea, which he immediately abandoned.⁶⁸

Adams feared for the failure of the negotiation of the Florida treaty by a recognition policy at that time. That Clay was encouraged in his efforts by a national hero was shown in his private correspondence. General Lafayette, from his home in France, corresponded regularly with Henry Clay, and spoke of his desire for Spanish American independence.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ C. Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, p. 238.

⁶⁵ Niles Register, 14, June 20, 1818, p. 295.

⁶⁶ Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, I, p. 150, Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1887.

⁶⁷ J. Q. Adams, Memoirs, IV, p. 148.

⁶⁸ J. Q. Adams, Diary, p. 201.

⁶⁹ C. Colton, The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, Lafayette to Mr. Clay, p. 59, A. S. Barnes and Co., N.Y., 1855.

In the meanwhile, the members of the Holy Alliance had gathered at Aix-la-Chapelle, to discuss various questions pertaining to European and colonial affairs, among which was the question of Spain and her revolutionary American colonies. France considered in her discussion the American view of Hispanic American intervention. Richelieu even suggested American cooperation in whatever discussion should take place on colonial affairs.⁷⁰ Dexter Perkins, in his "Monroe Doctrine," assumed that the chief object of Richelieu's proposal was to prevent independent action on the part of the government at Washington; the agitation for recognition and the propaganda of Clay had their part in forming the French decision.⁷¹ The Congress decided that Spain should settle her colonial question without any aid from the Allies except that of mediation. In his Message to Congress, November 14, 1818, President Monroe expressed the following opinion:

By a circular note, addressed by the Ministers of Spain, to the allied Powers with whom they are respectively accredited, it appears that the Allies have undertaken to mediate between Spain and the South American provinces, and that the manner and extent of their interposition would be settled by a congress which was to have met at Aix-la-Chapelle in September last. From the general policy and course of the proceeding observed by the Allied Powers in regard to this contest, it is inferred that they will confine their interposition to the expression of their sentiments; abstaining from the application of force.⁷²

Thus one of the Administration's fears of Hispanic American recognition was dispelled. Another was soon to incite Henry Clay to renewed agitation.

⁷⁰ Dexter Perkins, Russia and the Spanish Colonies, 1817-1818, American Historical Review, July 1923, XXVIII, pp. 667-668.

⁷¹ Dexter Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826, p. 124.

⁷² Am. State Papers, For. Rel., IV, p. 215.

CHAPTER III

Recognition by the United States

In February 1819, John Q. Adams, the Secretary of State, after long and trying negotiations, succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Spanish Minister, de Onis, for the cession of the whole of Florida to the United States in return for the assumption by the United States of the claims of American citizens against Spain, and settled the southwestern boundary question by withdrawing our claims to Texas. Our Senate immediately ratified the treaty, but King Ferdinand withheld his ratification. At the end of the six months period allotted for ratification, many Americans favored declaring the treaty void and taking Florida anyway. In a special message to Congress, March 27, 1820, President Monroe advised waiting a while longer, stating that the new Spanish minister was being sent to the United States, and that the King of Spain might yet sign the treaty.¹

Henry Clay, however, believed that we had waited long enough. He believed that, since the treaty had not been ratified on time, we should declare it entirely void. He wished to keep Texas even at the expense of Florida for he expected us to secure Florida anyway. A month later, May 10, 1820, Clay again returned directly to the Hispanic American problem by proposing that:

It is expedient to provide by law a suitable outfit and salary for such Minister or Ministers, as the President, by and with the consent of the Senate, may send to any of the Government of South America, which have established, and are maintaining, their independence on Spain.²

¹ Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, II, pp. 69-70.

² Annals, 16th Congress, 1st Session, 1820, II, p. 2223.

In defending his resolution, Clay questioned the inactivity of the Executive after his strong message to Congress, especially after hearing in the reports of the commissioners to South America, that "they had all agreed in attesting the fact of individual sovereignty being exercised by the government of Buenos Ayres." He said that everyone had expected the recognition of the independence of Buenos Aires.

The surprise at a different course being pursued by the Executive at the last session was proportionally great. On this subject, so strong was the message of the president at the commencement of the present session that some of the presses took it for granted that the recognition would follow,....³

He asked if Congress meant to wait until every other nation had recognized them. We had been accused he said of going about among foreign powers, of consulting with Lord Castlereagh and Count Nesselrode, to seek aid in recognizing the independence of South America. The excuse had been given by the President that the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle might take offense at our recognition, but the Congress had refused to interfere, even when Spain asked it. Even then the President had not advised recognition. The proper time for recognizing the independence of the South was "when the struggle was somewhat doubtful and a kind of offense on the part of this government would have had a salutary effect." However, there was still no reason for further delay.

Again Clay urged the importance of the United States in an American system; a Pan-American idea.

It is in our power to create a system of which we shall be the center and in which all South Americans will act with us.....We shall become the center of a system which would constitute the rallying-point of human freedom against all the despotism of the old world... In spite of our coldness toward them (South Americans), of the rigor of our laws, and the conduct of our officers, their hearts

³ Ibid, p. 2225.

still turned toward us, as to their brethren; and (he had no doubt), if our government would take the lead and recognize them, they would become yet more anxious to imitate our institutions, and to secure to themselves and to their posterity the same freedom which we enjoy.⁴

Clay then reiterated the commercial advantages of recognition and of closer associations with Spanish America,

In respect to commerce, we shall be most benefitted; this country will become the place of deposit of the commerce of the world. Our citizens engaged in foreign trade at the present time were disheartened by the conditions of that trade; they must take new channels for it, and none so advantageous could be found as those which the trade of South America would afford...Our enterprise, industry, and habits of economy will give us the advantage in any competition which South America will sustain with us.⁵

In disputing the intimation that these Hispanic Americans were unfit for freedom, Clay touched upon a subject that was already an important sectional one. "In some particulars,...they are greatly in advance of us. Granada, Venezuela and Buenos Ayres, had all emancipated their slaves," and Clay, a slave owner himself, stated that he rejoiced that circumstances permitted them to do it. He also noted that "They had fostered schools with great care, and there were more newspapers in the single town of Buenos Ayres than in the whole kingdom of Spain." In attesting to their intellectual ability Clay declared that he "never saw a question discussed with more ability than that in a newspaper of Buenos Ayres, whether a federative or consolidated form of government was best."⁶

The delay, Clay believed, was caused by the deference of the administration for foreign powers...We remained looking anxiously to Europe, "Watching the eyes of Lord Castlereagh, and getting scraps of letters doubtfully indicative of his wishes; and sending to the Czar of Russia" to get another scrap from Count Nesselrode. He asked why we did not pro-

⁴ Ibid, pp. 2226, 2227.

⁵ Ibid, p. 2226.

⁶ Ibid, p. 2228.

ceed on our own responsibility in recognizing independence of the South American countries, "instead of taking the lead of the holy Alliance in a course which jeopardizes the happiness of unborn millions?" Contemptuously, he continued, "If Lord Castlereagh says we may recognize, we do; if not, we do not." He begged his listeners to form their own opinions instead of depending on Europe. "Let us break these commercial and political fetters; let us no longer watch the nod of any European politician; let us become real and true Americans, and place ourselves at the head of the American system."⁷

Although Clay's resolution carried by a vote of 80 to 75; it only expressed an opinion in favor of diplomatic representation; it did not actually provide for it, and no action was taken by the administration. The views of the administration on the question of recognition, were fundamentally different from those held by Henry Clay. Adams and Monroe were so anxious for the success of the Florida Treaty that they would not allow the recognition of the Spanish American colonies to interfere. Henry Clay, on the other hand, felt that Florida would eventually belong to the United States anyhow, and that Texas really had belonged to us as a part of the Louisiana Purchase; therefore, we should not relinquish our claim to it. Hence, he felt that the correct course to pursue was to recognize the independence of the South American colonies in the hope of defeating the Florida treaty.⁸ Thomas Jefferson wrote Monroe that he was "not sorry about Spain's failure to ratify," and that Texas, Florida, and probably Cuba would join us in an acknowledgement of their independence.⁹

⁷ Ibid, pp. 2227-2228.

⁸ Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, I, p. 169; Annals, op. cit., p. 1720.

⁹ Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, pp. 64-65, J. C. Rives, Washington, D. C., 1849.

At a dinner in Lexington, Kentucky, in June 1820, Henry Clay gave the reasons for his zeal for the independence of South America. He said that those people were capable of freedom, they desired it, and he felt it to be his duty to strive for their recognition. He again criticized the inactivity of Monroe, stating that he differed from the president who wanted European governments to be acknowledge independence also. He favored American action uninfluenced by the policy of "my Lord Castlereagh, Count Nesselrode, or any other great man of Europe."¹⁰ Clay believed the administration was afraid to act alone in this matter.

Throughout the summer of 1820 Adams labored for the ratification of the Florida treaty. He told the French Minister that the time for recognition of some of the South American provinces was fast approaching.¹¹ He did not wish to commit this government never to recognize the independence of South America nor to assist in their revolt as Ferdinand required. Adams was exceedingly proud of the first draft of the treaty until he learned of the ambiguity of the date set for validating land grants in Florida by Ferdinand. In his "Diary," page 255 he records his anger and pique, especially with reference to his rival, Henry Clay. "....Clay and his admirers here were snickering at the simplicity with which I had been bamboozled by the crafty Spaniard." Clay first discovered the artifice and proceeded to "waft it as his tribute of incense to the President."¹² Adams demanded a formal declaration by Spain that the grants in question (three) were by the treaty null and void. Finally, in October, the Cortes advised Ferdinand to ratify the treaty and annul the land grants said to have been made after January 24, 1818. He did

¹⁰ Niles Register, XVIII, p. 327.

¹¹ J. Q. Adams, Memoirs, V, p. 118.

¹² J. Q. Adams, Diary, pp. 255-256.

so on October 24. Just two years after Adams and de Onis signed the first treaty, our Senate ratified the new treaty.

