TROUBLE ALONG THE BORDER:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE U.S.-MEXICAN BORDER DURING THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the transformation of U.S.-Mexican relations throughout the nineteenth century and its impact on the border during the administrations of James K. Polk and Rutherford B. Hayes. This transformation is exemplified by the movement away from hostile interactions during Polk’s presidency to the cooperative nature that arose between Hayes and, then President of Mexico, Porfirio Díaz. In addition, another aim was to place the importance of the public sphere in framing the policy making of the United States and Mexican governments.

The thesis focused upon the research surrounding Polk, Hayes, and their interactions with Mexico during their terms as president. The secondary materials were supplemented with corresponding primary source material from the presidents as well as their close advisors such as newspaper articles, correspondences, and speeches from both the United States and Mexico.

The conclusion of the work demonstrates that the transformation in the border, first, the United States to become the dominant power on the continent, ending its rivalry with Mexico. Second, the ability of Porfirio Díaz to bring some stability to the Mexican political structure that permitted him to work in conjunction with the United States to control the border in exchange for recognition. Third, the increase in economic ties of the United States and Mexico that made war an unprofitable and dangerous outcome for both countries. Last, the difference in the president’s personalities, Polk being ambitious, while Hayes following a cautious policy, as well as the fading of American expansionism and the concept of “manifest destiny.”
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To my loving and supportive family.
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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the United States and Mexico throughout the nineteenth century went through a transformation from hostility and competition for land, resources and military power, to one of hesitant cooperation. This transformation is the origin of the creation of the modern U.S.-Mexican border, which was brought to fruition by the presence of a number of factors. First, the growth of the United States to become the dominant power on the continent allowed it to change its relationship with Mexico. Second, the ability of Porfirio Díaz to bring some stability to the Mexican political structure that permitted him to work in conjunction with the United States to control the border in exchange for recognition. Third, the increase in economic ties of the United States and Mexico that made war an unprofitable and dangerous outcome for both countries. Last, the difference in the president’s personalities, Polk being ambitious, while Hayes following a cautious policy, as well as the fading of American expansionism and the concept of “manifest destiny.”

The most prominent events that help to shape this shift were the events during the administration of James K. Polk preceding the Mexican-American War, and the interactions regarding the border dispute between the two countries during the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes. Polk’s policies thrived, in large part, off the expansionist and nationalistic tones of the United States that were prevalent during the first half of the century. In particular, the concept of manifest destiny, the belief in the divine providence of the American people would overspread the continent, pushed Polk into office in 1844 and shaped his expansionist policies and goals, which brought the United States into direct conflict with Mexico, in an attempt to change the current border more in his favor. After the loss of Texas to an Anglo settler led rebellion in 1836, Mexico was a willing combatant, as it seethed with equally strong ethnocentric and
nationalistic reactions, and sought to defend both its territorial integrity and national honor from American incursions. The lack of political stability in Mexico throughout the 1830s and 1840s, allowed American expansionism to gain a greater advantage. The numerous failed attempts through negotiations and monetary enticements, frustrated Polk, and allowed him to gain his territorial goals (Texas, California, and Mexico) through military conquest. Polk’s antagonism towards Mexico and the war that followed jaded diplomatic relations between the two nations for the following two decades.

The transformative moment came with the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, as well as the ascension of Porfirio Díaz to the presidency of Mexico. The major concern between the two newly appointed leaders their two countries was the issue of the border, and the many marauding bands that used the surrounding area as a safe haven to terrorize settlements on both sides. Hayes looked to his presidency to be one marked with more peaceful resolutions versus confrontation, unlike his predecessors, which was reflected in his willingness to work with the Mexican government to solve the border crisis. Díaz’s personality, in terms of diplomacy, is equally responsible in this situation for a more cooperative outcome. He saw the United States as of a source of financial support to boost the fledgling Mexican industrial complex and railway system. The greater economic connection caused each side to be more hesitant towards military action, as it would disrupt any and all trade of American manufactured goods and Mexican natural resources. The other driving force behind Díaz’s cooperation was the desperation, which had driven all Mexican leaders before and for decades to come, of gaining U.S. recognition of his government to lend stability and legitimacy to his rule, as recognition necessitated assistance from the United States. Hayes was very willing to grant recognition, but was under the opinion that the United States should push for as many concessions from Mexico as possible. As a
result, the policy for Hayes and his Secretary of State, William M. Evarts, became protection of American citizens and territory proceeding recognition.

The Mexican-American War did not create a border between the United States and Mexico, as one had existed through previous treaties with Spain. However, before the disputed territory changed hands to the United States it was far from under the country of any nation state, though the respective areas were under Mexican authority. After the end of the war, the border became a more definite political entity, and led to greater settlement and national control, that had been previously virtually non-existent. The border for the purpose of the thesis refers to a more modern interpretation, in which it is a physical separation between two political bodies, the United States and Mexico. However, the border in this definition implies settlement and control from a nation state, also known as territoriality, such as the process that was attempted by the United States following its victory over Mexico. The new establishment of a new border between the two countries in the middle of the nineteenth century created a new territory, which due to expanded settlement, needed to be maintained with greater continual effort. A more stringent border for this new territory for the United States was meant to control access, though initially it was quite unsuccessful. It was this extended American settlement, but lack of strong control, along the new U.S.-Mexican border into the 1870s that led to the problems of marauding bandits, as it exemplified the border area’s transformation from unsettled, by European standards, to a territory under the control of a modern nation state. This example represents the narrative of the border in terms of a loss, or lack, of state control. The increased efforts of the Hayes administration were a logical response to the border raids, as the domestic pressures mounted in a call for action. The military action used along the border for security purposes

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creates a symbol of state authority for the United States, and represents, at the very least, a commitment to marking and controlling the borderline with Mexico. The U.S.-Mexican border in this work is seen as a separator and creator simultaneously, as it creates a new maintainable territory, but also demarcates a line between nation states.

The work is meant to examine the transformation of U.S.-Mexican relations between the two situations along the border that either led to war, in Polk’s case, or to an uneasy peace, during Hayes’s administration. The focus is upon the causes of the conflicts, or almost conflicts, and not the actual conflicts themselves, which then travels into a number of directions to further explain the correlations. First, the economic and political conditions forced a change in the diplomatic relations. Second, the attitudes, personalities, and goals of the presidents themselves, as well as their administrations played major roles. Third, there were the attitudes of the general public of the United States and Mexico leading up the Mexican-American War, beginning from the early decades of the United States until the start of actual hostilities, and through the administrations of Hayes and Díaz. The main driver behind these attitudes was the concept of manifest destiny and its impact on border between the two countries and also Mexican-American relations, and rise and fall in popularity over a nearly four decade period. The effect of manifest destiny was also seen in racial and religious commentary and the political ideologies that separated Mexico and the United States.

The first chapter focuses upon the events leading up to the opening of the Mexican-American War during the presidency of James K. Polk. The central event of this time period was the annexation of Texas by the United States, which brought the existing border disputes between Mexico and Texas directly into the diplomatic relations with the United States as well.

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Texas annexation also brought with it the state of war between Mexico and its former territory that had been fuming for nearly a decade. Building upon this heated atmosphere was the election of James K. Polk to the office of the president in 1844. His personality and ambitions gave license and free range to a surge of American expansionism in the name of manifest destiny, to gain Mexican territory by multiple means.

The second chapter deals with similar events three decades later during the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes. The issue of the border between the United States and Mexico had not truly been resolved, and no substantial border had been established. The ineffectiveness of Mexican regimes to control its northern frontier, and the marauders who operated there, had caused tensions between the two nations ever since the Civil War, including several incursions of American troops into Mexican territory. Turmoil in Mexico continued with the election of Porfirio Díaz in 1876, with border crossings increasing with a weak Mexican central government. Díaz’s need for American recognition and strong economic ties to Anglo business connections forced him to cooperate with American troops before he could consolidate and stabilize Mexico’s northern frontier in the face of Grant’s and then Hayes’s “hot pursuit” policy. On the other hand, President Hayes wished for a quiet administration at the end of Reconstruction and sought to avoid confrontation whenever possible, which caused restraint towards Díaz and Mexico. Yet, the bulk of the policy making was left to his Secretary of State William M. Evarts and the Minister to Mexico John W. Foster, to come to a peaceful and beneficial resolution.

The third chapter is centered on the public sphere reaction to the events during the administrations of both James K. Polk and Rutherford B. Hayes from the United States and Mexico. It focuses upon the transformation of attitudes on each side from the 1840s to the
1870s, from one of nationalistic and racial pride yearning for war, to one of, though hesitant, cooperation and an identifying of shared interests. Public newspapers from both the United States and Mexico, comments from American and Mexican artistic and philosophical fields, and observations and opinions of local politicians more in tune with the public feel for each situation contribute to the overall encompassing attitudes of each public to their governments’ policies concerning the connecting border. It is often the case, especially in these instances, that the public’s feelings and reactions to national policy. This power is felt more so in Mexico, as it can quickly lead to a government’s downfall, for example the negative reaction to Herrera and his attempted negotiations in 1845 in the press, and Díaz’s public pandering to the pugnacious nature presented in many of the central newspapers beginning in 1876. However, the public sphere is still important for both Polk and Hayes in the United, while their ability to rule is not as directly impacted, public discourse pushes their foreign policies, even if ever so slightly; the impact of manifest destiny in the election of Polk in 1844 being a classic example.

**Historiography:**

The historiography of the topic laid out previously is actually split into three distinctive clusters. The American sources are centered on the two separate administrations used as the comparison, and are distinctively American in approach, James K. Polk and the Mexican-American War and Rutherford B. Hayes and the Mexican border issue. The third group differs in that it is derived from a Mexican perspective, or at least focuses on Mexican events, which leads to differences in the opinions of relations between the United States and Mexico. However, there is very little current historiography that directly connects Polk and the Mexican-American War to Hayes and his dealings with Mexico, and any connections are only in passing with very little context or support.
The historiography of James K. Polk and the Mexican-American War is expansive and based on a wide array of research. However, much of it is taken from a purely American perspective, which leaves the viewpoint of his administration and the resulting war almost vacant in terms of the Mexican reaction and reasons for war. This field of research is broken down into three schools of thought. The first school focuses upon the weaknesses and instability of Mexico throughout the 1840s leading up to the war. The inability of Mexico to control its northern territories, especially in dealing with marauding bands of rogues and Native Americans, was considered a prime reason for the United States to take over the territory, as such the United States was helping Mexico by taking away a burdensome area. In addition, the lack of institutional control in areas like California and New Mexico gave rise to the notion that Mexico did not know how to use its lands effectively and purposefully. In most cases, the settlers of these areas, including Texas, were of Anglo stock and thus more American than Mexican. This is more prevalent in older sources, though it does appear in newer sources, but from a more sympathetic stance towards Mexico. Some sources that exemplify this school are: *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* by Brian De Lay, *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States* by Timothy J. Henderson, and *The Year of Decision, 1846* by Benard De Voto.

The second school of thought is far more concerned with the impact of manifest destiny and American expansionism on the road to war between the United States and Mexico. The cause of divine providence in the expansion of the United States across the entirety of the continent is what drove the countries into hostilities and then open conflict. It was this concept that was the prevailing factor for the annexation of Mexican territory and the election of James K. Polk as president. The Democratic platform that he supported was built almost exclusively
upon these principles. Due to manifest destiny’s pull within the American populace at the time, it was only a matter of time before the United States gained control of areas like California and New Mexico, but the Mexican-American War only sped up the process. Mexico would lose the territory either through internal forces or through outside interventions. This school of thought is generally of the latter decades of the twentieth century and up to the current scholarship. However, the works within this school are often more concerned with manifest destiny than other factors leading to the Mexican-American War. Some sources within this school include: *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent* by Robert W. Merry, *The Presidency of James Polk* by Paul Bergeron, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* by Walter R. Borneman, *The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansion* by Frederick Merk, and *James K. Polk: A Clear & Unquestionable Destiny* by Thomas M. Leonard.

The final school of thought is a combination of the previous two and takes into consideration a greater amount of reasoning for why the United States and Mexico eventually went to war in 1846. This school shows more of process in which one factor lead to another and so on. It begins with the concept of manifest destiny and its place within American society. This divine providence created a sense of racial superiority among Anglo-Americans toward their neighbors and thus propelled them to believe in the notion that the western territories were theirs for the taking. This sense of superiority allowed Polk and others to exploit the weaknesses of Mexico, leaving war as the eventual sole option. This school is somewhat more considerate to both sides, and is much harsher in its criticisms of the American motives behind the war. It seems to be more recent in its ascension, within the last decade. An example of this school of thought include: *Invading Mexico: America’s Continental Dream and the Mexican War, 1846*.
The historiography of the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes is not as robust as those of other presidents, in particular when dealing with his foreign policy, like those actions towards Mexico. When dealing with research on Hayes, most information is centered upon his domestic policies or his controversial entry into office, but what is mentioned of any diplomatic activities is taken to merely a distraction from any domestic difficulties. However, as with the research on Polk, much of that on Hayes ignores any outside influences. For instance, in this case, the sources ignore much of the Mexican perspective of the border dispute that arose during the Hayes Administration. Some scholars look to explain why Hayes dealt with Mexico in the way that he did. These scholars are more concerned with the president’s nature and personality, which are passed along to the rest of the administration. Other scholars focus on the economic ties between the two nations and the United States’ lack of military strength following the Civil War.

Some scholars focus upon Hayes’s personality and his goals for his administration. Hayes wished for a quiet presidency that would temper the fiery nature of the Civil War and then Reconstruction. He was more inclined to lean towards peaceful measures than hostile ones, which overflowed into his foreign policy. Hayes was more than willing to recognize new democratic governments, particularly in Latin America, if it could prove itself stable and democratic. This only changed somewhat with Mexico due to its proximity to the United States, and thus the danger presented by greater instability. His more quiet and peaceful demeanor
would lead naturally to a more cooperative spirit with Porfirio Díaz and his government in Mexico when it came to dealing with marauding bands along the border. These works tend to be biographies of the president, or are concerned with the two prominent officials in the matter.

Examples of this school of thought include: *Rutherford B. Hayes and his America* by Harry Barnard, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President* by Ari Hoogenboom, *William M. Evarts, Lawyer, Diplomat, Statesman* by Chester L. Barrows.

Other historians discussing Hayes concentrate primarily upon the weakness of the United States following the Civil War as a reason why no extensive military action was taken against Mexico. The “War between the States” had sapped much of America’s lust for war and thus the American people were more inclined to avoid conflict under lesser circumstances. The American military was not at a great enough position of strength to wage a war against Mexico, while it was attempting to pacify the Indians on the Great Plains. Furthermore, by the 1870s, the United States had expanded its business interests into Mexico a great deal. American companies had become entrenched in industries like the railroads, sea transportation, mining, and some agricultural practices. Thus, any form of war, no matter how short, would negatively affect powerful American business interests. The sources of this school come about mainly in the second half of the twentieth century. Examples of the school: *The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes* by Kenneth E. Davidson and the thesis from the University of Chicago *Selected Aspects of American Activities in Mexico, 1876-1890* by Howard Ryan.

The sources based upon the Mexican perspective during the nineteenth century can be separated into two foci of Mexican history. The first focus is made up of primarily of political histories dealing lack of political stability and social origins of political power in Mexico during this time period. On one hand, Costeloe argues that political instability is irrelevant in the sense
that the same groups support the regimes and the social beginnings of political culture. However, Hale is more concerned with the principles and ideas of the Mexican political structure. The constant turnover of national regimes, especially during the 1840s and 1870s, the times focused upon in this thesis, which created a chaotic situation and derailed any attempts at diplomacy. This condition was particularly the case in the events leading up to the Mexican-American, as Mexican regimes came and went as the wind blew. The example carries later into the late 1870s, as the lack of stability in the capital left the northern border a haven for bandits and marauders. It was only through the abilities of a strong central government under Porfirio Diaz. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Mexican political structure was built around rebellion, revolution, and armed factions. Examples of this school of thought include: *The Central Republic in Mexico, 1836-1846* by Michael P. Costeloe, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821-1853*, and *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth Century Mexico* both by Charles A. Hale.

Other works focus upon the cultural differences between Mexico and the United States, and the impacts upon the diplomatic relations of each nation. The continuing threat of American annexation of Mexican territory, and possibly the entirety of Mexico, was a constant fear amongst the Mexican people and press. The viewpoint that Americans represented more evil than good, everything that was right with democracy but wrong with Anglo ambitions, caused resentment and animosity towards American dealings with Mexico. Religious and racial differences between the United States and Mexico, led to a stauncher defense of Mexican honor, and a greater tendency for hostile actions. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, American business interests also complicated the relationship that existing between the two neighboring
countries. Examples of this historiography include: *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821-1846: An Essay on the Origins of the Mexican War* by Gene M. Brack and *Juarez* by Brian R. Hamnett.

This work is meant to show the transformation of U.S.-Mexican relations throughout the nineteenth century as both countries became more interdependent. The events surrounding the Mexican-American War and the border disputes during the late 1870s were not isolated incidents but they arose from previous interactions between the two nations. A major facet to exemplify this connection is the difference in the two president’s personal attitudes and ambitions for their respective administrations. The border played an important role to the interactions throughout the nineteenth century, in particular in the case of these two events. It became the central facet of each president’s policy towards Mexico, by expanding in Polk’s case or reaffirming a stable and protected line in the case of Hayes. Polk’s ambitious nature only exasperated the hostility from Mexico towards the United States and vice-versa, which would lead to continued suspicion. It was this remaining hostility and suspicious nature that Hayes was trying to change in order to gain greater security along the border. From the time that James K. Polk took office as President of the United States in 1844 to Rutherford B. Hayes came to the same position three decades later, the two nations had grown closer economically as well as culturally in many respects. Within this overall observation, is that Porfirio Díaz began negotiations with American business interests throughout the entirety of his first term, 1876 to 1880, as President of Mexico, and not just during the railroad boom in 1880 when two major concessions were awarded to American companies. The nations grew to become truly more like neighbors than adversaries. It seemed to be a process of learning or maturity from previous situations and mistakes by both Mexico and the United States. This process was realized in conjunction with the increasing risks that war could cost, economically, diplomatically, and socially. By the time that Hayes came to recognize
the Díaz regime in Mexico in 1880, war was seen as an evil that should be avoided if at all possible, and not an early measure of diplomatic relations.
The United States and Mexico were increasingly intertwined, as both nations came into being within decades of each other through revolutions against European powers. Each newly formed republic sought to expand their prestige and power on a both continental and global scale. Without the strong presence of European powers by the 1830s, Mexican-American relations became situated around the border between each nation. American expansion was moving westward across the continent at a brisk pace, which brought it directly abutted to the northern territories of Mexico (Texas, New Mexico, and California). For approximately two decades before the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, the United States attempted to wrest control of those areas from Mexico, and other nations and people, through monetary negotiations. However, as the United States became more powerful, it became more aggressive in its attempts to gain at Mexico’s expense.3

As James K. Polk came into the White House in early 1845, the agitation felt by each side was nearly at its peak. Polk was stubborn in the pursuit of his territorial goals, and would not falter until their successful conclusion, no matter the means. In Polk’s eyes, as well as much of the rest of the American populace, Mexico was disorganized and politically weak, making any kind of war against the country an easy victory. The lack of a stable and well defined border made the northern Mexican territories ever more enticing, which Polk wished to demarcate in America’s favor. Yet, open and declared war became the most likely outcome, as neither side refused to recognize any of their own weaknesses, cultural differences, and relative shifts in the balance of power that would change the relationship between the two countries for the next three decades.

decades. President Polk’s continued belligerence against Mexico would serve his purpose of causing hostility and, eventually, war with Mexico. The United States saw Mexico as purely an opportunity for exports and economic gain, as Polk and his administration had no intention of fostering a positive relationship, which in a strange paradox a border will create. The United States was more concerned with outside European interferences, significantly Great Britain, than with the reaction from Mexico. Mexico’s attitudes on the contrary were much more complex, shifting between admiration and fear towards the American spirit, but neither nation’s interests ever coincided in any direct way. Yet, these actions set back diplomatic relations between the two countries for decades to come, a problem that Rutherford B. Hayes would have to come to terms with during his own term in the White House thirty years later.

