

Mr. Cass's speech on the colonization of Cuba

SPEECH
OF
MR. CASS, OF MICHIGAN,
ON
COLONIZATION IN NORTH AMERICA,
AND
ON THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF CUBA.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 18, 1853.

The Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution declaratory of the views of the United States respecting colonization on the North American continent by European Powers, and respecting the Island of Cuba; which is as follows:

Be it resolved, &c., That the United States do hereby declare that 'the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power.' And while 'existing rights should be respected,' and will be by the United States, they owe it to their own 'safety and interests,' to announce, as they now do, 'that no future European colony or dominion shall, with their consent, be planted or established on any part of the North American continent.' And should the attempt be made, they thus deliberately declare that it will be viewed as an act originating in motives regardless of their interests and their safety, and which will leave them free to adopt such measures, as an independent nation may justly adopt in defence of its rights and its honor.

And be it further resolved. That while the United States disclaim any designs upon the Island of Cuba inconsistent with the laws of nations and with their duties to Spain, they consider it due to the vast importance of the subject, to make known, in this solemn manner, that they should view all efforts on the part of any other Power to procure possession, whether peaceably or forcibly, of that Island, which, as a naval or military position, must, under circumstances easy to be foreseen, become dangerous to their southern coast, to the Gulf of Mexico, and to the mouth of the Mississippi, as unfriendly acts, directed against them, to be resisted by all the means in their power."

The question pending was on the following amendment offered by Mr. HALE:

And be it further resolved. That while the United States, in like manner, disclaim any designs upon Canada inconsistent with the laws of nations, and with their duties to Great Britain, they consider it due to the vast importance of the subject to make known, in this solemn manner, that they should view all efforts on the part of any other Power to procure possession, either peaceably or forcibly, of that Province, (which, as a naval or military position, must, under circumstances easy to be foreseen, become dangerous to their northern boundary, and to the lakes,) as unfriendly acts directed against them, to be resisted by all the means in their power."

Mr. CASS said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question of the recolonization of any part of this hemisphere by the European Powers has occupied the attention of the American people for many years, with more or less interest, as passing events seemed to render the effort more or less probable. The general subject, as well as the principles involved in it, has been so often discussed, that I do not propose to enter into a very full examination of our rights and condition, connected with this important topic, but rather to present the general considerations belonging to it.

Two Presidents of the United States have, by solemn public acts, in their messages to Congress, declared and maintained the principles, respecting American exemption from European dominion, which are laid down in the first of the resolutions before us, and have distinctly and satisfactorily established, not only our right but our duty to do so, as one of the great elements of our national safety and prosperity. Mr. Monroe, in 1823, said:

"We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers, to declare, that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments, which have declared

their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European Power, in any other light, than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

Mr. Polk, in the same spirit, in 1845, said:

"The people of the United States cannot, therefore, view with indifference, attempts of European Powers to interfere with the independent action of the nations on this continent. The American system of government is entirely different from that of Europe. Jealousy among the different sovereigns of Europe, lest any one of them might become too powerful for the rest, has caused them anxiously to desire the establishment of what they term the 'balance of power.' It cannot be permitted to have any application on the North American continent, and especially to the United States. We must ever maintain the principle, that the people of this continent alone have the right to decide their own destiny. Should any portion of them, constituting an independent State, propose to unite themselves with our Confederacy, this will be a question for them and us to determine, without any foreign interposition. We can never consent that European Powers shall interfere to prevent such a union; because it might disturb the 'balance of power' which they may desire to maintain upon this continent. Near a quarter of a century ago, the principle was distinctly announced to the world, in the annual message of one of my predecessors, that 'The American continent, by the free and independent condition, which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power.' This principle will apply with greatly increased force, should any European Power attempt to establish any new colony in North America."

In some remarks upon this subject in the Senate, a few days since, I alluded to, rather than considered, the general grounds, upon which this claim of independent action for the nations of the American continent rested for its assertion. I shall not repeat those views, contenting myself with saying, that this right of exclusion results from the condition of this continent, and from those general principles of the public law of the world, by which it protects the interests and safety of nations, in the varying circumstances, in which they may be placed. The history of that code shows, that it has a power of adaptation to the advancing condition of nations, and that rigid inflexibility is not one of its attributes. The changes introduced into it by the discovery of America, in the establishment of the principles of occupation and settlement, are familiar to all, and furnish an illustration of this progressive improvement. The right of recolonization would necessarily lead to the renewal, indeed, to the perpetual domination of European Powers, and their colonies, wherever planted, would become parties, with the mother countries, in all their wars, though far beyond the true sphere of their causes and objects.

We should thus find ourselves in juxtaposition, it might be, and at any rate within the reach of the action of communities, rendered enemies by the disputes, too often frivolous, and almost always indifferent, of nations on the other side of the Atlantic. Such a state of things, bringing wars to our coast, to our inland boundaries even, and interrupting the peaceful and profitable avocations of a whole continent, to gratify the pride or jealousy, or some other equally unworthy passion of ministers or mistresses, where these are the depositories of power, would be "dangerous to our peace and safety."

But I do not know, that the general principle of this claim of exemption is contested. Certainly it cannot be upon any just grounds. Our Executive Government has assumed it upon full consideration, and the history of our negotiations with England, to be found in the interesting account given by Mr. Rush, our able and faithful representative, of his mission to that country, proves beyond doubt, that although the British Ministry were opposed to our anti-colonization doctrine, lest it might interfere with ulterior objects of aggrandizement on their part, yet they entirely concurred in the application of the principle to the recently emancipated Spanish Colonies, which in fact, conceded the right of the United States to extend the same policy to any portion of the continent, not then actually possessed by a European Power. And Mr. Monroe distinctly announced this fact, saying:

"It is gratifying to know, that some of the Powers, with whom we enjoy a very friendly intercourse, and to whom these views (concerning the condition of the Spanish-American States) have been communicated, have appeared to acquiesce in them."

When Mr. Canning announced to Mr. Rush that "England could not see the transfer of any portion of them (these same States) to any other Power with indifference," she acted upon considerations much more applicable to our condition than to hers, and which are co-extensive with the continent. There is great force in the remark of that eminent British statesman upon our situation and political duties:

"It concerned the United States under aspects and interests, as immediate and commanding, as it did or could any of the States of Europe. They were the first Power on that continent, and now confessedly the leading Power. They were connected with Spanish America by their position, as with Europe by their relations. And they also stood connected with these new States by political relations. Was it possible they could see with indifference their fate, decided only by Europe? Could Europe expect this indifference? Had not a new epoch arrived in the relative position of the United States towards Europe, which Europe must acknowledge? Were the great political and commercial interests, which hung upon the destinies of the new Continent to be compressed and adjoined in this hemisphere (Europe) without the co-operation or even knowledge of the United States?"