In the meantime, Clay, February 9, introduced a motion in the House to appropriate a sum not exceeding eighteen thousand dollars for an outfit and one year's salary to such Minister or Ministers 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 on Spain.¹³ As a matter of fact, the purpose of this motion was to force, by an appropriation, the president to heed the resolution passed by the House the previous spring. This motion was defeated, 79 to 86. The next day, however, Clay offered another resolution which provided that the House

participate 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 would give its constitutional support to the President of the United States whenever he might "deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence of the said provinces."¹⁴ In offering this resolution, Clay said that he was influenced by the "general solicitude which he felt on the subject," and by the conviction that there was a majority of the House in favor of an expression of favorable sentiment for the cause. Mr Brown, Representative from Kentucky, aided Clay on this question, lauding his efforts for recognition, and stating that from his observation it was the "almost universal expression of the wish of the people for the success of the Patriots."¹⁵ When it was intimated that it was out of place for the House to pass such a resolution, Clay declared that it would

¹³ Annals, 16th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 1071.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 1081.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 1088.

not hurt the feelings of the Executive. It merely added the strength of the House to his own, and cited precedents of former occasions. Since the Representatives (in the House) were the immediate representatives by the people, and the cause of South America was the cause of the people, being the cause of human liberty, they did have the right to pass such a resolution. The first clause passed by a vote of one hundred and thirty-four to twelve. The second clause passed by a vote of eighty-seven to sixty-eight. A committee, headed by Clay, was appointed to lay the resolution before the President who reported that he would take the resolution into "deliberate consideration."¹⁶

In his "Diary," pp. 262-263, Adams recorded on March 9, 1821, a conversation that he had with Henry Clay. He said that he regretted the difference between Clay's views and those of the Administration upon South American affairs and that he had never doubted that they would win their independence from Spain. He also believed that it was our true policy and duty to take no part in the contest, but he did not believe they would ever establish free and orderly government, however. He told Clay,

They have not the first elements of good or free government. Arbitrary power, military and ecclesiastical, was stamped upon their education, upon their habits, and upon all their institutions. Civil dissension was infused into all their seminal principles. War and mutual destruction was in every member of this organization, moral, political and physical. I had little expectation of any beneficial result to this country from any future connections with them, political or commercial. We should derive no improvement to our own institutions by any communion with theirs. Nor was there any appearance of a disposition in them to take any political lesson from us.

It was this erroneous attitude of Adams that caused Monroe to delay the recognition of the South American countries for so long. The ambition

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 1089-1092, 1180.

of Clay for South American independence, Adams believed, was due to the fact that he wished to succeed Monroe as president; therefore, he took opposition ground upon all the cardinal points of policy taken by the President, especially upon South American affairs.¹⁷ However, Schurtz says that this was an unjust charge for Clay had loudly proclaimed his ardent sympathies for the South American insurgents while Madison was still President. There is no doubt that his appeals were not a mere manoeuvre of opposition, but came straight from his generous impulses. His enthusiasm pictured the two American continents occupied by a great family of republics with his own nation as the head, and it was natural for a man of his temperament to strive for the realization of his dream.¹⁸

In the spring of 1821, Clay resigned as Speaker of the House and announced his intention of retiring from Congress and practice law for a few years to recuperate his fortune. Clay stated that he had been obliged to pay a twenty-five thousand dollar note that he had endorsed for a friend, but Adams declared that he had more than once won and lost an affluent fortune at the gaming table. Clearly, Adams was not a charitable rival for he said of Henry Clay,

In politics, as in private life, Clay is essentially a gamester,with a vigorous intellect, an ardent spirit, a handsome elocution, though with a mind very defective in elementary knowledge, and a very undigested system of ethics,..... He is, like almost all the eminent men of this country, only half educated. His morals, public and private, are loose, but he has all the virtues indispensable to a popular man. His school has been the world, and in that he is a proficient. As he is the first very distinguished man that the Western country has presented as a statesman to the Union, they are proportionably proud of him,.....¹⁹

Schurz pointed out that this was the judgment of a rival who was always

¹⁷ J. Q. Adams, Diary, pp. 194.

¹⁸ Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, I, pp. 147, 168.

¹⁹ J. Q. Adams, op. cit., pp. 238, 239, 263.

inclined to be censorious, and, when opposed, uncharitable--"a rival for the presidency who was careful to admit to himself the strong qualities of the adversary, while dwelling with some satisfaction upon his weak points." Clay's character and "public morals" were above reproach.²⁰

During the summer of 1821, events in South America cleared away any apprehension the Administration may have held regarding the ultimate results of the contest there. In June, Bolivar defeated the Spanish general Morillo in a decisive victory at Carabobo, and San Martin, in July, entered Lima, the last loyal province of Spain in America. The Spanish Viceroy of Mexico, General O. Donoju, in August, signed a treaty with the Revolutionists granting them independence. Although Spain refused to recognize the independence of her American colonies, they considered themselves free.²¹

Henry Clay spoke to enthusiastic audiences in Lexington twice that summer, each time advocating recognition of the South American republic. At a public dinner in July, he declared to his listeners that South American independence was one issue of his public career in which his constituents had manifested deep concern. He reminded them that the House had proclaimed the wish for that recognition in accordance with the sentiment of the American people, and he hoped the executive branch of the government would not much longer delay. One reason for wishing recognition was to give additional love, hope, and confidence to the friends of liberty throughout the world. Another reason was to counter-balance the powers of Europe. The Holy Alliance had taken upon themselves the power of repelling movements for independence in Europe, and Austria had successfully put down the revolt in Naples. He warned his hearers thus,

²⁰ Schurz, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.

²¹ Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826*, p. 48.

The Holy Alliance was dictating the affairs of foreign independent states. We owe our exception to our distance from Europe, and to the known bravery of our countrymen. But who can say, that has observed the giddiness and intoxication of power, how long this exception will continue? It had seemed desirable, that a sort of counterpoise to the Holy Alliance should be formed in the two Americas in favor of national independence and liberty, to operate by the force of example and by moral influence; that here a rallying point and an asylum should exist for freemen, and for freedom.²²

He, therefore, advocated free republican governments in the Western Hemisphere as one means of protecting our own government against any rash steps of the allies. Here, again, Clay advocated principles that were shortly afterward announced in the Monroe Doctrine.

Had the Spanish Cortes been willing to grant even a semblance of independence, the United States might not have needed to recognize the independence of any of the provinces. As late as 1821, the American deputies to Spain had advised dividing Spanish America into three divisions, each with a regent appointed by the Spanish King and a legislature subordinated to the Cortes, but this was refused. On January 31, 1822, Forsythe, the American Minister at Madrid, wrote to Secretary Adams that the Spanish Ministry was not prepared to recognize the independence of the "patriot government." "It would, I think, prefer selling the American possessions to the best European bidder." This fear of possible transfer to a more powerful European nation may have had something to do with the fact that finally on March 8, 1822, Monroe sent a special message to Congress recommending the recognition of the existing South American states and that provisions for sending ministers were made.²³ The message was greeted enthusiastically and the resolution of recognition was passed by a vote of 159 to 1. On May 4 an appropriation of \$100,000 was made for such missions to the independent nations on the

²² Niles Register, 20, p. 301, July 7, 1821.

²³ Richardson, Messages and Papers of Presidents, II, pp. 116-118.

American continent as the President of the United States may deem proper.²⁴

Don Jeaquin de Anduaga, the Spanish representative in Washington, wrote a letter to Secretary of State Adams protesting that the South American colonies were not in fact independent and expressing surprise at our attitude toward their independence. He also expressed Spain's friendly attitude toward the United States. In his reply, April 6, Adams stated that the civil war in the colonies was at an end, that treaties equivalent to an acknowledgment of independence had been concluded by the commanders and viceroys of Spain herself with the republic of Columbia, with Mexico, and with Peru; while, in the provinces of La Plata and in Chile, no Spanish force has for several years existed to dispute the independence which the inhabitants of those countries had declared.²⁵

Dexter Perkins in his "Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826", p. 49, said that the recognition of colonial independence was a bold and decisive act. The Administration was reluctant to act alone but had to base American action on American interest and sympathies and ignore the attitude of the powers of the Old World. The Administration consulted no European power and gave no warning. Its action was taken on a purely American basis, and from a purely American point of view.

The first formal act of recognition was made June 19, when Adams presented Mr. Manuel Torres, the Colombian charge d'Affaires to President Monroe. No representatives from the United States to the South American countries had yet been appointed, although in a conversation with Monroe on April 22, Adams had suggested that Henry Clay be sent as minister to Buenos Ayres or Chile, "where he could do no harm." On June 20, however, Adams proposed to the President that Clay be offered the position of

²⁴ Annals, 17th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2603-2604.

²⁵ American State Papers, For. Rel., IV, pp. 845-846.

Minister to Colombia, even though Adams felt that Clay would refuse it. He said that the Western country wished the offer might be made to Clay; "the republic of Colombia, and particularly Bolivar, with whom he has been in correspondence, will be flattered by his appointment," or even the offer of it; and, in the relations to be established between the United States and Colombia, Clay might be highly useful.²⁶ Clay preferred to return to the House of Representatives, however, "Where he could hope to render the most useful service to the country."²⁷

In a letter to Clay dated November 5, 1822, Lafayette expressed his satisfaction in our recognition of Colombia. "May every part of that continent be also free, independent, and universally acknowledged!" He depreciated the nonsense of an American Emperor (in Brazil), and supposed this would not last long, but hoped our recognition of the Spanish colonies would not cause a break with Spain.

But while I rejoice ⁱⁿ the emancipation of what is called the Spanish dominion, while I lament the hesitation of the Cortez in the acknowledgement which policy and necessity point out to them, I would be very sorry to hear of a serious quarrel between Spain and the United States.²⁸

No matter what the attitude of his own countrymen might be toward Clay's struggle for Spanish American recognition, the people of South America considered him their hero. June¹⁹, Captain Eugenio Cortes, of the Mexican navy, wrote Clay enclosing a letter from Emperor Augustin Iturbide which expressed the Emperor's gratitude for Clay's services and offered Clay his friendship.

for this philanthropic conduct that emanates from a liberal education, and whose end is the civilization of nations, though it relates to the whole Mexican Empire, if its success should be

²⁶ J. Q. Adams, Diary, pp. 277 and 283.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 262.

