

His last days were followed with sad hearts by those who were his associates and friends. A group in attendance at the Urbana meeting of the American Historical Association sent him a message of greeting and cheer during what were his last days. But he was not cast down, even with the shadows so close around him. He had lived richly, he had enriched the lives of others, and at the last he could have said, with Lord Bacon, "a mind fixed upon something that is good doth avert the dolours of death." Steps have already been taken to bring together a collection of essays by former students which will be their tribute to the memory of an inspiring teacher and a friend, one who lived in a spacious atmosphere and gave freshness and life to fields of history which narrow minds and prejudice had long muddled. In that volume it is to be hoped that there will be such adequate portrayal of the personality of Ulrich Phillips as shall preserve him a living figure to those who come after us who knew him.

SOUTHERN DESIGNS ON CUBA, 1854-1857
AND SOME EUROPEAN OPINIONS

Edited by GAVIN B. HENDERSON

The persistent bickering that disfigured Anglo-American relations during the nineteenth century was in one of its worst phases during the Crimean War period. The United States government was very suspicious of the Anglo-French alliance which, it was feared, might lead to co-operation in trans-Atlantic matters. On January 31, 1854, Lord Clarendon, the British foreign minister, made a speech in the House of Lords in which he declared: "the union between the two Governments has not been confined to the Eastern question. The happy accord and good understanding between France and England have been extended beyond Eastern policy to the policy affecting all parts of the world, and . . . there is no portion of the two hemispheres with regard to which the policy of the two countries, however heretofore antagonistic,

is not now in entire harmony." It is clear that these unimpeachable sentiments referred to the efforts of the two governments to bring to an end the traditional rivalry between French and British agents in all parts of the world. But the United States professed to see something specifically hostile to themselves in these words; and they considered the case proven when France refused to permit Pierre Soulé, American minister in Madrid, to pass through French territory on his way to Spain.

Meanwhile, there were numerous outstanding differences between Britain and the United States. The Oregon frontier, the Newfoundland fisheries, the Falkland Islands, and the Mosquito Coast—all provided material for diplomatic controversy. The American bombardment of Greytown and the project of annexing the Sandwich Islands added fuel to the flames. With Russia, on the other hand, there were no points of difference; and, throughout the Crimean War, the United States government was favorable to the Czar.¹ The American people fully agreed with their government. There were rejoicings in the United States when it was learned that the rumor of the fall of Sebastopol was false.² In December, 1854, the Mayor of New York and the District Attorney attended a meeting to present an address to Smith O'Brien on his return from Van Dieman's Land. Strongly anti-British speeches were made, and three cheers were given for the Czar of Russia.³

The strength of these anti-British feelings in the Northern, Central, and Western states of the Union seemed to provide a suitable opportunity for certain Southerners to carry through one of their dearest ambitions: namely, the acquisition of Cuba. This beautiful and wealthy island was not only of strategic and economic importance; it was of very special importance to Southern expansionists, who thought its

¹ See Frank A. Golder, "Russian-American Relations during the Crimean War," in *American Historical Review* (New York, 1895-), XXXI (1926), 462-76.

² Clarendon, British foreign secretary, to Aberdeen, prime minister, November 6, 1854, in Arthur Hamilton-Gordon (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of George, Earl of Aberdeen* (privately printed), Vol. for 1854-1855 (1885), 271. There is a copy of this rare series, which was printed for private circulation, in the manuscript room of the British Museum, which contains also the Aberdeen Papers in manuscript form.

³ Crampton to Clarendon, December 25, 1854, and enclosure from the New York *Herald*, Public Record Office, Foreign Office 5/600. Cited hereafter as P. R. O., F. O.

acquisition would greatly strengthen that slave-economy which they were determined to preserve at all costs. Everything seemed to make 1854 or 1855 a suitable time for the attempt. Spain was even weaker and more revolution-ridden than usual, and her despicable monarchy appeared on the verge of collapse. Britain and France—chief rivals of the United States in the Caribbean—were fully occupied elsewhere. A powerful effort was therefore made to convert the policy of the Southern expansionists into the policy of the Union itself.

