

with its professions or popular sentiment, and how far Congress has come up to the expectations of the public. First of all the President's Message fell heavy upon the hearts of the Cubans and hopes of the American people. After saying something about the people of the United States sympathizing with all who are struggling for liberty and self-government, and the efforts the government had made to negotiate for the independence of Cuba, the President states that the contest on the part of the Cubans "has at no time assumed the conditions which amount to a war in the sense of international law, or which would show the existence of a *de facto* political organization of the insurgents sufficient to justify a recognition of belligerency." Then followed immediately after this declaration the order to release the Spanish gunboats, thereby giving unnecessarily the most effective aid to the Spaniards while at the same time utterly ignoring the Cubans. Since the publication of the President's Message the sympathies and ardor of Congress for the Cubans seem to have been surprisingly chilled. To all appearances it fell like a wet blanket upon the glowing sentiment of liberty and generosity that had fired the breasts of Congressmen before that event. Monster petitions for the Cubans are tabled without notice; resolutions favorable to Cuba or to bring up the Cuban question in any form have been objected to and laid over, and in every way there seems to have been a disposition to put off the subject or to hold back from it for a time.

This is a curious state of things. It cannot be explained by any facts known to the public or by any process of reasoning upon the caprices or vagaries of human nature. The Cubans have not forfeited their claim to the sympathy of the American people and government. On the contrary, they have displayed those heroic qualities and that ability in the conduct of their war for independence that ought to inspire admiration in the heart of every American. How can the President say it is not a war in the sense of international law which would justify the recognition of belligerency in the face of facts to the contrary that all the world must know? General Prim acknowledged lately that forty thousand troops and fourteen war vessels had been sent from Spain to suppress the insurrection, and yet it is known that the insurgents are stronger to-day and occupy a larger extent of territory than ever they did since the commencement of the war. From the very beginning, which from the want of means was on a very small scale at first, the Cubans have been increasing their power, the strength of their organization and the territory held, until they are able to defy successfully all the power of Spain. The very necessity of these thirty gunboats which this country has furnished the Spaniards, and the enormous reinforcements sent out from Spain, afford a sufficient answer to the President's assumption that a war in the sense of international law does not exist. The war is on such a scale, and the Cubans have such an organized government; both civil and military, that any nation would be justified in according belligerent rights. It could be done fairly within the meaning and general interpretation of international law. But the American republic and government should rise above this consideration even in the case of Cuba. We should have a broad and comprehensive American policy of our own with regard to all the countries, colonies or territory in this hemisphere. We should never fail to aid the cause of republican freedom on American soil whenever an opportunity occurs. If the government should not do this at the present time in the case of Cuba it will show a lamentable want of foresight and statesmanship, will not fulfil its mission and will act in opposition to both the interests of the country and public sentiment.

But we are not willing to believe the administration is aiming to assist the Spaniards and to crush the Cubans, notwithstanding the language of the President's Message and the release of the Spanish gunboats. We are disposed to believe there may be some overtures from Spain—some professed disposition on the part of that Power to open negotiations for the sale or cession of Cuba, and that our government is desirous to conciliate the Spaniards and to save their pride from being wounded, so that the object may be accomplished under the form of friendship. The extraordinary attentions to General Sickles, our Minister at Madrid, lately, give color to this opinion. We cannot believe that the government, and least of all that General Grant, would take the back track in the Cuban question for fear of war with Spain. Such a bugbear would not disturb the most nervous old fogey if he had any sense. But if the seeming pro-Spanish and anti-Cuban policy of the administration arises from any new movement on the part of Spain to negotiate for the sale or independence of Cuba it may be well to warn the government against any possible Spanish treachery, so that it may not aid the Spaniards in their atrocious system of war on Cuba for the sake of a remote contingency. If our government be too yielding and tender in its friendship for Spain on such a prospect it may be cheated and be laughed at by the whole world for its simplicity and folly. The only way to treat Spain and this Cuban question is in the boldest manner and on the principle of a broad American policy, independent of what the rest of the world may think or say.

#### Holding Back on the Cuban Question— What Does It Mean?

Every one asks with some surprise what the apparently pro-Spanish policy of the administration and the seemingly studied reticence of Congress on the Cuban question mean. Even those members of Congress who are most pronounced and advanced in favor of Cuban independence or annexation are holding back. Monster petitions to Congress, with seventy thousand signatures, for the recognition of Cuban belligerency or independence are laid aside for the present, and that upon the motion of members who have been the warm friends of Cuba. Months ago the President did not hesitate to express opinions highly favorable to the Cubans. The Secretary of State was scarcely less sympathetic and hopeful for Cuba than his chief. All this is on record. Our Minister at Madrid was instructed to tell the Spanish government, nearly nine months ago, that public opinion in the United States was so strongly in favor of the Cubans that the administration and Congress would be compelled at no distant day to recognize them. At the end of the session of Congress last spring the House of Representatives passed a resolution unanimously expressing sympathy with the Cubans in their struggle for freedom and authorizing the President to recognize them. It is known, too, that our government made an effort, about the same time, to negotiate with Spain for the independence of Cuba.

Nor should it be forgotten that the seizure and detention of the Spanish gunboats for a time had no real relation to Peru. No one had any idea that these gunboats would or could be used against Peru. The government knew this, and, therefore, using the Peruvian Minister or the pretended *quasi* war with Peru in the matter was mere pretext. There is no doubt that the object at the time was to serve the Cubans in an indirect way. Everything tended to show that the government and people of the United States were steadily advancing to a point when this country would interpose in some way or other in favor of Cuban independence. Everybody expected it, the press anticipated it and the poor Cubans were inspired with hope by it. That was the state of the question up to two weeks ago, and a great deal was expected from the President and Congress, or from Congress, at least, as soon as the session commenced. General Grant said even to one of the Cuban Junta, in an interview ten days since, that Congress would take prompt action on the subject of Cuba.

Now let us look at the other side of the picture. Let us see how far the hopes that were inspired have been realized, how far the administration have acted in accordance