²⁸ Calvin Colton, The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, p. 68.

in proportion to its promise, I offer you the gratitude which is due to you by all.²⁹

Jose M. Del Real sent Clay six stamps of the portrait of Dr. Josef M. Garcias Toledo as a token of appreciation the "great deal of interest you lay hold of for the liberty and independence as well as for all that belongs to the glorious revolution of South America,...."³⁰ D. V. Pazos, a Peruvian, dedicated to Clay his book on "Letters on the United Province of South America" as an expression of gratitude for Clay's efforts in behalf of the revolutionists.³¹ The revolutionary government of Mexico also sent Henry Clay many testimonials of gratitude and admiration. In June 1822, a Captain Thomson, on his return from Mexico, declared that when Clay's name was mentioned in Mexico, it was "like an electric fire;" and that if Clay were made President of the United States, he could obtain anything he wanted to ask Mexico for.³² In December 1822, Dr. Gual, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, in a letter to C. S. Todd, United States Charge d'Affaires, spoke of Henry Clay, "to whom the Continental States of the ci-devant Spanish America are so much indebted for his perseverance and enlightened sagacity.....a sincere friend of humanity."³³ It was about this time that engraved portraits of Henry Clay, with extracts from his speeches advocating South American independence, were scattered broadcast about the leading cities and towns of South America.³⁴

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

³¹ Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay, p. 131.

³² Ibid., p. 131.

³³ C. Colton, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁴ C. L. Chandler, The Pan Americanism of Henry Clay, Bulletin of Pan American Union, May 1913, 36, p. 689, Wash., D. C., 1913.

In December 12, 1822, President Monroe formally received the diplomatic representation of Mexico, thus making the United States the first to recognize that country, but political intrigue in Washington delayed the naming of a minister to Mexico for about three years.³⁵

³⁵Bemis, Am. Sec't. of State, p. 133.

CHAPTER IV

The Monroe Doctrine

When the question of electing representatives to Congress came up in 1823, Henry Clay decided to enter the political race. He was elected without opposition to the Eighteenth Congress where he was again chosen Speaker by a vote of 139 to 42. At this time Europe was in a turmoil. Revolutions in Southern Europe were being put down by the members of the Holy Alliance; Austria in Naples and the Piedmont, and France in Spain. In the spring of 1823, Clay attended a dinner in Philadelphia where he discussed foreign affairs condemning the invasion of Spain by France whose purpose was to restore Ferdinand, and emphasizing the isolation of the American Continents from European affairs.

More than ten years past have the people of the United States felt and manifested the deepest interest in the success of the struggles of Spanish America, throughout all its fortunes and vicissitudes. These honorable feelings were excited by their abhorrence of a foreign domination, by their love of liberty, and by their high and just estimate of the inestimable privilege of self-government.

In discussing the probable success of the French in Spain, he said,

Whatever may be the issue, we shall, at least, have the consolation of cherishing our own principles... And, in all the changes of human affairs, let us cling, with a closer and fonder embrace, to our own excellent governments, and be thankful to the kindness of Providence, for having removed us far from the power and influence of a confederacy of kings, united to fasten forever the chains of the people....¹

During this period, Cuba and the Caribbean area was believed by Americans to be the point of greatest danger to our country. The United States was unwilling to see Cuba transferred to any European power. Clay felt that England might be given Cuba by the revolutionary government of Spain to purchase support against the Holy Alliance, or by Ferdinand to

¹ Niles Register, XXIV, p. 94.

purchase the aid of Great Britain to consummate a counter-revolution in his favor.² Stratford Canning, British Minister to the United States, told Clay that England had no views on Cuba. Clay answered, however, that we would fight for it, should they attempt to take possession. Clay believed that England's principal interest in Spanish America was commercial gain rather than a desire to possess this region as colonies, but he was always suspicious of England's hidden motives.³ Adams believed Canning, however. In August, George Canning, British Foreign Secretary, suggested to Richard Rush in London, a joint Anglo-American declaration of policy concerning the South American colonies. The two most interesting parts of the proposition were that neither nation aimed to appropriate any part of Spain's possession in America, and that neither nation could see with indifference any portion of them transferred to any other power. Such a declaration would definitely limit our future boundaries south and westward; hence, Adams preferred that we act alone in such a declaration. Therefore, in his Message to Congress, December 2, 1823, Monroe declared that the American Continents were not to be considered "subjects for future European colonization, and that since it was not our policy to take part in European wars, we would consider it an "unfriendly disposition" on their part to interfere with the political systems of the American continents.⁴ Adams stated in his "Diary," page 312, that Clay approved Monroe's Message, but thought the government had weakened itself by withholding so long the acknowledgment of South America's independence, and "he believed even a war for it against all Europe, including even England, would be advantageous to us."⁵ Clay

²Adams, Memoirs, VI, p. 72.

³ Edward H. Tatum, Jr., The United States and Europe, 1815- 1823, pp. 173, 150.

⁴ Richardson, Messages and Papers of Presidents, II, 209, 218.

⁵ Adams, Diary, p. 321.

would be expected to approve Monroe's declaration for he had been advocating such a policy for several years.⁶ Jefferson, also, had favored such a policy. In a letter to Monroe, October 24, 1823, replying to his request for advise, Jefferson counselled Monroe to make such a declaration at that time.⁷

Although this famous declaration named for Monroe was well received, there was no legislative confirmation of it. Clay, however, soon found a good excuse for supporting it in the House. At this time the Greeks were in revolt against the Turks, and Webster introduced a resolution to provide for an agent to Greece whenever the President deemed it expedient. Clay's sympathetic nature responded to the cause. He compared it with the struggle for freedom in South America, and scornfully upbraided them who feared that if Republican America would express her sympathy for the Greeks in their struggle, she would antagonize the Holy Alliance, the self-appointed guardian of European affairs. He stated that such a course would add to the credit and character of our country's name. In closing he cried,

Go home...if you dare, to your constituents, and tell them that you voted it down;...that the specters of cimeters, and crowns, and crescents, gleamed before you and alarmed you; and that you suppressed all the noble feelings prompted by religion, by liberty, by national independence, and by humanity.⁸

During the course of this debate Clay laid the following resolution on the table for consideration:

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the people of these States would see, without serious inquietude, any forcible interposition by the Allied Powers of Europe in behalf of

⁶ See speech in Annals, 12th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 663; 14th Congress 1st Session, pp. 724-725; 790-791; 15th Congress, 1st Session, pp. (Speech Mar. 24, 1818); Ibid., pp. (March 28); 16th Congress, 1st Session, II, pp. 2226-2228; Niles Register, XX, p. 301; Niles Register, XXIV, p. 94.

⁷ Paul L. Ford, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, X, pp. 277-279, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., 1899.

⁸ C. Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, pp. 246, 253.

Spain, to reduce to their former subjection those parts of the continent of America which have proclaimed and established for themselves, respectively, independent Governments, and which have been solemnly recognized by the United States.⁹

This resolution of Clay's was not called up for debate and Mr. Webster's resolution failed in the House. The Administration was doubtless influenced by the debate because of the instructions to Commodore Rogers, in the Mediterranean. About a year later Lafayette mentioned the influence of his actions in a letter to Clay, "which has produced no party complaint that I know of, has...added to the popularity and dignity of the American name." This was the result that Clay had predicted.¹⁰

Clay's resolution, which would have committed Congress to the support of the Monroe Doctrine, was withdrawn in May, because he believed there was no evidence to cause him to think that the European governments intended any attack on the independence of South America.

For his part, whilst he was disposed to keep a vigilant eye on every movement of the Allies, as to America, and to be ready to give his feeble cooperation to every measure calculated to repel their aggressions, if any should be attempted, on the independence of any part of America; he was on the other hand unwilling to give them any just cause of offense against us.¹¹

Europe paid little attention to the Monroe Doctrine, but South America applauded it. The Administration was careful, however, not to commit itself to any agreements with the Latin American governments, when it was immediately suggested by Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico that some such accord would be welcomed.¹² Perkins, in his "Monroe Doctrine," page 195, stated that the earliest South American reference to the Doctrine was in the instructions prepared by the Brazilian Foreign Minister,

⁹ Annals, 18th Congress, 1st Session, I, p. 1104.

¹⁰ C. Colton, op. cit., p. 246.

¹¹ Annals, 18th Congress, 1st Session, II, p. 2763.

¹² S. F. Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, p. 208.

Carvalho e Mello for Rebello, who was sent to urge recognition of the Empire in January 1824. Rebello was to suggest an offensive and defensive alliance with the United States

Such are the principles, which in the Message of the President to both Houses in December last, assumed a more generic application to all the States of this continent, since in that Message is clearly enunciated the necessity of our combining for the defense of our rights and our territory.¹³

The Empire of Brazil was recognized on May 26, 1824, when the Brazilian ambassador was formally received. Some time later he wrote to Adams suggesting an alliance, but Adams, busy with his candidacy for presidency, did not take up the matter.

In his race for the presidency Clay's efforts for South American Independence was emphasized. He was called "the benefactor of the human race and the lover of liberty." The Kentucky Committee of correspondence working for Mr. Clay, published a notice to the Public of the County of Philadelphia, September 11, 1824, announcing Mr. Clay's candidacy in which was said,

...supported by the excellence of the cause and general sentiment of the American people, Mr. Clay persevered in his exertions which have been ultimately triumphant, and identified his name with that of 'benefactor of the human race and lover of liberty.'¹⁴

When the three candidates receiving the highest number of electoral votes, were voted upon in the House, February 9, 1825, Clay's followers voted for John Quincy Adams. Clay had stated before he left Kentucky that in such a contingency, he would vote for Adams. Since the Administration's recognition of the South American republics and the attitude declared by Monroe in December of 1823, Clay and Adams would

¹³ D. Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826, pp. 195, 197.

¹⁴ Niles Register, XXVII, p. 61.

be able to work together with more harmony on foreign affairs.¹⁵ On March 5, Adams nominated Henry Clay to be Secretary of State, and the nomination was confirmed by the Senate.

¹⁵ G. Van Deusen, op. cit., p. 183.

CHAPTER V

Secretary of State, 1825-1829

As Secretary of State, Clay took a more conservative attitude toward problems of state. This attitude is reflected in his Hispanic-American activities. Five of the southern nations had been favorably recognized by the United States at this time, and England had decided to recognize Mexico and Colombia in December preceding Adam's election. Clay's increased responsibilities probably caused more reserve on his part. More than ever before his duty now was to protect the interest of the United States first.