Soon after gaining its independence from Spain, Mexico began to look elsewhere for a political identity. Early nineteenth-century elites in Mexico developed a notion of patria, which can mean either “motherland” or “fatherland.” However, this central focus of nationalistic and patriotic emotion was not truly attached to the land itself but more so the idea of a group of people that lived within that land. Yet, this expressed sense of nationalism was implemented into the understanding of the Mexican political structure more in terms of philosophy than an established governmental structure. The clear answer amongst the liberal factions was to imitate their closest neighbor to the north, and also recently established democratic republic, the United States. The United States was the “contemporary symbol of progress for Mexican liberals, its institutions and politics were openly adopted,” which created a “heritage of conflict,” in balancing a mix between esteem and Mexican culture. This adaptation led to deeper cultural differences larger than the boundary disputes and rivalries, as the two nations began to interact

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with greater frequency. It created a quandary for the Mexican side to balance the American style with the American reality. Mexican liberals saw the America as the “utilitarian dream,” where the democratic style of government was well represented. In the 1820s, the Mexican writer, Simon Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala saw the United States as, “the classic land of liberty and order and the refuge of all social virtues.” However, most Mexicans were not aware of the changes of American society in Jacksonian America, as the difference between the ideal and reality was ever expanding. From its very inception, Mexico was at conflict with the United States, both in ideological terms as well as cultural. It soon became a struggle, especially for Mexican liberals and conservatives, to find a balance regarding its North American neighbor. The United States saw Mexico as purely an opportunity for exports and economic gain; Mexico’s attitudes in reverse were much more complex.

Antecedents in the North:

The northern areas of Mexico were far from the political and cultural center of the country. This sense of independence made it difficult for Mexican authorities to gain any real semblance of control in those states, which also led to greater connections with the United States simultaneously. The isolation of the northern territories, also known then as Gran Chichimeca, from Mexico City led it to develop commercial ties with the United States twenty-five years before the Mexican-American War. However, Mexican politics ignored these areas until it was much too late to regain any semblance of authority. Mexico already had to deal with the problematic American settlers in Texas, which made it an enticing target, leading to the call to

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6 Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora*, 199.
halt immigration. The aggressive nature of the Americans had already been made well aware to Mexico, as exemplified by the taking of Florida and the Fredonian Rebellion in Texas in the late 1820s. In 1825, President John Quincy Adams attempted to purchase land below the Sabine River, which was rationalized to Mexico that it placed the Mexican capital closer to the center. These attempts were also pursued by his successor, Andrew Jackson. By the end of 1835, 35,000 Americans lived in Texas compared to only 3,000 Mexicans, which caused Texas to become more culturally and ethnically of an American province than a Mexican state.

Mexico made a number of attempts to solve the problem of American settlement in Texas. In the 1827 study on the border by General Manuel Mier y Terán, he stated ways in which Mexico could gain greater control in the north. “Thus, I tell myself that it could not be otherwise than that from such a state of affairs [of mutual ignorance] should arise an antagonism between the Mexicans and the foreigners, which is not the least of the smoldering fires which I have discovered.” He also advised for the need for more forts and militias, colonization by only Mexicans and Europeans, and institution of customhouses. In attempt to curtail further Anglo settlement in Texas, the Mexican government in 1829, abolished slavery in all Mexican territory, as a direct attack against American settlers and their slave-based agriculture. The next year Foreign Minister Lucas Alamán established a new colonization law that attempted to end any further American settlement in Texas. In 1832, Santa Anna ended Texas’s political autonomy, which presented settlers with the perfect pretext for rebellion and revolution. This American settlement played a direct role in the Mexican liberal perception of the United States. The Mexican politician Lorenzo de Zavala was a cynical observer that the “liberal utopia of the

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11 Raat & Brescia, “Texas and a Collision of Cultures,” 74-75.
United States was unattainable for Mexico,” which created a dilemma of progress and identity. He sensed that North American colonization would overrun Mexico, with a “conquest of industry and civilization” directed by American ambitions.12

In the 1830s, Mexico replaced its federalist system with a centralist style government, which led to a number of revolts across the northern territories, forcing them into closer relations with the United States. Relations on the frontier only worsened, as both Mexicans and Indian tribes further rejected national authority from Texas to California. Some examples included: the Comanche raiding in Texas, Apaches in New Mexico, northern Chihuahua, and Sonora, Navajos in the upper Rio Grande Valley as late as 1845, and the Utes traveling far into Alta California to rustle cattle and other livestock for their “American backers.” It became clear that in many instances U.S. traders encouraged these Indian raids on Mexican lands.13 The continued attacks by native tribes on Mexican settlements, and overall restless nature, caused the United States to sense a possible weakness to exploit. The Comanche and Kiowa tribes a decade later signed a treaty with the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua on July 23, 1834, as a somewhat continuation of this arrangement to defend against outside raiders.14 The Americans played their roles as well. By the 1830s, there was no official military policy of “hot pursuit” concerning the U.S.-Texas border, but there were a number of attempts to prevent the various tribes under U.S. authority from participating in the affairs of Texas.15 However, the United States provided them

12 Hale, Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 203-204.
with weapons, ammunition, and with political instruction to further complicate the Mexican position.  

The geographic expansion of the United States had brought it into contact with other powers, both continental and European, by the third decade of the nineteenth century. In order to continue its gradual expansion, America had to respond to the advances of its European counterparts, in particular Great Britain and France. The United States needed to hack at the hydra of the British Empire good politics in the 1830s, with its ever encroaching power. The United States had to guard these areas from Great Britain, who was “ready enough at all times to lay her grasping hand on the face of the globe.”17 Economic goals remained at the forefront of many aspects of American foreign policy. Many within the expansionist camp saw the need of overcoming Great Britain as the dominant commercial power. This jealousy of the British stranglehold on trade in the Far East pushed the course American foreign policy after 1842, which was augmented by American “land hunger.” The United States’ not only had to contend with Mexico, but also with European ambitions, especially from Great Britain and France, within Mexican-American relations. If the United States was to maintain its advantage on the continent, it had to exclude Europe from the process as much as possible. The Tyler and Polk administrations believed that the center of their foreign policies should be for the United States to expand commercially. The policies would be implemented through “the control of trade, monopolization of raw materials, and to open additional overseas markets.”18 Interactions with both Texas and Mexico became a major diplomatic battleground between American and European intentions for the remainder of the North American continent.

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16 DeLay, War of a Thousand Deserts, 220.
17 John M. Belohlavek, “Race, Progress, and Destiny: Caleb Cushing and the Quest for American Empire,” in Manifest Destiny and Empire, 29.
18 Hietala, Manifest Design, 55-57, 61.
Texas soon became a hot bed of agitation towards the Mexican authorities in the northern territories, and the beginnings of a Texas movement for autonomy came into being. In 1833, the first Texas convention called for independence from Mexico, planting the seeds of revolution.\footnote{Joseph Wheelan, *Invading Mexico: America’s Continental Dream and the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 44.} The battle for control of the northern Mexican territories and the native tribes that resided there was only a prelude to the coming conflagration between the United States and Mexico. The U.S. economic expansion led to an eventual state of colonialism in the Mexican frontier, as its commercial orientation was shifting away from Mexico and towards the United States. Territorial expansion by the United States soon followed, with Anglo settlers taking to both Mexican and native lands.\footnote{Raat & Brescia, “Texas and a Collision of Cultures,” 72-73.} The conservative Minister Lucas Alamán realized in 1837 that the open colonization of Texas would be its undoing, “Texas is going to cease to belong to the United States of Mexico.”\footnote{Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora*, 211, 213.} Once Texas was swept up in an open revolt of Anglo settlers against the Mexican government, it was clear that the relations between Mexico and the United States had turned a corner. The two would now come to arms over the border territories between them. The loss of Texas became a “festering wound” to Mexican honor.\footnote{Timothy J. Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007), 100.} The U.S. government gave its “quasi-official support to Texas in the form of arms and money,” though a great deal of volunteers arrived from the United States. From 1836 to 1845, hostilities continued between the “Texicans,” as the people of Texas became known, and the Mexican authorities.\footnote{Raat & Brescia, “Texas and a Collision of Cultures,” 77}
The next major step towards the eventual war between the two North American republics came once the settlers of Texas gained their independence from Mexico. Many in the United States saw the Texas Revolution as one against tyranny, as the people’s ideals were “incompatible with their rulers.” Other parts of northern Mexico began to exploit the weakness shown in the central Mexican government. In 1839, the newly formed Republic of the Rio Grande, centered in Laredo in northern Mexico, followed Texas’s example and broke away from the centralist Mexican government and began limited commercial relations with the newly formed Texas Republic. Following the Pastry War with France in 1839 the situation became even more turbulent for Mexico, as Great Britain had recognized Texas, the many Indian attacks in the north, Bustamante had been taken prisoner, the capital was devastated by battles amongst the many factions, and Santa Anna’s mediation failed to bring about any real change in the national government. In the years directly preceding the Mexican-American War, Mexico’s internal strife was the main concern and prevented it from countering any kind of American expansion along its northern border. Until 1843, the Republic of Texas continued this pattern varying “hostile politics with attempts at diplomacy” with Mexico, while balancing its relations with both the United States and the various nations of Europe.

After it gained its de facto independence from Mexico, Texas became the center of conflict between Mexico and the United States. However, it was becoming clear that the two sides were traveling in opposite directions in terms of political power, with the United States ascending and Mexico fracturing and splintering from within. After their victory over Mexico in

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1836, the people of Texas “voted overwhelmingly for annexation,” yet Jackson was fearful of raising the issue with its strong connection to the problem of slavery. On August 4, 1837, the Texas government formally applied to be annexed into the United States, but it was declined by President Van Buren for many of the same reasons as Jackson had stipulated previously. In June 1843, the Texas legislature refused the Mexican peace offer and “unanimously approved the United States offer” to eventually join the Union. That same year, American trade ended in Mexico and American citizens were expelled, and Mexico stated that it would “regard any annexation of Texas as tantamount to a declaration of war.” President Santa Ana confided that Mexico “needed a foreign war in order to develop its resources,” which seems to have continued to been a push towards war on the Mexican side.

In an attempt to counteract this, a formal diplomatic agreement was drafted that involved Britain, France, Mexico, and Texas, in order to give Texas its independence and give Britain and France the “right to intervene” in its future affairs with the United States. Henry Wise, a Virginia Congressman, in a speech in April, 1842 dealt with the potential economic risks involved with a connection between Texas and Europe. He warned that Britain had in Texas, “a rival to the United States in the production of cotton.” Wise saw that the continuing rivalry between the United States and Texas as Britain’s motive behind its support for Texas’s continued independence, and that the United States must either annex Texas or allow it “to conquer Mexico, and become our most dangerous and formidable rival.” Wise’s sentiment was part of a larger feeling that suggested that the United States could become a cotton monopoly with the

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31 Harlow, California Conquered, 48-51.
32 Steven E. Woodworth, Manifest Destinies: America’s Westward Expansion and the Road to the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 139.
addition of Texas, which would be preferable to a continual a battle with the British there. In the spring of 1843, British diplomats sought to turn their government’s influence with Mexico into a good account by offering to mediate a peace between that country and Texas. The Tyler administration would have been inclined to place credence on reports of British intrigue in Texas no matter what, as they confirmed what they “had already believed about the long-range intentions” of Britain. An atmosphere of distrust and suspicion led Washington to view even the “innocuous actions with a jaundiced eye.” Beyond the issues of economic advantage and national security, the United States was insulted that Great Britain would involve itself in a perceived domestic issue.

James K. Polk and Mexico:

As James K. Polk was campaigning for office in 1844, Mexico was undergoing its own political transition. When José Joaquín de Herrera came into office early that year, he sought a more conciliatory tone towards the United States. The new President had to contend with discontent with his stand toward the United States in the military as well as, major fiscal trouble, and attacks from the press over Texas, along with the many rumors swirling around the capital of plots to overthrow him. After the policy of quick recognition fell apart, the Mexican public took a more “militant” stance. As war fever dominated the Mexican press by October, 1845, Herrera maintained open diplomatic channels at the same time that he readied the army.

33 Hietala, Manifest Design, 65, 67.
35 Costeloe, The Central Republic in Mexico, 268, 270.
36 Costeloe, The Central Republic in Mexico, 273, 276.
then offered to recognize Texan independence as a way to avoid war and annexation, though it
would be all for naught.37

Annexation easily became a central aspect of the election of 1844, which was reflected in
the Democratic platform that eventually supported Polk. The Whig Party and their champion
Henry Clay were against annexation, and the Democrats were split on the topic, with Van Buren
leading the anti-annexation camp and Polk the pro-annexation one. Polk declared the Rio
Grande to be the recognized boundary of the U.S. state of Texas. He refused to negotiate on the
disputed territory, leaving it to be exploited in the coming months.38 Polk interjected the
question of Texas into the presidential campaign, and thus “forced Clay to modify his stand in
order to hold the southern votes,” which “alienated a sufficient number of abolitionist and anti-
annexationist voters in the Northeast,” and allowed him to win the election.39 Senator Walker
wrote to Polk after his nomination on the topic of annexation and the growing sectionalism in the
United States, “The Texas question will carry the South; you must then go as far as your
principles permit for incidental protection.”40 Polk’s election convinced the Mexican minister to
the United States. He advised his government to become more aggressive before Polk’s
inauguration.41

On December 2, 1844, the exiting President John Tyler stated to the lame-duck session of
the Twenty-eighth Congress on the subject of Texas annexation, “Mexico has no right to
jeopardy the peace of the world, by urging any longer a useless and fruitless contest.”42

37 Vázquez, “In Search of Power,” 192.
38 Henderson, A Glorious Defeat, 139.
40 Walter R. Borneman, Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America (New York: Random House,
2008), 115-16.
42 Merry, A Country of Vast Designs, 120.
However, by the time of Polk’s election it became clear that annexation was in the best interest of both Texas and the United States. In his last presidential message, Tyler attempted to vindicate himself and establish his legacy in regards to both Mexico and Oregon. Concerning Mexico, he placed much of the onus for conflict upon the government of Mexico. He stated within the message:

She [Mexico] has issued decrees and proclamations, preparatory to the commencement of hostilities, full of threats, revolting to humanity; and which, if carried into effect, would arouse the attention of all Christendom. This new demonstration of feeling, there is too much reason to believe, has been produced in consequences of the negotiation of the late treaty of annexation with Texas … A controlling majority of the People, and a large majority of the States, have declared in favor of immediate annexation.

Annexation of Texas:

In his inaugural address Polk issued a “ thinly veiled warning’ to Mexico not to disrupt United States-Texas relations, as “independent powers and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or to take exceptions to their reunion.” In that address, Polk also stated:

Texas was once a part of our country—was unwisely ceded away to a foreign power—is now independent, and possesses an undoubted right to dispose of a part or the whole of her territory and to merge her sovereignty as a separate and independent state in ours … Foreign powers should therefore look on the annexation of Texas to the United States not as the conquest of a nation seeking to extend her dominions by arms and violence, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once her own, by adding another member to our confederation, with the consent of that member, thereby diminishing the chances of war and opening to them new and ever-increasing markets for their products.

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In a similar document created by Polk setting out the initial objective of his presidency, a main facet was to continue negotiations with Mexico concerning the boundary between Mexico and Texas, and any existing issues between the United States and Mexico. It was clear that Polk had his sights set on Mexico from the very beginning of his administration.46

Polk followed his mentor’s, Andrew Jackson, lead by framing Texas as the, “key to our safety in the South and the West.”47 To complete this goal, Polk enticed Sam Houston, the former President of Texas, by considering the Rio Grande as the boundary with Mexico. Through all of the negotiations, Polk never considered to buy Texas from Mexico as it was still a sovereign republic.48 Polk believed that Texas could not continue as an independent republic, and would become part of the British sphere of influence. He stated, “My aim is to give this country the strength to resist foreign interference. Without Texas we shall not have this strength.”49 A quick settlement with Texas was vital due to rumors of Mexican and British trade treaties, which would be advantageous for Texas due to its financial woes.50 The resulting policy, referred to as the Polk Doctrine, stated that, “the people of this continent alone have the right to decide their own destiny,” and to reject European territorial claims without the consent of the United States.51 Polk stated specifically that, “Great Brittain [sic] had her eye on that country [Texas] and intended to possess it if she could,” which was cause for immediate action.52 Polk was certain of annexation, he “wished Texas to place herself in an attitude of active hostility

47 James K. Polk, quoted in Wheelan, Invading Mexico, 20.
48 Wheelan, Invading Mexico, 58, 68.
50 Morrel, “Young Hickory”, 242, 258.
towards Mexico, so that, when Texas was finally brought into the Union, she might bring a war with her.”\textsuperscript{53} Polk’s cabinet passed on to Senator Donelson directions to “urge Texas to accept the terms without modification or delay.” Polk might have altered Tyler’s original instructions for Donelson, but he supported the same eventual goals.\textsuperscript{54}

The problem of British and French intervention into the issue of Texas continued on into Polk’s administration. There were three problems that ruined British plans to help prop up Texas in 1845: France was hesitant to go against the United States by supporting any joint guarantee though it supported an independent Texas, Mexico was unable to come to terms with its loss and missed its opportunity, and its unwillingness to recognize Texas independence and the continuing hostilities only pushed it closer to the United States.\textsuperscript{55} Polk’s emissaries continued to work to prevent British ambitions in Texas, but British transparency of its goals of a protectorate led most Texans to believe it to be “more in their interests to accept the U.S. offer.”\textsuperscript{56} Polk inserted an endorsement of Monroe’s message and an actual quotation from it in his first message to Congress, which created the impression that old problems were being met by the new administration in the spirit of the national fathers. Polk used Monroe’s message only in regards to North America, in order to direct attention to areas immediately contiguous to the United States. Polk focused on Europe, in particular interferences by Great Britain and France in the affairs of neighbors, and on dangers posed to U.S. security and interests.\textsuperscript{57} This suspicion of European interference continued, as Senator Robert J. Walker advocated for the annexation of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{54} Borneman, \textit{Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America}, 145-146.
\textsuperscript{55} Bailey, \textit{A Diplomatic History of the American People}, 247.
\textsuperscript{56} Heidler, \textit{Manifest Destiny}, 115.
\textsuperscript{57} Merk, \textit{The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansion}, 4-5, 8.
\end{quote}
Texas to prevent others from joining it to gain preferential treatment from Britain concerning the abolition of slavery.\textsuperscript{58}

Though Polk eventually gained his goal of adding Texas to the rest of the Union, new hurdles were still in sight. With the annexation of Texas, a state of war now, at least ceremoniously, existed between the United States and Mexico. Polk “celebrated the recent actions in behalf of Texas annexation, and warned against Mexican interference or any other continental power.”\textsuperscript{59} However, the prospect of annexation was not as popular across the United States. For example, Massachusetts submitted a list of formal resolutions, based around the issue of slavery, to Polk on March 26, 1845. In the document, the Massachusetts government stated that: Texas should not be added to the union if it continued with the institution of slavery, that its annexation was unlawful, annexation of a slave state was an encroachment on the liberties of freemen everywhere, slavery should not be extended to new states, and that any new states should not be admitted if it does allow slavery.\textsuperscript{60}

Polk wished to present the United States as the protector of Texas, stating in the summer of 1845, “I am resolved to defend and protect Texas as far as I possess the constitutional power to do so.”\textsuperscript{61} According to Polk, Texas annexation was a political triumph where, “the sword has had no part in the victory,” though the sword came to define its relationship between Texas, the United States, and Mexico. He publically lamented that U.S. relations with Mexico “have not been of the amicable character which it is our desire to cultivate with all foreign nations.” However, Polk placed focus on still unresolved reparations issue and Mexico’s, supposed,

\textsuperscript{58} Henderson, \textit{A Glorious Defeat}, 134-35.
\textsuperscript{59} Merry, \textit{A Country of Vast Designs}, 9
\textsuperscript{60} “Commonwealth of Massachusetts on Texas, March 26, 1845,” James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, Library of Congress, Series 2. Reel 35.
\textsuperscript{61} Haynes, \textit{James K. Polk & the Expansionist Impulse}, 119.
unwillingness to make any progress in that facet. Polk disputed the notion that annexation was an insult to Mexico, “From the day that the battle of San Jacinto was fought until the present hour … Mexico has never possessed the power to reconquer Texas.”

