

PLEDGE OF THE U. STATES TO THE GOVERN-
MENTS OF MEXICO AND S. AMERICA.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

The information required by the resolution of the House of
Representatives, of the 27th instant,

IN RELATION TO

The Instructions given to the Minister of the U. States

TO THE

GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO;

AS ALSO IN RELATION TO ANY

Pledge on the part of the United States

TO THE

Governments of Mexico or Southern America, &c.

MARCH 30, 1826.

Read, and laid upon the table.

WASHINGTON:

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1826.

TO THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE UNITED STATES

REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES

AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

1917

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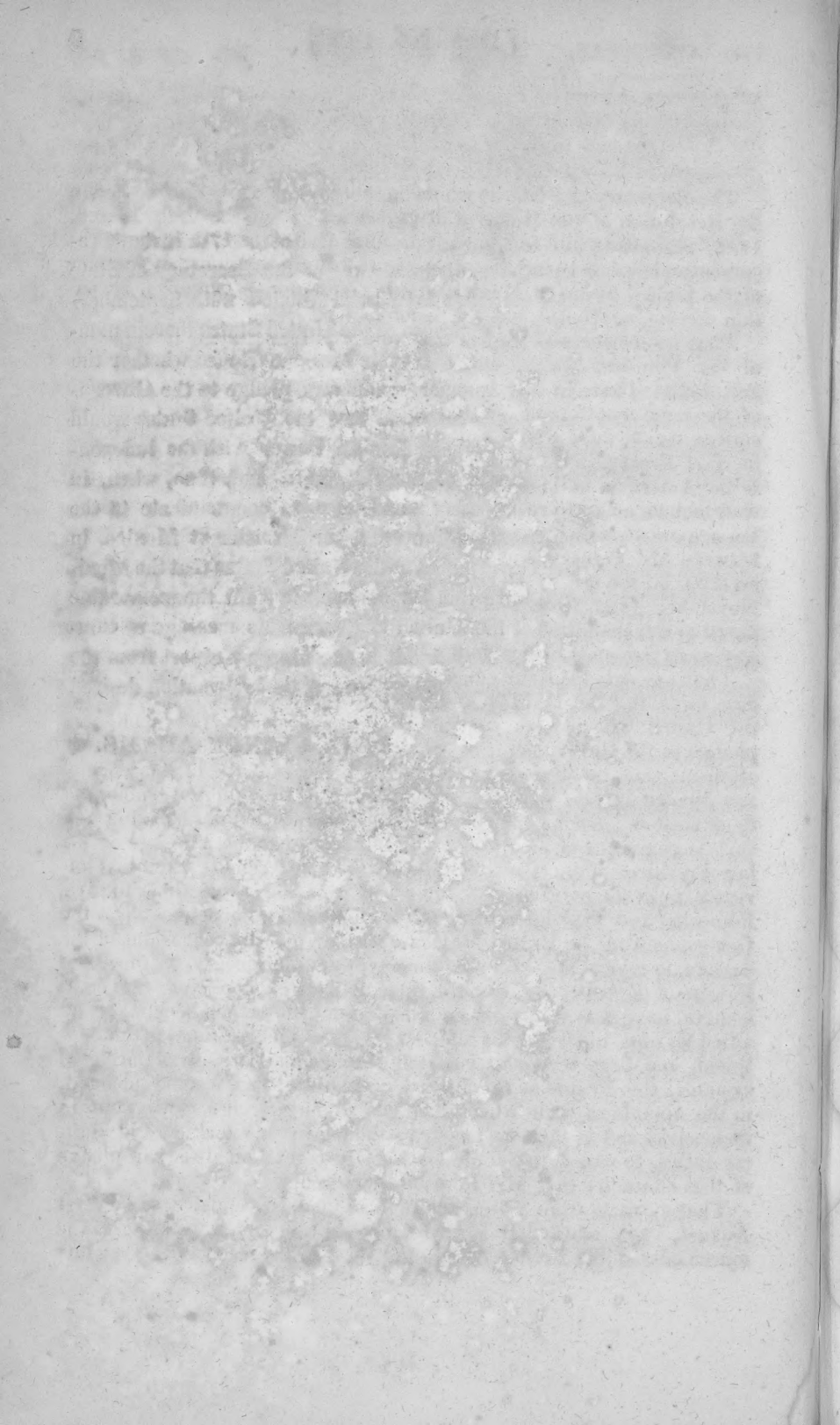
1917