Henry Clay still felt, however, that the freedom of the South American nations was necessary to the best interest of his own country, but he did not wish to entangle the United States too closely. Hence, when Rebelle renewed his suggestion for an offensive and defensive alliance of the United States with the Empire of Brazil, Henry Clay, the new Secretary of State replied in the negative, minimizing the danger of Portuguese intervention in Brazil and refusing to pledge the aid of the United States definitely if that did happen, but he applied the Monroe Doctrine to European intervention in the Empire of Brazil as well as to the republican governments of South America.

The President sees with satisfaction that there is a reasonable probability of a speedy peace between Portugal and the Government of Brazil, founded upon the Independence of which the United States was the first to acknowledge. If in the progress of events there should be a renewal of demonstrations on the part of European Allies to attack the Independence of the American States, the President will give to that new state of things, should it arise, every consideration which its importance would undoubtedly demand.

With respect to your second proposition of a treaty of allianceto repel an invasion by the forces of Portugal...such a treaty would be inconsistent with the policy which the United States has prescribed to themselves, that policy is, that whilst the war is

confined to the parent country and its former Colony, the United States remain neutral extending this friendship and doing equal justice to both parties. From that policy they did not deviate during the whole of the long contest between Spain, and the several Independent Governments which has been erected on her former American Territories. If an exception to it were now for the first time made, the justice of your Sovereign will admit that the other new Governments might have cause to complain of the United States.¹

By refusing to contract such an offensive and defensive alliance, the Administration reserved the privilege of constructing the Monroe Doctrine as they wished.

That Henry Clay did use the Monroe Doctrine as a means of encouraging closer relations with the Spanish-American republics is reflected in his instructions for the various diplomatic representatives to those countries in 1825. He instructed Joel Poinsett, March 26, 1825, to "Bring to the notice of the Mexican Government the message of the late President of the United States to their Congress, on the 2nd of December 1823, asserting certain important principles of inter-continental law, in the relations of Europe and America." He discussed the first principle, "that the American continents are not henceforth to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers," and emphasized that the maintenance of it had a greater importance to the independent governments of Spanish America than to us.

The second principle he stated as being that while we did not desire to interfere with the political systems of the allied powers of Europe, "we should regard as dangerous to our peace and safety any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere." Each Continent had the right to choose its own form of government without interference.

¹ Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the U.S. Concerning Latin American Independence, I, pp. 233-234.

Clay advised Poinsett to remind the Mexican government that

This principle was declared in the face of the world, at a moment when there was reason to apprehend that the allied powers were entertaining designs inimical to the freedom if not the independence of the New Government. There is ground for believing that the declaration of it had considerable effect in preventing the maturity, if not in producing the abandonment, of all such designs...And you will urge upon the Government of Mexico the utility and expediency of asserting the same principles on all proper occasions.²

These instructions were paralleled by those of John Forbes at Buenos Aires,³ and those to Condy Raquet, Charge d'Affaires in Brazil.⁴

In these instructions Clay combined non-intervention and non-colonization in America as a policy to be considered by all the governments of the two continents, and he states that Monroe's declaration prevented hostile action on the part of the Holy Alliance. He did not suggest alliances, however; he preferred that each country be prepared to enforce the principle itself.

Clay's instructions also point out the importance of commercial understandings with the Spanish-American countries. In Poinsett's instructions he wrote;

But what gives, with ^{the} President, to your mission, peculiar importance, at this time, is that it has, for its principal object, to lay, for the first time, the foundations of an intercourse of amity, commerce, navigation, and neighborhood, which may exert a powerful influence, for a long period, upon the prosperity of both States.⁵

To Condy Raquet, newly appointed United States Charge d'Affaires in Brazil, Clay, April 14, 1825, wrote,

The commerce of the United States, already considerable with the Brazilian territories, is susceptible of great augmentation, and you will, therefore, lose no opportunity to advance its

² Ibid., pp. 229-233.

³ Ibid., p. 235.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 237-239.

⁵ Am. State Papers, Foreign Relations, VI, p. 578.

interest, and increase its facilities.

He also warned against England or France gaining any "commercial advantages which shall be denied to an earlier and more uncalculating friend."⁶ To John Forbes, Clay gave the same instructions, emphasizing our adherence to the Monroe Doctrine and stressing the importance of securing favorable commercial connections. These representatives were to remind these nations of our early sympathy and of the fact that the United States was the first to grant them recognition, and that the priority of our recognition had "disconcerted plans which the European Allies were contemplating against the independent Governments, and which no doubt, tended to accelerate similar acts of recognition by the European Powers and especially that of Great Britain."⁷ England already had worked up a profitable trade with these countries, so Clay probably feared British influence in determining the form of government adopted by the various Spanish-American nations. To counterbalance this probable influence, each of the newly appointed agents^{was} to avoid improper interference in the public councils of the nations to which they were appointed but should be ready to explain the glorious nature of our political and social institutions to the South Americans.⁸ Clay was intrinsically patriotic and believed thoroughly in the democratic principles upon which his government was based, but the meddling of her ministers and charges d'Affaires in political affairs of the countries to which they were appointed did not encourage the feeling of trust and brotherhood that Clay long for.⁹

⁶ Manning, op. cit., p. 238.

⁷ American State Papers, op. cit., p. 578.

⁸ Ibid., p. 579.

⁹ John M. Forbes, at Buenos Aires, Samuel Larned at Santiago, and Herman Allen at Valparaiso spread propaganda about our political

Another problem of state that Clay and Adams inherited from previous administrations was that of Cuba and Porto Rico. These islands had been an important consideration in our defense for several years, and most Americans, Adams and Clay included, believed that eventually Cuba would belong to the United States. England had disclaimed any intentions of securing Cuba, but at this time two new dangers threatened it. Colombia and Mexico made plans to invade these islands, and a large French Fleet visited the West Indies and hovered in the vicinity of Cuba.

Clay at once took action to protect the interest of our South and West by protecting Spain's ownership of Cuba. The war between Spain and her American colonies was still considered in progress although Spain was too weak to accomplish anything in the Americas. The Spanish-American republics, however, were desirous of driving Spain entirely out of the New World. In his instructions to Poinsett in March 1825, Clay warned him to watch lest Mexico or Colombia annex Cuba.¹⁰ Clay felt that the Cubans were not prepared for independence, and he preferred that the island remain in weak Spanish hands rather than in the hands of any other European power or any South American states. While Spain owned it, its ports were open; but as the possession of any other nation, it would be dangerous to us, for "it commanded from its position, the Gulf of Mexico, and the valuable commerce of the United States, which must necessarily pass near its shores." If Mexico or Colombia annexed Cuba, neither was a strong enough naval power to retain it in case some

system, encouraged "by all proper means" the election of men favorable to democracy, and maneuvered against the ever present British influence. On one occasion, Larned even served on a Chilean constitutional committee, and appears to have had an important part in formulating a national charter. This sort of diplomacy probably caused a suspicion of our real motives. G. Van Deusen, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

¹⁰American State Papers, Foreign Relations, VI, p. 578.

European nation decided to take it.¹¹

Henry Clay felt that the safest way to keep Cuba in Spanish hands was to persuade Spain to acknowledge the independence of the South American countries that had proclaimed their independence. Hence, in the spring of 1825, Clay wrote to the ministers of the United States in Russia, France, and England instructing them to secure the influences of those governments in convincing Spain of the necessity of granting independence in order to retain Cuba and Porto Rico. Clay believed that Alexander, Czar of Russia, would have a great deal of influence over Spain and "have a controlling influence on its (the war) useless protraction. Among the many reasons for Spain's acceding to the demands for independence, Clay stated that,

No Statesman can have contemplated the colonial relations of Europe and Continental America without foreseeing that the time must come when they would close...When the epoch of separation between a parent state and its colony...arrives...the struggleleads to almost embittered and ferocious war.¹²

He declared that in the conflict the United States had maintained a strict neutrality, but the war was really at an end, and the colonies had already tested the fruits of independence. He then warned that, if Spain obstinately perseveres in the refusal to conclude a peace, the aspect of war will change for Spain from an offensive to a defensive war. She would have to exert her energies to defend her remaining insular possessions in Cuba and Porto Rico. The new states would probably seize these islands because they were rich and because Spain used them as a base of operation against the New States. Their privateers might even attack the coasts of Spain herself.

¹¹ W. R. Manning, op. cit., p. 231.

¹² American State Papers, Foreign Relations, V, p. 847.

Clay then warned of the attitude that the United States might feel forced to take. He said that the United States,

...are satisfied with the present conditions of those islands (Cuba and Porto Rico), now open to the commerce and enterprise of their citizens. They desire for themselves no political change in them,...The United States could not, with indifference, see such a transfer to any European Power...although they (United States) would have been justified to have seized Cuba and Porto Rico, in the just protection of the lives and the commerce of their citizens, which have been a prey to infamous pirates finding succor and refuge in Spanish territory, have signally displayed their patience and moderation by a scrupulous respect of the sovereignty of Spain, who was herself bound, but has utterly failed to repress those enormities.¹³

Clay then dwelt on the Emperor's devotion to peace and his friendship for Spain and declared that in becoming "the advocate for peace, one is the true advocate of Spain."

The instructions of Rufus King, United States Minister to Great Britain, and to James Brown, United States Minister to France, stated the futility of carrying on the war longer, and stated the reasons why the United States desired Cuba to remain as she was in Spanish hands. These instructions were quite similar to those to Russia, except that France and England were given to understand that the transfer of these islands to any other European power would be considered dangerous to our peace and safety.¹⁴ Clay believed that the combined efforts of Russia, England, and France with that of the United States might be able to convince Spain of her true interests. Canning immediately took advantage of the Administration's suggestion to advance the commercial cause of England. He proposed that a treaty be signed among England, France, and the United States in which each nation would disclaim any

¹³ American State Papers, Foreign Relations, V, pp. 848-849.

¹⁴ Manning, op. cit., pp. 250-252.

intention of any further attempt at conquest on American soil.

In a letter to Rufus King, October 17, Clay said that he feared such a treaty would prolong the war because Spain would no longer fear losing Cuba.¹⁵ Clay also felt that such a treaty would prohibit the United States from extending its boundaries on the continent or of ever owning Cuba.