Soulé, the firebrand United States minister in Madrid, appears to have been the leading spirit in this affair. He persuaded William L. Marcy to call a "conference" of the United States ministers accredited to the courts of London, Paris, and Madrid—namely, James Buchanan, John Y. Mason, and Soulé. Mason and Soulé were Southerners; Buchanan, though a Pennsylvanian, was a Democrat, and in full sympathy with them. "Never did I obey any instructions so reluctantly," wrote Buchanan later, ". . . and yet I continue to be entirely satisfied with our reports."⁴ The three ministers met at Ostend on October 9, 10, and 11, 1854. Another Southern diplomat, Dudley Mann, was in Ostend, and seems to have been consulted.⁵ From Ostend, the three ministers proceeded to Aix-la-Chapelle, where they produced a report (dated October 18) commonly known as the Ostend Manifesto. This report declared that the acquisition of Cuba by the United States, by purchase or by any other method, was a foregone conclusion; and that, if any other great power were to indicate an objection to such a plan, this should be regarded as a mere impertinence.⁶ The conference, and the

⁴ James Buchanan to William L. Marcy, December 22, 1854, in John B. Moore (ed.), *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising his Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, 12 vols. (New York, 1908-1911), IX, 289.

⁵ Van Iseghem, Hanoverian consul in Ostend, wrote to von Lenthe, Hanoverian foreign minister, on October 12, 1854 (No. 148) that the three ministers were "accompanied by several secretaries or attachés, and by Mr Dudley Mann, a member of the American cabinet." Hannover Staatsarchiv, Hannover 9 Türkei 27E. It seems doubtful whether Mann's presence was a pure coincidence or not. For Mann, see *Journal of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1935-), IV (1938), 219, n. 15.

⁶ See Moore (ed.), *Works of James Buchanan*, IX, 260-74, for the text of the Ostend Manifesto. In Britain this was of course regarded as a piece of "unparalleled audacity." See, for example, W. R. Greg, *Rocks Ahead, or the Warnings of Cassandra* (London, 1874), 208, 216.

report, were highly irregular: it was Southern policy, not Union policy, that was being expressed so forcibly. The authorities at Washington seem to have given the Southern diplomats freedom of expression with a view to testing opinion at home and abroad. But the gentlemen of the South had on this occasion gone too far: their report gave deep offence to the Free Soil party, which recognized that it adopted "the highwayman's plea, that might makes right."⁷ Pierce and Marcy, though always anxious to do a bad turn to Britain or a good turn to Russia, dared not give their full support to the Southern designs on Cuba,⁸ and, as a result, the opportunity of the Crimean War was lost. For the meanwhile, Cuba remained Spanish.

The Cuban question naturally excited interest in diplomatic and political circles in Europe, and particularly in Britain. Nowhere in Britain was there any sympathy for Southern aspirations until the noble struggle of the Confederacy attracted widespread admiration, though little concrete support. In the days of the Crimean War, Southern designs on Cuba and United States friendship with Russia were alike regarded as a base betrayal of democratic principles. In 1812-1814, when Britain was engaged in a desperate struggle against the autocrat, Napoleon, the United States—which had revolted in the name of liberty—had fought on the side of despotism. Such, at least, was the British interpretation. In 1854-1855 Britain was again engaged in a desperate struggle against an autocrat—and again the United States favored the upholder of despotism. Hence the British people—of all classes—were led to the conclusion that the great Republic of the West was not a true believer in democratic principles. And the explanation that naturally sprang to the mind was that a slave-economy was inherently incapable of being truly

⁷ The Free Soilers, and even more the abolitionists, were most despondent even before the publication of the Ostend Manifesto. On August 7, 1854, Wendell Phillips wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Pease Nichol: ". . . the *Government* has fallen into the hands of the Slave Power *completely*. So far as *national* politics are concerned, we are beaten—there's no hope. We shall have Cuba in a year or two, Mexico in five." See W. P. Garrison and F. J. Garrison (eds.), *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children*, 4 vols. (New York, 1885-1889) III, 411.