The first task for Secretary of State James Buchanan following Polk’s inauguration was to respond to Almonte on the topic of Texas annexation. He notified the Mexican minister in a conciliatory tone that the policy had been decided from the perspective of the United States, though he wished for amicable relations between the two countries. William S. Parrott’s instruction as negotiator also reflected this push for a return to “normalcy,” before the issue of Texas. Furthermore, he was to reiterate that Texas would remain a part of the United States, but any interactions with Mexico would be on a “friendly and liberal basis.” Polk wrote in his diary on September 16, 1845, on the latest word from Parrott, “He gives it as his opinion that there will be no declaration of war against the United States and no invasion of Texas; … He is also of opinion that the government is desirous to re-establish diplomatic relations with the United States, and that a Minister from the United States would be received.” He went on to write, that Slidell’s:

One great object of the mission, as stated by the President, would be to adjust a permanent boundary between Mexico and the United States, and that in doing this the Minister would be instructed to purchase for a pecuniary consideration Upper California and New Mexico. He said that a better boundary would be the Del Norte from its mouth to the [El] Passo, latitude about 32° north, and thence west to the Pacific Ocean, Mexico ceding to the United States all the country east and north of these lines.

62 James K. Polk, quoted in Merry, A Country of Vast Designs, 205, 323.
In his message to Congress on December 2, 1845, Polk spoke of the annexation of Texas and the possible consequences that could occur between the United States and Mexico after Texas became part of the Union. He stated:

The independence of Texas is a fact conceded by Mexico herself, and she had no right or authority to prescribe restrictions as to the form of government which Texas might afterwards choose to assume. But though Mexico cannot complain of the United States on account of the annexation of Texas, it is to be regretted that serious causes of misunderstanding between the two countries continue to exist, growing out of unredressed injuries inflicted by the Mexican authorities and people on the persons and property of citizens of the United States, through a long series of years. Mexico has admitted these injuries, but has neglected and refused to repair them.65

The newspaper the *Texas Democrat-Extra*, printed Texas President Anson Jones’s Valedictory Address from February 19, 1846, which reflected the overriding positive response to annexation within Texas. In the speech, he gave his praise to the United States for bringing Texas into the Union in the most advantageous and respectable manner possible. Jones went on to state that Texas was just one step in the natural expansion towards the Anglo-American continent. One portion of the speech states:

Annexation is the natural consequence resulting from congenial impulses and sympathies; and the operation and influence of like sympathies and impulses is destined, as soon as can be important or necessary, to settle all conflicts in relation to the claim of the United States to any territory now in dispute on this continent.66

The Mexican ambassador at the time, Juan N. Almonte, was given instructions to ask for his passport and return to Mexico in the event that annexation measure passed, describing the annexation of Texas as, “an act of aggression the most unjust which can be found recorded in the

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annals of modern history.”

Upon returning to Mexico, he ended diplomatic relations with the United States and assisted in the preparations for war. On January 2, 1846, the Herrera government fell, and Mariano Paredes took hold of the national government, but his anti-American stance meant he was opposed to sit down to negotiations. In 1846, Paredes attempted to placate this anti-American opinion without offending the United States like his predecessor, through recognizing Texan independence. Texas annexation was the perfect pretext for war with Mexico, yet still Polk mistakenly believed that military pressure alone would force negotiations with Mexico.

There was nothing essentially at stake concerning the Texas border, as the dispute was useful to bring the situation with Mexico to the forefront. Thomas Benton stated that, “They [the administration] wanted a small war, just large enough to require a treaty of peace, and not large enough to make military reputation, dangerous for the presidency. Never were men at the head of a government less imbued with military spirit, or more addicted to intrigue.”

General Taylor was ordered to protect American territory, which was claimed to be the Rio Grande. Polk wrote in a letter to Robert Armstrong, the consul in Liverpool, of his lack of hesitancy towards war with Mexico, and the need for the United States to be on heightened alert for an act of aggression by Mexico. Polk wrote to Donelson, “all questions of Constitutional power to defend and protect her by driving an invading Mexican Army out of her Territory will be at an end and our land and naval forces will be under orders to do so.” Polk reasoned that a show of force would

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67 James K. Polk, quoted in Borneman, Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America, 144-145.
68 Henderson, A Glorious Defeat, 146.
69 Borneman, Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America, 197.
70 Brack, Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 149, 153, 159.
71 Brack, Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 175, 179.
73 Borneman, Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America, 190-191.
“deter Mexican aggression, not invite it.”\textsuperscript{74} The U.S. annexation of Texas gave it a “smoldering state” of conflict with Mexico, and a halt to diplomatic relations. Polk was willing to forgo the payment of previous American claims against Mexico for damages to property and goods, if the Rio Grande was recognized as the border, though that claim was questionable at best.\textsuperscript{75}

\textit{The Obsession with California:}

It was clear Polk would not sway from his continental vision, became he saw the pieces of Oregon, California, and Texas as interconnected. Polk’s overt interest in California reflected his fixation upon opening trade with Asian markets, which were needed due to overproduction, particularly of agricultural goods.\textsuperscript{76} On October 17, 1845, Polk initiated a significant program to weed out and foil all the designs of any foreign power in California. Polk stated that, the United States “has no ambitious aspirations to gratify and no desire to extend our federal system over more territory than we already possess, unless by the free and spontaneous wish of the independent people of adjoining territories. The exercise of compulsion or improper influence to accomplish such a result would be repugnant both to the policy and principles of this Government.”\textsuperscript{77} Buchanan sent instructions that same day to the American consul at Monterey, T.O. Larkin, which placed great emphasis on the need to thwart the operations of British agents in the area. The Consul was instructed to report any foreign interference and the movements of the Mexican army. The Secretary of State made it clear that the commerce along the Pacific coast was to be the main priority defended if California remained in Mexico’s control.\textsuperscript{78} The recognizing of the regime in California under Pio Pico in 1845 changed the conditions although

\textsuperscript{74} James K. Polk, quoted in Leonard, \textit{James K. Polk}, 80-81, 148.
\textsuperscript{75} DeConde, \textit{A History of American Foreign Policy}, 194-195.
\textsuperscript{76} Hietala, \textit{Manifest Design}, 84.
\textsuperscript{77} James K. Polk, quoted in Merk, \textit{The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism}, 111.
\textsuperscript{78} Sioussat, “James Buchanan: Approach of War with Mexico,” 271-73.
Californians were not willing to accept annexation to the United States as an imposed condition.\textsuperscript{79}

European intentions were also prevalent in California, as rumors reached Polk that both England and France were willing to recognize its independence if it agreed to never be annexed by the United States. This heightened Polk’s propensity to gain the “Golden Coast” for the United States. The fear of English intervention aroused a greater enthusiasm for expansionism. Buchanan stated, “The future destiny of that country, is a subject of anxious solicitude for the Government and people of the United States.” The President therefore, “could not view with indifference the transfer of California to Great Britain or any other European Power.” Californians “should desire to unite their destiny with ours.” Polk revived the Monroe Doctrine at the end of 1845, stating, “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 well be a question for them and us to determine without any foreign interposition.”\textsuperscript{80} The sources of antagonism in California were: “the claims of U.S. citizens against Mexico, the long quarrel over the boundary, and the perennial yearning in Washington for territory.” The factors were only exasperated by the aggressiveness of Americans in Mexican lands.\textsuperscript{81} According to Polk, the purpose of the Kearny and Stockton missions was “to acquire for the United States California, New Mexico, whenever a peace was made.”\textsuperscript{82}

\textit{The End of Negotiations:}

\textsuperscript{79} Bauer, \textit{The Mexican War}, 13, 16.
\textsuperscript{80} James K. Polk, quoted in DeConde, \textit{A History of American Foreign Policy}, 198.
\textsuperscript{81} Harlow, \textit{California Conquered}, 45.
\textsuperscript{82} James K. Polk, quoted in Borneman, \textit{Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America}, 234.
By February 17, 1846, Polk made his observation known to his Cabinet that if Mexico did not meet his demands that war would be inevitable, which was earlier presumably confirmed by Slidell’s information of Mexico’s intentions to reject his overtures. This information prompted Polk to send Taylor to the Rio Grande. On March 1, 1846, Slidell attempted again to meet with the Mexican government, but the reply was of a far from positive nature.83 Polk wrote in his diary somewhat over a month later:

it [is] probable that Mr. Slidell, our Minister to Mexico, will not be received by that government and will return to the United States … my opinion was that I should make a communication to Congress recommending that legislative measures be adopted, to take the remedy for the injuries and wrongs we had suffered into our own hands;” and nearly a week later, “our relations with Mexico had reached a point where we could not stand still but must assert our rights firmly; that we must treat all nations whether weak or strong alike, and that I saw no alternative but strong measures towards Mexico.84

The issue of Mexico’s instability within its northern territories arose again during the United States’ attempt under Polk to gain those areas from Mexico through negotiations and sale. Secretary of State Buchanan strongly believed that it would be beneficial for Mexico to hand over its northern territories, as it could not defend them from “tribes of fierce and warlike savages.” Northern Mexico’s first war was with the independent Indians of the area. Americans in the 1830s had come to see the Mexican north in highly racialized terms as a land in constant war that the Mexican state would be willing to sell.85 Furthermore, buying California and New Mexico was also much more desirable to Polk, but the failure of negotiations caused him to increase military preparations along the Rio Grande.86 Polk was certain that diplomatic negotiations and monetary payment would not only pacify Mexico, but force the recognition of the fullest of Texan boundary claims and to part with all territory west and north to Oregon.

85 DeLay, War of a Thousand Deserts, 247-249.
86 Heidler, Manifest Destiny, 175.
Polk empowered Slidell to offer the following terms to Mexico: $25 million for a boundary following the Rio Grande west to the Pacific, $5 million for New Mexico (the Rio Grande watershed above El Paso), and the minimum release of $2 million of claims by United States citizens. If the efforts in negotiations failed, then Polk’s war position would be bolstered, though a war with Mexico might have come well before. Polk distorted the nature of Slidell’s diplomatic mission by claiming it to represent a sincere attempt to resolve existing issues. This claim was “clearly coercive,” as no Mexican government would have been able to come to the negotiating table over the loss of New Mexico and California without any drastic domestic repercussions.

Buchanan’s instructions to Slidell were a declaration of manifest destiny, as Texas confirmed a *fait accompli*, in which the boundaries of Texas created by the rebellion should apply to the United States, and that it would be better able to restrain Indian incursions. Buchanan told Slidell to communicate to Paredes that the United States, “would relieve his administration of pecuniary embarrassment,” in return for the settlement of the Texas border dispute. Buchanan then wrote to Slidell on January 28, 1846, concerning a possible war with Mexico, “Should the Mexican Government, however, finally refuse to receive you, the cup of forbearance will then have been exhausted. Nothing can remain but to take the redress of the injuries to our citizens and the insults to our Government into our own hands.” Polk’s denunciation of Mexico in April, 1846 stated that:

> Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war. As war

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88 Schroeder, *Mr. Polk’s War*, 12.
exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.91

Donelson and Allen agreed on the likelihood of a Mexican invasion with the annexation of Texas in place. Donelson was sure of British backing of the Mexican military against the United States after annexation had been passed. New Mexico was sought as a bridge from Texas to California to complete western expansion. War against Mexico was simply to gratify the “continental impulse,” and “the reality that some Americans had already fought Mexico and had won” in the Texas Revolution.92 Polk hoped to prevail in the propaganda war “as a means of facilitating the winning of a shooting war;” while on the Mexican side, the anti-Catholic tones were presented by Mexicans as visions of American intentions. In Alexander Slidell Mackenzie’s memorandum, the three supposed goals of the war for Polk are listed: the restoration of Santa Anna to power, the recognition of the Rio Grande as the Texas border, “and a willingness to pay handsomely” to facilitate any action. Most of the American public “supported the war as a natural by-product of manifest destiny.”93

Polk was quick to cover his ambitions with claims of continued Mexican intransigence and unwillingness to negotiate on American terms of purchased territory. Polk justified war against Mexico on the basis of “unpaid damage claims, its refusal to receive Slidell, and other grievances,” which were changed by a new emphasis on the invasion of American soil by Mexico after the skirmish with Taylor’s forces. Polk was against specific pledges against his intentions to conquer Mexican lands, as that step would clearly hamstring his overall goals. Peace in Polk’s mind meant for the United States to take California and other portions as

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payment for “the costs of war and for the damages suffered by American citizens in Mexico.” He also viewed possession of disputed territory as “a weapon to force the Mexicans into a general boundary and claims settlement,” but his prime objective was still to be California. Polk’s shortcoming, like the rest of the country, was that he did not understand the “complexities of the Mexican character.”

The country rallied to the cause of American bloodshed based on a “longtime frustration with Mexico.” This could be attributed to the power of expansionism within the American political system during Polk’s term in office. Polk’s terms to Mexico were: “the Rio Grande must be the boundary of Texas, Mexico must grant California to include San Francisco Bay, which would be paid for handsomely, and that the United States would not demand any war cost indemnities.” The president made it publically known that the war was not a means of conquest, but rather purchase lands through negotiations once sufficient military pressure was placed on Mexico. The conquests of California and New Mexico were to be used as leverage for negotiations, with no intention of being relinquished. They were added to the perceived sufficient grounds for war, based on Mexican abuses against United States citizens.

After April 23, 1846, Polk realized that there was no longer any hope of negotiating with Mexico on the various issues. The purpose of the war was given as to bring the “benefits of American liberty upon ‘lesser’ lands and peoples.” War with Mexico was to commence in any circumstance as long as the Rio Grande was crossed by either side, and it could be used as a powerful bargaining chip to bring Mexico to negotiations. Though money appeared to be of no

importance, Polk was still willing to pay up to $40 million for the desired territory.\textsuperscript{99} The consensus within the cabinet was that “any Mexican act of hostility against Taylor would prompt an immediate war message to Congress.” Polk anticipated that any opposition would be light to a war with Mexico as the nation was already in the throes of war lust, and any who opposed would be committing political suicide.\textsuperscript{100} A similar plan was made by Polk towards Mexico to “fan its [Mexico’s] war hysteria,” to further the push of war amongst the populace.\textsuperscript{101} This was easy to do as Mexico was even more willing for a fight, as it did not think the United States would or could fight, which was confirmed by its attempts at peace. The United States was seen as a nation of “money-grubbers and dollar worshipers,” without military might. Mexico was also counting, initially, on a war between the United States and Great Britain over Oregon, that would divert U.S. military pressure.\textsuperscript{102} Mexico was splintered and weak politically, but was “united” in its animosity towards the United States over the claims for Texas. Mexican pugnaciousness was bolstered by the fact that their army appeared on paper to be the “strongest military presence in the hemisphere.”\textsuperscript{103}

\textit{The War Commences:}

Even before May 1846, Polk was “quietly plotting the permanent acquisition of Mexican territory above the 32\textsuperscript{nd} parallel.” He stated, “I declared my purpose to be to acquire for the United States California, New Mexico and perhaps some others of the Northern provinces of Mexico whenever a peace was made.” Polk showed his lack of foresight concerning the war, as he believed that a war with Mexico would be “of short duration. I doubt whether there will be

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{99} Merry, \textit{A Country of Vast Designs}, 192-194. \\
\textsuperscript{100} Merry, \textit{A Country of Vast Designs}, 244-246. \\
\textsuperscript{101} Henderson, \textit{A Glorious Defeat}, 147. \\
\textsuperscript{102} Bailey, \textit{A Diplomatic History of the American People}, 259. \\
\textsuperscript{103} Sobel, \textit{Conquest and Conscience}, 246, 249. 
\end{flushleft}
much more fighting unless it be in guerilla warfare.” In the end, Polk used a drawn out process based on an overly suspect purpose for America’s first offensive war with “American blood shed on American soil,” after the altercation along the Rio Grande.104

In his war message to Congress on May 9, 1846, Polk spoke to the Senate to ask for a declaration of war, in which he espoused many of the already well documented issues between the United States and Mexico. In it he stated:

The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens throughout a long period of years remain unredressed; and solemn treaties, pledging her public faith for this redress, have been disregarded. A government either unable or unwilling to enforce the execution of such treaties fails to perform one of its plainest duties … As war exists, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.105

In his diary Polk wrote that same day, “I stated to the Cabinet that up to this time, as we knew, we had heard of no open act of aggression by the Mexican army, but that the danger was imminent that such acts would be committed. I said that in my opinion we had ample cause of war, and that it was impossible that we could stand in statu quo, or that I could remain silent much longer; that I thought it was my duty to send a message to Congress very soon and recommend definite measures.”106

California became Polk’s main objective shortly before the hostilities along the Rio Grande began. In 1846, California was “drifting in anarchy.” The Mexican hold there was “slackening,” the natives were divided into various factions, wild rumors spread of European

104 James K. Polk, quoted in Wheelan, Invading Mexico, 101, 153, 427.
grabs and power and territory, and there were violent attempts at seizing of power from all sides.\textsuperscript{107} Polk used Stockton’s attacks in California to manufacture a war and then have Texas attack Mexico, as San Francisco Bay was “all important” to the United States as a port to the Far East. In addition, Secretary of State James Buchanan announced that New Mexico was of slight importance to Mexico, as it was a “burden because of distance, hostile Indian tribes, and its placement in the Texas disputes.”\textsuperscript{108} In Merk’s words, “Mexico’s failure to improve California, a land of Eden, was attributed to an incompetent local bureaucracy that was degenerating into anarchy,” and would naturally follow the “Texas pattern” of annexation.\textsuperscript{109} Polk saw the acquisition of California as recompense for American claims from the 1830s, being the ideal territory: “as it was lightly populated, beyond Mexico’s ability to govern, and adjacent to the new Oregon territory.”\textsuperscript{110}

Once hostilities began after the declaration of war, the Polk administration had no clear strategy for war beyond supporting Taylor and capturing California. Polk discounted the likelihood of a protracted war with Mexico and the risk of British involvement. Polk proposed to Santa Anna as means of negotiating with a disposed leader perceivably more sympathetic to American claims, that the United States would suspend all active operations except the blockade, whenever Santa Anna regained power and was willing to negotiate.\textsuperscript{111} In his meetings with Santa Anna’s go-between, Colonel Atocha, Polk wrote in his diary of the concurring goals of each party.