Meanwhile the presence of a French Fleet in the West Indies during the summer, aroused a great deal of excitement in the United States, and Clay wrote to James Brown in Paris demanding from the French Government an explanation of its presence there.¹⁶ The next day, October 26, Clay wrote to Rufus King, in London, that since France had refused to sign the treaty proposed by Canning, there was no need for the United States to sign it. He also explained the message to the French government concerning the Fleet episode, and declared,

...under no contingency, with or without the consent of Spain, can the United States agree to the occupation of the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico by France. If the British Government should direct its ambassador at Paris, in like manner to protest against France, under any circumstances, taking possession of those Islands, it can hardly be doubted that if she really has entertained any design upon them, they will be abandoned.¹⁷

The government of Mexico had also been greatly agitated by the presence of the French Fleet, and had appealed for aid to the United States in the name of the Monroe Doctrine. Hence, Clay sent to Poinsett, a copy of his warning to France as an indication to the Mexican Government that the United States stood ready to redeem its "pledge."¹⁸ This attitude of Henry Clay and John Q. Adams actually added another principle to the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

¹⁶ *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, V, pp. 855-856.

¹⁷ Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

¹⁸ *American State Papers, op. cit.*, p. 855.

Monroe Doctrine--that of "no-transfer" of territory in the Americas. Clay continued to be suspicious of France, however, even after France disclaimed any intentions of occupying Cuba, and Spain denied any plans for ceding it to any other nation.¹⁹

In his instructions to Mr. Everett, the United States Minister to Spain, Henry Clay asked him to bring, "in the most conciliatory manner possible," before the Spanish Government the subject of the war between Spain and her former colonies in America, for "True wisdom dictates that Spain, without indulging in unavailing regrets on account of what she has irretrievably lost, should the means of retaining what she may yet preserve from the wreck of her former possession."²⁰ He declared that the war was really at an end, for Spain's armies had been "vanquished and annihilated by the victorious armies of the New Republic." Clay urged Everett to confide the danger of losing Cuba and Porto Rico. Since the armies of the Republics could not be disbanded until Spain made peace, they were liable to strike Spain wherever they could. That would mean Cuba and Porto Rico, where there was already some talk of revolt. Mr. Everett was to declare to Spain that the United States was considering her welfare when she urged peace. In stating the policy of the Administration, Clay said,

The United States are satisfied with the present condition of these islands in the hands of Spain, and with their ports open to our commerce... This Government desires no political change of that condition.²¹

Since the population of the islands was incompetent at that time to

¹⁹ France explained that the reason for the Fleet in the West Indies was secretly to settle trouble in Santo Domingo. *Am. State Papers, For. Rel.*, V. p. 881.

²⁰ *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, V, p. 794.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 794.

maintain self-government, and the maritime force of Colombia and Mexico was not adequate to the protection of those islands in case they would conquer them, the "United States would entertain constant apprehension of their passing from Spain's possession to that of some less friendly sovereignty." Clay warned, however, if the war continued and these islands should become the object of it,

Their fortunes have such a connexion with the prosperity of the United States that they could not be indifferent spectators and the possible contingencies of such a protracted war, might bring upon the Government of the United States duties and obligations, the performances of which, however, painful...they might not be at liberty to decline.

Clay then stated that by making peace with her former colonies, Spain would fulfil two obligations. On the cessation of war, the "shocking piracies" in the West Indies would cease, and the real interest of the Spanish nation itself would be promoted.²²

In a letter to Henry Clay, dated October 20, 1825, Mr. Everett reported the attitudes of the Ministers in Madrid from various European Nations. Mr. Zea, the Spanish Minister expressed the confidence of the Spanish King in the restoration of the colonies. He said that the revolutionists comprised only a minority of the colonists, and that those loyal to the king were waiting for some suitable occasion to put down the insurgents. The king was "prepared to sacrifice everything rather than surrender what he knew to be his right." Mr. Zea, stated that the king would only treat with the colonies on the basis of their previous submission, and he wondered that "among the offers of mediation that had been made from time to time, especially by England, none had ever been proposed upon this basis." Mr. Everett told Mr. Zea that the British Government, as well as that of the United States, considered that

²² Ibid, pp. 794-795.

the independence of the new states was so well established that these Republics would never give it up.²³

The Czar Alexander I of Russia showed a friendly disposition toward Clay's overtures for mediation, but there were no immediate results of his efforts. In his dispatch of October 20, Mr. Everett wrote that the Russian Minister of Spain, Mr. D-dubril, in very guarded language, informed him that Russia was aware that Spain was

...daily and yearly suffering great injury from the effects of the present system, and that, by continuing it, she would probably lose her remaining possession in America and her chance of ever obtaining a due share in the trade with the continent, besides endangering her national existence at home.

The diplomatic representatives of France, Holland, Sweden, Saxony, and Prussia expressed to Mr. Everett their opposition to the policy of Spain.²⁴ From the British Minister, Mr. Frederick Lamb, Everett learned the British Government intended making no further attempt to influence the decision of Spain.

No offer of formal mediation has been made by England since her recognition...her interest as a commercial and manufacturing country is now on the other side. The longer the war continues, the longer she enjoys a monopoly of the Spanish American market for her fabrics, and the more difficult will Spain find it to recover her natural advantages upon the return of peace. England will, therefore, probably, be very easy in regard to this matter, and will leave Spain to persevere, unmolested, the course she may think expedient.²⁵

Spain obstinately refused to consider independence for the former colonies, but when Mr. Everett suggested to Mr. Zea and to the Russian Minister England's commercial advantages resulting from Spain's attitude, he believed he had made a deeper impression on these men than at any previous time.

²³ Ibid, pp. 795-796.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 797.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 797.

Then Clay decided to take a more aggressive attitude. First he wrote to the government of Colombia and Mexico, December 20, requesting them to suspend for a limited time the expedition against Cuba and Porto Rico, which he understood that they were planning, until he learned the result of negotiations which the United States had undertaken to secure peace between these Republics and Spain.²⁶ Then Clay, December 26, instructed Middleton to inform the Russian Government that if Spain continued in her obstinate refusal to end the war, the United States, although it did not desire to see either Colombia or Mexico acquire the islands, could not forcibly interfere to keep them from doing so. Since the liberation of Spain's remaining American possessions was a lawful operation of war, the United States could not interfere unless the struggle should be conducted in such a manner and with such results as to endanger the quiet and safety of the United States. It was not apprehended, however, that these contingencies would arise; therefore, "it is most probable that the United States, should the war continue, will remain...neutral observers of the progress of the events."²⁷

Czar Nicholas I, who became ruler of Russia by the death of Alexander, December 1, 1825, promised to exert his influence to secure peace between Spain and the American Republics.

Colombia and Mexico did not appreciate to any great extent this interference of Clay's for they wished to drive Spain from the New World. José Revenga, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, informed Richard Anderson, United States Minister to Colombia, March 17, 1826, that the importance of the subject had caused the delay in answering Mr. Clay's proposal. Colombia saw on the one hand the noble efforts

²⁶ Manning, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

by which the United States was endeavoring to perfect and maintain the general peace, "and to facilitate to this Continent the means of healing its wounds." On the other hand there were the treaties which bound Colombia to her allies; "the greater probability of putting an end to it (the war) by removing the enemy from this hemisphere." Revenga gave the promise of the Vice President that Colombia would not, "without weighty reasons, accelerate any operation of great magnitude against the Spanish Islands," until the question had been acted upon by the American Congress at the Isthmus.²⁸

The Mexican Government became distinctly unfriendly when it read in a Madrid newspaper, an account of Mr. Everett's discourse to the Spanish King. Poinsett stated several reasons proving the friendship of the United States for Mexico, but the Mexican Senate passed a resolution authorizing the President to undertake an expedition against Cuba jointly with the Republic of Colombia. The Chamber of Deputies, however, voted to submit the question to the Congress at Panama.²⁹ During this same time, President Victoria of Mexico assured Poinsett that

the government of Mexico had no intention to conquer or keep possession of that Island (Cuba)--that the object of the expedition which they contemplated, was to assist the revolutionists of Cuba to drive out the Spaniards, and, in case they succeeded, to leave that people to govern themselves.³⁰

Spain, however, continued her uncompromising attitude although Russia three times suggested the benefits of peace to her.³¹ In April, Clay suggested to Jose Salazar, Colombia's Minister to the United States, that an armistice for ten or twenty years would be one mode of effectuating the purpose of peace negotiations with Spain. This would be a distinct

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 1295-1296.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 1646-1653.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1651.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1887.

advantage to the New Republics, for by that time they would be stronger nations.³² The governments of Colombia and Mexico definitely decided to leave the question to the Panama Congress. By the time it met, however, the countries were too disturbed internally to undertake an offensive war.

The fact that Mexico was so ready to distrust the motives of the United States may have been due to British influence. The United States had recognized the independence of Mexico two years before England did so, but England had preceded the United States in establishing actual relations.³³ Hence, British influence, directed toward a monarchical form of government in Mexico, was well established before Poinsett arrived. In his instructions to Poinsett, Clay advised him to explain the sympathy of the people and the government of the United States toward all the South American countries; he was to show a readiness at all times to explain our political institutions; he was to remind Mexico that the United States had been the first to recognize Mexican independence, and this movement disconcerted plans which the European Allies were contemplating against the independent governments, and "tended to accelerate similar acts of recognition by the European Powers, and especially that of Great Britain"; he was to insist that, though we wished no special favors in commerce or navigation, Mexico should "deny to the commerce and navigation of those European States, any favors or privileges which shall not be equally, extended to us" in a commercial

³² Ibid, I, p. 270.