These words of wisdom, of one of the most enlightened men of England, commend themselves, by their justice and liberality, to the consideration of every true American, and they are not the less just and liberal, because they were urged with a view to induce our Government to become a party to a European Congress for the arrangement of American affairs. It was wise to reject the proposal, it is not less wise to acquiesce in the doctrine, which led to it, and to make it ours by its practical enforcement in our own way, as a question of American policy, beyond the just sphere of European interposition. When such statesmen as Mr. Monroe, Mr. Polk, and Mr. Canning, unite in their general views of our rights and duties, those of us, who believe in his salutary doctrine, and in the expediency of enforcing it, may well bear the censures, and sneers, and ridicule, and reproach, which our efforts encounter from some, because we go too far, and from others, because we do not go far enough, while the cautious and the timid see in every assertion of national rights and honor, a fearful cloud impending over our country, ready to burst upon us, and sweep away our prosperity, if not our existence.

One-third of a century has passed away, since these diplomatic discussions, and if our position and circumstances, being the oldest of the family of nations in the western hemisphere, conferred upon us at that time, such rights, accompanied by such duties, how much stronger is the appeal of this policy of continental independence to our earnest attention now, when time has developed our strength and our danger, and when our American interests are primary, and those, which connect us with Europe, but secondary in importance, and when, from day to day, this disparity is increasing.

This, then, being our settled plan of policy, and having been so announced to the world by two Chief Magistrates of our country, why, it may be asked, does it become necessary for Congress to interpose, and by a legislative declaration, reaffirm it? The nature of our Government furnishes a satisfactory answer to this question. Though there is no doubt, but that these Executive declarations were beneficial in their operations, and aided in checking schemes of aggrandizement, which, had they gone on, would have changed the political aspect of the countries south of us, and greatly to our injury, still they have not been wholly regarded, as events upon the La Plata and in other regions have practically demonstrated. And occurrences now going on in Central America, and which, from day to day, occupy the earnest attention of the Senate, showing the steps by which the merest shadow of possession becomes a claim, and a claim a title, which carries with it dominion and sovereignty, treaty or no treaty,—these occurrences announce, that our declared policy of exclusion will be still further disregarded, unless authoritatively reaffirmed in the name of the American people. An experiment is making upon our forbearance, or rather upon our apprehension, and as it is resisted or submitted to, it will be abandoned, or pushed to results, which no nation now ventures openly to avow. It is but a few years since, a principle looking to an American balance of power, was announced by the French Prime Minister, Mr. Guizot, in the Chamber of Deputies, in relation to occurrences at Buenos Ayres, utterly inconsistent with the true American doctrine; and no doubt our own negligence, or rather our timidity, has encouraged this spirit of presumption, and led to the belief, that we do not intend to carry out our own principles, and that, therefore, they may be safely disregarded by other nations.

I repeat, that the nature of our Government furnishes a satisfactory solution of this course of foreign policy. The annunciation of our views upon this subject was intended to warn the Powers of Europe of our policy, and thus to prevent the violation of its principle. But upon this, as upon many other occasions, we halted in our course, and did not come up to our work. *We did not keep on the line of political knowledge.* We should have added the solemnity and the force of a legislative concurrence to these Executive declarations. Such annunciations, when made by the head of a European State, are made authoritatively, because, he who issues them, has the power to enforce them. They become settled maxims of policy, and other nations are aware, that they cannot be interfered with, except at the hazard of war. But it is far different here, Great principles of national conduct depend essentially upon public sentiment, and can only be enforced in the last resort by the action of Congress. Public sentiment has, I believe, with almost unexampled unanimity, approved this principle, but Congress has never, by action or declaration, given to it the sanction of its authority. That decisive measure should have been taken, when the Executive first promulgated the doctrine. The claim, therefore, has rested barren among our archives, only to bear certain fruit, when the Legislature of the Republic adopt as its own.

An able and distinguished Senator from Ohio, now no longer among us, (Mr. Allen,) seeing the importance of this policy, and foreseeing the necessity of making it our own, and respected as such, by a more signal public act, attempted, some six or seven years since, to press the subject on the consideration of Congress, but his exertions, which deserved a better fate, were fruitless, and we compromised alike our honor and our interests, by shrinking from a responsibility not less noble, in my opinion, than it was important. The Senate, if I recollect aright, refused even to consider the subject. We would not denounce interference, because that would be to interfere. And we should thus be led, but how I know not, into *entangling alliances*; the *bugbear* of American politics, which raises its spectral front, whenever it is proposed to take a decided step in our foreign intercourse. This national timidity never did any good, and never will. There are positions in the progress of a people, when firmness is not only wisdom but safety; and one of these we have now reached.

Mr. Monroe, when he first announced this policy, considered *the occasion proper* for the assertion of "*a principle* in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved." If the circumstances, to which he referred, justified this great and untried measure at that day, much more do the circumstances, in which we are now placed, justify the most solemn declaration of our adherence to it. Some of the independent States of Spanish origin seem to be hastening to dissolution, and almost all of them are weak, unquiet, agitated, and with elements of destruction in more or less active operation.

The most important in extent, in population, and in natural resources, and the one which, from its conterminous position, has the most intimate relations with our peace and interests, is precisely the Power, whose fate appears to be the most doubtful. Its internal agitations announce one of those catastrophes, whose consequences are beyond the reach of human sagacity.

It is impossible, but that this state of things should have attracted the attention of European statesmen, and have given rise to schemes, more or less matured, for turning the circumstances to the advantage of the two great Powers, most likely to interfere, because most interested, and most capable of making their interference felt. We cannot disguise from ourselves, that our progress and prospects, while they are a reproach to many of the Governments of the Old World, have excited their enmity by the contrasts they exhibit, and by the dangerous example they offer to the oppressed masses, inviting them to do as we have done, and to become free, as we are free. He, who does not know, that there is not a Government in Europe, which is a friend to our institutions, has much to learn of the impressions, that our past, and present, and probable future, are producing among them. And while we should watch their designs with constant, even with jealous care, it does not become us to magnify either our own danger or their power. I have no fear of a direct attack upon this country. I do not believe, that such a project is even among the reveries of the most dreaming statesman, now on the stage of action. But what we have to apprehend is plans for arresting our extent and prosperity, the seizure of positions, by which we might be annoyed and circumscribed, and the creation of an influence, and of schemes of policy, offering powerful obstacles to our future advancement. Motives have always existed and been in operation for checking

our progress, but recent events have added, as well to their number, as their gravity. *We have acquired an extensive territory upon the shores of the great ocean of the west, and our flag now waves in the breeze, that comes from the islands and continent of Asia.*

Think you, Mr. President, there is a maritime nation in Europe, which does not desire, that every possible obstacle should be interposed in the way of all communication between the eastern and the western portions of this magnificent Republican empire? Not one; and Nicaragua routes, and Panama routes, and Tehuantepec routes, and all others, if there are any others, to be used by us, are so many abominations in their eyes, to be tolerated only till they can be closed upon us by the occupation of commanding positions, whenever opportunities can be found, or made for seizing them. Considerations of this nature, far more than their intrinsic value, give importance to Honduras, to the Colony of the Bay of Islands, to Sonora, to Chihuahua, and to other points, where European intrigues have been at work to obtain possession. All we want is a fair and equal field for exertion, and if we have not industry and enterprise enough to hold our own way, in the great career of advancement, we deserve to fall behind our rivals and cotemporaries, and ought to find no one "to do us reverence." But I have no fear of this, nor indeed has any one else. It should, therefore, be a cardinal maxim of our policy, to preserve, as far as we can, the integrity of the Cisatlantic Republics, for it is almost as much for their interest as it is for ours, that these great lines of communication should be opened to all the world, and free to the competition of every nation.