⁸ John A. Quitman, who was organizing an expedition against Cuba, was forced to pay some regard to the neutrality laws. But he was rewarded for his illegal activities with a seat in Congress.

democratic; and that, so long as the South had a powerful influence on the policy of the United States, that policy was certain to be antidemocratic and anti-British. The Southern hunger for Cuba was one of many factors responsible for building up this line of argument which, though largely mistaken, contained some elements of truth. A body of opinion developed in Britain which believed not only that Southerners were wicked men, because they practiced and justified slavery, but also that they were peculiarly anti-British, since Britain had freed her slaves and loved liberty. This complacent fantasy, which finds some slight justification in the irresponsibilities of the Ostend Manifesto, was not without importance, for it had significant results. Had British opinion been more pro-Southern in the days of the Confederacy the course of the struggle might have been altered.

It is therefore thought useful to print certain dispatches and letters to illustrate the course of events in Cuba, and the state of opinion in Europe, in the years 1854-1857. A number of dispatches from British representatives abroad have been selected from the British Public Record Office. Use has also been made of material from the private Clarendon Papers.⁹ These documents may be regarded as supplementing the text of the Ostend Manifesto which is, however, too easily accessible to need reproduction here.

W. H. HOLDERNESS TO PALMERSTON, ADAMS COUNTY, OHIO,
SEPTEMBER 22, 1854¹⁰

Your good sense will of course excuse any lack of etiquette that there may appear to be in this epistle especially as it comes from a resident on the Western side of the Atlantic, where courtly forms have not yet been introduced. I have just received information of matters that deeply concern, as I think, the whole of Europe, especially Spain. There is an expedition of immense magnitude now on foot in the United States for the subjugation of Cuba. General [John A.] Quitman is at the head of it. It is secretly organized, chiefly throughout the Slave States. General Quitman proposes raising 200000 men, of which I have been informed that 150000 are enrolled already. The place of rendezvous is New Or-

⁹ I am indebted to Lord Clarendon for permission to make use of material from his family papers.

¹⁰ P.R.O., F.O. America Domestic/611. The letter is marked "Private."

leans, where they also purpose to embark for their descent on the Island. The time they purpose for their expedition is next February.¹¹ The late conduct of the United States Government leaves no doubt that they will connive at it. You may depend on my information being correct. I had it from one who has been among the conspirators, and has seen their arms, a good part of which are revolving rifles, of seven barrels together. I have no motive that I know in giving this information, but to prevent, if possible, the consummation of as dark a piece of villainy as can disgrace the 19th century, to be carried out under the hypocritical pretext of enlarging the area of freedom. Beyond this communication, I wish not to be known in the matter.¹²

HOWDEN (BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN MADRID) TO CLARENDON (BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER), NO. 269, OCTOBER 23, 1854¹³

I have just seen a private letter from Mr Soulé, dated Aix la Chapelle the 12th instant, in which he says that his absence from Madrid was never a Leave but "a grave and momentous Mission". He alludes no doubt to the Congress of American Ministers.

I have no doubt that in this Congress not only the republicanizing of Spain, but the republicanizing of Europe as a result, was debated. I gather this from the answer of the present Chargé d'Affaires here, Mr [Horatio J.] Perry, to Mr Soulé's letter.

Mr Soulé overwhelms Mr Perry with abuse for even the common terms of amity on which he has very wisely kept with the Spanish Government and its members. Mr Perry read me his reply, and I must say of the composition of this young man that it is one of the most earnest, right-minded and really eloquent productions I ever met.

In one part, to which I have alluded, Mr Perry says "You will fail in your objects, *nor will you have the consolation of pulling down Empires with you*,— it is my business to tell you the truth even if my destiny be in your hands. You have not a single real friend here, and I should be still more correct in saying that, excepting the Queen Mother, you are the being most hated in Spain."

It is really an astonishing fact, if the American President and Foreign Secretary do not approve of Mr Soulé's acts that they should allow him to jeopardise the wiser policy of the United States by what he may be inclined now to say or do. The letter I read was hot with anger, ambition, and vanity, and pregnant

¹¹ February, 1855, was in fact the critical month. See subsequent documents.

¹² This letter was communicated by Clarendon, British foreign secretary, to Crampton, British minister in Washington, on November 2, 1854. No. 246, F.O. 5 America/592.