\textsuperscript{107}De Voto, \textit{The Year of Decision}, 72.
\textsuperscript{108}James K. Polk, quoted in Wheelan, \textit{Invading Mexico}, 59, 71.
\textsuperscript{110}Merry, \textit{A Country of Vast Designs}, 187.
\textsuperscript{111}Bauer, \textit{The Mexican War}, 70, 76.
He [Atocha] said that Santa Anna was in favor of a treaty with the United States, and that in adjusting a boundary between the two countries the Del Norte should be the western Texas line, and the Colorado of the West down through the Bay of San Francisco to the sea should be the Mexican line on the north, and that Mexico should cede all east and north of these natural boundaries to the United States for a pecuniary consideration, and mentioned thirty millions of dollars as the sum. This sum he said Santa Anna believed would pay the most pressing debts of Mexico, support the army until the condition of the finances could be improved, and enable the government to be placed on a permanent footing.\textsuperscript{112}

Polk’s overconfidence and lack of knowledge of the Mexican people led him to believe that once battle was joined that Mexico’s army would be swept aside by American forces. The Mexican leaders would then have to negotiate for peace and the United States would be able to gain its territorial goals. The prospect of war disconcerted neither the president nor his cabinet, as they clearly disdained both Mexico’s diplomatic and military capabilities.\textsuperscript{113}

The war between the United States and Mexico, while an important event, does not just appear on the historical timeline. It is preceded by decades of diplomatic interactions between the two nations that rises and falls to a point that it comes to a head during the administration of James K. Polk. However, the central aspect of the topic is not only the war itself, but the motivations and antecedents that led up to that point. With the end of the Mexican-American War, the United States and Polk gained their desired territory from Mexico. The resulting treaty stripped Mexico of all of its northern territories and eliminated any cushion between the two countries, leading to greater and more frequent border issues for the remainder of the century. The Polk administration in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo annexed only the sparsely populated territories of northern Mexico, which was quite unusual for a victorious invading force at the time. This restraint was largely attributed to the fact that the American public recoiled from

\textsuperscript{112} Polk, “Friday, 13\textsuperscript{th} February, 1846,” in \textit{Polk: The Diary of a President}, 50-51.
\textsuperscript{113} Wheelan, \textit{Invading Mexico}, 79.
admitting the masses of Mexicans into the United States, based on race and religion. Following the Mexican-American War, the U.S-Mexican was still far from a defined boundary. However, the border zone became a haven for native tribes and raiders from both sides to cause havoc for both the Mexican and American governments. By the time Rutherford B. Hayes stepped into the Oval Office in 1876, these issues would become the central feature of his relations with Mexico.

By the time of James K. Polk’s election as President of the United States in 1844, the United States and Mexico were on a current course toward conflict. The relations between the two countries had been strained by an extremely fluid border, along with the recent loss of Texas by Mexico. By the 1840s, American sentiment had only grown concerning its entitlement, Manifest Destiny, to the rest of continent not included in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The border between the North American powers began to blur in a way that the current situation in the west could not remain the same. The border lines were to change, but for whose benefit was left with little doubt. Polk’s personality and determination fit perfectly with the general feeling of Americans during his time in office, and thus he was able to capitalize on opportunities to expand the country both in terms of territory and glory. However, this came at the expense of Mexico, a country which, at that time, was in the midst of a number of regime changes and a lack of overall stability. Polk’s aspirations and cultural biases led him to dismiss Mexico and its people either as a threat or a possible partner in nearly every way. The aggressive nature of his decisions toward Mexico created more than enough animosity to spread across three decades of diplomatic relations. The lasting hatred over the loss of territory would be a prominent reason

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114 Robert E. May, “Manifest Destiny’s Filibusters,” in Manifest Destiny and Empire, 163.
for the length of the negotiations before the border issue could be finally resolved during Rutherford B. Hayes’s presidency.

The Mexican-American War arose out of the transformation of both the United States and Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century, as each nation began to grow from their initial beginnings. The control of the North American continent became the central aspect of each country’s relationship to the other. The United States, in particular, sought to wrestle control of North America from the indigenous peoples, Mexico, and any European players, specifically Great Britain. The war succeeded in the virtual American conquest to the Pacific coast. Furthermore, the expansionist nature of the United States only grew as James K. Polk came into office, and territorial expansion, in the form of an enormous land grab, became the prime interest of American policy makers. Tied closely to the ascension of this policy was the ideology of Anglo superiority to other races and ethnicities, particularly Indians and Mexicans, who stood in the way of Anglo-American progress and were not fit to use the land in the first place. Lastly, was Mexico instability in the decades leading to the Mexican-American War, which was exemplified by the continual revolving door of leaders, the defeat at the hands of the Texans, and the poor quality of rule in the highly sought after northern territories.
CHAPTER II: RUTHERFORD B. HAYES, PORFIRIO DÍAZ AND THE BORDER

This chapter focuses upon the fundamental changes in U.S.-Mexican relations following the Mexican-American War, from purely confrontational to a cooperative spirit that looked to benefit both sides and their interests. I argue that these changes owe to factors including the expansion of the economic interactions between the two nations, to the increase in the power of the United States in the 1870s, as compared to the 1840s, and the personalities and goals of both Hayes and the Mexican President Porfirio Díaz.

The interactions between the United States and Mexico governments following the Mexican-American War continued to be of an antagonistic nature into the 1870s. The border remained a major issue as it was far from secure, and that fluidity had caused a number of problems, such as banditry, marauders, and revolutionaries, for each side. Mexican politics had gained some measure of stability under the regime of Benito Juarez throughout the 1860s, but the central government still held little authority on the northern frontier of the country. The presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes inherited the problems of raids along the Mexican border from its predecessors, and attempted to carry on their policies in a more diplomatic way. However, at the same time their policies pushed for a change in the culture of the interactions between the two sides. Porfirio Díaz, who came to power in Mexico at virtually the same time as Hayes, was instrumental in this transition as well. He was open to a cooperative relationship with the United States, in order to gain both the recognition of his government and American investment in Mexican industry and infrastructure. It was a change from a relationship of open hostility to one of limited cooperation and understanding. Each side had much to gain by correcting the situation along the border, and to lose if the situation did not improve. For if the raids did not cease, war between Mexico and the United States was a distinct possibility. The
issue of border security from various marauding groups and the initially skeptical nature on both sides of the possibility of an actual transformation of the relations between the two countries held up negotiations throughout the term of Rutherford B. Hayes. For Mexico, this hesitancy stemmed from the expansionist nature of the U.S. government in the past, which Hayes was attempting to alter, and for the Americans it was the continued political instability and intransigence in paying for claims by U.S. citizens.

*The Aftermath of the War:*

The war between Mexico and the United States fundamentally altered the diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries. Following its aftermath, the American government continued to force upon Mexico a level of servitude, though not always in a tangible way. The annexation attempts by the United States did not end after the conclusion of the Mexican-American War. However, these new attempts were focused upon transportation claims. The United States government throughout the 1850s attempted to acquire transit rights across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico to establish a consistent and reliable line of communication to the newly gained territories in the west. On February 5, 1853, Mexico agreed to recognize the concession of the construction of a railway in the same location by American interests. The Pierce administration also sought a railroad line from New Orleans to San Diego, which eventually led to the Gadsden Purchase in 1854, which only intensified the push for transit rights.116

However, in Mexico the feelings toward the United States tended to oscillate between adoration and a reversion back to the long time fears of American expansion. The Mexican-

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American War’s aftermath led to a “new generation of liberals,” who were willing to lessen their political ideals for national prosperity. The supposedly “great liberals” Juárez and Díaz, were the ones able to bring any semblance of a centralized national government oddly against the liberal stance in response to the elites. After the war, the United States was no longer the model nation, especially among conservatives who saw Americans as a threat. U.S. recognition was a coveted goal for Mexican governments to establish constitutional legitimacy. Yet, the continued instability of the border often stalled these negotiations, which turned towards economic issues. As in 1858, President Benito Juárez had to give up railway concessions in order to receive loans from the United States. These trade-offs led José María Mata, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to warn that the desire for future territorial acquisitions at Mexico’s expense reached a “point of mania in Washington.” American expansionist inquiries were frequent in the years between the Mexican-American War and the American Civil War, and would only recede during the latter conflict but not disappear entirely.

A major shift in the diplomatic relations came with the American Civil War. The Republican victory in 1860 cancelled the threat of the total absorption of Mexico into the United States, and the formation of the Confederacy restored the balance of power. Juárez said of President Elect Abraham Lincoln in 1861, that he provided “the safest guarantee of the inviolability of our rights and of the faculties required in making them effective.” The Mexican president saw the Union’s victory in the American Civil War working the most in

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118 Hale, Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 207.
119 José María Mata, quoted in Hamnett,Juárez, 148-150.
120 Colin M. MacLachlan & William H. Beezley, Mexico’s Crucial Century, 1810-1910: An Introduction (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 87.
Mexico’s favor, as he welcomed the destruction of the slave power of the South and Lincoln’s support for his own government.\textsuperscript{122} Just after the end of the American Civil War, the interests in railroad investment began to rise in the political imagination.\textsuperscript{123} In June 1868, the Finance Minister under Juárez, Matias Romero, stated while in Washington, the positive treatment of Mexico by the United States compared to the other prominent nations. He stated, “Mexico has been regarded and treated up to now as a semi-barbarous state by the European nations, and will always recall with pleasure that the United States was the first powerful nation to begin the wise policy of treating Mexico as an equal to all other civilized nations.”\textsuperscript{124} Mexico’s relationship with the United States continued to be a sensitive one, as the United States was never prepared with a purposeful policy towards Mexico to produce a positively reflected relationship; at the same time, Juarez “regarded the United States as a natural ally of Mexico and the logical defender of republicanism throughout the continent, in spite of its frequent unwillingness to perform such a role.”\textsuperscript{125}

The issue of the security of American lands in the southwest soon became a major concern for the Hayes Administration, though it was not a truly new issue. The threat came in the form of marauding bandits and Indian tribes that used the poorly defined area along the U.S.-Mexican border to attack both American and Mexican citizens alike. During Grant’s administration, the United States made repeated demands toward Mexico to halt these border

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\item[\textsuperscript{122}] Hamnett, \textit{Juárez}, 158.
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] Matias Romero, quoted in Hamnett, \textit{Juárez}, 162-63.
\item[\textsuperscript{125}] Hamnett, \textit{Juárez}, 162-63, 166.
\end{itemize}
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raids, and as early as 1870, he “threatened to send United States soldiers across the border in pursuit of the raiders into Mexico,” often referred to as “hot pursuit.”126

The economic disparity between the United States and Mexico became even more apparent following the Civil War. The economic gap widened and became well established by the 1870s.127 The Mexican attitude towards purely domestically owned railroad system ebbed and flowed throughout the nineteenth century, as the national government gave concessions to both foreigners and native investors. During the Restored Republic, 1867 to 1876, the Mexican government made attempts to bring the country’s railroads back under its own control, though many foreign companies still found way around these attempts, such as public lotteries. Mexico’s first railroad, the Veracruz-Mexico City line, which opened on January 23, 1873, became the foremost example as it was completed with English backing.128 Yet, Lerdo remained opposed to the United States’ rail links with Mexico as a way to prevent American conquest, as he stated, “between strength and weakness a desert should remain,” when referring to the two nations.129

Arrival of Díaz and Hayes:

A transformation in the interactions between Mexico and the United States occurred once Porfirio Díaz came to power in 1876. His working relationship with his also newly elected counterpart, Rutherford B. Hayes, shifted the diplomatic relations between the two nations from one of bitterness to hesitant cooperation. The Mexican writer and historian Luis Lara Pardo spoke on the American connection to Díaz’s rise to power in 1875, which might explain Díaz’s

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willingness to work closer to the American terms. “Certainly he secured moral support and very probably he received the direct aid of American interests, offering in exchange full-handed concessions.” Recognition of his newly formed government was Díaz’s principal goal. There was a split among the American leaders on what the relationship going forward would be with Mexico. The Minister to Mexico, John W. Foster, wanted to view Mexico as a protectorate as he questioned Díaz’s strength, and Hayes was looking solely for peace between the two nations. Ex-President Lerdo’s agents were also looking to place Mexico at the feet of the United States as a protectorate.

Yet, it was not the possibility of a protectorate, but more practical concerns that occupied Hayes’s attention on Mexico and the border. The volatility of Mexico was a direct concern for President Hayes, as the marauding bands along the border continued to cause havoc on American soil, however, “the political instability made it difficult for Mexico to control its northern border.” This problem became two-fold in relation to the border raids as the United States was only able to garner a very limited connection to the central Mexican authorities, as well as they being unable to gain any resemblance of control in the north. Tightening the border control became for Hayes the key bargaining piece in exchange for the recognition of the Porfirio Díaz government.

On March 30, 1877, John W. Foster, who continued as the Minister to Mexico under Hayes, reported of the stability of the political situation in Mexico. He stated that all challenges to Díaz’s authority had ended and that his recognition within Mexico was assured.

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establishment allowed William M. Evarts, the new Secretary of State, to be quite forward about forcing Diaz to respect its international commitments, before recognition from the United States could be promised. Evarts also pushed to abolish the “Zona Libre,” the area just across the Mexican border, to stop European companies from exploiting the loophole of duty free imports. Evarts’s most insistent demand was for Diaz to show an ability to suppress cattle rustling and Indian raids from across the Rio Grande. Evarts’s stance was that some guarantee of action along the border “should be made the condition precedent to any recognition, rather than to trust to the possibility that it may ultimately follow.”

On May 16, 1877, Evarts wrote to Foster voicing his displeasure of the border situation and the continuation of the raids, particularly with the Mexican inabilities of control. These issues continued to be extremely problematic for the Secretary of State and caused his more than often cold stance towards the Díaz Administration. He wrote:

> For each and all of these acts, many of them committed, if not with the sanction, at least in the name of the Mexican Government, not one single man, so far as is known to this government, has been punished … But it is natural, on the other hand, that the Government of the United States should be disposed to believe that some guarantee of such an arrangement should be made the condition precedent to any recognition, rather than to trust to the possibility that it may ultimately follow.\(^{135}\)

However, marauding bands of criminals were not the only group causing havoc along the Mexican border, as parties of revolutionaries and native tribes from Mexico used the area as a base to conduct raids on both sides. On a number of occasions, those groups raided into Texas in large numbers, but were repulsed and dispersed. One such raid, on May 25, 1877, ended with robbery, kidnapping, outraging of women and children, and destroying grain. They were described as, “all the vagabonds of the neighborhood of Laredo, all those criminals who, being

\(^{135}\) Barrows, *William M. Evarts*, 353.
unable to live in Mexico, desired to aid in the organization of a government which, when established, would grant them immunity from punishment.” The situation also spread to border areas in the New Mexico and Arizona territories.\textsuperscript{136}

When Rutherford B. Hayes stepped into the duties of the President of the United States, he clearly preferred to have an administration that was marked by quiet times, which fit his more reserved personality. His foreign policy (and his actions toward Mexico) exemplified this stance. Hayes respected the territorial integrity of Mexico, but out of political necessity did send troops to the border regions in June, 1877 in order to, “put an end to the invasion of our territory by lawless bands… even if the effectual punishment of the outlaws should make the crossing of the border by our troops… necessary.” At the same time, Hayes announced a revamped system of recognition for newly formed governments, particularly those in Latin America. Those regimes in question only had to prove that they had “popular approval,” and had “to be able to fulfill their international obligations,” though it seemed he had more rigorous standards for Mexico due to its close proximity. This new doctrine was somewhat less stringent than his predecessors, and Hayes saw himself as a more liberal proponent of Latin American democracy.\textsuperscript{137} In this way, he agreed with Secretary of State Evarts that protection of American soil rather than U.S. expansionism was the prime objective when dealing with Mexico.

The orders of “hot pursuit” passed down by Hayes to Ord on June 1\textsuperscript{st} were carried out successfully in the field, though the desired results did not come about until the end of his term. For when American and Mexican troops did meet at the border, an agreement was eventually


\textsuperscript{137} Rutherford B. Hayes, quoted in Barnard, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes and His America}, 443-444.
reached between the two sides for “joint action against the marauders” in the area.\textsuperscript{138} In June, 1877, President Hayes “directed General Sherman to seek ‘cooperation’ with the Mexican authorities in the suppression of the bands of Mexican raiders.” General Ord, in the field, did, however, enjoy “close ties with the new Mexican government, especially the state administrations that were appointed by Díaz in northern Mexico.”\textsuperscript{139} Evarts interpreted the June 1\textsuperscript{st} order as, “to follow marauders either when the troops are in sight of them, or upon a fresh trail, across the Rio Grande and until they are overtaken and punished and the stolen property recovered. Whenever Mexican troops are present and prepared to intercept retreating raiders he is to leave the performance of that duty to them.”\textsuperscript{140} The June 1\textsuperscript{st} order garnered objection from Mexico, as the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ignacio Vallarta, declared that the order, “disregarded all rules of international law and the practices of civilized nations, and treated the Mexicans as savages.”\textsuperscript{141}

Díaz responded to the angst against the June 1 order by issuing his own, to “Repel with force any invasion of Mexican marauders,” though at the time he was unable to carry out such an order both politically and financially. Mexico also took other steps to counteract the policy of “hot pursuit,” by preventing American economic forays in Mexican industry. Vallarta, made accusations against Hayes and his administration for departing from the normal American policy of recognition when it came to Díaz, and furthermore, that the policies of the United States were steps toward a declaration of war against Mexico. This allegation represented much of the feeling of Mexico at that time, as Foster reported that there was an intense feeling and general

\textsuperscript{138} Barnard, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes and His America}, 443-444.

\textsuperscript{139} John Mason Hart, \textit{Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 75.

\textsuperscript{140} William M. Evarts, quoted in Lewis, “The Hayes Administration and Mexico,” 145.

\textsuperscript{141} Ignacio Vallarta, quoted in Dyer, \textit{The Public Career of William M. Evarts}, 196.
belief that the United States wished to annex all, or at least the northern states, of Mexico. On June 12, 1877, Díaz’s troops defeated one of the last remaining Lerdoista forces along the Rio Grande and pursued them into the United States. However, Hayes ordered U.S. troops not to cross the border in response. The United States public, as well as General Ord, was still distrustful of the response of Mexican authorities to the border issue. This misunderstanding was showed to be mistaken, as many of the bandits from Mexico were not Mexican citizens or even organized on Mexican soil. Hayes later passed down to Ord orders to respect any and all Mexican orders, and report back to the War Department if problems arose. Díaz eventually agreed to have his troops to cooperate with Ord’s forces, as long as American troops attempted to cut off Mexican revolutionaries from using the United States as a base. A week later, Hayes wrote in his diary on the turn of his thinking of Díaz, “Should Díaz be recognized as Prest. Of Mexico? Should we determine it now or let Mexico hang by the eyelids during August? There is no good reason why we should not recognize Mex[ico] when we are ready.”