³³ The United States formally recognized the independence of Mexico on December 12, 1822, although Joel Poinsett, our first Minister to that country, was not commissioned until March 1825. England publicly recognized Mexico January 3, 1825, two days after the Minister had left England with instructions and full powers. J. H. Latane, Hist. of Am. Foreign Policy, p. 195.

treaty; he was to obtain the complete opening of the Santa Fe Trail; and, in place of the Sabine River boundary of Louisiana, fixed in the treaty with Spain, Poinsett was to ask for the Brazos or the Colorado, or the Snow Mountains, or the line of the Rio Grande-Pecos.³⁴

Poinsett's readiness to explain the workings of our republican government was well received, but his other instructions were not. Only a partial survey of the Santa Fe trail was agreed upon. The boundary question tended to cause immediate distrust of the United States. Mexico had accepted the line established in the Spanish Treaty, the Sabine River, as the southern boundary and refused to consider any other, even though American citizens were pouring into Texas. The Mexican Congress would agree to a commercial treaty only if the United States accepted the line of the Sabine River.³⁵ The negotiations for a commercial treaty did not fare much better. After the most favored nation clause was finally settled satisfactorily, the Mexican senate refused to accept the clause providing for the rendition of fugitive slaves.³⁶

In his first instructions, Clay had told Poinsett that he was to seek for the foundations of an intercourse of amity, commerce, navigation, and neighborhood, which would exert a powerful influence for a long time upon the prosperity of both states. Instead of which, Poinsett's mission aroused such a feeling of distrust and hostility that he failed in establishing relations that were friendly and harmonious, and through his failure, Clay also failed in his Mexican policy.

³⁴ Am. State Papers, For. Rel., VI, p. 580.

³⁵ Poinsett finally signed such a treaty which was not ratified until 1832 when the United States accepted the Sabine River boundary. S. F. Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, pp. 220-221.

³⁶ The commercial treaty was not ratified until April 5, 1832, when the fugitive slave article had been dropped. S. F. Bemis, Am. Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, IV, p. 134; Wm. M. Malloy, Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the U. S. and Other Powers, pp. 1085-1097.

CHAPTER VI

The Panama Congress

The outstanding event of his career as Secretary of State was, Clay believed, the proposed participation in the Congress at Panama. For several years he had been a zealous advocate of free republican governments in South and Central America. For several years he had advocated an American system of free republics with the United States at the head. "We would become the center of a system which would become the rallying points of human freedom against all the despotism of the Old World."¹

Therefore, the proposal for a Congress of the American nations at Panama presented the opportunity to develop a great Confederation of American nations guided by the United States.

The United States was not among the first nations invited by Bolivar to send a representative to the Congress. There were various reasons for this disregard. The rejection by the United States Senate of a proposed treaty with Columbia for the suppression of the slave trade indicated to Bolivar a lack of sympathy with his ideals and policies. "Whether white or black, all are equally entitled to the just recompense of valor, of honour, of intelligence, of sacrifice and of virtue."² He also believed that our neutral policy indicated an indifference toward the success of their revolutionary movements. Then Bolivar was partial to England and the monarchical form of government rather than the republican. In the spring of 1825, however, the Ministers of Columbia and Mexico asked Clay if the United States would

¹ Annals, 16th Congress, 1st Session, II, p. 222.

² S. F. Bemis, Am. Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, IV, p. 138

accept an invitation to the meeting. They stated that it was not expected that they (the United States) would take any part in its deliberation, in respect to the existing war with Spain, but that other great interests affecting the Continent of America, and the friendly intercourse between the Independent Nations which are established on it might be considered and regulated at the Congress.³

Clay immediately set about winning such an acceptance. Adams recorded in his "Diary," for April, page 531, that Clay was strongly inclined to it and proposed a cabinet consultation concerning it. In a newspaper article, Clay discussed various reasons for the participation of the United States in the Panama Congress. He emphasized that if we did that, if we did not attend, some other nation would reap the benefits of leadership which the United States should have. He believed that coalition or confederation of all the Spanish-American nations would be suggested at that meeting and we should be represented. A constitution for such a confederation should be modeled on our own, with a congress to watch over mutual and foreign relations of the confederated states, with no internal interference, and for protection from attack. Clay cited the instances of the Holy Alliance and of others to prove the futility of mere alliances. To soothe the fears of those who feared that such relations would lead to the formation of one government, Clay said that fusion was impossible because the regions were too enormous, the languages too varied, and for many other reasons. The purpose of the proposed confederation was to secure peace and power abroad, and peace and happiness at home.⁴ Adams recorded in his

³ W. R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations, I, p. 253.

⁴ J. B. Lockey, Pan-Americanism, p. 405

"Memoirs," page 531 that the project was of great importance but a "grain of mustardseed."

The enthusiasm of Clay won Adams' consent to participate in the Congress, and Adams instructed Clay to inform the ministers that "of course they (the United States) could not make themselves any party to the existing war with Spain, or to councils for deliberating on the means of its further prosecution; that he believed such a Congress as was proposed, might be highly useful in settling several important disputed questions of public law, and in arranging other matters of deep interest to the American Continent, and to the friendly intercourse between the American Powers." he was also instructed to inform the ministers that before such a Congress assembled, the governments should know the subjects to be taken up by the Congress; the nature and the form of the powers to be given to the representatives; and the mode of organization of the Congress. If these points could be adjusted satisfactorily, the United States would be represented.⁵

In extending the invitation to the United States, Mr. Abregon, the Mexican Minister wrote, November 3, to Henry Clay,

The government (of Mexico) never supposed nor desired that the United States of America would take part in the Congress about to be held, in other matters than those which, from their nature and importance, the late administration pointed out and characterized as being of general interest to the continent; for which reason, one of the subjects which will occupy the attention of the Congress will be the resistance or opposition to the interference of any neutral nation in the question and war of independence.....⁶

The formal invitation of Colombia extended, November 2, by Mr. Salazar, Colombian Minister to the United States, to Mr. Clay, set forth a broader program for the Congress. He said that there would be two

⁵ American State Papers, Foreign Relations, V., p. 835; W. R. Manning, op. cit., I, p. 253

⁶ Ibid. V. p. 836.

classes of subjects:

1. Matters peculiarly and exclusively concerning the belligerents.
2. Matters between the belligerents and neutrals.

As the United States would not take part in the discussion of subjects, they would confine themselves to the latter. He said also that the Congress would give the United States an opportunity "to fix some principles of international law, the unsettled state of which has caused much evil to humanity," and which the United States had had a great deal of experience with. He also referred to the question of colonization by European powers between Spain and her colonies. He suggested an eventual alliance in opposition to those possibilities. "This," he said, "is a matter of immediate utility to the American states that are at war with Spain, and is in accordance with the repeated declarations and protests of the Cabinet at Washington."⁷ He also said that "consideration of the means to be adopted for the entire abolition of the African slave trade is a subject sacred to humanity and interesting to the policy of the American states," and referred to a proposed treaty between Colombia and the United States for the suppression of the African slave trade that the United States had not ratified, adding, "Would that America, which does not think politic what is unjust, would contribute in union, and with common consent, to the good of Africa." Then he states that the question of establishing relations with Haiti would be determined at the Isthmus, "with modifications demanded by the circumstances."⁸ This question had stirred up a great deal of political resentment in our southern states.

The invitation from Mr. Canaz, Minister of Central America, November 14, stated that

As Europe had formed a continental system, . . . America should form a system for itself, and assemble, but its representatives, in Cortes, whenever circumstances of necessity and great importance should demand it.

⁷ Ibid., V, p. 837.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 836-837.

He also said that while the object of the Congress was "to preserve and confirm the absolute independence of these Republics," it would not require "that the representatives of the United States should, in the least compromise their present neutrality, harmony, and good intelligence with other nations."⁹

These invitations did not fulfil all the conditions that Adams had asked, but he directed Clay to accept, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. In his identical replies to Colombia and Mexico, Clay reminded them that "there is not recognized so exact a compliance with the conditions on which the President expressed his willingness that the United States be represented at Panama...."; however, he stated that the representatives of the United States would be "fully empowered and instructed upon all questions likely to arise in the Congress on subjects in which the nations of America have a common interest." On the same day, Clay accepted, in a shorter note the invitation from Central America.¹⁰

In his first annual message to the Senate, December 6, 1825, Adams said that he had accepted the invitations to send representatives to the Congress at Panama. In a later message, December 26, he said that he thought it proper to take no step without the concurrence of both branches of the legislature, "first, by the decision of the Senate upon the nominations to be laid before them, and, secondly, by the sanction of both Houses to the appropriations," without which it could not be carried into effect.¹¹ He also stated that it was not intended that the motive of our attendance was to contrast alliances or to en-

⁹ *Ibid.*, 838-839.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 837, 848, 839.

¹¹ James D. Richardson, Message and Papers of the President, II, 302.

gage in any undertaking or project importing hostility to any other nation. He nominated Richard Anderson of Kentucky and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania as envoys and ministers to the "Assembly of American Nations at Panama."¹²

Although Henry Clay was a staunch advocate of Pan-Americanism, he was too patriotic to his own nation to contract any promises that might be dangerous to our peace and safety. He advocated a Pan-American confederation because he thought that such a system would insure his own republican country from the encroachments of Europe, and because he believed it would benefit our commerce. In a letter to Francis Brooke, November 31, 1825, Clay promised, "Our friends need have not fear of our contracting there (Panama) unnecessary or onerous engagements, or menacing the peace or neutrality of the country."¹³ He felt that the assemblage at Panama was so important that he asked Albert Gallatin, one of the best diplomatic minds in America, to represent the United States there. In a letter declining the mission, Gallatin referred to the importance of laying the foundations of a permanent friendship between the United States and the other American republics, and of the distinguished honor conferred on the persons who were to represent this country.¹⁴

Clay was eager to see the representatives on their way, but the mission met the unexpected opposition of Congress. The nomination was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where opposition began. After unnecessary delay it was reported back to the Senate

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 318-320.

¹³ C. Colton, Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, p. 134.

¹⁴ C. Colton, The Works of Henry Clay, IV, p. 131

thus,

Resolved, that it is not expedient, at this time, for the United States to send any Ministers to the Congress of American Nations assembled at Panama.