There has recently been an attempt to wrest Sonora from the Mexican dominion, which at first attracted some attention in this country; but it has apparently failed, and the effort seems now rather to be ridiculed than condemned. The circumstances, connected with the origin of that movement, are obscure, but public rumor at first assigned it indirectly to French agents, made with a view to the extension of the jurisdiction of their country over that region. There are strong reasons for believing, that this conjecture was correct, though to what extent those concerned, acted from authority, will probably never be known, especially as the result was unfortunate, and such an event generally leaves these secret political agents to meet the consequences of their own responsibility. But it is not a little curious, that it was known here, that such a movement would be made, before we had any actual information of its occurrence, and it was understood to be under the direction of French interests, and with the design of French acquisition. I received a letter myself, from a quarter, I am not at liberty to disclose, some days before we heard of the enterprise, which I mentioned to my colleague and to other gentlemen, foretelling the movement and coupling it with designs of permanent annexation. And a document has since reached this country, which is worthy of our attention, and which goes far to confirm these anticipations. It is a memoir, published recently at Paris, by Mr. Dupasquier de Dommartin, in order to draw the attention of European Powers, and especially of France, to the purpose of *colonizing Sonora* and Northern Mexico, as the only means of checking the rapid and formidable growth of the United States, and preventing forever the acquisition of a railroad from the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean. The writer has devoted himself for some time to the careful study of this subject, has thoroughly explored the region of which he writes, and has laid the foundation for the policy he recommends, by *procuring, through the aid of the French Minister in Mexico, large grants of land for the purpose of colonization, from the local authorities of Sonora and Chihuahua.*

It is well remarked by the New York Times—to which paper I owe the above extract, as well as the translated memoir—that the fact of the commencement of such a colony, with the open avowal of such a purpose, is, of itself, sufficient to command the prompt attention of the American people and Government. And the interest is increased by the consideration, that such an appeal is thus publicly made for co-operation in the plan; made, too, in the French capital, where no such publication could appear, without the consent of the Government, that a French company has obtained exclusive grants in Sonora; and that an attempt has been made to wrest that region by arms from Mexico. All these may, by possibility, be accidental coincidences, and not co-operating causes; but the suggestion requires a good deal of national charity, before it can become even credible. I wish there was time to lay this memoir before the Senate, for it is a very significant document, advocating the very policy from which we have most to fear in all our foreign relations. But I must confine myself to a very general summary of it.

The writer adverts to our commercial interests, and to their extension; to our object to obtain *absolute command of the commerce of the world*, and to the certainty with which our projects of aggrandizement will be affected; from the wonderful progress we are making, and shall make, *unless Europe interferes to prevent it*. He then considers the condition of Mexico, with a view to show, that from her state of weakness and division, she will fall a prey to the grasping rapacity of the United States, unless saved by European colonization. He also gives a narrative of his explorations in Mexico, and of his efforts to lay the foundation for carrying his designs into effect. This brief abstract must suffice for the general purpose I have in view. I shall add to it the summary made by the author himself. He says:

"From the preceding there result two facts: First, that Mexico possesses the key of the Northern Continent, of the Atlantic and the Pacific, by land and by these two seas, of all the commerce which is carried on there. Second, that the existence of Mexico, pressed on all parts by the United States, hangs only by a thread."

"The whole question is now reduced to knowing *if Europe will permit the United States to obtain so much power.*"

A French periodical, of high and established character, The *Annuaire Des Deux Mondes*, for 1852, has some remarks strongly corroborative of the importance of the suggestions of Dr. Dupasquier de Dommartin. "Some attempts," says that journal, "to afford a remedy for Mexican difficulties, have meantime been recently made. We mention the commencement of the colonization of the State of Sonora, which has been greatly aided by the French Minister." He who supposes that a French diplomatic agent would take such a step, without the instructions of his Government, knows nothing of that punctilious sentiment of duty, which animates his corps, and little of the responsibility he would encounter. "Three hundred Frenchmen," says our authority, "collected from different parts of the Republic, are already settled upon the lands granted by the Government. Within a few years, a Frenchman, Mr. Dupasquier de Dommartin, has shown a lively interest in these projects of colonization."

"This," the adoption of his plans, "will be the surest dyke against the usurpation of the American race."

"There is also involved the great interest of influence for Europe, in not allowing to be accomplished, in spite of her, perhaps against her, and to her detriment, this new dismemberment of the Spanish-American Empire." The *Courrier des Etats Unis*, published at New York, the well-known organ of the French Government in this country, in an article, a few days since, made a very pregnant allusion, whether carelessly or carefully I know not, but certainly well worthy of attention: "As yet," says the *Courrier*, "France has not set her foot on the American continent. *We may fear what she will do, we admit*, but in good faith she does not yet merit the least censure." This is honest enough, indeed, whether intended as a prophecy or as a warning. It may be that it will be found expedient to irradiate the new empire with the luster of conquest; and it also may be, that the great augmentation of the French Navy is connected with the designs upon this continent, so distinctly portrayed in the quotations I have made. Nothing is lost by a provident forecast.

Now, it can hardly be doubted by any man, who is familiar with the course of European interposition, that if the effort just made to overthrow the Mexican Government in Sonora had succeeded, ere long the country would have passed into the possession of France, unless prevented by our remonstrances, or by armed intervention. As it failed, we shall not know its true history, until we read it in another attempt, and perhaps a successful one. That, however, will not be made, if we are true to ourselves, by announcing and continuing to manifest a determination to resist it, or any similar scheme of European aggrandizement.

It is obvious, from the foregoing recapitulation, that our policy and purposes are attracting the attention of Europe, and, whatever difference of opinion may prevail, respecting the true origin and objects of the recent movements in Sonora, it is equally obvious, that we may look, for similar explosions, from time to time, with results far more injurious to us, unless anticipated and prevented by a prompt, bold, and decisive declaration, made to be enforced with all our power, should circumstances be grave enough to require us to put forth our whole strength.