¹³ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/846. In a pencil note Clarendon instructed a copy of the above to be sent to Washington to Crampton "who will take care that Mr P's name is not divulged as holding communⁿ with L^d H."

with some great scheme. I learn that he counts on the out and out support in the American cabinet of Messieurs [Caleb] Cushing and [Jefferson] Davis.

It is very possible that all this violence, by its very excess, may defeat itself.

SEAFORD (BRITISH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN BRUSSELS) TO LORD CLARENDON,
NOVEMBER 1, 1854¹⁴

At a visit I paid yesterday to the chargé d'affaires of the United States, he let fall a few words which may not be uninteresting to Your Lordship, at the present moment, though they occurred in a conversation quite of a private and friendly character.

We were talking of the occurrences of the day, and I alluded to the incalculable importance and results to Europe of the alliance between France and England, when Mr [J. J.] Seibels remarked: "True as regards Europe but yet we do not *quite* like it in the United States."

I expressed my surprise asking how this could be, whether we had not their sympathy in our struggle with Russia, adding that I had been under the impression not only that their relations were excellent with us, but that there was always a special leaning on their part towards France.

He quite assented to this, but replied "there was a speech of Lord Clarendon's which has created great sensation and dissatisfaction with us."

I replied "surely there must be some mistake, as I never recollect Lord Clarendon saying anything of a nature which could be taken ill by the United States, and indeed I am sure that he could not really have said anything of the kind from my knowledge of his sentiments towards your country." Mr Seibels explained that it was by no means any expression of Your Lordship *distinctly directed* against them which had caused irritation but that in a speech in which you had alluded to the *immediate* importance to *Europe* of the actual alliance between France and England, you had given utterance to the expression of a confidence of this alliance being of a *permanent* nature, and *as such* attended with advantages to the *World*.

He added that they (in the United States) took this as a sort of menace to the United States, or at least intention to thwart them, and he went on to say "you know we want and must have Cuba, and we know that France, when acting with England, would oppose us."

I remarked "of course your territory is large enough for your prosperity, and your power is as great as it need be for self defence and for consideration as a leading people among nations, but your aggrandizement would in the opinion of many Countries render you dangerous to the peace of the World, but, I went on to say, as connected with Cuba a great principle of civilisation (to which the whole population of France and England attach the greatest importance)

¹⁴ P.R.O., F.O. 10 Belgium/182. The letter is marked "Private."

was *at least apparently involved*, that is the question of Slavery. There is, as you know, a reasonable expectation that something will be done by Spain towards the abolition of Slavery. Now we look upon the object of your policy in desiring to obtain possession of Cuba to be that of *the perpetuation* of Slavery. We know the dangerous character to you of the struggle going on between your Slave and Free States, and the project of transporting all your Slaves to Cuba, and indemnifying the Southern-States Slave owners by grants in Cuba (whether feasible or not) has been so often put forward, that credence is attached to what I have said was the apprehension would result from the occupation of Cuba." Mr Seibels laughed, and said he knew what was said in the United States and what was felt in England upon that subject, and he admitted the danger of the Slavery question as it now stood with them.

I then turned the conversation to the Meeting of the United States Ministers in what has been called "Congress" in Europe, thinking that I might learn something of the object, and whether the question of Cuba (that is to say the opportunity of making a dash at Cuba, as has been suspected) might have formed matter for deliberation, but he told me he had not been party to the meeting anywhere, and he was quite reserved upon the subject, if he knew in fact anything of the proceedings of this Assemblage of the United States Representatives.

Although I do not attach any special importance to what fell from Mr Seibels, yet being a thorough American and a Slave Owner, the sentiments he expressed to me are fairly to be looked upon as genuine, and as indicating correctly those of certain classes in the United States at this moment.

HOWDEN TO CLARENDON, NO. 299, MADRID, NOVEMBER 10, 1854¹⁵

There is expressed by all the Ministers, declared by all the journals, and believed by all the Publick, a *confident expectation* that England will protect Cuba against the Americans, and the present Policy of Spain itself against any power or party that attacks it. The strength of Spain as regards the rest of Europe has been long that of a woman:— She knows that she is too weak to be struck. . . . I cannot divest myself of the conviction that Cuba is destined to become, before long, a serious embarrassment not only for the Mother Country but for England. I am sure that Spain rests her expectation of retaining the Island *entirely* on England and France: She says (perhaps she says rightly) that the English Antilles make Cuba as much an English as a Spanish question, but I earnestly request Your Lordship to believe that the result of this argumentation is that Spain will never be even grateful for the protection of England, or do anything to merit it. . . .