Once his policies were put into place, Hayes encountered a large amount of opposition nearly from the start on the topic of Mexico, and the American ambitions attached to that nation. Many of his political opponents sought to portray the president as a warmonger, with his policies pushing towards the completion of aspirations of previous administrations, like James Polk. On July 4, 1877, Senator James G. Blaine of Maine announced his suspicion that Hayes had entered into a “conspiracy with the Democrats,” especially Southern Democrats, to annex Mexican territory, and possibly even the entirety of the country. His opponents argued that Hayes wished to secure Mexico in order to expand both the political and economic power of the South after the

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144 Hoogenboom, Rutherford B. Hayes, 337.
desolation caused by the Civil War and Reconstruction.\textsuperscript{146} Blaine also struck at Hayes and Evarts for creating a crisis with Mexico, in order to draw attention away from issues at home, and warned that a war with Díaz should be avoided. Pressures from Blaine and others, however, did change the process in which Evarts set to deal with the issue of Díaz’s recognition.\textsuperscript{147} Although war was never a real possibility considered by Hayes’s administration, many accusations were still made against him by his opponents of war mongering and territorial aspirations, which became problematic for Hayes throughout his presidency. Ironically, Hayes made similar comments 1846 and 1847 against then President James K. Polk for his actions leading to the Mexican-American War.\textsuperscript{148}

However, Hayes’s policies were not seen in the same light by the Mexican authorities. Díaz pushed back claims of border raids from the American side, as well as cattle stealing by Texas bands. Díaz’s assertions were verified by one particular episode of Mexican blood spilled by American hands, in the Salt War in El Paso County from September to December, 1877. It began with disputes between American and Mexicans over salt from the Guadalupe Salt Lakes, in which prominent citizens on both sides were killed. However, the most infamous case was that of a death of an American, Walter Henry, who was murdered on his way to Saltillo by bandits. The report of General Ord stated that, “Three Mexican criminals-committed a murder near Hidalgo, Texas, and evaded the officers by hiding in the region of Matamoros.” In addition, it was often claimed by American officials that Mexican authorities were either harboring or generally supporting the criminal bands.\textsuperscript{149} Reports like these prompted Hayes to rebuke Díaz’s calls for recognition, as they exemplified a lack of control. Díaz protested when U.S. troops

\textsuperscript{148} Barnard, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes and His America}, 444.
\textsuperscript{149} General Edward O. Ord, quoted in Lewis, “The Hayes Administration and Mexico,” 141-142.
crossed the border and sent his own troops and cabinet minister to “protect Mexican sovereignty” from any American incursions that could possibly arise.\textsuperscript{150} There was agreement on both sides as to the need of a solution, but Díaz objected to the implementation of Hayes’s proposals. The relative free reign of the marauders there led to intermittent raids into the United States, with American troops responding in kind a number of times in an effort to bring the bandits to justice, much to the dismay of the Mexican authorities.\textsuperscript{151}

Hayes was forced to address publicly, the issue of the border with Mexico, after his first year in office. In his annual message in late 1877, Hayes referred to the border issues simply as “disturbances along the Rio Grande,” and “lawless incursions into our territory by armed bands from the Mexican side of the line for the purpose of robbery,” despite the best efforts of American forces. Simultaneously, John W. Foster wrote to the State Department discussing the same issue of, “a series of raids into Texas from Mexico, resulting in murders, arson, plundering of Government Post Offices and Custom Houses, robberies and other outlawry.” He also stated, “The continual harassing and apparently ceaseless turmoil- on our otherwise peaceful borders by these marauding bands of Mexicans which crossing secretly and in the darkness of the night from their own territory, emerge upon the farms and fields of American citizens, carrying perpetual alarm and dread.” Secretary of State Evarts also commented on the situation of the number of complaints raised by citizens in the area.\textsuperscript{152}

The similarities between Polk and Hayes remained palpable to many on both sides of the political conflict occurring in the United States at the end of Reconstruction. President Hayes defended himself and declared that, “There is nothing secret or underhand in the Mexican

\textsuperscript{150}Hoogenboom, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes}, 335.
\textsuperscript{151}Davidson, \textit{The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes}, 199.
policy,” which he also applied to Evarts and his workings. He stated that, “Evarts was habitually truthful so he could hide his intentions from those who expected him to be deceptive.” Although there were marginal groups who would have supported a war with Mexico, neither government was willing to go to war over the border disputes. Foster feared that Evarts’s policies were alienating Díaz, “I regard General Díaz as the only hope of the country … Lerdo’s restoration to power would only be the signal for outbreaks in all directions … Should the President and you think it opportune to make a formal recognition of Díaz … I probably would be able to bring about an earlier settlement than otherwise.”153 He believed that some close to Hayes planned to turn the focus away from the adverse domestic conditions by starting a war with Mexico. Though there was sentiment for the acquiring of Mexican territory, Evarts was not of that camp, and it appeared that he had no desire to conduct a war for that purpose.154

After another year of “hot pursuit,” little progress had been achieved concerning the border issue. President Hayes in his second annual message stressed the intent of American forces crossing into Mexico after the marauding bands as one of cooperation with Mexican troops and not punishment only. They were to only act if Mexican troops were unable or unavailable to counter the marauders, but that Mexico should feel assured that the United States was not in the disposition of conquest. Evarts wrote in 1877 concerning Mexican cooperation, “These incursions cannot be stopped so long as the government of Mexico is either unable or unwilling to punish the marauders and the United States is prevented from crossing the border in pursuit.”155 Later that year, Díaz was forced to subdue a Lerdist rebellion by General Escobedo.

153 Hoogenboom, Rutherford B. Hayes, 335-337 and Barrows, William M. Evarts, 352.
155 Lewis, “The Hayes Administration and Mexico,” 145.
by driving him across the river into Texas, which garnered protest in the United States.\textsuperscript{156} The lack of progress in the field was reflected in the diplomatic channels. The negotiations in 1877, which took place in both Washington and Mexico City, remained stagnant, as the United States only augmented its conditions for Mexico to meet before recognition would be granted. Díaz worked shrewdly to keep himself in office, while complying with the United States at least to some degree. He strengthened his own position by encouraging public consternation with the United States to unite all factions, but he stopped short of forcing an undoubtedly detrimental war with the Americans.\textsuperscript{157} Díaz attempted to attack against Hayes to relieve pressure upon him, through political propaganda in both countries. In addition, he courted American capitalists with “favorable economic concessions” to increase their interest in Mexico. His hopes were that powerful American business interests would place greater pressure on Hayes to grant recognition and end the political impasse.\textsuperscript{158}

Suspicion only grew about Hayes within the U.S. government after the policy of “hot pursuit” stalled. As a result, Foster was called to Washington by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “to testify on the conditions in Mexico.” The delay in recognition had led to an unfavorable situation for the United States, though he did not answer on whether the time had come for recognition. On February 16, 1878, Evarts answered that question. In his opinion, the delay of recognition to Díaz was helpful to the stability to Mexico, and it had pushed for more serious efforts to take control of the frontier. Then, in March, 1878, even before the completion of negotiations, Evarts instructed Foster to recognize the Díaz government, “upon a consideration of some permanent measures for the preservation of peace and the punishment of

\textsuperscript{156} Barrows, \textit{William M. Evarts}, 354.

\textsuperscript{157} Barrows, \textit{William M. Evarts}, 354.

\textsuperscript{158} Dyer, \textit{The Public Career of William M. Evarts}, 198-199.
outlawry upon the frontier, the better protection of American citizens and their interests in Mexico.”

Díaz wanted recognition above all else and was very willing to cooperate with the United States, but what he publically said was often the opposite of his considerations in private. Recognition was essential to him as it was necessary for him to consolidate his control over Mexico, and it allowed him to create a common cause when cooperation worked in concert with his establishment of power. That is why he announced General Geronimo Trevino’s mission to protect the frontier to repel any American invasion, in order to consolidate his power amongst the Mexican people. However, the same force was invited to cooperate with American forces to bring peace to the northern frontier, much to outcry of Mexican nationalists. The Trevino mission was a landmark event in the movement toward closer ties between Mexico and the United States.  

In April, 1878, Díaz finally gained his so sought after recognition from the United States and President Hayes. Díaz called for the withdrawal of the June 1st order of “hot pursuit,” but Hayes refused to do so until its existence was deemed unnecessary. John W. Foster then went on to state of the later negotiations that:

The ground upon which Secretary Evarts based his instruction to me to make the recognition was that the Government of General Díaz found itself embarrassed in the discussion of pending matters of difference between the two nations and placed under constraint in reaching a satisfactory settlement of these matters by the absence of recognition. I was instructed to follow up the recognition by insisting upon some permanent measures for the preservation of peace and the punishment of outlawry on the frontier, the better protection of American citizens

161 Davidson, *The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes*, 201.
and their interests in Mexico, and the settlement of the various matters of complaint already presented.\textsuperscript{162}

Díaz announced his policy of cooperation toward the United States in early 1878, in order to improve his negotiating status. He was “resolved to act with full justice, and animated by a friendly spirit, although decided at the same time to admit nothing which would wound the dignity of Mexico.”\textsuperscript{163}

Anti-American sentiment in Mexico began to recede in August, 1878, but its government and people still regarded Hayes and his administration with distrust while the policy of “hot pursuit” remained in effect. Suspicion grew into conviction that the United States was using the issue of the Rio Grande as a reason to force Mexico into a war of annexation. The Díaz government lacked an appeasing mood in its negotiations with the United States, though it stemmed mostly from the need to appease his opponents.\textsuperscript{164} The negotiations between the United States and Mexico did not improve as long as the June 1\textsuperscript{st} order was still in effect, while at the same time the situation at the border also suffered. Evarts stated quite vigorously on August 13, 1878 about the determination of the U.S. government to protect its citizens and their property from the border raiders.

The first duty of a government is to protect life and property. This is a paramount obligation. For this governments are instituted, and governments neglecting or failing to perform it become worse than useless. This duty the Government of the United States has determined to perform to the extent of its power toward its citizens on the border. Protection \textit{in fact} to American lives and property is the sole point upon which the United States are tenacious.\textsuperscript{165}

The cautious nature of the Hayes Administration remained evident, as seen in a letter from Assistant Secretary of State Frederick Seward to Evarts from August 9, 1878. In the letter,

\textsuperscript{163} Lewis, “The Hayes Administration and Mexico,” 151.
\textsuperscript{164} Dyer, \textit{The Public Career of William M. Evarts}, 198.
Seward mentions that it was discussed in a cabinet meeting that Ord should carry out his current instructions unless a new emergency arose, in which he should then contact Washington. McCrary not only gave orders for General Ord to cross the Mexican border in pursuit of the marauders, but also to recover and return any stolen property found as well. This order was heavily protested by Díaz as a violation of international law, but he was effectively ignored. Foster solved the dilemma as he created the condition in order to allow for American troops to continue patrolling the border. In his annual message in December, 1878, Hayes stated that he might be able to soon “recognize the ability of the Mexican Government to restrain effectively violations of our territory,” representing an easing of his stance towards Mexico. Eventually by the winter of 1878-1879, Díaz was able to push out the Indian raiders from using the Mexican interior as a base.

John Foster was well aware of the inevitability of cooperation between Díaz and the United States, but also realized that the long standing tensions had to be resolved before their friendship could grow. He wrote later in life in his memoirs about the situation in 1878 and 1879:

With the passage of time without any successful counterrevolution, President Díaz was enabled more and more to strengthen his hold upon power and improve his Administration. The customs and excise were more honestly accounted for and the financial credit of the Government improved. This fact and the general prevalence of order gave the President greater ability to meet the expectations of the Washington Administration, gradually a better state of relations resulted, the order for crossing of American troops was withdrawn, and the differences assumed a more satisfactory diplomatic footing.

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167 Eckenorde & Wright, Rutherford B. Hayes: Statesman of Reunion, 282-283.
169 Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.
170 Foster, Diplomatic Memoirs, 105.
The American authorities began to recognize the border as a two-way problem. Evarts wrote that, “Mexican cattle thieves invade Texas; Mexican revolutionists, in violation of our laws, invade Mexico from this side of the Rio Grande according to the exigencies of their desultory warfare. But no American force ever goes over the Rio Grande except in pursuit of ‘invaders’ who have already ‘invaded’ the soil of the United States and are escaping with their booty.” He went on to say, “some satisfactory recognition of the obligation of the Mexican Government to amply provide for such contingences… might perhaps afford greater facility to the future adjustment of these cases.”171 He then sarcastically wrote of the Mexican outrage:

If the instances of wrong doing complained of were as isolated as the cases in which the offenders are brought to justice, or if the examples of prompt and severe punishment were as numerous as the cases of wrong, the isolated selection to which Senor Nunez Ortega takes exception would most assuredly not have taken place.172

Evarts wrote in February, 1879 of his disappointment in Mexico, in that the nation had done nothing or ignored the United States’ demands concerning the situation along the border, in spite of the fact that the United States had shown great patience. Furthermore, that once cooperation and protection were assured once again in that area that commerce and trade between the two nations would resume as previously hoped, which was the main concern of the U.S. government.173 During the spring of 1879, the raids along the border became less numerous, and Mexico pushed once again for the repeal of the June 1st order.174 General Ord reflected that sentiment in his annual report for 1879, in which he thought that there was no longer a need to

cross the border after the various marauding bands, and that Mexican troops were now in sufficient control of the area.\footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.}

After three years of trouble along the Mexican border, the American policy towards the situation made an about-face in 1880, and began to soften its position though the recognition of Díaz was still not on the table. In the opinion of Secretary of State Evarts, the protection of the border had to be firmly placed ahead of recognition of the fledgling Mexican government.\footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.} On February 20, 1880, Evarts pushed through those hopeful thoughts by contacting the Mexican minister at Washington that the border situation had improved enough that it necessitated the end of “hot pursuit” order.\footnote{Dyer, The Public Career of William M. Evarts. 202.} On March 1, 1880, the order of “hot pursuit” by American troops marching into Mexico was revoked. In the end, Porfirio Díaz was able to gain recognition from the United States and the reverse of the “hot pursuit” order, while Evarts and the rest of the Hayes administration were able to end the bothersome border raids and gain a more stable border with their neighbors to the south.\footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.}

The solving of the border issue to Mexico was a key piece in the nation building process that was undertaken during the first term of Porfirio Díaz’s presidency. The end of the raids along the U.S. border was the essential first step for Díaz and Mexico to begin the process of creating a more modern state through greater state control. It allowed for further advancements within Mexico that created the possibility for greater growth. Those factors included: the greater control of the northern territory, the expansion of integral infrastructure, through railroad contracts, the ceasing of revolutionary forces, and, finally, the transfer of power through popular election in 1880 to Manuel González. The ability to come to a peaceful solution to the border

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.}
  \item \footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.}
  \item \footnote{Dyer, The Public Career of William M. Evarts. 202.}
  \item \footnote{Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 201.}
\end{itemize}
issues with the United States by 1880 was a crucial step in the nation building process that had been put forth by the Diaz administration.

Growing Economic Connection between the United States and Mexico:

The economic relations between the two North American republics had greatly changed since Polk’s presidency and the Mexican War. The two countries had become interconnected in a way that businesses on both sides wished for more cooperation than consternation. Expanding the commercial ties between Mexico and the United States had been increasing over the second half of the nineteenth century, which Hayes and Diaz were aware of. Diaz made it a main priority to attract the growing American industrial giant to Mexico. The first and most important phase was to improve the railroad system within the country. The constantly growing industrial joining of the two nations was reflected sharply in the diplomatic relations. American surplus domestic goods were sent to Mexico, which would allow for prosperity to be restored and the possibility for future territorial gains to be rekindled.179

Following the Mexican-American War, two currents developed from the Mexican intellectual traditions concerning the economic future of the country. José María Luis Mora championed the liberal doctrine which pushed for a more modern Mexican economy free of state interference, and allow for a more entrepreneurial spirit within the country. The eventual position “embraced individualism, supported free trade, attacked secular and religious corporate property, and envisioned Mexico as a nation anchored in agriculture and mining” as its major economic activities. The second position was more pragmatic, and arose out of the economic thought of the economist and conservative politician Lucas Alamán. This position did not reject

179 Davidson, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, 199.
the importance of agriculture and mining, but also sought the need to develop a strong industrial base through tariffs and state-sponsored loans. During the period of *La Reforma*, 1854-1876, the laissez-faire economic rhetoric of the doctrinaire position came to dominate.\(^{180}\) Even during the years of the empire, liberalism remained the guiding light behind Mexican economic policy. The triumph of economic liberalism came hand in hand with a change in emphasis in the way intellectuals and politicians perceived the role of the nation.

If before the war authors were concerned with the threat of territorial conquest, after the war, the threat from the United States was shifted to economic “vassalage” and economic “conquest.”\(^{181}\) Economic liberalism, in particular the opening in the early years after the war in Mexico, liberals depicted it as a “poor nation,” and as such it was in a “subservient position” to the countries of Europe and the United States. It was seen before Díaz’s ascent that economic superiority was closely connected to a nation’s racial composition, which meant that Mexico was vulnerable due to its racial inferiority, compared to Anglo nations. Liberals were “ambivalent towards Mexico as a part of the international economy.” It was needed to be infused with foreign “blood, money, and technology,” in order, to bring prosperity and stability. In addition, the state had to prove to be vital force to regulate economic prosperity and political sovereignty from the influx of outside investors.\(^{182}\)

Building upon this consensus of the importance of opening up the economy to strengthen Mexico’s viability as a nation, Porfirio Díaz’s policies shifted the attitudes of Mexico towards foreign investment, and made the United States its prime contributor. However, the previous administrations under the Restored Republic attempted to bring in foreign investment, but had

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\(^{182}\) Weiner, *Race, Nation, and Market*, 49.
failed to do so. However, Díaz’s attitudes would change as his term went on, as he simultaneously continued negotiations with American investors. In his first three years in office, Díaz was just as unsuccessful as his predecessors, but he did strategize two methods to expand the railroad network. He first used public money to “invest directly” into railroad projects, and second, made concessions available to the individual state governments, including two major concessions to American companies that led to the beginning of the railroad boom. Yet, he did view Americans as essential to creating a prosperous Mexico, as their investment in all aspects of the Mexican economy, primarily in railroads and communications, would promote Mexican advancement, which made American investors became increasingly optimistic.

It was Díaz’s negotiating of the major concessions before 1880 that allowed for the major railroad contracts to be completed by the end of his first term as president. Though he was not always successful in those negotiations with American business interests, Díaz demonstrated to the United States a commitment to developing Mexico and the increased capabilities of his government.