If, then, we have a right to insist upon this principle of American exemption, and if the condition of things, here and elsewhere, may render the exercise of this right essen-

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 tial to our interest and our safety, and, still more, if the original announcement of the doctrine meet, as it unquestionably does, the general approbation of the country, what objection can there be to its reaffirmation by Congress, the depository of so much of the power of the American people? Why this course is rendered necessary, I have already explained, and have shown, that the time, which has intervened since its first proclamation, and the circumstances, which have almost reduced it to a dead letter, have produced the impression, which evidently prevails in Europe, that we are not prepared to enforce it, as the war-making authority has refused or neglected to sanction it—why, I repeat, withhold this action, and leave us thereby to encourage untoward events, which ~~do~~ *do* firmness, on our part, might anticipate, and would probably prevent? The decree stands recorded in the history of our Executive acts. It is essential to its vitality, that it should now take its place in the acts of the Legislative Department. Why not? Do you mean to leave it without effect, and abandon it to its fate, and not even attempt to enforce it? If so, it would be much more honorable to repeal it. Or do you desire its efficient action in great exigencies, which may come, probably, indeed, will come, for if you do, you must fortify it by the declaration of your zealous concurrence, and, if ~~needed~~ *needed* be your powerful co-operation. Or are we afraid to speak out boldly, plainly, as ~~before~~ *before* the American people, trusting to the miserable policy of expedients, instead of asserting our rights and our determination to maintain them? It may be consoling to observe, at least for those, who need the consolation, that a legislative declaration would, to say the least of it, have a strong tendency to prevent attempts, which, without, such an imposing measure, would doubtless be made; for assuredly a contest with the United States for the acquisition of territory in North America, the very seat of our power, would not be hazarded without very powerful considerations, which it is difficult to foresee, in the face of the exertions of this country, putting forth all its strength.

So much for this project of reconverting the American continent into European colonies, and for the position, it is our duty to assume and maintain in relation to it. And now for the second resolution, which looks to the present and the future of the Island of Cuba.

But before proceeding to the consideration of it, it is proper to remark, that its form has provoked a good deal of animadversion and some opposition, because the desire of the United States to purchase Cuba is not distinctly announced upon this occasion. Mr. President, it is an occasion, which is not appropriate to such a declaration. Our present purpose, in this appeal to the world, is to announce our policy, should any other nation attempt to obtain possession, by the consent or without the consent of Spain, and in the conviction, that such a solemn procedure will have a tendency to prevent designs, which might otherwise be undertaken. But our purchase of Cuba is a question between us and Spain, and requires no public announcement to other nations, and to make it, would be a sacrifice of our own self-respect.

So far as respects my own personal views, these I have already explained to the Senate. I desire the possession of Cuba, earnestly desire it, whenever we can justly obtain it, and the sooner that time comes the better; for then will be finally settled one of the most delicate questions—the most delicate, perhaps, in our foreign policy, always liable to embarrass us by grave conjunctures, more easily to be foreseen, than to be guarded against. As to the means, though as I have already said, I am prepared to advocate its purchase, even at the most liberal price,—still, I should prefer its acquisition by the action of the people of Cuba—and a noble tribute it would be to our institutions—in the exercise of their power as an independent nation, could they succeed by any arrangement with Spain, in procuring her recognition of that condition, or should they be able and prepared to establish their right to a place in the family of nations.

There are two questions involved in this subject of Cuba, one of right, the other of expediency. Whether we can do anything justly, and if we can, what and how much we ought to do. This great measure of policy, connected with the destiny of that important insular position, has long occupied the attention of the American people, and the considerations, bearing upon it, have been so often and so elaborately presented, that I shall confine my present remarks within the narrowest compass, which the gravity of the inquiry will permit. We are all aware of the recent circumstances, which have attracted and arrested public attention; and though the crisis they appeared to foreshadow has passed away, still there are elements of difficulty, arising out of the uncertain condition of the Spanish monarchy, both metropolitan and colonial, which must be in active operation, ever liable to produce results, gravely affecting our vital interests.

The right of one country, to occupy or control portions of the possessions of another, is deducible from the great law of self-defence, which is as applicable to communities as to individuals. There are many instances in modern history of the application of this doctrine, and the code, which regulates the intercourse of nations, and which adapts itself to the existing circumstances of the world, recognizes this power of self-preservation. Like other human pretensions, this is liable to abuse, and has been greatly abused in Europe, and especially by the usurpations, arising out of the *balance of power*—a principle avowedly introduced for the protection of the weak against the strong, but practically perverted to make the strong more powerful, and the weak more dependent. A nation, feeling the responsibility of its conduct towards God and man, and sensible of its own duties, should take care, when driven to avert danger by anticipating it, that it does not mistake a spirit of aggrandizement for the just claims of self-defence, and seize the fleet of a friendly Power, a *Danish fleet*, for example, as a mere instrument of maritime supremacy.

The true principle is well laid down in our own legislative history, and was announced in the resolution of Congress of March 3d, 1811, which declared that,

“Taking into view the peculiar situation of Spain, and of her American provinces, and considering the influence, which the destiny of the territory adjoining the southern border of the United States, may have upon their security, tranquility, and commerce: Therefore

“Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States, under the peculiar circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot, without serious inquietude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign Power, and that a due regard to their own safety compels them to provide, under certain contingencies, for the temporary occupation of the said territory. They at the same time declare, that the said territory shall, in their hands, remain subject to future negotiations.”

And in the act of Congress, passed on the same day, for the purpose of carrying this declaratory resolution into effect, it is provided that the President “be authorized to take possession of the country east of the Perdido river, and south of the State of Georgia and of the Mississippi Territory,” among other events, in case it should be delivered up by the local authority, “or in the event of an attempt to occupy the said territory by any foreign Government.”

This is our doctrine and our policy, and the very proposition of the French and British Governments to our own, to regulate by a tripartite treaty, without the participation of Spain, the future condition of Cuba, is itself a concession of the right to direct and control peculiar positions, upon whose fate important interests depend.

Does the Island of Cuba present those paramount considerations, connected with our safety and prosperity, which justify the United States in the exercise of a vigilant supervision over its destiny, and in the adoption of decisive measures for its possession, should any other nation seek to obtain it, by force or by purchase? The importance of the question, rather than any difficulty in its solution, deserves a passing consideration, and in referring to it, I must repeat views, I have heretofore presented to the Senate upon this subject.