To the House of Representatives of the United States :

In compliance with a resolution of the House of the 27th instant, requesting a copy of such parts of the answer of the Secretary of State to Mr. Poinsett's letter to Mr. Clay, dated Mexico, 28th September, 1825, No. 22, as relates to the pledge of the United States therein mentioned ; and, also, requesting me to inform the House whether the United States have in any manner made any pledge to the Governments of Mexico and South America, that the United States would not permit the interference of any foreign Power with the independence or form of Government of those Nations, and, if so, when, in what manner, and to what effect ; and, also, to communicate to the House a copy of the communication from our Minister at Mexico, in which he informed the Government of the United States that the Mexican Government called upon this Government to fulfil the memorable pledge of the President of the United States, in his message to Congress, of December, 1823, I transmit to the House a report from the Secretary of State, with documents containing the information desired by the resolution.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

WASHINGTON, 30th March, 1826.



The Secretary of State, to whom has been referred, by the President, the Resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 27th March, 1826, requesting him to transmit to that House certain parts of the correspondence between the Department of State, and the Minister of the United States at Mexico, and to communicate certain information therein mentioned, has the honor to report :

That no answer was transmitted from this Department to the letter of Mr. Poinsett, No. 22, under date at Mexico, on the 28th September, 1825 : That No. 18, from Mr. Poinsett, under date of the 13th of the same month, and No. 22, relate to the same subject, the first stating the obstacle which had occurred to the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty, in the pretension brought forward by Mexico to grant to the American nations of Spanish origin, special privileges, which were not to be enjoyed by other nations ; and the second, narrating the arguments which were urged for and against it, in the conferences between Mr. Poinsett and the Mexican Ministers : That No. 22 was received on the 9th of December last, and the answer, of the 9th of November, 1825, from this Department, to No. 18, having been prepared and transmitted, superceded the necessity, as was believed, of any more particular reply to No. 22 :

That extracts from the general instructions to Mr. Poinsett, under date the 25th March, 1825, are herewith reported, marked A : That the United States have contracted no engagement, nor made any pledge, to the Governments of Mexico and South America, or to either of them, that the United States would not permit the interference of any foreign Power, with the independence or form of government of those nations ; nor have any instructions been issued, authorizing any such engagement or pledge. It will be seen that the Message of the late President of the United States of the 2d December, 1823, is adverted to in the extracts now furnished from the instructions to Mr. Poinsett, and that he is directed to impress its principles upon the Government of the United Mexican States. All apprehensions of the danger, to which Mr. Monroe alludes, of an interference, by the allied Powers of Europe, to introduce their political systems into this hemisphere, have ceased. If, indeed, an attempt by force had been made, by allied Europe, to subvert the liberties of the Southern nations on this continent, and to erect, upon the ruins of their free institutions, monarchical systems, the People of the United States would have stood pledged, in the opinion of their Executive, not to any foreign State, but to themselves and to their posterity, by their dearest interests, and highest duties, to resist, to the utmost, such attempt ; and it is to a pledge of that character that Mr. Poinsett alone refers :

That extracts from a despatch of Mr. Poinsett, under date the 21st August, 1825, marked B, are also herewith reported, relating to the movements of the French fleet in the West India seas, during the last

summer : That his previous letter, to which he refers, on the same subject, with the accompanying papers, is accidentally mislaid, and cannot, therefore, now be communicated, which is less regretted, because the information, contained in that now reported, it is presumed, will be entirely satisfactory.

All which is respectfully submitted.

H. CLAY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 29, 1826.

A.

Extracts from the General Instructions of Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, to Mr. Poinsett, appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States, to Mexico, dated,

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

WASHINGTON, 25th March, 1825.