The majority of Porfirio Díaz’s first term of office was an example of the gradual enlarging of commercial ties between the two nations, which was supported by Díaz and American business interests, and fought against by Mexican nationalists and ironically the Hayes administration. Hayes was in favor of the current improving trend, but believed that it was only feasible after the current issues were settled. However, in the end, both sides finished in positive ways, as Díaz gained his recognition and gained a good deal of American investment, and Hayes

gained security on the border through the stability of Mexico’s northern frontier.\textsuperscript{186} On the American end, similar attempts were begun in order to increase trade in the region and with the rest of the western hemisphere. It became imperative to Evarts, and other leading political and economic figures, that American prosperity was dependent upon the sale of its surplus products abroad. To help establish this new primary direction of foreign diplomatic relations, Evarts sent a circular letter to all the South American consuls, that they were to send back regular reports on the status of trade with the Latin American countries, and introduce ways in which to increase American trade with those nations.\textsuperscript{187}

Díaz made great attempts to foster foreign investment by reducing the power of radicals among the peasants and labor movements, improved the infrastructure, and sped up the privatization of agriculture. American railroad financiers united behind Díaz, once it became apparent that he would reverse the previous attempts by Lerdo to block them out of concessions. Díaz issued and reissued concessions to friends and partners of the former Minister to Mexico, William Rosecrans, along with other American investors.\textsuperscript{188} The Mexican concessions given by Díaz laid out many regulations and instructions to be followed. For instance, they planned the approximate route of the track, designated the amount and type of federal subsidy that would be given, established stringent time limits for the construction of the railroad, awarded tax breaks or exemptions, and controlled the tariff rates. The concessions could also be much more complex in their actual abilities. Still, the agreements between the Mexican government and foreign railroad companies attempted to create a very favorable and lucrative deal for targeted railroad contractors. Although some requirements were strict, such as mail service, site inspections, and

\textsuperscript{186} Ryan, \textit{Selected Aspects of American Activities in Mexico}, 140-141.
\textsuperscript{187} Davidson, \textit{The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes}, 198.
\textsuperscript{188} Hart, \textit{Empire and Revolution}, 106-108.
some rate setting, these concessions were many times placed above the normal federal oversight with both territorial and commercial benefits.\textsuperscript{189}

Due to anti-American protests from the Mexican public, Díaz played both sides by encouraging public protest with anti-American demonstrations, while negotiating with American business leaders. Meanwhile, Foster reported back to the Manufacturers Association of the Northwest in Chicago, that Díaz “lacked resolve and that he should do something about the opposition to the railroad concessions in the Mexican Congress.”\textsuperscript{190} The increase in economic relations between American companies, particularly in the railroad industry, in the forms of government contracts, and Mexico were essential to the betterment of American diplomacy towards Mexico. Foster wrote in his memoirs concerning the opposition to foreign contracts:

This contract met with strong opposition in the Congress based upon much the same ground as that taken in resisting the Plumb contract. The leading opponent was Hon. Alfredo Chavero, a prominent public man, a supporter of the Díaz Administration, and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. He contended that ‘it is very poor policy, very injudicious to establish within our country a powerful American company; … we should always fear the United States’; and he said the contract should be rejected because it was ‘a danger for the independence and the future of the country.’ The climax of the argument was the following metaphor: ‘Go and propose to the lion of the desert to exchange his cave of rocks for a golden cage, and the lion of the desert will reply to you with a roar of liberty.’\textsuperscript{191}

Díaz’s personal invitations to American industrialists turned into official legislation. One such piece of regulation was the 1878 agreement signed under Díaz “allowed foreigners to purchase real estate in the border areas and extended the duty free zone westward from Tamaulipas to Baja California,” which opened Mexico to direct American “economic

\textsuperscript{189} Coatsworth, \textit{Growth Against Development}, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{190} Hart, \textit{Empire and Revolution}, 108-109.
\textsuperscript{191} Foster, \textit{Diplomatic Memoirs}, 110-111.
penetration” into the heart of Mexico.\textsuperscript{192} Despite Foster’s warning, which reflected American officials’ worrisome nature, to the Carlisle Mason and the Manufacturers’ Association of the Northwest in October, 1878, they banqueted with Díaz and attended a number of receptions exhibited manufactured wares.\textsuperscript{193} During one of those banquets, the entrepreneurs made their desire known to sell their goods to Mexico in order to buy Mexican products in return, specifically coffee, cotton, and tobacco. The major impediment they felt to the completion of this desire was the lack of railroad connections. It was seen by many that, if those tracks could be improved trade would greatly increase, and the “two nations, now strangers, and estranged, would become acquaintances and friends.” Those American businessmen desired “that in the near future, and the long hereafter, this people will find it to their interest to trade mainly with the people of the United States.” Díaz replied was that, “the Mexican nation is thankful to you for having come on this noble mission with the olive of peace in one hand and the torch of civilization in the other.” Díaz then predicted that Mexico and the United States would become increasingly closer, including: trade in manufactured and agricultural products. He added that every administration since the French intervention had attempted to “establish permanent commercial relations with the United States.”\textsuperscript{194} The Díaz administration promoted an exhibition of American manufactured products in Mexico City in January, 1879, which was meant to stimulate interest in Mexican commerce in spite of Hayes’s hesitance.\textsuperscript{195}

It was Díaz himself that reached out to private American citizens, who were still weary of Mexican investment because of both the administration’s attitude as well as the native reception. Yet, the anti-Americanism slowly diluted with greater investment, which smoothed into a path of


\textsuperscript{194} Ryan, \textit{Selected Aspects of American Activities in Mexico}, 187-188.

cooperation that convinced American businesses that Mexico was a safe place to expand their business opportunities.\footnote{Ryan, \textit{Selected Aspects of American Activities in Mexico}, 141-142.} As Minister to Mexico, Foster was well aware to the lack of reliable modes of transportation and communication between the two neighboring countries. These deficiencies had led to a sluggish trade, and to the revolutionary nature of Mexico, which were central to the diplomatic relations. He wrote:

> The smallness of the trade with the United States was due mainly to two causes, - first, the want of communication, and, second, the revolutionary character of the country. To establish commercial reciprocity the means of communication should be cheap and frequent … The revolutionary character of the country, the changes of customs officials at the ports, and the irregular and oppressive acts of those officials greatly obstructed free commerce by sea.\footnote{Foster, \textit{Diplomatic Memoirs}, 108.}

Economic principles were pushed by those within the government in other positions, but also by those with special interests in the Mexican economy. William S. Rosecrans, a close personal friend of Hayes from their time in the Civil War and the former minister to Mexico from 1868 to 1870, advised the president to “secure for our commercial and manufacturing interest, the lion share of the commerce of ten millions of people.” To this statement, Rosecrans’s main objectives were the mining and railroad interests of Mexico. He pushed for the building of railroads into the northern Mexico territories and connecting them to the North American system already in place. Rosecrans suggested that the best way to fund the railroads for Mexico was to sell its northern states. However, he did recognize at the time that the Mexican constitution forbid the sale or alienation of Mexican soil. The difficulty being that the constitution would have had to be amended and that the opposition by the Mexican “political class” to “Northern annexation” was “practically a monomania capable of overturning any government not backed by money, power and popularity.” It was also Rosecrans’s belief that it
was the manifest destiny of the United States to consolidate “the family of Western Republics under our leadership,” but his ideals, however, did not determine Hayes’s Mexican policy.\textsuperscript{198} Rosecrans perceived that a “prosperous Mexico needed peace, immigration, and railways,” with the third being the most important to the United States. His beliefs were soon brought to fruition, as he became one of the most important Yankee railway men in Mexico. In one such venture, he sought to establish railway and telegraph lines from the city of Tampico, north of Veracruz, to the coast.\textsuperscript{199} Rutherford B. Hayes had his own principles on the ideals of the United States, and how they should play out during his administration. Hayes did agree that the annexation of territory would be the, in the popular term of the nineteenth century, “manifest destiny” of the country. However, the President was “not in favor of artificial stimulants to this tendency,” though he was often accused of exploring such means.\textsuperscript{200}

One such railway company was able to gain a concession from the Díaz government in 1880 under the leadership of James B. Eads across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It was just one example of a Mexican concession to an American business that clearly states all of the specifics of rights and guarantees given by the Mexican government in these types of agreements. Articles 5 through 7 represent how much power was actually given over to these American railroad projects. They state:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Art. 5. To said Eads, or said company, is granted a right of way of the width of four hundred metres on each side of the road and its water communications, measured from the centre line; …
  \item Art. 6. The public land contained within the zone mentioned shall be ceded by the government, gratis, to Eads, or to the company.
  \item Art. 7. With the approval of the government and gratuitously; Eads, or
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{198} Hoogenboom, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes}, 337.
\textsuperscript{200} Hoogenboom, \textit{Rutherford B. Hayes}, 337.
the company, may take from the public lands whatever materials are needed for the construction of the railway and other necessary works. 201

Díaz’s flirtations with the leaders in the American business world were not very popular amongst Hayes and his staff. Evarts commented somewhat negatively on Díaz’s promotional maneuver, with his indication of protection American lives and property as the main priority, “Without these it is hardly to be expected that responsible capital from without will seek legitimate field for its employment in Mexico.” 202 It became quite clear that the economic relations between the United States and Mexico were tightening as the nineteenth century went by. Exports from Mexico quadrupled from the beginning of Polk’s term in 1844 to the end of Hayes’s term in 1880 and from six million dollars in 1876 to eight million in 1880. 203 The imports from Mexico at the same points jumped drastically from one million dollars to seven million dollars, and rose two million dollars just during Hayes’s presidency. 204

The entirety of the United States economic interest was examined by the U.S. government, which the Mexican government was doing as well. One such document was the Report of the Secretary of Finance of Mexico, published in 1880, in which he agreed with Foster’s assertions of the improvement of relations between the United States and Mexico, which referred to the need for railroads and industrial growth in Mexico. It states:

that American capitalists and business men who have consulted with the Representatives of the United States in Mexico upon the probabilities of obtaining


202 Ryan, Selected Aspects of American Activities in Mexico, 189.


a practicable concession from the Mexican Government to build a railroad from the Mexican frontier to the City of Mexico, have almost invariably considered it necessary that the concession should contain a clause by which the property and capital of the railroad should be guaranteed by the two Governments, and in some cases it has even been considered indispensable that the credit granted by Mexico should also be guaranteed by the United States Government.  

The production in Mexico of exportable articles can be greatly forwarded in two ways: by developing mining and by the cultivation of tropical plants ... A. Development of mining of Mexico, B. Development of the production of tropical fruits in Mexico, C. Increase of the exterior commerce of Mexico, its elements of wealth once being developed, D. The United States Government has done very little to increase its commerce with Mexico, E. Celebration of a reciprocity treaty between Mexico and the United States.  

In conclusion the report, gave the recommendations for Mexico to improve its economic standing and expand its railway system, was through concessions to foreign, particularly American, business interests. International investment was believed to be the best option to supplant funds needed for industry that were not available domestically. In this way the leverage of Hayes in terms of his connection with the key supporters like American industrial giants, and force them to deal with the Mexican government directly on more favorable terms. Through this system Mexico could improve its infrastructure; however, it would still lose its sovereignty, but only economically to private capitalists and not politically to the United States.

When Rutherford B. Hayes came to the presidency in 1877, he was thrust into a situation with Mexico that was far from ideal. The relationship between the United States and Mexico had grown ever more stressful as the nineteenth century progressed. It reached its climax of

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205 “Report of the Secretary of Finance of the United States of Mexico of the 15th of January, 1879, on the actual condition of Mexico, and the increase of commerce with the United States, rectifying the report of the Hon. John W. Foster, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in Mexico, the 9th of October, 1878. To Mr. Carlisle Mason, President of the Manufacturers’ Association of the City of Chicago, in the State of Illinois, of the United States of America,” (New York: N. Ponce De Leon, 1880), 17.

206 “Report of the Secretary of Finance of the United States of Mexico of the 15th of January, 1879, on the actual condition of Mexico, and the increase of commerce with the United States, rectifying the report of the Hon. John W. Foster, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in Mexico, the 9th of October, 1878. To Mr. Carlisle Mason, President of the Manufacturers’ Association of the City of Chicago, in the State of Illinois, of the United States of America,” 150.
animosity with the Mexican-American War in 1848, during the presidency of James K. Polk. However, the diplomatic situation did not improve in the three decades before Hayes took office in 1876, and again there was a strong likelihood of an outbreak of a war along the U.S.-Mexican border if the raids came to an end. The issue of the security along the border continued throughout to be a major thorn in the side of both nations’ governments; yet, the constant political instability on the Mexican side prevented any real attempts at relieving the problem of bandits and marauders. The issues from Polk’s administration would still remain the focus of U.S.-Mexican relations at the beginning of Rutherford B. Hayes’s administration. However, by 1876 the geopolitical balance had been decided, as the United States had solidified itself as the strongest continental power. The land grab interests of the United States in Mexico were satiated by Porfirio Díaz and his economic concessions, who was also able to bring a sense of stability to the central Mexican government.
The battle over the border between the United States and Mexico during the nineteenth century was not fought solely in political arenas and diplomatic hallways, but also played itself out in the public discourse of both nations. The public opinion concerning the border shared by the two countries, often reflected the current feelings of the situation in both 1844 and 1876, but also revealed a transformation that occurred concurrently with the diplomatic relations. In the events leading up to the election of James K. Polk in 1844 and the Mexican-American War two years later, the concept of Manifest Destiny held a concrete sway over the United States. The belief in the privilege and divine position of the Anglo race propelled many within the American territories to foresee the expansion of the country across the length and breadth of the continent. The supposed divine backing of the American right to rest of North America, brought the nation into hostile contact with other peoples and nations and had already laid claim to those areas wanted by American settlers. The related context of ethnocentrism and extreme nationalism convinced those in the American populace that natives of the western territories and Mexicans who resided in the areas were not fit to use the land and thus it was required for it to be taken away from them. A similar concept of superiority was playing out in Mexico at the same time. The Mexican people were both extremely proud and stubborn when it came to their northern neighbor. Many associated Americans with the worst of the Anglo-European culture and were in constant fear of American expansion into their homeland. During the events leading up to the Mexican-American War, the public press shows the extent national pride and racism shaded the discourses of U.S.-Mexican relations throughout the greater portion of the nineteenth century.

By the 1870s, the attitude toward Mexico in the United States had altered slightly from one of physical conquest to one of economic concerns. Though territorial ambitions still
abounded in the aftermath of the Civil War had dampened the dream of a hemispherical empire. It had become clear by this point that the United States had become the far greater power over Mexico, and, as such, it was not deemed necessary to reignite any hostilities that would jeopardize that balance. In Mexico, the same old fears of the prospect of American conquest were still abundant and caused much suspicion amongst the public. The press was the most belligerent force and routinely called for many efforts to repel American advances. However, as the decade came to a close, the Mexican public was more perceptive to cooperation with the United States, which would open up new markets and goods, and improve their virgin industries and infrastructure. The press also reflected the change in political discourse of the Rutherford B. Hayes administration towards one of pragmatism, collaboration, and economic gain, and whether the interests of each side won over the strong sense of nationalism as time went on.

The Mexican press grew to become one of the most dominant factors within the country as the nineteenth century ran on. The Mexican press began as a more regional local influence that informed the people on relevant immediate events and topics. However, after independence the scope of writing in Mexican newspapers expanded to include events at the national level, and previously less discussed topics such as trade and industry, which in the process created a greater national feeling of unity. As Mexico grew into nationhood, the press grew as well, becoming the common link for all Mexicans to follow Mexican national events as well as some international. As the Mexican press grew at the national level, it became ever more connected with the political activities occurring, primarily, in the capital. This connection created the rise of political presses both with positive and negative attitudes towards those in power. This expanded type of media
created a stronger connection between the national government and the people, and created a sense of accountability.\textsuperscript{207}

Following Mexican Independence, the press in Mexico used the models of England and the United States. This transformation coincided with the increase in emigration into Mexico. The Spanish model was abandoned as a greater number of American editors became well established, as the audience followed suit in terms of its composition. The introduction of foreign periodicals multiplied the number of publications with regular printing, and allowed for some publications that would previously been censured for attacks against the governmental administration. This influx changed the traditional balance in the Mexican press more towards the freedom of expression and expanded the manner and subject of the writing.\textsuperscript{208} However, in many cases it was supported by the various governments in power at any one particular time. Yet, its contour of opinion was part of a larger struggle in Mexico to find balance, somewhat similar to the situation in the United States, between free speech and sedition and instigation. The early politicians in Mexico recognized the need to allow public opinion to shape national policy, but warned against the blurring of “the popular voice with public opinion.” In their minds, public opinion should be more “the general expression of the people convinced about the truth, which it has examined through discussion.” The problems with this balance in Mexico, which was most likely similar to the situation in any other country, that the public opinion was made from imperfect citizens, which was also quite a diverse group. Furthermore, the strong cultural sense of honor was bothersome, as it could be promoted to the level of abuse that could

The Mexican press’s power became under attack with a decree in 1842 by then President Santa Anna, which denied congressional immunity to public writers. The following year, he backed off somewhat, stating that, “Under no circumstances will it be allowed to write about private life.” From Juárez to Díaz, Mexican newspapers bounced between sedition and satire under the protection of the press juries, which were established to assess any outrages caused by public writings.

Manifest Destiny in Early Nineteenth Century America:

The Anglo-American nation state was predicated upon the advancement of its people and territory to this fullest extent, which was exemplified by a connection between conquest and divine providence. The result, manifest destiny, the divine right of territorial expansion and glory, and the American expansionist spirit in general, had already taken hold of the psyche of the American people well before any formal interactions with Mexico were conceived. The American public became entranced with the concept nearly from the beginning of the nineteenth century, which would only grow as the decades past. However, this expansionist spirit was not as strong in the Northeast as it clearly thrived in the West and South. As a result, the United States was still a “nation of disparate parts;” a threat to one part was not seen as a threat to all, which made it very difficult to create a truly national policy towards expansion in the west. Manifest destiny had two separate tracks within the United States, with a more relaxed tone in the Northeast and a more outward and aggressive one in the northwestern states. In terms of

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the border with Mexico, American expansionism was based around the premise that the mission of the United States was directly tied to manifest destiny. That mission was characterized as one of an “idealistic and self-denying nature, and was hopeful of divine favor for national aspirations.”

The new impact of manifest destiny during the middle of the nineteenth century drew from the growing literary and cultural tradition of Romanticism and the numerous transitions forming with the United States in the early nineteenth century. It combined the “fervent, idealistic even mythical expression of Romantic nationalism with the realistic, practical consequences of extraordinary technological and economic developments as well as an unprecedented movement of Americans to distant parts of the continent.” The impact of manifest destiny reached its zenith by the election of James K. Polk that it propelled the American people to even loftier ambitions for their country’s future.

The foreign policy of the United States began to turn to take advantage of this newly expressed public spirit. One of the earliest examples came during the Presidency of James Monroe. Then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams stated in 1819, that the United States would, “be familiarized with idea of considering our proper dominion to be the continent of North America,” and, “find it a settled geographical element that the United States and North America are identical.” After the acquisition of Florida in that same year, American diplomacy was “directed toward establishing the security of the United States that would be continental in its extent,” which would place it in direct confrontation with the newly independent Mexico.

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214 Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission, 261.
216 Wheelan, Invading Mexico, 30.
217 Bill, Rehearsal for Conflict, 44.
The American government was not alone in its mission to expand the nation’s borders. As prospective settlers looked beyond the established borders of the United States, they saw land that they believed was being used poorly. Racial and religious undertones led many Americans considered Mexican Catholics to be “outside the destined realm” of manifest destiny. As such, they had no rights to the lands in the west if they were to be left idle, which was also applied to the native tribes of the area.\textsuperscript{218} One of the key areas exemplified by this attitude was California, as it was sought “on the grounds of the capacity of Americans to develop it more fully” than their Mexican counterparts.\textsuperscript{219} In addition, between 1836 and 1848, the stories of Indian raiding throughout the Mexican held western territories created the picture of a virtually uninhabited country open for Anglo settlement.\textsuperscript{220}

\textit{Texas and Western Expansion as Seen in the United States and Mexico:}

Many influential Americans began to support the idea of the addition of Texas and other territories to the United States. The then Congressman of Massachusetts, Caleb Cushing, stated that American expansion in the 1830s into Mexican territory was “inevitable and irresistible,” as the area was sparsely populated which would lure the “daring and hearty pioneer.”\textsuperscript{221} Senator John Fairfield of Maine was of a brasher and racially charged manner when it came to Mexico. He stated after the Texas revolution, “The Mexicans are a rascally, perfidious race. No reliance can be placed in their most solemn compacts. They are little better than a band of pirates and robbers.”\textsuperscript{222} In addition, members of the artistic professions joined in the cause. The American

\textsuperscript{218} Raat & Brescia, “Texas and a Collision of Cultures,” 73.
\textsuperscript{219} Weinberg, \textit{Manifest Destiny}, 89.
\textsuperscript{220} DeLay, \textit{War of a Thousand Deserts}, 290.
\textsuperscript{222} Thomas R. Hietala, “This Splendid Juggernaut,” \textit{Manifest Destiny and Empire}, 53.
painter, author, and western traveler, George Catlin, called the rise of the Texas issue as a clash of cultures, as Anglo-Americans had racial superiority to the Mexicans and Native Americans. By the mid-1840s, this was clear to him in the use of resources, that a “limited national government was the blueprint for a vast empire,” with improvements in travel and communication. In his eyes, Mexicans were to suffer the same fate that had befallen the natives. William Gilmore Simms, a poet and novelist from South Carolina, wrote in 1846 in a poem in the Democratic Review, that the United States was “to carry civilization by the sword,” and called on Americans to “obey our destiny and blood.” However, not all Americans were for conquest and annexation. The opponents to forcible annexation spoke of the “influence of our example” rather than military strength, and to control the continent through “gentle unobtrusive influences.”