The Gulf of Mexico is the reservoir of the great river of the North American continent, whose importance it is as difficult to realize, as it is the value of the country, which must seek an outlet to the ocean through its waters. That country is nearly equal to all Europe in extent, embracing twenty-five degrees of latitude, and thirty-five of longitude upon the great circles of the globe. This vast basin extends from the summit of the Alleghany to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and its population now equals eight millions. The man yet lives, who was living, when almost the first tree fell before the woodman’s stroke in this great domain; and the man is now living, who will live to see it contain one hundred millions of people. Already the hardy western pioneer has crossed the barrier of the Rocky Mountains, and the forest is giving way before human industry upon the very shores, that look out upon China and Japan. The Mississippi is the great artery of this region; which, drawing its supplies from the fountains at the north, pours them into the ocean under a tropical sun, and drains, in its own course, and in the course of its mighty tributaries—tributaries in name, but equals and rivals in fact—the most magnificent empire, which God, in his providence, has ever given to man to reclaim and enjoy. I have myself descended that great stream two

thousand miles in a birch canoe, admiring the country through which it passes in a state of nature, and lost in the contemplation of what that country is to be, when subdued by human industry. The statistics of such a region, in years to come, is a subject too vast for calculation. Its extent, fertility, salubrity, means of internal navigations, and the character of the people, who will inhabit it, baffle all efforts to estimate its productiveness, the tribute, which its industry will pay to the wants of the world, and the supplies, which the comfort and habits of its people may require.

During the palmy days of Napoleon, it is said; that one of his projects was to convert the Mediterranean into a French lake. England has nearly done what defied the power and ambition of the Great Conqueror. She has almost converted it into an English lake, in time of war. Gibraltar commands its entrance, Malta the channel between Sicily and Africa, and the Ionian Islands the waters of the Levant. There were good reasons for believing, a short time since, that England was seeking to obtain a cession of the Island of Crete, the ancient kingdom of Minos, which would give her the port of Canea, that I found one of the most magnificent harbors in the world, equally capacious and secure. If England, in the pursuit of the same system, should acquire similar commanding positions on the Gulf of Mexico, that great reservoir would become a *mare clausum*, and no keel would plow it, nor canvas whiten it, in time of war, but by her permission. Now, sir, looking to the extent of our coast in that direction; to the productions, which must pass there to seek a market; to the nature of our population; and to the effect upon all these, which a permanent naval superiority would produce—where is the American, who is not prepared to adopt any measures to avert such a calamitous state of things? Who can fail to see the nature of the predatory warfare, which England would carry on, in all times of hostilities, from her various positions, which would encircle the Gulf, from the Bahamas to Cuba and to Yucatan? And who, also, can fail to see, that even in time of peace, her many harbors would become places of refuge for a certain class of our population, and that perpetual collisions would occur, involving the peace of the two countries?

The Gulf of Mexico, sir, must be practically an American lake, for the great purpose of security, not to exclude other nations from its enjoyment, but to prevent any dominant Power, with foreign or remote interests, from controlling its navigation. It becomes us to look our difficulties in the face. Nothing is gained by blinking a great question. Prudent statesmen should survey it, and as far as may be, provide for it. We have, indeed, no Mount Carmel, like that of Judea, nor prophet to ascend it, and to warn us against a coming storm. But the home of every citizen is a Mount Carmel for us, whence we can survey the approaching cloud, even when no bigger than a man’s hand, which threatens to overspread the political atmosphere, and to burst in danger upon his country.

So long as Cuba is held by its present possessors, neither we, nor the commercial world have anything to fear from the projects of England or France; for the latter country also has its schemes of territorial and mercantile aggrandizement, as is apparent from the considerations, I have already presented to the Senate. Spain is not now in a condition, and in all human probability never can be, seriously to annoy us, even if she had the disposition, and we may well rely upon her want of power and her want of will, and rest satisfied that her most precious dependency, the Queen of the Antilles, will not be hazarded by converting it into a military and naval arsenal for interrupting and seizing our commerce, and devastating our coasts. But let the dominion be transferred to England or France, and where are we? The mouth of our great river might be hermetically closed, and the most disastrous injuries inflicted upon us. I need not pursue these considerations further, for he, who is incredulous to their force, would not be driven from his incredulity by any effort of mine.

Such being the intimate relations between this island-fortress and our safety and prosperity, are there such indications of danger, as to call upon a provident nation to decide upon its course promptly, and to pursue it inflexibly? The signs upon this subject are neither few nor doubtful. I am not going to review them. But no man of ordinary sagacity, looking to the acknowledged policy of France and England, can question the desire of both of them to acquire this commanding position. And a characteristic incident occurred not long since in the House of Commons, which shows the views of British statesmen upon this subject. Lord George Bentinck, one of the most distinguished public men of England, and then the Tory leader in the Commons, in a discussion which took place there, said:

"He had read in the Times an extract from a United States paper, in which it was stated, that if the United States did not possess herself of Cuba, Great Britain would, and that England had a greater claim, by one hundred fold, on Cuba than the United States had to Mexico, because a sum of £15,000,000 was due to British subjects, and Cuba was hypothecated for the debt, &c., &c. He would therefore say at once, let them (the British) take possession of Cuba, and settle the question altogether. Let them distract upon it for the just debt due—and too long in vain—from the Spanish Government."

And then comes the true key to the English heart:

"Then depend upon it," continued the speaker, "when Great Britain possessed the Havana, as once she did in 1762, when she held it for about a year, and then exchanged it for the Floridas, and when she could cut the trace of America in two, no more boasts would be heard of what the United States could do," &c.

The importance of Cuba to our interest seems to be pretty well appreciated in the halls of British legislation. This last candid avowal, of a design and a desire to cut in twain the commerce along our southern coasts, would find its proper place in a precious article published some years since in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, entitled "A War with the United States a Blessing to Mankind," filled with some of the most cold-blooded suggestions, that ever marked even that notorious receptacle of vile slanders against this country. The present security of Cuba from European interference, independent of our position, is to be found in the jealousy of France and England. And could this be removed by any scheme of partition, the mortgage would be foreclosed, for France also has a similar lien, and the property transferred, as soon as the process could be completed. And we are reminded, in the recent correspondence between Mr. Everett and the Ministers of France and England, on the subject of the proposed tripartite treaty, suggestively or significantly, as may be, that the hypothecation is yet in full force as "British and French subjects, as well as the French Government are, on different accounts, creditors of Spain for large sums of money." How soon the creditors may *distrain*, in the language of Lord George Bentinck, may depend upon our course. I am satisfied they will resort to no such remedy, should we keep on Mr. Canning's *line of political knowledge*, and say, if you touch the Island, that act will be a declaration of war against the United States.

Besides, no man can look at the aspect of Europe, without feeling assured that, from day to day, collisions may arise between nations, and internal convulsions may shake the very frame of society. And wars may thus break out, extending their effects through the globe. The Spanish monarchy, it may be, is incapable of rejuvenation. I do not know how that may be, and I leave it to a wiser or to a rasher man than I am to speak confidently. But certainly that kingdom is marked with the signs of some approaching catastrophe. If the new French Empire follows the traditions, as it inherits the name and institutions of the old, which rose and fell with its founder—a name greater, in my opinion, than any other in modern, if not in ancient European history—it will soon make itself felt in the Hesperian Peninsula, and become the arbiter of its fate. To rely, as some profess to do, upon the security, which the present state of things in Europe, gives to the Spanish dominion in Cuba, is to neglect the most obvious dictates of policy, and to abandon an object of vast importance to the mere chance of events.