“The Mission, on which the President wishes you, with all practicable despatch, to depart, would at any time be highly important, but possesses at this moment a peculiar interest. Every where, on this Continent, but on the side of the United Mexican States, the United States are touched by the Colonial Territories of some Sovereign authority fixed in Europe. You are the first Minister, actually leaving the United States, to reside near a Sovereign Power established and exerted on this Continent, whose Territories are conterminous with our own. You will probably be the first Minister received by that Power from any Foreign State, except from those which have recently sprung out of Spanish America. The United Mexican States, whether we regard their present fortune, or recall to our recollection their ancient history and fortunes, are entitled to high consideration. In point of population, position, and resources, they must be allowed to rank among the first Powers of America. In contemplating the progress in them, towards civilization, which the Aborigines had made, at the epoch of the Spanish invasion, and the incidents connected with the Spanish conquest which ensued, an irresistible interest is excited which is not surpassed, if it be equalled, by that which is awakened in perusing the early history of any other part of America. 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 neighbourhood, which may exert a powerful influence, for a long period, upon the prosperity of both States.

“In more particularly inviting your attention to the objects which should engage it, on your Mission, I will in the first place refer you

to the general instructions which were given by my predecessor, on the 27th May 1823, to Mr. Anderson, the Minister of the United States at Colombia, of which a copy is annexed, and which are to be considered as incorporated in these. So far as they are applicable alike to the condition of Colombia and of Mexico, and shall not be varied in this or subsequent letters, you will view them as forming a guide for your conduct. In that letter of the 27th of May, the principles which have regulated the course of this Government, in respect to the contest between Spanish America and Spain, from its origin, are clearly stated, explained, and indicated, and the bases of those, upon which it is desirable to place the future intercourse between the United States and the several Governments which have been established in Spanish America, are laid down. So that, although that letter was intended to furnish instructions for the American Minister deputed to one of those Governments only, it should be contemplated as unfolding a system of relations which it is expedient to establish with all of them.

“ From that letter, as well as from notorious public facts, it clearly appears that the People and the Government of the United States have alike, throughout all the stages of the struggle between Spain and the former Colonies, cherished the warmest feelings and the strongest sympathies towards the latter ; that the establishment of their independence and freedom has been anxiously desired ; that the recognition of that independence was made as early as it was possible, consistently with those just considerations of policy and duty which this Government felt itself bound to entertain towards both parties ; and that, in point of fact, with the exception of the act of the Portuguese Brazilian Government, to which it was prompted by self-interest, and which preceded that of the United States only a few months, this Government has been the first to assume the responsibility, and encounter the hazard, of recognizing the Governments which have been formed out of Spanish America. If there ever were any ground for imputing tardiness to the United States, in making that recognition, as it respects other parts of what was formerly Spanish America, there is not the slightest pretext for such a suggestion in relation to Mexico. For, within a little more than a year after its independence was proclaimed, the United States hastened to acknowledge it. They have never claimed, and do not now claim, any peculiar favor or concession to their commerce or navigation, as the consideration of the liberal policy which they have observed towards those Governments. But the President does confidently expect that the priority of movement, on our part, which has disconcerted plans which the European Allies were contemplating against the independent Governments, and which has no doubt tended to accelerate similar acts of recognition by the European Powers, and especially that of Great Britain, will form a powerful motive with our Southern neighbors, and particularly with Mexico, for denying to the commerce and navigation of those European States, any favors or privileges which shall not be equally extended to us.”