¹⁵ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/847. There was more than one opinion in the British cabinet as to whether "the English Antilles make Cuba as much an English as a Spanish question." On December 9 Lord John Russell wrote to Clarendon: "This Washington chit-chat seems to me rather probable, and agrees with what 'Old Buck' [Buchanan] has said here. I think

DRAFT: CLARENDON TO LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN (BRITISH AMBASSADOR
IN BELGIUM), NOVEMBER 11, 1854¹⁶

I have received Your Lordship's Despatch marked "Private" of the 1st instant giving an account of a Conversation which you had on the 31st ultimo with the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States at Brussels; and I have to acquaint you that I approve the language which Your Lordship held on that occasion. I am well aware of the objection taken in the United States to a passage in a speech of mine at the beginning of last Session, and I have explained frequently both to the American Minister here as well as to Mr [John F. T. C.] Crampton that no reference to the United States whatever, direct or indirect, was intended nor was in my mind at the time, and that I merely alluded to the joint Missions of England and France to some of the South American States.

In justification of the views entertained by certain Parties in the United States respecting Cuba, the most absurd rumours had been industriously circulated of the intention of Her Majesty's Govt. to "Africanize" Cuba, and that negotiations were actually in progress for the emancipation of the Slaves in that Island, but the only desire of Her Majesty's Government is that Cuba should remain in the possession of its lawful sovereign while their communications to the Spanish Govt. have been confined to remonstrances against the perpetual violations of the Treaty between Great Britain and Spain for abolishing the Slave Trade.

You will, in the manner you may think most expedient, make this known to your American colleague.

HOWDEN TO CLARENDON, NO. 301, MADRID, NOVEMBER 12, 1854¹⁷

Some time ago I told Your Lordship that I felt almost convinced that Mr Soulé had entered into no contract either with the Queen Mother or the late Government for the sale of Cuba, but I have very great reason to believe that a contract was not only projected but even prepared between Mr Soulé and Señores [José Maria] Orense and Ordax Avecilla, the heads of the Republican Party here, for the sale of the Island whenever, through Mr Soulé's assistance and the money supplied by the United States, that party came into power.

That this idea, and even more than an idea, was discussed, I can almost positively say. We should try to come to an understanding with France about Cuba. If Spain sells it, let her. If Cuba revolts, let it. But if Pierce attempts to take Cuba by force I should not allow it." Clarendon Papers. Hence Russell did not object to a United States acquisition *in itself*, e.g., by purchase; but he objected to its acquisition *by violence*—an acquisition which might encourage Southern filibusters to start operations on British colonial possessions.

¹⁶ P.R.O., F.O. 10 Belgium/179. The letter is marked "Separate and Private." There is a marginal note as follows: "Should not this await till Lord H. de Walden returns? Yes, but it may be sent to Ld. H. at Paris and to care of Ld. Cowley. C[Clarendon]."

¹⁷ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/847.

tively inform Your Lordship, but as far as my experience goes of the feeling of this Country at large, a feeling entertained very widely by people of all parties, even by those who are most democratick in their opinions, I can not think this Sale would ever be executed with the sanction of a Representative assembly by any Ministry under any form of government.

HOWDEN TO CLARENDON, NO. 349, DECEMBER 13, 1854¹⁸

[Howden gives a more friendly account of Soulé, and continues:] In speaking of Cuba, Mr Soulé said he did not think there would be any more filibustering attacks, but that the universal feeling of the Country would force its acquisition on the Government; that the Government would be absolutely obliged to do so in its own defence, in order to allay a universal and overpowering excitement, in the same way that, by every law natural or made, a man was justified in knocking down his neighbour's wall to put out a fire which threatened the conflagration of his property.