In the report, the Committee stated that our participation would be in conflict with the whole course of policy hitherto pursued by the United States; that because of our great interest in Cuba and Porto Rico, we ought not discuss the destinies of these islands, that commercial relations would be taken care of without compacts with those nations; and that propositions relating to religious liberty, suggested by President Adams, involved a dangerous intermeddling with the domestic affairs of other states.¹⁵

There followed a long debate on the report and it was not until March 14, that the vote was taken in the Senate. The delegates were confirmed by a vote of 24 to 19. Clay blamed this delay and opposition to the mission to political hostility. In a letter to his close friend Francis Brooke, February 20, 1826, Clay wrote that opposition was

....owing principally to the actual composition of that body (the Senate) at present. There are some 15 or 16 Senators determined to oppose the administration at all events, and that measure especially. There are 8 or 10 others whose private feelings are inimical, but who are restrained by the state of things at their respective homes. The delay which has occurred in the Panama affair has been produced by a majority thus compounded.....¹⁶

General Lafayette watched closely the progress of events in the United States on the question of the Panama Mission, and was eagerly desirous that we attend in order to preserve republican governments in the Western hemisphere. In a letter to Henry Clay, February 28,

¹⁵ American State Papers, op. cit., V, pp. 857-865

¹⁶ Calvin Colton, Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, p. 137.

he said,

My notions of the moral influence of the people of the United States are lofty and extensive, I confess; but at least I would regret it if it were not fully exercised at the Congress of Panama, and in every concern of South America, it would be in my opinion, leaving the field to the intrigues of European monarchy and aristocracy. Nor can I be easy until the throne of Brazil is no more. 17

In a special message to the House of Representatives, March 15, President Adams in compliance with resolution, declared that the first and paramount principles upon which it was deemed wise and just to lay the cornerstone of future relations between the United States and the new republics was disinterestedness; the next was cordial good will to them; the third was a claim of fair and equal reciprocity. He declared that the meeting would be in its nature diplomatic and not legislative. After enumerating the subjects to be discussed at the meeting, Adams asked for an appropriation for the delegates. 18 When the motion for the appropriation came up in the House, there was another lengthy debate. Webster favored the Mission and took an important part in the debate. At this time Webster spoke of Clay as "the first to reach forth the hand of welcome and of succor to the new-born nations, struggling to obtain and to enjoy the blessings of liberty." 19

The wrangling in Congress over the Panama mission did have the appearance of mere opposition to the administration, for Adams, in his message of December 26, had stated clearly that the administration had no intention of abandoning its neutral position or of contracting alliances. He said that the administration sought better commercial relations, agreement upon the rights of neutrals, and a declaration

17 Ibid., p. 139.

18 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the President, II, pp. 329-340.

19 Register of Debates, II, Part II, p. 2276, Gales and Sgaton.

from each country that it would resist colonization by any European power. We would seek to promote religious liberty, and exert our influence to stop the war.²⁰ Southern leaders of the opposition declared that we should not take part in the Panama meeting because the Latin Americans meant to recognize the black republic of Haiti and abolish the slave trade. These policies were menaces to slavery in the United States. Washington's Farewell Address was reiterated by the isolationists as a warning to stay out of the affairs of other nations. Others declared that such a confederation would be a menace to the sovereignty of the United States.²¹ Van Deusen in his "Life of Henry Clay," page 208, states that the leaders of the opposition, Tazewell, Hayne, and Van Buren, deliberately distorted the aims of the administration because they feared that the success of the proposed assembly would make Clay and Adams popular.

In his instructions to Anderson and Sergeant, delegates to Panama, May 8, 1826, Clay included many of the principal points of Adams' Message of March 15. He stated,

The assembling of a Congress at Panama, composed of diplomatic representatives from independent American nations, will form a new epoch in human affairs.

The commissioners were to confer with the ministers of all or any of the American powers on peace, commerce, maritime law, neutral, and belligerent rights, "and other matters interesting to the continent of America."²²

He also said,

It is distinctly understood by the President, that it (the Congress) is to be regarded, in all respects as diplomatic in

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 318-319.

²¹ Register of Debates, II, pp. 2168-2507.

²² Ibid, 20th Congress, 2nd Session, V, Appendix, p. 39.

contradistinction to a body clothed with powers of ordinary legislation; that is to say, no one of the States represented is to be considered bound by any treaty, convention, pact, or act, to which it does not subscribe and expressly assert by its acting representative; and that, in the instance of treaties, conventions, and pacts, they are to be returned, for final ratification, to each contracting State, according to the provisions of its particular constitution... ..All notion is rejected of an Amphictyonic council, invested with power finally to decide controversies between the American States, or to regulate, in any respect, their conduct.....The complicated and various interest which appertain to the nations of this vast continent, cannot be safely confided to the superintendence of one legislative authority. 23

Even with these necessary restrictions, Clay declared that such an assembly of American ministers would afford great facilities for free and friendly conferences, for mutual and necessary explanations, and for discussing and establishing some general principles applicable to peace and war, to commerce and navigation, with the sanction of all America.

Clay then warned the delegates that in accepting the invitation to the Congress, our government had no intention of taking part in discussions relating to the future prosecution of the war with Spain, but while it was thoroughly understood that the United States had no intention of changing our neutral policy.

.....It might be urged to contract an alliance, offensive and defensive, on the contingency of an attempt by the powers of Europe, commonly called the Holy Alliance, either to aid Spain to reduce the new American republics to their former colonial state, or to compel them to adopt political systems more conformable to the policy and view of that alliance. 24

Clay continued with the warning that in either case, the United States would have been "compelled to fight their own proper battles," because had the political institutions of Europe been forced upon the southern republics, they probably would have been extended even over the United

23 Ibid., p. 39.

24 Ibid., p. 40.

States, "and every vestige of human freedom had been obliterated within these states." These designs were no longer seriously apprehended, however, since the pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine and since Great Britain had manifested a disposition to follow the same policy.

As a strong reason for avoiding an alliance with these republics, Clay referred to the negotiations of the United States with the Czar of Russia, "the soul of the Holy Alliance," and feared that an alliance would provoke the Czar and his allies. Another reason mentioned in the instructions was that the avoidance of foreign alliances had always been a maxim of the nation's foreign policy; therefore, only an occasion of great urgency would warrant a departure from this principle. In any case the motive of self-preservation would govern the attitude of the United States, in case of a European attack upon the liberties of America, to a greater extent than a treaty of alliance. If they felt that the reflection of such a treaty caused a feeling of unfriendliness on the part of the new states, the delegates were instructed that they might receive written proposals on the subject "ad referendum."²⁵

Knowing that the declaration of Monroe was to be discussed, Clay directed the delegates to propose a joint declaration of the Non-Colonization principle. Each nation, acting for itself, should declare that no European colony could thereafter be established within the boundaries of that nation. If the moral effect of such action were not sufficient to prevent the effort to establish such a colony, there would be time then for the American nations to consider any further action.²⁶

With respect to Cuba, Clay's instructions warned against their conquest by the American republics. This would change the character of the

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

war from a defensive to offensive, and the American nations could not hope to hold Cuba against a strong maritime power. These instructions were in accord with the attitude already stressed by Clay and Adams. ²⁷

On the question of the recognition of Haiti, Clay declared that the acceptance of the commercial restriction imposed by France in exchange for a nominal freedom, proved that Haiti was not in reality a sovereign power. Such being the case, "the President is not prepared now to say that Haiti ought to be recognized as an independent sovereign power." ²⁸

The early concern of the United States in an isthmian canal was shown in Clay's instructions. He said,

A cut or canal for purposes of navigation somewhere through the Isthmus that connects the two Americas, to unite the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, will form a proper subject for consideration at the Congress.

He declared that the best route would most likely be found in the territory of Mexico or that of the Central Republic.

If the work should ever be executed so as to admit the passage of sea vessels from ocean to ocean, the benefits of it ought not to be exclusively appropriated to any one nation, but should be extended to all parts of the globe upon the payment of a just compensation or reasonable tolls. ²⁹

This statement was of great importance in later years when the subject of equality in the use of the Panama Canal was under discussion.

Besides putting an end to the war between the republics and Spain, Clay advocated devising means for the preservation of peace among the American nations and with the rest of the world. Here, however, he emphasized the unity of all the nations of the two Americas.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 45-46.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 47.

Remote from Europe, it is not probable that they will often be involved in the wars with which that quarter of the globe may be destined hereafter to be afflicted. In these wars, the policy of all America will be the same, that of peace and neutrality, which the United States have heretofore constantly labored to preserve." 30

In order to guard against misunderstandings, Clay urged the adoption of the maritime principles for which the United States had always contended abolition of war against private property and non-combatants upon the ocean, and should oppose privatizing, recommending the adoption of the rule that free ships should make free goods. And in order that nations might be made still more secure in time of war against abuses at sea, Clay said, "You will propose a definition of blockade." 31

Another important matter that the delegates were to give especial attention to was that of the establishment of some general principles of intercourse applicable to all the powers of America for the mutual regulation of their commerce and navigation. Clay stated that the United States had no desire to procure peculiar commercial advantages, but two general principles should be observed. The first was that no nation should grant any favor in commerce, or navigation to any foreign power, either upon this or any other continent, which shall not be extended to every other American nation. The second was that whatever might be imported into or exported from any American nation in its own vessels might in like manner be imported or exported in the vessels of other nations, the vessel and the cargo paying in both instances exactly the same duties and charges and no more. 32 He mentioned that these principles were included in our commercial treaties with Colombia and Central America. We did not yet have a treaty with Mexico because she

30 Ibid, p. 41.

31 Ibid, p. 42.

32 Ibid, p. 43.

objected to these principles. Clay warned, however, against any proposal to impose precisely the same rates of duties on vessels and cargoes in all the ports of the American nations. Lockey states in his book "Pan-Americanism, Its Beginnings," page 419, that in advocating concerted action on these commercial subject, Clay could not have been unmindful that such action would constitute a great advance toward the ideal of continental solidarity, nor that it would tend to diminish British influence in the concern of the new states.

Clay's efforts to insure republican forms of government on the South American continent was typical of all his efforts for South America. He instructed the delegates, "You will take advantage of every fit opportunity to strengthen their political faith, and to inculcate the solemn duty of every nation to reject all foreign dictation in its domestic concerns." In discussing this problem Clay mentioned the fact that at least one European Power had been active both in Colombia and in Mexico, with a view to substitute a monarchical for the existing free form of government.³³

Henry Clay felt that this Congress would have a vast influence on Europe as well as on the American nations. The Congress, however, proved to be a great disappointment to him for our delegates failed to reach the meeting. The unnecessary delay by the United States Senate and House of Representatives, when they knew that some of the South American representatives were already in Panama, was the first factor. Then Sergeant, because of his health and because of the unhealthful conditions in Panama, was allowed to delay until fall. Anderson left Bogota on June 12, 1826, but died before he reached Panama. The meeting

³³ Ibid, pp. 48-49.

in Panama was a short one, however, and the delegates, after a few preliminary negotiations, adjourned, July 15, with the plans to meet again at Tacubaya, near Mexico City, the next year.

