

Has the Government Any Policy with Regard to Cuba?

It is said that General Sickles' mission to Spain has reference especially to securing the independence or annexation of Cuba. The administration, or some of its members and organs, have put forth this idea among the Washington correspondents of the press. This reported action of the government has been used, in fact, to allay the impatience of the public with regard to the extreme rigor with which the neutrality laws have been enforced against the Cubans and their friends. What is the truth in this matter? Has the government any policy on the Cuban question? Is General Sickles to use his efforts to secure the independence or acquisition of Cuba? Or is all this talk only to cover up the hesitating timidity and notoriously unpopular course of the administration?

We see by our European news that General Sickles had arrived at Madrid, and from his rapid journey thither, not stopping on the way at London, Paris or anywhere else, it would seem as if he were intent on business. But we are left in the dark. The country wants to know and ought to know what the policy of the administration is if it has any. The age of red tape and reticence in international affairs is passed. It is time our old foggy Cabinet officers understood this. The great statesman of Prussia, and perhaps we may say of the world, Count Bismarck, understands it; for it will be remembered by our readers that he freely and fully discussed with the *HERALD* correspondent important questions of national and international policy, knowing that it was all to be published in New York and would go back to Europe. No; the time has gone by when the diplomats and governments of the world could clothe their views and doings in mystery, as the timid ostrich hides its head from fear of those who look at it. Let the American people, and for that the whole world, too, know what the policy of the United States is regarding Cuba. Our Minister at Madrid will be listened to with not less attention and the Spanish people will better appreciate whatever motives or arguments may be made when boldly proclaimed.

If the administration is about to open the question of the status and future of Cuba with the Spanish government it will not be difficult, we suppose, to show that this distant possession of Spain can no longer be profitable or useful as a colony to the Old Country. From the strength of the insurrection in Cuba and from all appearances that island will conquer its independence; but if that should not be the result the colony will be ruined and never more of value to Spain. It would only be an expense and constant trouble to the home government; and in the end, sooner or later, it must become independent and fall into the American republican system. Should the statesmen of Spain take a broad and liberal view of the situation and magnanimously give up the colony they would secure the gratitude of the Cubans, the lasting friendship of this republic, and a good share of the increased trade that would be developed in and with the island. On the other hand, should our government have no policy relative to Cuba, and make no efforts to stop the effusion of blood and the pending ruin that hangs over that rich island—should it, in fact, calmly and indifferently let things drift on as they are going, there will arise a burst of indignation throughout this republic, and our relations with Spain may become seriously complicated. There is no question as to the tone of popular sentiment in America. The emphatic expression of Congress just before it adjourned, the well known views of most of the leading men of the country, and the course of the press generally, show that the recognition of the Cubans, as belligerents at least, must come at no distant day. Several of the South American republics have already recognized them as belligerents, and all will soon. The United States cannot pursue long a different policy, and declare against the principles of American republicanism, which we here have constantly upheld before all the world and proclaimed to every people when struggling to be free. The position this country holds at present, if there be not a motive in it to secure the independence of Cuba through Spain herself, is unworthy of the great republic. By all means let the government have some definite policy and let the people know what it is.