CRAMPTON TO CLARENDON, NO. 20, JANUARY 22, 1855¹⁹

I have the honour to inform your Lordship that M. Pierre Soulé, Minister from the United States to Spain, has resigned his appointment and that Mr John C. Breckenridge [*sic*] of Kentucky has been named by the President to be M. Soulé's successor. This appointment has been confirmed by the Senate.

Mr Breckenridge who has represented a district of the State of Kentucky in the House of Representatives, although comparatively a young man, has gained a respectable standing in Congress and is a person of good character and conciliatory manners. He has never that I am aware of committed himself publicly or privately to any political opinions regarding the relations between this Country and Spain, which could fairly give umbrage to the Government of Her Most Christian Majesty.

ARTHUR FANSHAWE (BRITISH ADMIRAL) TO CRAMPTON, HAVANA,
FEBRUARY 6, 1855²⁰

I arrived here on the 1st inst with the "Colossus". I have had a very cordial reception from the Captain General and Spanish Authorities and he has given me to understand my visit is an opportune one, as he had reason, from information he had received, to expect the arrival of a filibustering expedition under Colonel Quitman,—and certainly since my arrival there have been some symptoms of activity with the Spanish Squadron and troops. A frigate, two brigs and

¹⁸ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/848. Soulé's simile about a conflagration is an echo of the terms of the Ostend Manifesto.

¹⁹ P.R.O., F.O. 5 America/619.

²⁰ P.R.O., F.O. 5 America/619. Crampton sent this letter to Clarendon and in his covering letter, dated February 18, 1855, No. 36, he says that, in spite of all American pro-

three steamers have gone to sea, taking the General second in command and some troops. General [José de la] Concha assures me he is well prepared to receive them, he would only wish to be sure of the point of debarkation.

My own opinion is that these movements have more reference to some apprehended *insurrection* in the Island than invasion.

The American Consul tells me he has assured the Captain General [Concha] his apprehensions are groundless—that the President is entirely adverse to any filibustering and that the adventurers have exhausted their funds and Mr[A. C.] Crawford says he has heard nothing from any of his Brother-Consuls in the States. The Spanish Squadron, and I may say also the Spanish troops, appear in a much more efficient state than any I have seen for a long time. . . .

CRAWFORD (BRITISH CONSUL IN HAVANA) TO CLARENDON, No. 11,
FEBRUARY 10, 1855²¹

I have to report to Your Lordship that a plot for the subversion of the Government and of Spanish Rule in this Island has been discovered, and numerous persons have been arrested here and elsewhere who are said to be implicated in the conspiracy. So completely effectual have been the measures of General Concha on this occasion, that the papers of those arrested were seized and I understand have been found to disclose a plan in combination with an expedition which was to have sailed about this time from certain parts of the United States in aid of the insurrectionists in the Island, as well as that there have been considerable depots of arms and ammunition established at various places, which were brought from America, the money for the purposes of the conspirators having been furnished by those engaged in it here and elsewhere in Cuba to a large amount.

These arrests were made on Tuesday last the 6th instant at all places simultaneously and some sixty persons have been made prisoners, chiefly Creoles, but there are several Spaniards amongst them. I have not heard that any foreigners have been taken, although it is said that emissaries from the United States are at various places, they have managed until now to avoid capture.

The parties accused are to be tried by the Military Commission and General Concha has assured me that he feels perfectly secure as to any consequences which might result even if the whole force estimated at 2300 or 2600 men were to effect a landing, as he is prepared for them at all points.

I have the honour of transmitting to Your Lordship the Diario of today, which republishes an official notice published by the Captain General which appeared in yesterday's Gazette upon this subject, and also some particulars of

testations, "I fear there can be little doubt that had the proposed insurrection in Cuba been even partially successful no efforts of the United States Govt. could have prevented the departure of numbers of persons from this country to join its ranks."

²¹ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/878.

the Filibuster Expedition which it appears was to have come from Texas, Savannah, and New York.

The public tranquillity has in no way been disturbed in the Island, and the Manifesto of the Captain General has in a great degree tended to calm the alarm which could not fail to have been produced by the action of the Government which has been so energetically displayed.