Clay wished to send Monroe to Tacubaya in Anderson's place, but Monroe declined because of the condition of his wife's health and because he wished retrieve his private financial affairs.³⁴ Poinsett, the United States Minister to Mexico was then selected. Sergeant went to Mexico, but there was a delay in convening the Congress, due to the internal discords of the new republics, that after three months Sergeant returned home. Thus the first efforts for a league of the American nations ended in failure.

Clay's disappointment in the failure of one of the most important events of his career as Secretary of State must have been keen, but he did not give up hope. At a public dinner in Lewisburg, Virginia in September, 1826, he had asked,

What should have been the course taken with the very respectful invitation which was given to the United States to be represented at Panama? Haughtily folding your arms, would you have given it a cold and abrupt refusal? Or would you not rather accept it, send ministers in a friendly and respectful manner, endeavor to satisfy those who are looking to us for counsel and example, and imitating our free institutions, that there is no necessity for such alliance; that the dangers...have vanished, and that it is not good for them or us...Whatever may be the result of the mission, its moral affect in Europe will be considerable.³⁵

In conclusion it could be said that in some ways Clay's South American policy might be called a failure; in others a success. It is true that the recognition of the South American nations came when Clay was not a member of Congress, but it is true that he had labored several

³⁴ J. Q. Adams, Diary, pp. 364-365.

³⁵ Niles Register, XXVII, p. 62.

years to secure aid for the colonies, and then to secure recognition of their independence both by the United States and by Europe. It is also true that his efforts for a Congress of the American nations failed at that time, but Clay's endeavors laid the foundations for later successful Congresses.

The nations of Spanish America did found republics, and, as Clay believed, commerce between the United States and these republics is important. However, Clay's efforts to secure Texas, which he always maintained belonged in the Louisiana Purchase territory, were also unsuccessful. In fact the hostility of Mexico was stimulated by such actions, and the government of Mexico became so incensed at Poinsett that they requested his recall.

Even Clay's friendship with Bolivar was shadowed by suspicion. Samuel Larned and other diplomatic agents in South America became suspicious of the monarchical tendencies of Bolivar and communicated them to Clay.³⁶ Clay was led to believe that Bolivar used his position for the establishment of despotic power over his own country and over adjacent territory. By 1827 Clay had become suspicious that Bolivar was under the influence of Great Britain. Bolivar did invite England to send a representative to the Congress at Panama. Hence Clay believed that British influence at Panama would be strong. That he wrote Lafayette of his suspicions and disappointment is shown by a letter from Lafayette to Clay, dated October 10, 1827, in which Lafayette said,

But I have received with deep regret the part of your letter alluding to a man whose glory, great talents, and hitherto experienced patriotism I have delighted to cherish. Several painful informations had reached me, which, all together, and many

³⁶ Glynden Van Deusen, Life of Henry Clay, p. 209.

more besides, could not weigh so much with me as your own sense in the matter.³⁷

In 1827 Bolivar wrote to Clay expressing his appreciation for Clay's efforts in behalf of South America. "All America, Colombia, and myself, owe your excellency our purest gratitude for the incomparable services you have rendered to us, by sustaining our course with a sublime enthusiasm."³⁸ After waiting almost a year, however, Clay wrote,

I am persuaded that I do not misinterpret the feelings of the people of the United States, as I certainly express my own, in saying that the interest which was inspired in this country by the arduous struggle of South America arose primarily from the hope that along with its independence, would be established free institutions, insuring all the blessings of civil liberty. To the accomplishment of that object we still anxiously look.

He admitted the difficulties which opposed the achievement of this end, but hoped that Providence would bless South America as it had her northern sister, with the genius of some great and virtuous man to conduct her through her trials.

We had even flattered ourselves that we beheld that genius in your Excellency. But I should be unworthy of the consideration with which your Excellency honors me and deviate from the frankness which I have endeavored to practice, if I did not on this occasion state that ambiguous designs have been attributed by your enemies to your Excellency, which have created in my mind great solicitude...I will not doubt that your Excellency will, in due time, render a satisfactory explanation to Colombia and the world of the parts of your public conduct which have excited any distrust; and that preferring the true glory of our immortal Washington to the ignoble fame of the destroyers of liberty, you have formed the patriotic resolution of ultimately placing the freedom of Colombia upon a firm and sure foundation.³⁹

Bolivar did not reply to this letter.

In his "American Secretaries of State," Bemis stated that it would be difficult to believe that the course of Bolivar was other than patriotic. He, too, became disappointed in the results of the South

³⁷ Henry Clay, Private Correspondence, p. 181.

³⁸ Calvin Colton, The Works of Henry Clay, I, p. 266.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 266-267.

American revolutions, and at one time wished to establish a monarchical form of government with a French prince at the head.⁴⁰

Clay's policy was purely American. He was intensely patriotic, and throughout a life filled with family sorrows and financial worries he remained the leader of his part in Congress. In a discussion of patriotism Clay declared, "Personal or private courage is totally distinct from that higher and nobler courage which prompts the Patriot to offer himself a voluntary sacrifice to his country's good."⁴¹ His devotion to his country took precedence over private or party policy. In the struggle of the South American colonies for independence Clay saw a people striving for the freedom represented by his own beloved country. Any struggle against tyranny found a ready response in Clay's generous nature. Clay had seen at first hand enough the political institutions of Europe to distrust anything European. He believed that by intermeddling in the affairs of the Spanish Colonies, European nations would gain control of South America and destroy the seeds of liberty there. This, he felt, would constitute a menace to the United States. By aiding the cause of South America, Clay believed the United States would preserve its own freedom. He considered the release of any part of America from the dominions of the Old World as adding to the general security of the new.⁴² Clay was also convinced that the economic advantages of closer friendship with South America were valuable. He endeavored for several years to make the political leaders of his country realize the interdependence, political and economic, of the nations of

⁴⁰ S. F. Bemis, American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, IV, p. 156.

⁴¹ Calvin Colton, The Works of Henry Clay, I, p. 166.

⁴² Annals of Congress, 14th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 776-792.

North and South America. This interdependence would serve as a basis for an American international law. Dr. Jose Santiago Rodriguez called Henry Clay the "apostle of Pan-Americanism in the North."⁴³

When George Canning, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared in Parliament, 1826, that "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, wrote the following to Henry Clay,

I have just read Lord Grey's speech and cannot resist the desire I have to send it to you. You will recognize in it sentiments I have expressed as regards Mr. Canning and the new states. If Earl Grey had been better informed, he would have said that it was you who did most to call them into being. I say this in no idle spirit of praise, having always, abroad and at home, expressed the opinion that next to their own exertions, the South Americans owe to you more than to any other man in either hemisphere, their independence, you having led the way to our acknowledgment of it. This is truth; this is history. Without our acknowledgment, England would not have taken the steps to this day. I give Mr. Canning no credit for the part he acted. It was forced upon him by our lead, which he never had the magnanimity to avow, but strove to claim all the merit for England, or rather for himself. He esteems civil and political liberty no more than Lord Londonderry did, though circumstances have made him appear to be somewhat more their champion.⁴⁴

Canning jealous of the priority of recognition by the United States, wrongfully claimed the honor of "calling the New World into existence because the patriots had won their own independence and, two years before great Britain acted in the matter, the United States had recognized that independence."

Henry Clay's earnest endeavors in their behalf endeared him to the people of South America. Colton said,

Henry Clay was loved by them, celebrated in song, and monuments of gratitude were erected to his memory. Thanks were voted to him by the governments of those states, and his name, as a heroic advocate of their independence, is incorporated with their history.⁴⁵

⁴³ Dr. Jose S. Rodriguez, Speech at Presentation of the Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela, Bulletin of Pan American Union, 65, February 1931, p. 130.

⁴⁴ C. Colton, The Works of Henry Clay, IV, Private Correspondence, pp. 165-166.

⁴⁵ Calvin Colton, Speeches of Henry Clay, I, p. 163. In his works

In 1931 the Congress of the United States presented to Venezuela a bronze statue of Henry Clay as a token of the friendship between two nations. The presentation took place in a lovely plaza, named for Henry Clay, in the heart of Caracas. The inscription on the statue read, "Henry Clay; 1777-1852; apostle of fraternity among the countries of America, and valiant defender of their independence."⁴⁶

Accepting the statue of Henry Clay on "behalf of his country," Dr. P. Itriago Chacin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, said,

This gift is one that is significant and inspiring in every way, because the memory of Clay is linked with that of Hispanic American emancipation;...it is more than a monument...it is a symbol...The memory of great men truly perpetuates...the lessons taught by their lives. And such men as Clay, who have served a cause vital to other countries, have linked their memory in those other nations where their names awake warm affection, to the achievement of their ideal...Prophet and genius, he displayed in his speeches a romantic faith in the liberty of Spanish America, a daring conception of future continental solidarity, a generous confidence in the capacity of the Latin democracies for self-government.

As the star twinkling in the heavens above indicates his course to the searcher below..., so the souls of great men, nay, of all men, who in their daily tasks see beyond themselves, point out to their nations the path of progress, of virtue, and of glory. In the radiance of such lives, transcending boundaries, national interests, and racial distinctions, an ennobled humanity pauses to evaluate itself, and realized the unity of all the world.⁴⁷

Such praise from one of the nations for whose independence he endeavored so many years is indeed a fitting tribute to Henry Clay, the first great Pan American.

of Henry Clay, Colton records several expressions of gratitude to Clay from the Spanish American nations, especially Mexico. Niles Register also printed several such notes.

⁴⁶ M. H. Thatcher, Speech on Presenting Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela, Bulletin of Pan American Union, 65, p. 119.

⁴⁷ Dr. P. Itriago Chacin, ^{Speech} on Accepting Statue of Henry Clay, Bulletin of Pan American Union, op. Cit., p. 125.

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