“You will bring to the notice of the Mexican Government the message of the late President of the United States to their Congress, on the 2d December, 1823, asserting certain important principles of inter continental law, in the relations of Europe and America. The first principle asserted in that message, is, that the American Continents are not henceforth to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Powers. In the maintenance of that principle, all the independent Governments of America have an interest; but that of the United States has probably the least. Whatever foundation may have existed three centuries ago, or even at a later period, when all this Continent was under European subjection, for the establishment of a rule, founded on priority of discovery and occupation, for apportioning among the Powers of Europe parts of this Continent, none can be now admitted as applicable to its present condition. There is no disposition to disturb the Colonial possessions, as they may now exist, of any of the European Powers; but it is against the establishment of new European Colonies, upon this Continent, that the principle is directed. The countries in which any such new establishments might be attempted, are now open to the enterprize and commerce of all Americans. And the justice or propriety cannot be recognized, of arbitrarily limiting and circumscribing that enterprize and commerce, by the act of voluntarily planting a new Colony, without the consent of America, under the auspices of foreign Powers belonging to another and a distant Continent. Europe would be indignant at any American attempt to plant a Colony on any part of her shores, and her justice must perceive, in the rule contended for, only perfect reciprocity.

“The other principle asserted in the message is, that, whilst we do not desire to interfere in Europe, with the political system of the Allied Powers, 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. The political systems of the two Continents are essentially different. Each has an exclusive right to judge for itself what is best suited to its own condition, and most likely to promote its happiness; but neither has a right to enforce upon the other the establishment of its peculiar system. 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 Governments. 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. Both principles were laid down, after much and anxious deliberation, on the part of the late Administration. The President, who then formed a part of it, continues entirely to coincide in both. And you will urge upon the Government of Mexico the utility and expediency of asserting the same principles, on all proper occasions.”

B.

Extracts of a letter from Mr. Poinsett, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to Mexico, to Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, dated

“MEXICO, 21st August, 1825.

“The correspondence respecting the reported movements of the French fleet, on the West India seas, which accompanied my last letter, was attended with circumstances which I had not then time to communicate.

“The intelligence was received on the 15th inst. by the Secretary of State. On the morning of the 16th, he called upon the Chargé d’Affaires of His Britannic Majesty, and showed him the letters from the Agent of this Government, at Jamaica. Mr. Ward came immediately to me, to consult what was to be done, and expressed a wish that we should act in concert. As I had not seen the Secretary, nor the letters to which he alluded, I could only reply, that I was perfectly willing to do so, provided this Government, in their communications with us, placed both our Governments on precisely the same footing. He immediately went to the Palace, and saw the Secretary of State, to whom he explained his desire that the notes to be addressed to us, should be *verbatim et literatim* the same. Late in the afternoon, the Secretary called on me, and exhibited the letters he had received from Jamaica, and which induced him to believe that France entertained hostile intentions against this country. In this conversation, I assured him of the friendly disposition of the United States, and that they would not view with indifference the occupation of the Island of Cuba by France, especially if it was the result of any hostile views towards Mexico; but, at the same time, hinted that the imprudent conduct of some of their commanders might have induced Spain to cede that Island to the French, rather than have it wrested from her in the manner proposed by Santa Ana, of which they were fully aware.”

“When Mr. Ward was informed that the Secretary had said nothing to me of his interview with him, nor of his intention to make the notes to be addressed to us on this subject similar, he waited on the President, and reiterated his request. The President, after assuring him that this should be done, declared that he himself was ignorant of the arrival of this important intelligence, until he saw it published in the *Sol*.”

“On the ensuing day, notes, couched in exactly the same words, were received by both Mr. Ward and myself. I objected to the language, and waited upon Mr. Alaman, to state my objections. The original notes, after stating that we had declared, in the most solemn manner, that we would never consent that any third Power should interpose in the question between Spain and her former Colonies, and that the conduct of France, on this occasion, is certainly an interposition, which, however cloaked, is not the less inexcusable—goes on

to say, 'The President therefore instructs me to inform your Excellency of these important occurrences, so that, by bringing them to the notice of your Government, it may demand of His Most Catholic Majesty such explanations as the case requires.'

"I told the Secretary, that the declaration of the President, and the known friendly disposition of the Government and of the People of the United States, towards these countries, did not confer upon this Government the privilege of demanding our interference as a right. He expressed his readiness to alter the phraseology of the note, and it was done." "The note to H. B. M. Chargé d'Affaires was afterwards altered in the same terms; and the substance of our answers corresponded."