The correspondence, to which I have just alluded, gives rise to some serious reflections. Before adverting to these, however, I desire to express my warm approbation of the letter of Mr. Everett. It is worthy of his character, and it is marked by a lofty patriotic American feeling. I have seldom seen a document more conclusive in its argument, or more beautiful in its style or illustrations. If it had announced openly, that we desire to purchase Cuba—and that declaration would have been appropriate to the occasion—I should have given to it almost my unqualified adhesion; but even with that omission, I feel proud of it, as an American State paper.

And I thank Mr. Everett for the reproof, or retort, be it one or the other, caustic, though a little reversed, as became his position, but plain enough withal, which he administered to his diplomatic correspondents on the subject of our territorial acquisitions, compared with those of France and England. If there is one chapter in the whole history of human hypocrisy, from the time of the parable of the Pharisee, who thanked God he was not as other men, and especially as that *Publican*, down to the last diatribe against the grasping propensity of the United States, more remarkable than any other for its inconsistency, it is that which records the boasts of European self-disinterestedness, com-

pared with that great *Publican* on the western side of the Atlantic, who covets all he sees, and snatches all he can. Mr. Everett's defence of the history of our acquisitions is *unsusceptible*, as well with relation to the means, by which they were obtained, as to the *improvements* resulting from them. Truly has he said, "Every addition to the territory of the American Union has given homes to European destitution, and gardens to European want." And he might have added, with equal truth, freedom and the rights of man to European vassalage. He says, rather slyly, that the extensive accessions made to French and English dominion, "have created no uneasiness in the United States," and that "probably," he speaks with diplomatic doubt, "probably" our *accessions of territory*, while following the example set us, "caused no uneasiness to the great European Powers." Well done, Mr. Everett! well done! Addison could not have managed this retort with drier humor, nor in a happier vein of irony.

But to return to my remark, that this correspondence gives rise to some serious reflections. Why was this proposition for a tripartite treaty submitted to the United States? Not with the slightest belief that it would be accepted. There was not a member of the French or of the British Cabinet, who did not know, as well before the project was referred to us, as after, that the offer would be peremptorily rejected. They all understand our principles, and our policy. They knew we were opposed to these *Salus Populi* alliances, for these are truly so; and they knew our views with respect to Cuba, and that we would not sacrifice our permanent interests to any such scheme.

Then why this solemn farce of an invitation to do, what it was known we would not do? Well, sir, there is but one rational answer to this inquiry. Those two Governments are able to say to us, now and hereafter, we shall take our own course with respect to Cuba. We have asked your participation, in the measures necessary for its security, and you have declined to join us. We are free to act as we please. We have given you warning, that we do not recognize your right to acquire that Island, and that we shall "discountenance" all efforts, that you may make to obtain possession of it. This declaration is explicitly made by the French Government, and the same view is easily deducible from the letter of Mr. Crampton, where he speaks of there being something *equivocal* in the declaration of the United States, in consequence of the "juxtaposition" of the words "European" and "Power," and inviting a plain disavowal of our intention ever to obtain possession of Cuba. This, of course, he neither got, nor expected to get.

Thus, then, stands this matter: France and England have assumed the right to decide upon the destiny of Cuba, and have asked the concurrence of the United States in their proposed arrangements. This has been declined, and the two Powers, upon their own principles, are free to regulate the whole subject, so far as they can agree in their policy. If they cannot do that, each of them will probably await the chapter of accidents, protesting or seizing, as one or the other may be in the ascendant—provided, however, that we sit still and philanthropically cry *peace, peace, when there is no peace*.

Now, sir, I have endeavored to show why these resolutions should pass. I have endeavored to show, both our right and our duty to adopt them, and also that their adoption would have a powerful operation in checking projects of aggrandizement, which, without our influence, will go on to their consummation. I do not presume to say, that this solemn proceeding alone will, under all circumstances, secure our immunity from these dangers. But I do say, it will be heard, and not unheeded; and projects, which, without it, would be, and perhaps promptly, carried into effect, will be, if not abandoned, at least delayed, till a more convenient opportunity—which will come when pusillanimity guides the councils of our country—and not till then. Why, then, not say what we mean, and do as we say? Gentlemen opposed to this course, while they avow their indisposition to act, acknowledge, also, that our policy must be enforced by war, if necessary, should the effort be made to thwart it and to endanger our safety.

A highly estimable member of the House of Representatives, for whom I have much regard, has recently remarked that "he was not willing to sustain the resolution." "He was opposed to serving a John Doe and Richard Roe notice to the world," though he avowed his determination to act by force, if European colonization should be attempted, or if there should be danger of any maritime nation taking Cuba. Then why not say so? The declaration may do good, and can do no harm. No American, Mr. President, has the right to undervalue his country, by saying, that the avowal of a firm resolution on her part to resist an unjust policy, deeply affecting us, will be received in Europe with indifference, or lightly regarded. No, it is not so; and without the fear of any imputation of self-exaltation, we may estimate our influence by a higher

standard than that. If, indeed, we do nothing, by our own differences and discussions, to cast suspicion upon our ultimate course, leading the politicians of Europe to believe, that when the trial comes the record containing our words will never be inscribed with our deeds. Far better is it to do nothing, than thus prove recreant. I repeat, sir, why not say, in good faith, what in good faith we mean? These annunciations to the world, of a fixed course of policy, in certain contingencies, to be foreseen or apprehended, are common occurrences in the intercourse of nations, and therefore to be decided on, under existing circumstances. Why not serve a John Doe and Richard Roe notice to the world? Passing by the sneer, in which I join, upon the clumsy contrivances of the common law, by puerile fictions to do indirectly what should be done directly, and looking to the object and not to any form of expression, even though rendered unpalatable by its associations; the serving of that notice is precisely what we may do, as a just nation, what we ought to do, as a wise nation, and what it becomes us to do, as a frank and republican nation.

Did not our fathers issue a John Doe and Richard Roe notice to the world, on the 4th day of July, 1776, when we assumed a place among its independent communities; and did they not then announce certain great principles as fundamental articles of our political faith? And did not the Emperor of Russia, but the other day, issue also his John Doe and Richard Roe notice, in the form of a Muscovite decree, proclaiming to Christendom, that nations should not be independent, contrary to his pleasure?—for such is the meaning of that memorable State paper, when divested of its diplomatic redundancy. And is not modern history full of these declarations, more or less just or unjust, as well as more or less grave, down to the blockading of a port even, which is made known by the same process?