The lynchpin to the expansion of the United States became Texas. As the 1830s came to a close, the public attitude became synonymous with expansionism and the frontier, further “pushing citizens towards brasher ventures that resulted in another territorial surge.” As the 1830s moved on, the Anglo immigrants to Texas kept their heritage and as a result felt little respect toward the Mexican authorities. This culture clash created tensions with Mexico and a greater infatuation with the United States. Texas remained attractive to Americans as the Texans were seen as “true-blooded Americans with the right to dispose of themselves as they wished.” Texas was already seen publicly as more American than Texas, and as such should be reconnected with its Anglo-American brothers, and saw expansion there as part of a more

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223 Hietala, “This Splendid Juggernaut,” 51-52.
226 Heidler, Manifest Destiny, 14.
natural progression. William C. Preston, Senator from South Carolina, wrote in 1836 about the Texas rebellion and its importance to the United States to his fellow Senators:

It was at one a war of religion and of liberty. And when that noble race engaged in a war, victory was sure to perch upon their standard. This was not merely the retribution of the cruel war upon the Alamo, but that tide which was swollen by this extraordinary victory would roll on; and, it was not in the spirit of prophecy to say where it would stop.

Senator Robert Walker of Mississippi also spoke in the Senate chamber suggesting that any money available in the treasury should be used to buy Texas from whomever as soon as possible after its de facto independence from Mexico. Texas independence was favored in the Senate, but there was reluctance to its annexation, as Texas was too unsettled in many eyes. Additionally, a lack of enthusiasm from the Texas towards annexation caused many to tread lightly, though support was given for an independent Texas. Walker also wrote, “A higher than any earthly power still guards and directs our destiny, impels us onward, and has selected our great and happy country as a model and ultimate centre of attraction for all the nations of the world.”

After the Texas uprising, Americans believed that it could be added at any time, which led to a sense of cautious optimism.

The growing American aspirations for a continental empire did not go unnoticed in Mexico, as it became clear that northern incursions would be a prime threat to Mexican sovereignty. In Mexico, the United States represented the worst of the classic European tradition, especially the culture of slavery which drove attempts at territorial gain. Mexicans viewed slavery in the United States as the most obscene aspect of “Yankee ethnocentrism” that

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228 Bill, *Rehearsal for Conflict*, 44.
could spread into Mexico if Texas was lost, causing a cultural conflict. As the 1840s began, Mexicans regarded American qualities “more with wonder than admiration,” as Americans acted out of only their own well-being and thought it was their right to control Mexico’s dealings endangering Mexican sovereignty.²³² Immediately following the independence of Texas, the Mexican public strongly called for its re-conquest, but finances were unavailable to undertake the cause, with a continual deficit of eighteen million pesos.²³³ Francisco Pizarro Martinez, the Mexican consul in New Orleans, observed that because of its positive attributes, Texas “excited the ambitions” of the “overbearing, enterprising and intrepid” northern republic. The intentions of the United States soon became clear that Texas was an American patrimony that would come naturally into their possession, peacefully or otherwise.²³⁴

The proponents of manifest destiny, encouraged by the political developments of the 1840s, were “single-minded and upbeat in their providential claims,” which suffused the debates on Texas, Oregon, and Mexico.²³⁵ The Washington Madisonian, pushed for Polk’s eventual victory in 1844 election by running an article on October 14, 1844 about the future president elect. One of the reasons given for his victory and eventual success was his support for the annexation of Texas. In more broad terms, his push of expansionist policies was why the American public should choose him to lead the United States for the next four years.²³⁶ The American Transcendentalist poet, William Ellery Channing wrote to Henry Clay, “we are destined (that is the word) to overspread North America,” “it matters little to us how we

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²³² Gene M. Brack, Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 50, 63, 127.
²³³ Timothy J. Henderson, A Glorious Defeat, 114.
²³⁴ Brack, Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 65.
²³⁵ Guyatt, Providence and the Invention of the United States, 219-220.
accomplish our fate.”237 However, during the election of 1844, Henry Clay wrote in his “Raleigh Letter” much the opposing sentiment, “Annexation and war with Mexico are identical… I consider the annexation of Texas, at this time, without the assent of Mexico, as a measure compromising the national character, involving us certainly in war with Mexico, probably with foreign powers, dangerous to the integrity of the Union, inexpedient in the present financial condition of the country, and not called for by any general expression of public opinion.”238 Polk’s victory made territorial expansion a prominent idea, and created a future of freedom for the swelling American masses. Polk was an “advocate of territorial expansion and expressed the same confidence in America as other proponents of Manifest Destiny.”239 Polk’s ascension to the presidency was seen as a sign for the continuation of expansionism, and the right for the United States to gain Texas.240

Polk, Expansionism and the Mexican-American War:

Polk in many ways was a “fitting representative of the expansionist impulse,” and placed himself at the head of the crusade. At the beginning of his term manifest destiny was more an “inchoate, undefined spirit” rather than an “agenda for empire.”241 This enthusiasm combined “the long-standing sense of national mission with the ideas of territorial growth,” by growing the “area of freedom” and extending the “blessings of a democratic self-government.”242 The newspaper the Washington Union, the Democrat paper in the capital, wrote in early 1845, with a nationalistic slant. “For who can arrest the torrent that will pour onward to the West? The road

239 Leonard, James K. Polk, 191
241 Sam W. Haynes, James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse, 112
242 Schroeder, Mr. Polk’s War, 4-5.
to California will be open to us. Who will stay the march of our western people?"\(^{243}\) The press in the United States had much the same attitude, as in many occasions the relationship with Mexico was one of one-sided American exceptionalism. A newspaper clipping entitled, “Later from Texas,” covers an incident within Texas in which seven Mexican emissaries were sent to the territory in an attempt to incite an insurrection by the slaves there and somehow prevent its annexation by the United States. The article reflects upon the strong positive will towards the United States within in Texas and the geography surrounding the settlements by stating, “We have no fear that seven, or even seventy seven Mexican emissaries could excite a general insurrection among the slaves of Texas.” However, the article still saw the emissaries as threats if they are not handled with quickly and with extreme caution.\(^{244}\)

The most classic example of the American nationalistic press was the writer, publisher, and so called patriarch of the term “manifest destiny,” John O’Sullivan of the *New York Morning News*. In July 1845 he wrote that the United States “had a manifest destiny to overspread the continent, allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” He also wrote in *United States Magazine & Democratic Review*, “limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny.”\(^{245}\) O’Sullivan wrote his famous piece entitled “Manifest Destiny!” in July-August 1845 issue of the *Democratic Review*:

Texas has been absorbed into the Union in the inevitable fulfillment of the general law which is rolling our population westward… It was disintegrated from Mexico in the natural course of events, by a process perfectly legitimate on its own part, blameless on ours; in which all the censures due to wrong, perfidy and folly, rest on Mexico alone.

\(^{243}\) “For who can arrest,” *Washington Union*, June 2, 1845, in Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America*, 177, 188.

\(^{244}\) “Later from Texas,” James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm Collection, Library of Congress. Series 2, Reel 37.

In that same issue of the *Democratic Review* he wrote on Texas annexation: Britain and France were attempting to nullify “the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”\(^{246}\) In one of his latest articles before the war on December 27, 1845, he wrote in his short lived newspaper the *Morning Star*, “the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole continent which providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government.”\(^{247}\)

However, the issue of the Texas triangle did not remain on the western shores of the Atlantic. Even with relations between Texas and America getting ever tighter, European intervention remained a constant threat to the addition of Texas to the United States, who saw British intentions in Texas as “part of a policy of encirclement in which the seizure of California would be the next step.” The *London Times* in 1846, after the American missions to California, called for a Spanish monarchy in Mexico, although the article anticipates that Polk’s expansionism would offset any monarchical ambitions by “re-asserting Mr. Monroe’s doctrine.”\(^{248}\) Polk’s policies reflected the common fear amongst Americans of European plans for the targeted areas of Texas, Oregon, and California.\(^{249}\) There was a widely held belief that persisted in the United States that Europe was “united in the desire to save Mexico from

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\(^{249}\) Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 2
American expansion.” This fear was echoed in the often spread rumors of the meddling of Great Britain and others in Mexico which caused problems for the United States.

The concern over Texas was felt throughout the entirety of American society, as reflected in the letters and correspondences received by Polk during his first months in office. In a letter to James K. Polk from former Jacksonian New York State Assemblyman, Augustus Beardslee of Little Falls, New York, on March 8, 1845, reflected some of the apprehension in the northeast of the United States towards the annexation of Texas. The worried former politician made a strong argument against Texas’s addition to the union on the grounds that its debts should not be absorbed by the United States, as it was their own problem. In May 1845, the Washington Union wrote on the topic of Mexican intransigence, that “Mexican gasconading about her pretended rights and pretended wrongs,” “insolence, stupidity, and folly, every little favorable to the cultivation of liberal conciliatory dispositions on our part… If she now persists in carrying into effect her absurd threats of war … she will exhaust what remains of disposition our part to deal generously with her.” In a letter to Polk from then Supreme Court Justice and Jackson appointee, John Catron, from Nashville, Tennessee on May 20, 1845, the writer tells the President that the “spirit of annexation” is strong in his local area, along with other reports making similar statements. It is also seen by many that it is truly considered a “settled matter,” in that the public saw Texas as already an American state. In a similar letter from William Moore of Fayetteville on June 5, 1845, the author called upon Polk to continue the glory of the

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250 Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, 361.
251 Leonard, James K. Polk, 153.
United States through the annexation of Texas. It was shown that much of the public felt positively about the annexation issue.\textsuperscript{255}

After the annexation of Texas, the public’s attention turned towards a possible conflict with Mexico. Polk received another letter from Catron on August 16, 1845, that again offered his support for a war with Mexico, if that was to be the path that Polk was to choose. Catron also mentions the joy gained from any European jealousy that would occur once American gained California and other Mexican territories.\textsuperscript{256} A newspaper clipping, from an unknown paper, kept by Polk referencing a coming war with Mexico, stands by the American belief in its right to Texas as the newest addition to the Union. It attacks Mexican claims to Texas as baseless and annexation hardly an American wrong that would lead to war. It cites many of the examples that Polk himself used to defend his stance on Texas. First, that Mexico had lost Texas when it had broken away, and had done nothing to regain it since. In addition, Mexico had been defeated by the Texans, and, as such, had no right to claim any sense of ownership over that territory. The article then went on to site the many unfulfilled claims by American citizens against the Mexican government.\textsuperscript{257} This article is a clear representation of the direction of the Polk administration towards Mexico and its people. At no point, is any thought given to the situation in Mexico except in the most negative manner possible. The *New York Morning News* during the summer and autumn of 1845 wrote representing the nation’s warring spirit, “Nine-tenths of our people would rather have a little fighting than not.”\textsuperscript{258} The paper the *Union* printed a similar reflection of this general war fever, a year later acting as the administrations propaganda machine, “We

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{256} “John Catron to James K. Polk, August 16, 1845,” James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm Collection, Library of Congress, Series 2, Reel 40.
\bibitem{257} James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm Collection, Library of Congress, Series 2, Reel 41.
\end{thebibliography}
mean to conduct war against Mexico with all the vigor in our power... We shall invade her
territory; we shall seize her strongholds; we shall even TAKE HER CAPITAL, if there be no
other means of bringing her to a sense of justice.”

Not all Americans were allied with the president in his attitudes toward war with Mexico,
though more out of pity than any sense of equality. One example comes in the form of a letter to
Polk on May 20, 1846, in which the author, under the classical Roman pseudonym Junius,
represents the part of the nation that opposed a war with Mexico. The author urged Polk to
recognize that a state of war existed at the current time, and for him to explain why the
circumstances had occurred and the route in which the president took. The letter goes on to
mention as it characterized Mexico as a nation with a “weak and changing government,” which
causes any conflict upon Mexico to be unjust in accordance with American ideals and the
Christian faith. In an article published in the *Boston Courier* on May 22, 1846, it referenced a
correspondence from Washington on May 19. It was concerned with the suspected clash
between General Taylor’s force and Mexican troops along the Rio Grande. However, it reflects
on the uncertainty of the American public towards the prospect of war, and the secrecy to which
Polk moved Taylor to the area, without the knowledge of the American public. The
correspondence states its reservations against Polk:

I learn with surprise, - or it would be with surprise, if the administration had not
proved itself besotted in almost everything that has been done touching our
foreign relations, - that the President, while carrying on his war in Mexico, is at
the same time carrying on a political war in the capitol.

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of Annexation*, 456.
260 “Junius to James K. Polk, May 20, 1846,” James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm Collection,
Library of Congress, Series 2, Reel 45.
261 “*Boston Courier*, May 22, 1846,” James K. Polk Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm Collection, Library of
Congress, Series 2, Reel 45.
Still, very few Americans expressed remorse for of a war against a people perceived feeble and lacking in self-respect. The general assumption in the cabinet was that Mexico would not fight and could be defeated easily if it did, which was also reflected in the public opinion, with some even thinking that the Mexicans would “welcome an invading armies.” The Victories in the Southwest had vital attachments to the “notions of romanticism and chivalry that were abundant in the country.” By the end of the Mexican War, manifest destiny seemed to have been verified, and the superiority of the American race had been proven to such an extent that became a national creed.

*The Perspective from the Mexican Press:*

Since 1836, Mexican leaders found it useful in gaining support to place emphasis in the public on the loss of Texas to the United States, which increased the Mexican, will to defend itself against American aggression. Soon after James K. Polk took office, the Mexican press took the situation with a strong nationalist spin that propped up Mexican greatness and denounced all things American. In the minds of Mexicans, Polk’s entrance into office to Mexicans was closely connected to the Congressional Texas annexation bill. It was widely believed that Polk’s election was the event that made the discussion of and the eventual bill possible. It was written in the Mexican press in response to Polk’s assertion of Texas as lost American territory, that he was ignoring the Mexican perspective and the recent history of the territory out of his own priorities and convenience. It was noticed in Mexico, that Polk’s expansionist policies were derived from the discourse and sentiments of the greater portion of the

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263 Bergeron, *The Presidency of James K. Polk*, 110
265 Wheelan, *Invading Mexico*, 76
266 *El Monitor Constitucional 1844-1846*, Ciudad de Mexico, No. 86, March 30, 1845.
267 *El Monitor Constitucional 1844-1846*, No. 92, April 6, 1845, pg. 4.
American population, which provided sufficient motives for increased armaments and preparations for attack.268 The Mexican Press warned of “American greed,” and that its final goal would be all of Mexico. “Union and war” was the rallying-cry, but preparations were made difficult due to a series of revolutions in 1845 against the Herrera government.269 On numerous occasions articles within Mexican newspapers attacked the United States and made robust commentary to the strength of Mexican national unity. On February 25, 1845, the newspaper *El Siglo XIX* published an article concerning a potential conflict with the United States, “The struggle on which Mexico is today being obliged to enter is the most national cause since 1810. It is a fight to the death, a question of existence and nationality.”270 It stated again between June and July, 1845, “The Mexican republic is today in a war which is absolutely inevitable but just.” It continued to call for unity in the face of an outside enemy while blaming Herrera and his “imbecile cabinet” for the crisis.271 By July, 1845, it was clear that the current state of harsh diplomatic and economic relations along with the large scale military preparations were clear notions of a war against American aggression.272

The annexation of Texas also created a strong reaction in the Mexican press. In an article in the *El Monitor Constitucional* from July 18, 1845, it was written that the Mexican people were focused upon the sizeable American forces on the Rio Grande, and that war with the United States had been decided with the annexation of Texas. Furthermore, if war came to pass the propositions between Mexico and Great Britain concerning Texas would be pivotal. Further on, it argues that the movement of U.S. troops to the Rio Grande had created a greater opinion that it

268 *El Monitor Constitucional 1844-1846*, No. 326, January 4, 1846.
271 Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico*, 274.
272 *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Ciudad de Mexico, No. 1320, July 11, 1845, pg. 2.
was a reaction due to Great Britain’s presence in Mexican affairs. Though Texas at the time was well within the influences of the United States, it was still highly independent in spirit, as it had been towards Mexico.273 The following day in the newspaper El Siglo Diez y Nueve, it was written that the United States had offended Mexican national honor with the annexation of Texas, which would lead to a time of war. In response, Mexico had to prepare to guard its borders immediately from an attack from the north, as the current condition of affairs must be considered one of aggression.274 At the end of March 1846, it was argued in the Mexican paper, El Monitor Republicano, that Texas was still not truly independent of Mexico, though it had made that claim for the past decade. In addition, the future of Texas should have been left to the decisions of the Texans and, more importantly, the Mexican government, without any pressures from the United States, Great Britain, and France. Overall, Texas’s place in the relations between Mexico and the United States was seen as a domestic problem by the Mexican press.275

At the beginning of August that year, the same newspaper wrote that as Texas pushed its boundaries towards the Rio Bravo, it was essentially an act of war towards Mexico. Once it was annexed by the United States, Texas’s actions were passed on to its new government. In the end, after the United States sent troops into Texas towards the Rio Grande, it was seen by the Mexican press as an invasion and an occupation of Mexican territory.276

Prelude to Hayes and Díaz:

Following the war between Mexico and the United States, the balance of power shifted permanently in favor of the United States. The U.S. was now the dominant nation on the

273 El Monitor Constitucional, Ciudad de Mexico, July 18, 1845, No. 180, pg. 1.
274 El Siglo Diez y Nueve, July 19, 1845, No. 1328, pg. 1.
275 El Monitor Republicano, Ciudad de Mexico, March 31, 1846, No. 404, pg. 2.
276 El Monitor Republicano, August 1, 1846, No. 527, pg. 2.
continent and could hold sway over Mexico as it pleased, particularly politically and economically. The loss of territory after the Mexican-American War eliminated the cushion between the two countries. In the United States, both politicians and business leaders discussed the possibility of a Mexican protectorate. Groups like the “All Mexico” movement called for the annexation and purchasing of territorial assets. Others, especially in the South, called for a “controlling economic arrangement” with Mexico.277

In the American Southwest, the war marked a change from subsistence cultivation to market production. Following the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, there were a great number of revolts, a political transformation (La Reforma), and a French occupation. The new Liberals that arose believed that there was no resistance to foreign invasion and that Mexico was a “fiction” as a nation. It was just an “ineffective collection of poor Indians, overly taxed and regulated merchants, foreign artisans, and poorly trained military and greedy priests.”278 Yet, the United States was still seen as a “liberal utopia” during the Reforma (1867-1876), even in the face of continued threats of American expansion. Mexico was entering the beginning of an era of “economic Americanism,” looking to the benefits of economic expansion.279

The liberals of the Reforma were not only concerned with the political health of Mexico and its connection to the United States, but also economic issues that were closely tied to the political stability of their country. After La Reforma, Mexican liberals began to see the United States as less of a model and more of a threat, as its growing power was quite clear, as was Mexico’s glaring political weaknesses. The Mexican poet and journalist Justo Sierra Mendez

277 MacLachlan & Beezley, Mexico’s Crucial Century, 73, 79.
278 Raat, “Texas and a Collision of Cultures,” 85, 87.
referred frequently to the threat of the United States throughout the 1870s. He used the phrase “struggle for existence” to describe the weakness of Mexico compared to the “marvelous collective animal” to the north. The natural imbalance demanded the “strengthening of the central authority and directed external defense.” In a work written between 1876 and 1877 Sierra’s tone was one of slight cooperation, “To attract to our extensive and unpopulated territory the greatest possible number of honest and industrious colonists … is certainly one of the duties of any enlightened government, especially in a nation like ours, so rich in natural resources but lacking the necessary hands to exploit them.” Sierra Mendez stated, in summation of the political atmosphere during 1878, “We have crossed the Rubicon,” and that there is no turning back. Mexico’s problem now was to avoid becoming “a protectorate, which every Mexican will be obliged to resist by law and by the rifle.” The cultural threat was “perhaps the most dangerous form (of Americanism),” was an “attempt at moral and intellectual annexation.”