Rear-Admiral Fanshawe C. B. arrived here on the 1st Instant in the "Boscawen" 72, accompanied by the "Colossus" 81. The "Espiegle" 12 was in port, and "Vestal" 26 has since arrived. The Colossus sailed yesterday on her return to England.

The Commander in Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in these Seas has met a most cordial reception, and the presence of our Fleet here at so critical a moment cannot fail to have been exceedingly opportune and agreeable to His Excellency the Captain General by its moral effect, which I believe General Concha has acknowledged and expressed to Admiral Fanshawe who will remain until he receives his Despatches by H. M.'s Steamer "Medea" expected in a few days from Jamaica.

CRAWFORD TO CLARENDON, No. 12, FEBRUARY 14, 1855²²

With reference to my last despatch No. 11 of the 10th Instant and inclosure I have now to report that General Concha has declared the Island to be in a State of Siege and the whole of the Coast and Islands adjacent to be blockaded by the Spanish Naval Forces. . . .

Those measures have been resorted to, as I understand, in consequence of information which the Captain-General has received which leads him to apprehend that a part of the Expedition, which it was said was ready to leave the United States, had actually sailed.

Admiral Fanshawe had an interview with General Concha yesterday after the "Bandos" were published and His Excellency stated that there was no doubt of a considerable part of the piratical forces having left New Orleans and Galveston, which required him to reinforce the Spanish Garrison at Trinidad and he applied to the Admiral for a steamer to convey troops from hence to that place.

In consequence of the official request which was addressed to him for that purpose, Admiral Fanshawe placed Her Majesty's Steamer Sloop Medea at His Excellency's disposition, and having embarked a wing of the Regiment of Iberia, the Medea sailed today at noon for Trinidad, from whence Commander Phillimore has orders to return as soon as said troops have been disembarked. . . .

²² P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/878. Crawford's letter of February 23, 1855, No. 16, says that there was no risk of a filibustering expedition, and that Concha's preparations seem to have been on an unnecessarily large scale. The "state of siege" in Cuba, declared on February 12, 1855, was raised by a proclamation of May 23, 1855. See Crawford to Clarendon, No. 36, May 24, 1855, in P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/878.

The proclamations of yesterday appear to have produced great enthusiasm among the Spanish inhabitants, a great number of them have been enrolled, amongst them most of the wealthy and Influential, and they are to be embodied forthwith for the defence of the Island. . . .

HOWDEN TO CLARENDON, No. 91, MARCH 4, 1855²³

The Government received last night a telegraphick dispatch from Cadiz, stating that a Spanish Man of War had arrived from the Havana bringing accounts of a serious conspiracy which had been discovered and frustrated. The assassination of the Captain General Concha in the theatre was to have been the signal for the conspirators. It appears that the plan was known to, and supported by, a party in the United States, as the American Government had stopped a vessel which was on the point of sailing. At the time of the Spanish Steamer leaving the Havana thirty arrests had been made, and the Spanish Government speak in very laudatory terms of the conduct of that of the United States.

HOWDEN TO CLARENDON, No. 103, MARCH 10, 1855²⁴

I have seen a private letter from a person in a highly respectable position in Cuba to his family, and on subjects of private and material interest which leave no doubt that his utmost intelligence and means of observation have been exercised. He says that although the last attempt at insurrection has been frustrated, there will be another and another till the object is attained, with the probability of a general massacre of the "Godos" or born Spaniards. The letter is in reference to very large sums which now are placed in Cuba at the extraordinarily advantageous interest of 12 per cent and he recommends their being transferred to Spain or elsewhere for the sake of security, and for whatever they may bring. The belief in the Havana is that the Captain General has secret orders, in case of an insurrection appearing successful, to proclaim the general emancipation of the Negroes, and to trust to the troops, and to any chance that turn up from the fearful scenes of blood which would ensue, for the re-establishment of the Spanish rule.

LORD NAPIER (BRITISH MINISTER IN WASHINGTON) TO CLARENDON,
No. 80, MAY 26, 1857²⁵

[It is certain that the acquisition of Cuba by the United States] is contemplated with avowed or secret favour in every portion of the Union, and that it is the capital object on which the President has fastened his hopes for popularity now and fame hereafter. Your Lordship will therefore be prepared for the dis-

²³ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/865.