So much for these two old pillars of the common-law, thus converted into pillars of the public law of the world. And I take this occasion to add, that I saw with dismay, that these two revered personages had been recently put to death by the British Parliament! The most prominent event in human progress, that has occurred in my day! The old dry bones are really beginning to shake. I have no doubt, but that this irreparable loss has been sincerely deplored, as well in England, as in this country, by many a devout believer in the doctrine, that all changes are changes for the worse; and that unless a head is covered with a *horse-hair wig*, whatever may be inside, the outside renders the man utterly unfit for a judicial station.

"*Oh, the virtue of horse-hair!*" said the waggish *Progressivists* of the Edinburgh Review.

But, sir, these resolutions, or equivalent ones, embodying the same principles, will pass the Legislature of the United States. Their passage is but a question of time. They may fail to-day, and they may fail again. Timidity or immobility may overrule that firm sagacity, which befits our condition. It is just as certain, that these principles themselves will be permanently ingrafted into the American policy, and in the most imposing form, as it is that they are now ingrafted in the hearts of the American people.

My friend, the Senator from New Hampshire, (Mr. HALE,) said the other day, with that *ex cathedra* manner, which distinguishes his vaticinations, not always remarkable for their fulfillment, that we should *back out* of this declaration, if made, as we always do. The sentiment is not very patriotic, nor is the assertion correct; nor, indeed, is it redeemed by the charm of novelty. I heard the same taunt in 1812, though in different terms. The phrase then was, and it was daily heard from our political opponents, that the country could not be *kicked* into a war. Well, sir, we went to war, notwithstanding, and came out of it without *backing*. And he, who thinks we shall not, and urges that as a reason for submission to national degradation, knows little of the resolution of his countrymen, when the hour of trial comes. There is one redeeming and encouraging feature of our public character in all these contests between standing still and going on, and that is, that the national feeling, in all grave conjunctures, has always gone ahead of the Congressional feeling. I know of no exception; the latter *plants* after the former, but not entirely in *vain*. And it is best it should be so. The public instinct and judgment are right, and are animated with an ever active love of country, which feels its way and follows it, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.

Mr. President, I am not going over the old ground of our *manifest destiny*, and the *mission we have to fulfil*, and other similar phrases, expletives, if you please, adopted into our political vocabulary, and which have provoked more criticism than they merit, and been assigned more importance than they are entitled to. I take it, they are all

merely indicative of a strong impression of the mighty career, that is before us, and of the duties and responsibilities, it brings with it, as well towards ourselves as the world. However these may be magnified or depressed, they cannot be avoided; and that past, which alone foreshadows the future, is filled with the most startling proofs of national progress, which have ever arrested the attention of mankind.

The generation has not yet wholly passed away, since we were a peaceful dependency of England, and he who, by the kindness of Providence and the favor of his fellow-citizens, is now permitted to address you, was born before the final acknowledgment of our independence by the parent country. A narrow strip of sea-coast, and a scattered population, short of three millions, who were hardly permitted, as it has been said, in illustration rather than in assertion, to make a horseshoe nail for themselves, divided into separate colonies, and almost unknown, with some profitable rather than patriotic anticipations at home, as England was then called, that these possessions might be useful for the purpose of taxation,—such was our condition about the commencement of our revolutionary struggle, and at its close we found ourselves exhausted by the exertions we had made, and without internal trade, without external commerce, and, in fact, without a government for the protection of social order or the prevention of foreign aggression; and, indeed, the institutions of the country were maintained by the character of the people, and not by political organization. The seventy years, which have since passed away, have more than quadrupled the area of our territory, have increased our population eightfold, and have added to our productive industry, to our commerce and navigation, to our revenue and resources, and to all the other elements of power and prosperity in a still greater ratio, while they have given us a Government and institutions, as free as is compatible with the preservation of order, and have placed us among the great Powers of the earth, with *none to make us afraid*. And at the same time, our intellectual improvement has kept pace with our material advancement, and our whole progress is without example in the history of nations.

Now, sir, in this state of things, let no man despair of the future. Let no one fear, that his country will not, sooner or later, come up to her proper work, without presumption, but without hesitation. Our progress is from day to day, but the steps, which mark our career before the world, are the decennial periods, when the "*numbering of the people*" discloses results surprising even to ourselves, and almost incredible to the other nations of Christendom. Eight of these I have lived to see, and the gigantic strides, they mark, indicate a future, which is almost appalling to the imagination. If this magnificent destiny, even now so gratifying to national pride, but in prospect so boundless in its power, for evil or for good, brings with it causes of gratulation for every true American, it brings also grave responsibilities, which cannot be evaded, and ought not to be neglected.

It is thus we have a *mission to fulfil*, in the example we may offer, and in all just efforts to promote the extension of freedom, the advancement of knowledge, and the establishment of all the great principles, on which public and private prosperity depends.

In looking back upon our progress from infancy to maturity, it is obvious, that we have submitted to much, that was unjust and contumelious, because we had not strength to resist, as we should now do, pretensions, not less remarkable for their injustice, than for the presumption and pertinacity with which they were urged. We had true patriots in those days of weakness to guide and counsel us, and well did they fulfil their trust. But we had to bear much, because we could forbear when we could not avert or avenge.

But old things have passed away, and with the power has come the determination of the American people to protect their interests and their honor, wherever, and whenever, and however these may be assailed. Why, sir, it is difficult even for this generation to believe, and to the next it would appear perfectly incredible, unless established by the irrefragable evidence of public records, that for twenty years we seriously argued with England, in labored diplomatic notes, whether her naval officers had a right to enter and search our vessels, wherever these might be met on the ocean, and to take thence, at their mere will, any person they might find, and consign him to that worst of slavery, the slavery of unlimited service on board a hostile ship to fight against his own country. Well, sir, we have exhausted that argument, and shall supply its place by other means. We have got far beyond discussion, and the first man impressed from an American vessel by a British officer, whose act is recognized by his Government, will be the signal of war. Nor shall we ever again discuss the legality of Berlin and Milan decrees, and all the other schemes of rapacity, by which neutral property was stolen during the terri-

ble contests arising out of the French Revolution—schemes which were defended, in elaborate State papers, upon a highwayman's plea, that he robs you, because you have been, or will be robbed, by some one else. All this, too, is with the things that have been. And think you, sir, that the time will ever return, when a third of the territorial extent of one of the States of this Union will be ceded upon such pretexts, as those which dismembered the State of Maine? Never, in my opinion, was there a public claim urged upon grounds so utterly indefensible as that; but we yielded, and now let us make the best of it, and acquiring resolution as we acquire strength, let us do just what is right—and demand it from others. That is our true policy, and as it is right, that we should exercise the same authority, as the other Powers of the world, our coequals only in position, in the declaration of great principles of international law, the true sentiment of self-respect will teach us, ere long, to maintain its inviolability when threatened with dangerous innovations, hostile to the freedom and independence of nations, by the same solemn and authoritative procedure, as that which announces its peril. If we choose, that our Chief Magistrate should wear a hat, and not a crown, we desire it to be understood, that we are just as jealous of our rights and honor, and have just as much of both, as the gaudiest monarch of them all.