Hayes, Díaz and the Border Issue:

The raids along the Rio Grande border soon took precedence, as they became the major hang-up in the negotiations over the recognition of Porfirio Díaz and full economic transfers between Grant’s administration and Díaz. In the English language Mexican newspaper The Two Republics posted a story that Governor Coke of Texas brought attention to the Indian incursions in the Upper Rio Grande Valley and the Mexican incursions in the Lower Valley, and called for military action to secure the border and prevent any further raids and violence upon his

280 Hale, The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico, 218.
281 Justo Sierra Mendez, Memoria presentada … por el secretario de estado y del despacho de foment, colonización, industria y comercio, December 1876-December 1877 (Mexico, 1877). in Hale, The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico, 235.
citizens. On December 9, 1876, *The New York Times* ran an article from Brownsville, Texas about outrages against American citizens in Mexico. The specific incident in question was of an American businessman who was taken prisoner and held for three months by the Mexican General Revueltas, which was just the latest incident in a long line of outrages. There grew a greater concern with protection and preservation versus necessarily progress and expansion. *The New York Times* published an article on November 3, 1877 on a proposed treaty between the United States and Mexico. It was argued that cooperation would be advantageous to both sides if a treaty could be crafted. Secretary of State William Evarts was not seen as an expansionist and it would have been best for his legacy as a statesman to accomplish such a feat. It would be just as important to Mexico, as Díaz was also extremely anxious to come to similar conclusion and willing to please those in Washington. However, the topic of recognition was identified as the one major blockage of the pursuit of a treaty.

Due to the situation along the border, the United States saw Mexico as a state in complete anarchy. There were still many questions surrounding Díaz, his abilities, and his power to control the country. Referenced from the *New York World*, Señor Manuel Mariscal, the newly appointed Mexican Minister, sent his assurance to the people of Mexico that their leaders did not support the policies of the newly elected president Rutherford B. Hayes. *The Two Republics* reported that there was a strong sense of angst in Mexico against American intervention, but it was seen that the American press was pushing Hayes beyond the simple border question. In Mexico, it was believed only through the recognition of Díaz that the raids would decrease. There was some resemblance of cooperation between the two sides, but strong suspicions

284 *The Two Republics*, Mexico City, Vol. IX, No. 48, May 24, 1876.
remained on the American side that Mexican forces were in league with the bandits.\(^{288}\) It was continually printed in the Mexican press that Mexico and Díaz needed time to have central control be consolidated, which was not being given by the United States in their response.\(^ {289}\) As reported in *La Patria*, the early negotiations over the Rio Grande made very little headway, forcing the Mexican minister to leave Washington worried that war was the eventual outcome. There were still many questions amongst the Hayes administration about Díaz’s abilities in international relations and his official significance in office.\(^ {290}\) In an editorial in *La Voz de Mexico* in November, 1877, the writer wrote negatively of Hayes in that his policies were just a continuation of Grant’s. Díaz was to be the counteraction to the annexationist claims, and he must follow Juárez’s politics.\(^ {291}\)

By the end of 1877, Secretary of War George McCrary made clear his intentions, that he expected the administration to work in concert with Mexico along the border, but General Sheridan believed that war was on horizon if American and Mexican forces accidentally collided in the field. General Edward Ord in the field had confirmation and was convinced that the Mexican populace and authorities on the Lower Rio Grande were in sympathy with the raiders on the Rio Grande. This supposed lack of Mexican support was a hindrance to his mission of guarding the border. Ord’s suspicions reflected the general American feeling that the Mexican government was behind the raids, or at the very least, unwilling to bring the raiders to justice.\(^ {292}\) In a republished letter to the editor in *The New York Times* on January 20, 1878, taken from the Mexican newspaper, *La Epoca*, the author is extremely bitter towards the policies of Evarts,

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\(^ {288}\) *The Two Republics*, Vol. XI, No. 10, September 1, 1877.

\(^ {289}\) *The Two Republics*, Vol. XI, No. 17, October 20, 1877.

\(^ {290}\) *La Patria*, Ciudad de Mexico, No. 202, November 16, 1877.

\(^ {291}\) *La Voz de Mexico*, Ciudad de Mexico, No. 270, November 23, 1877.

\(^ {292}\) *The Two Republics*, Vol. XI, No. 27, December 29, 1877.
placing the blame on American policies. His policies are seen as far too harsh towards the
Mexican government and are thus doomed to fail. It was argued that the only way for
resolutions to be reached on the various claims between the two countries is through friendly
negotiations. Furthermore, that Mexico should be treated on equal footing with the United
States, and not as a lesser entity while negotiations continued.\(^{293}\) It was written in the *New York
Times* in June 1878, of the raids by American Generals Mackenzie and Ord into Mexico, were
needed though they are on the whole unsuccessful, in which the blame must be placed on
Mexico. However, it is recognized again that President Díaz would be equally restless about
stemming the tide of border raids on both nations.\(^{294}\) The Mexican press presented Americans as
ignoring the current situation by holding the Mexican government responsible for the past
problems along the border.\(^{295}\) Hayes was quoted in Mexico as stating his belief that relations
between the United States and Mexico could not be continued in its current alarming condition,
and that his administration had to postpone diplomatic relations until there was a more solid and
permanent base of reciprocal convenience.\(^{296}\) Foster’s recall from Mexico by Hayes and
subsequent return was seen in the Mexican press as a clear admission by the president of his
failure to negotiate with Díaz.\(^{297}\)

The American press was split to some degree on Evarts’s decisions, though some were in
support many attacked it as “high-handed and intolerable.” Though, James G. Blaine also
publically supported Evarts, he referred to the Secretary of State’s decisions, “As a comforting
and consolatory addendum to the whole scheme, we are kindly assured that in no event shall any

\(^{293}\) “Letters to the Editor: Mr. Evarts’ Foreign Policy,” *The New York Times*, January 20, 1878. Translated from *La
Época*, December 14, 1877.


\(^{296}\) *La Voz de Mexico*, No. 47, February 26, 1878, pg. 3.

Mexican territory be acquired or annexed to the United States. As in many cases of similar
design and movement, the most important feature may be that which is especially disavowed.”298
In a newspaper article entitled “The Trade Reports,” attached to a letter to Evarts from the
prominent New York businessman J.S. Schultz on June 17, 1878, it comments on Evarts shift in
the use of the American consuls. “They show there are few articles manufactured here that are
not favorably received abroad, and the majority of the consuls agree in saying that with proper
attention there is no doubt that our trade could be indefinitely extended.”299 In an article printed
in The New York Times in September the paper defended the raids by American troops into
Mexican territory, but did see some legitimacy of Mexican opposition towards those raids.
However, the article does point out that the raids would be unnecessary if the Mexican
government could control its own borders without outside assistance.300 In an article on
January 1, 1879, The New York Times commented upon the transition in the relations between
the United States and Mexico, particularly concerning the issue of the border. It was reported
that at the time the Mexican government finally was able to seek out raiders along the border,
and, as predicted, was successful on its first attempt.301

There were many rumors of the United States’ pursuit of a Mexican protectorate abound
in both Mexico and the United States during Hayes’s administration. Many arguments were
made on both sides of the U.S. Congress, which included a number of attacks made against
Hayes, after the introduction of a resolution in June 18787 by Senator John Morgan of Alabama
to absorb Mexico into further American influence. This partisan bickering caused much

299 “Letter from J.S. Schultz to William M. Evarts,” “The Trade Reports,” in The Correspondence of William M.
trepidation within Mexico, and was worrisome as to the true intentions of the American
government towards its southern neighbors.\textsuperscript{302} Amongst many in Mexico there was a strong
opinion that Hayes’s appointment of Generals Ord and Renald S. Mackenzie to settle the border
issue had been the wrong choice as they had little experience in dealing with Mexico and the
tenuous situation. In an article referenced from the \textit{New Orleans Times} on June 30, 1878, it was
seen that the administration clearly wanted war, “A Mexican fight is what the administration
wants now.” However, the \textit{Two Republics} felt differently about the situation and looked for
more cooperation.\textsuperscript{303} In the Mexican press, Hayes was seen mistakenly as an annexationist
whose only concern was to take large pieces of Mexican territory, and was often compared to a
bandit looking to rob Mexico.\textsuperscript{304} Foster commented upon the intensity of the animosity of the
Mexican press towards the American government:

\begin{quote}
In October, 1878, I reported to the Department of State that the prevailing belief
in Mexico was that the situation would result in war. An incident had occurred the
month previous in which I was an unintentional participant that afforded the press
an opportunity to circulate more alarming rumors … The same press, however,
was united in condemning what it charged was the policy of the United States in
seeking to bring about hostilities with a view to annexation or the establishment
of a protectorate.\textsuperscript{305}
\end{quote}

\textit{Economic Ties and the End of the Border Dispute:}

The close ties between American economic interests and foreign policy soon became a
leading issue in the relations between the United States and Mexico. Commercial ties between
American business and Mexican resources created a strong and beneficial connection that neither
national government wanted to disturb with the possibility of war. John Foster wrote towards the

\textsuperscript{302} \textit{The Two Republics}, Vol. XI, No. 1, June 29, 1878.
\textsuperscript{303} \textit{The Two Republics}, Vol. XII, No. 5, July 13, 1878.
\textsuperscript{304} \textit{El Siglo Diez y Nueve}, Ciudad de Mexico, Vol. 74, No. 12058, September 25, 1878, pg. 3.
end of his report, published in 1878, on the trade with Mexico to the Manufacturers’ Association of the Northwest in Chicago:

Mexico is our natural market, and the two countries should have more intimate commercial relations. But our merchants will continue to find other markets beyond the equator and on the opposite side of the globe, unless, first. Mexico is willing to liberalize its legislation and reestablish its credit, so as to make a direct railroad communication possible; 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Modify its tariff and interior trade regulations; and 3\textsuperscript{d}. Preserve a stable Government, and enforce order and protection to life and property. When these are accomplished, an unexampled era of prosperity and development will dawn upon this fair land, and the two Republics will be bound together by the indissoluble bonds of commercial and social reciprocity, which will not allow a disturbance of their peace or their national integrity.\textsuperscript{306}

The mission by the American manufacturers centered in Chicago to Mexico was met with a great deal of trepidation, though it was considered much more credible than military incursions. It was clear to those in Mexico that the difference in the relations between the economic interests and political interests of each nation was outstanding. It represented a true dichotomy between cooperation and animosity and force.\textsuperscript{307} Referencing a \textit{New York Sun} article from November 11, \textit{The Two Republics} newspaper in Mexico was still citing the American hesitance towards Mexican diplomacy. In the article it was seen as a wasted effort by Hayes by many in the United States in negotiating with Mexico, as Diaz seemed to be making little progress in civilizing Mexico, especially in civil service reform, like that attempted by Hayes in the United States.\textsuperscript{308}

By the waning months of 1880, the shift had turned from military action to economic pandering on Diaz’s part. \textit{The New York Times} wrote an article on one of the various banquets held by the Diaz government for American business investors. This specific dinner was meant to entice those interested in “establishing railway communication with Mexico.” The article goes on to

\textsuperscript{306} John W. Foster and Manufacturers’ Association of the Northwest, \textit{Trade with Mexico; Correspondence between the Manufacturers’ Association of the Northwest, Chicago, and Hon. John W. Foster, Minister, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to Mexico} (Chicago: 1878. Reprinted, Memphis: General Books, 2010), 26.
\textsuperscript{307} \textit{The Two Republics}, Vol. XII, No. 50, January 8, 1879.
\textsuperscript{308} \textit{The Two Republics}, December 28, 1879.
state, that the parties involved were “the Republic of Mexico, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Company, the Palmer & Sullivan grant, the Mexican Central grant, the Sonora grant, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company.” As can be seen, the meetings covered much of Mexico’s railway grants, which was an outreach to a large number of American railroad companies.\textsuperscript{309}

The overall positive change is reflected in a letter to President Hayes on December 2, 1880, William Leonard Helfenstein, a former Pennsylvania judge, in which he discussed the positive change in the situation along the Mexican border.

Seven years ago when I paid my first visit to Mexico, the Rio Grande on both sides was infested with thieves, robbers and murderers, composed of lawless Americans, Mexicans and Indians, so that the journey was extremely perilous and the loves and property of sellers and residents were exposed to constant danger… Both governments may be congratulated in the success of their measures … No one of our own statesmen that [...] has more of the spirit of enterprise of the age and more enlarged and liberal views as to the internal and foreign policy of his own Government. With such men in power in Mexico I look with great hope to her bright and magnificent future.\textsuperscript{310}

Helfenstein’s letter clearly shows the almost immediate changes that had occurred along the U.S-Mexican border in under a decade. Though the border was far from solid, it was far more secure on each side, which was important to the prospering of trade and good natured feelings between the two countries.

The general public imagination and the popular press in both the United States and Mexico played significant roles in the transformation of the relationship between the two countries over the greater portion of the nineteenth century. These facets of each society

\textsuperscript{310}“Letter from William Leonard Helfenstein to President Rutherford B. Hayes, December 2, 1880,” in \textit{Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes concerning Mexico}, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center Library.
contributed to the political discourse surrounding diplomacy, including the evolution of the border that split these two North American powers. By Polk’s election in 1844, the evolution of the concept of manifest destiny had reached its apex and swung much of the emphasis on territorial expansion, which brought the United States into direct conflict with Mexico. Yet, by Rutherford B. Hayes’s term in office, the belief in the divine manifestation of American glory had dissipated, to a degree, and the focus shifted to economic dominance. This type of imperialism needed a more tactful and cautious approach to gain the cooperation of the Mexican government, with the ideal partner coming in the form of Porfirio Díaz. In Mexico, the shift was less drastic, but more impactful. The Mexican public and press continually remained hostile towards the United States, and were still fearful of American invasion, which was understandable given the history of the relations between the two countries. Díaz’s administration attempted to change the perception of his people during his first term, with some success, as the United States turned into an economic savior that would help cultivate Mexico’s newly formed industrial complex and infrastructure.
CONCLUSION

From the election of James K. Polk in 1844 to the end of the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880, the U.S.-Mexican border became the central factor in the relations between the two nations. Polk’s policies and actions leading up to the Mexican-American War in 1846 attempted to create a border to the west and south of the United States, in replace of the many various perceptions of borders in both the United States and Mexico. The American victory in the war with Mexico brought the two countries into closer contact, and removed any cushion that could have previously existed after the annexation of Texas. This direct connection continued to create problems as the border area became a haven for bandits, displaced revolutionaries, and marauders. Before Hayes election as president in 1876, the United States had already implemented a policy of “hot pursuit,” by sending American troops across the border into Mexico, with much protest from Mexican officials. Over his four years in office, Hayes attempted to foster a cooperative relationship with Mexico, and in the process transformed the border into the modern scenario that exists today. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the U.S.-Mexican border transformed from a military background to an economic frontier.

James K. Polk’s push for war with Mexico was based on his extensive personal goals and ambitions that he designed for his presidency. It was during the election of 1844, that the concept of manifest destiny flowing through the United States, which matched the strong public opinion for territorial expansion in the country with a leader with a nearly identical policy to accomplish expansionist desires. A major focal point of the Polk administration, which also captured the collective attention of the United States as a whole, was the annexation of Texas. The addition of this young republic as the newest state into the Union became a springboard territorially, and increased the confidence of American expansionists, Polk chief among them,
that greater territorial expansion at Mexico’s expense was an easily attainable reality. Polk also perceived of a weakness in Mexico, both in terms of political instability and military strength. This was validated, at least politically, in the continual revolving door of Mexican presidents.

In terms of Mexico, in the years leading up to the Mexican-American War the presidential carousel was in full effect. A sense of stability came with the election of José Joaquin de Herrera in 1844. He sought to pursue a peaceful plan concerning Texas and the interactions with the United States. Herrera’s attempts at relinquishing Texas to avoid war were attacked mercilessly by the Mexican press and forced his eventual downfall. His successor, Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga, sought a much different course of action, one of direct confrontation, pushed by many within the press, to defend the national honor of Mexico over the loss of Texas and the possibility of greater losses at the hands of their northern neighbors. The border was the issue here, as though Polk and the expansionists wanted to expand the border, by their actions, one was actually created for really the first time territoriality in terms of nation state controlled settlement.

Rutherford B. Hayes attempted to change the course of relations between the United States and Mexico from that of the previous administrations that was much more confrontational, which was in direct correlation with his want of a quiet presidency. By 1876, the competition for the North American continent was no longer in question, as the United States came to be the clear dominant power. In terms of relations with Mexico, he pushed for a more cooperative spirit than his predecessors; however, he still had to implement the policy of “hot pursuit” as the situation of raiding marauders along the border became too great of a problem to be overlooked. Hayes issued this order out of necessity to protect American citizens in the border areas and their property from these bandits. However, due to Hayes’s willingness to avoid conflict, this is
where the military action stopped and a greater conflict was avoided. This situation became the
center of a greater controversy, as it directly impacted the recognition of the government of
Porfirio Díaz, who came to power the same year as Hayes. The economic connections between
the United States and Mexico had shifted greatly by the end of the 1870s, as the United States
was now the dominant economic power, and shifted its focus from territorial conquest of Mexico
to one based more commercially, and any conflict would disrupt this link of commerce and trade.
In the end, the policy of Hayes and his Secretary of State William M. Evarts was summed up as
protection precedes recognition.

Porfirio Díaz was also responsible for the cooperative nature that came to be between the
United States and Mexico. He needed the recognition by the United States for the
legitimatization of his government in the Mexican political structure, through the fact that Díaz
was seen to be able to fulfill any international obligations and was presumed to maintain order
within his own country. Díaz had to be willing to play the diplomatic game with his northern
neighbors in order to get what he wanted and needed. In addition, he sought possible American
investment for the developing Mexican industry and railway lines that would assist in bringing
Mexico into a greater industrial state. Díaz, however, still had to pander to a degree with the
Mexican press. Though he continued negotiations with the United States concerning his
negotiations, Díaz still maintained a hard stance publically to placate any possible detractors.
Through these reasons, it was seen by Díaz, and slowly the rest of the Mexican public, that the
issue of the marauding along the Rio Grande and its eventual security was seen as a common
goal finally for the two nations instead of a relationship as purely continental competitors.

The U.S.-Mexican border had a strong impact in the relationship of the two countries
throughout the nineteenth century, and for much of the century was the focal concern. Through
the presidencies of James K. Polk and later Rutherford B. Hayes, the border was seen in both the United States and Mexico as the last barrier culturally, politically, and economically in a history of hostility. In the United States it transformed from an obsession of territorial gain to an economic frontier that could be exploited for its own gain. Mexico, on the other hand, sought to preserve the border in its favor as it was the last defense against Anglo-American conquest, at first territorially and then economically through the duration of the nineteenth century.
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