²⁴ P.R.O., F.O. 72 Spain/865.

²⁵ P.R.O., F.O. 5 America/671.

closure of the design at no distant date, and as it is one by which the interests and sentiments of the English people are alike affected, it is worthy of timely and dispassionate examination.

I submit the following reflections to Your Lordship with the greater hesitation because they point to conclusions at variance with prevailing opinions and my own first impressions; these remarks are consequently offered in a suggestive and not in a confident spirit.

The annexation of Cuba to the United States by pecuniary negotiation may be recommended to Great Britain by several arguments—

- [(i) The United States tariff is lower than that of Spain, so British trade would gain.
- (ii) Production of sugar, tobacco, and coffee—commodities which are all needed in Britain and which are all rising in price—would increase.
- (iii) British shipping would benefit.
- (iv) Spain would gain 30 to 40 millions sterling for Cuba. She would be able to pay 4/5 of her foreign debt, and undertake great public works. Spain's new prosperity would increase British commerce.
- (v) Cuba is more easily attacked than any part of the United States, which would thus become more conciliatory towards Britain.
- (vi) If the United States do not buy Cuba, they may get the Island by war or revolution.
- (vii) The Cuban slave trade would be abolished.]
- (viii) The transfer of Cuba would allay a feeling of uneasiness and jealousy in reference to Great Britain which is fermenting to a greater extent in the United States than is generally allowed. It is imagined here that England forms part of a European Confederacy formed for the purpose of counteracting the extension of the United States in that quarter. . . .

. . . If Her Majesty's Government, on deliberation, resolve that the Interests of Great Britain are not attached to the preservation of Cuba by Spain, it would be desirable that Your Lordship should authorize me to inform the President that the attitude of Great Britain in this matter is one of perfect neutrality. The claims of Her Majesty's subjects would then secure a more benevolent consideration in the pecuniary settlement, the wishes of Her Majesty's Government would obtain a friendly hearing on other questions, and the triumph of American ambition would be associated with grateful sentiments towards England.²⁶

²⁶ Minute by Lord Clarendon, July 31, 1857: "This has remained so long without an answ. that it is perhaps not worth while to answ. it now and I have told Ld. N. privately that we altogether differed from him."

MINUTE BY PALMERSTON, JUNE 18, 1857, REFERRING TO LORD NAPIER'S
DISPATCH, NO. 80²⁷

This dispatch is not written with the good sense and judgement which naturally belong to Ld. Napier. It is evidently the detailed Exposition of views arguments and opinions instilled into him by the Govt. and others in the United States. It is a Tissue of Fallacies and Sophistries. It is to place on the narrow ground of Shopkeeping Considerations a Question which involves in its ultimate Issue the Jeopardy of valuable Possessions of the British Crown in the West Indies, and increased Dangers to our Floating Commerce. As to the argument that Concession as to Cuba would secure to England the permanent goodwill and future Forbearance of the United States, this is the worn-out argument used by the mouthpieces of the Americans at each step of Encroachment on their Part. This was to be the result of the Concession made to them by the Ashburton Treaty. This again was the motive urged for the Oregon arrangement. This is now put forward about Cuba and this would be repeated when successive Proofs of our weakness and gullibility shall have encouraged them to demand our North American Provinces. I think Napier should have a Hint to cast one Eye at least to the Eastern Shores of the Atlantic and to remember that he has not become a naturalized Citizen of the Union. Moreover besides British Interests there is good Faith to Spain not to be lost sight of.

PALMERSTON TO CLARENDON, JULY 4, 1857²⁸

Napier takes a narrow and limited view of the Results of United States extension, and forgets that we have West Indian Colonies. As to propitiating the Yankees by countenancing their schemes of annexation it would be like propitiating an animal of Prey by giving him one of one's Travelling Companions. It would increase his desire for similar food and spur him on to obtain it.

Napier should keep his opinions to himself and not try to make Popularity Capital by proclaiming them.

There can be little doubt that in the Course of time the Anglo-Saxon Race will spread far South in America, but it is for our Interest that this should not happen until the swarms are prepared to separate from the Parent Hive.

²⁷ Clarendon Papers.

²⁸ Clarendon Papers.