We committed a great error, not a fatal one, that it would be difficult to do in our condition of elasticity, when, last session, we refused to pass a declaration denying to the Emperor of Russia, the authority he had assumed, to act the part of universal legislator, and to impress his own will upon the code of the public law of mankind, prostrating with his pen, preparatory to prostrating with his sword, all the barriers, that protect the political rights of nations: Well, we shrunk also from this high duty. We got alarmed at the shadow of something—I do not know precisely what, whether *Russian ukases*, or “entangling alliances,” and left the Czar to pass his own law, and to enforce it too. And hereafter, when the occasion comes,—and it will come, for power, like the daughters of the horse-leech, always cries give, give,—he will be able to quote his own precedent, submitted to in both hemispheres, and seek to regulate the whole subject of international communication, and of national rights by a ukase, as he regulates the lives and fortunes of the sixty millions of people, who call him lord and master. In brief time we shall abjure all this, as well our own subservience, as his presumption, and assume our place in the great legislative council of nations.

We have evidently reached one of those epochs in the career of nations to which the historian of their decline and fall looks back, in his searching investigation, into the causes of their fate. Our duties are plain, noble indeed, and our position invites us to fulfil them, firmly and fearlessly. The progress and improvement in all the great branches of human industry, and especially in those, which relate to the intercommunication of nations, and to the benefit, that each may derive from all by the interchange, as well of knowledge as of material products, have brought the human family more closely into contact, than at any former period, and have opened interests, which, if not new, have become much more powerful in their extent and operation, and which give some degree of unity to the public feeling of the world. We cannot withdraw from this great association. We cannot isolate ourselves from the common sentiment of the age, nor ought we to do so if we could. Our place is assigned to us by events almost beyond our control, and as we fill it, worthily or unworthily, the judgment of the future will pronounce us the inheritors of the spirit, as we have been of the labors and sacrifices, of the men of the Revolution; or craven descendants, false to their principles, as to our own honor. I am well aware, Mr. President, that such views expose a man to a great deal of obloquy in this country. I have experienced all that, in common with many others. But neither the advent, nor the apprehension of it, has deterred me, at much earlier periods of life, and certainly will not deter me now, when that life is fast drawing to a close, from the expression of an earnest hope, that the American name and fame will be maintained by the American people, with the brightness of true glory, undiminished by the neglect of a single deed, which national honor may require we should do, or leave undone.

There are men, American citizens even, who cannot appreciate sentiments like these—who disbelieve in their existence, and who deride and denounce all those, who avow them as *demagogues*—that is the term—and which, when truly translated from our party vocabulary into old-fashioned English, means all, who differ in great measures from these standards of faith, and advocate them; even though they are *acceptable to the people*—a fatal error, indeed, in a country like this. I saw the other day a specimen of this exclusive patriotism, which rails at all it does not accept, in a Buffalo paper, the

Commercial Advertiser, which, from its *near* relation to the present Administration, I should have thought would have tried to elevate itself above this tone of affected moderation, but of real subserviency, and which deprecates all these efforts to resist European encroachment, talks of the *ghost of the Monroe doctrine*, and of *palpable absurdities* introduced into the Senate with *owl-like wisdom*, and in a *spirit of demagogism*, and of the equality of the rights of European monarchs with the United States upon this continent, and much more of the same sort, little suited to the banks of the Niagara, but which would find its proper home upon the banks of the Thames, as would he who cherishes and utters such anti-American sentiments. But time will bring its cure for this Anglo mania, and when the patient once recovers, he wonders how he ever caught the disorder.

I have seen a great deal of this political perversity, this unpatriotic predisposition, which prompts many men to take part against their country, whatever be the position, in which she is placed. I do not recollect a single controversy, in which we have been involved with a foreign Power, since I have been on the stage of action, when the whole sentiment of the country was united in the cause of the country. I doubt if there is another people on the face of the globe, whose history presents so many instances of this want of true national pride, patriotism rather, as our own. Whether it results from any peculiar political idiosyncrasy I know not; or whether our party feelings are so strong, that we are blinded by them, and led in their vehemence, to think that all is wrong our opponents do; or it may be, at any rate, so far as England is concerned, that some of the old colonial leaven remains, which leavens much of the lump,—be it one or the other, or whatever else, the deplorable consequence is certain, and the sentiment of Decatur, not less noble than just, “*Our country right or wrong*,” which being truly understood, felt rather, means, that when embarked in a controversy with a foreign nation, it becomes every true citizen, after the course of his country has been decided by the constitutional authority, to submit to that decision and to support her cause, and not the cause of her foes—this noble sentiment finds many, who repudiate it; many who possess the character without possessing the feelings of American citizens.

Mr. President, I trust our imperial neighbor on the other side of the Pacific, the mighty brother of the sun and moon, will set up no Chinese claims to our new possessions upon that ocean; for if he should, they might create much embarrassment, as I fear there would not be found wanting those among us ready to vouch for the validity of the claim, and to impugn our title because it is ours.

But, returning from this digression, if it can be called one, more immediately to the subject, I would observe that *conservatism* and *progress*, as they are called, designate principles, positions rather, which are useful in their moderate, but injurious in their extreme application. Like all other antagonistic elements, which work together, and well and wisely, in the worlds of mind and matter, these also may usefully co-operate, without counteracting each other. It may be, that we may run too fast; but we have not yet committed that error, nor do I believe we shall. When we do, then it will be time enough to announce the danger and to propose the remedy. In the meantime, we desire, that we may be left free in our career, rightfully free, unimpeded by tortuous European policy or project of aggrandizement upon this continent. And every American who, participates in this sentiment, will be ready to proclaim it, as these resolutions do, and abide by it, in safety and in dangers. We do not intend to be circumscribed in our expansion, nor do we intend to have this hemisphere ruled by maxims, suited neither to its position, nor to its interests, and divided into political communities, dependencies of European monarchies, or under their influence, and, therefore, liable to be involved in every war, breaking out in the Old World, and thus extending its dangers and its difficulties to the New, and by which means we should be exposed, in all time to come, to have our lines of communication with our Pacific coast interrupted, our *commerce cut in two*, as Lord George Bentinck said, and war entailed upon us, agreeably to the moral code of Blackwood, that impersonations of English Tory feelings, as a “*blessing to mankind*,” together with all the other vexatious annoyances which such a state of things could not fail to bring with it. If this is not to be our *destiny*, we must be progressive, till the great objects are accomplished, and then just as *conservative* as may be necessary to maintain our high position in the world, our free institutions, and all those elements of individual and national prosperity which God has given to us, and which, I trust, man will never be able to take away. This will be the truly American union of *progress* and *conservatism*.