AMERICAN POLICY IN GUATEMALA, 1839-1900

DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER I
TROUBLESOME BEGINNINGS

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Guatemala was exceedingly difficult to accomplish. The problem originated with the vacillation of the American State Department in deciding whether relations should be instituted with the Government of Guatemala, or with the government of the United Provinces of Central America. This dilemma had grown out of the confused state of affairs which followed the separation of the Captaincy-General of Guatemala from Spain. At first united to Iturbide's short-lived Mexican empire, the five Central American states organized a federal union in 1825 under the name of the United Provinces of Central America. The United States promptly recognised this new federal union and signed a treaty of commerce and friendship with it on December 5, 1825.1

However, governmental institutions adapted to the needs of Anglo-America did not work equally well when transplanted to a land where the problem of geographical isolation alone made such a union difficult to achieve. In May, 1838, the individual Central American states were granted permission by the federal government to form their own governments; and though the federal government was to linger on, it was, to

all intents and purposes, dead. Guatemala finally declared her independence from the federal government on March 21, 1847. Hence in the period between 1838 and 1847 the American diplomatic representatives were commissioned, not to Guatemala, but to a Central American government which was actually no longer in existence. Even then our representation to that part of the western hemisphere was not adequate. One historian described in the following manner the attempts to establish diplomatic relations with Central America:

Futility marked the early relations of the United States with Central America. Nothing went right; everything went wrong. The very agents of the Washington government seemed to move under an evil star. Physical hardships, vexations of the spirit, dread diseases, and in some cases death itself attended them. Of the eleven appointees before 1849 three died enroute; another succumbed before he started on his mission; one escaped with his life by being dismissed before he embarked; another survived by contriving to draw his salary for more than a year without going near the Central American capital; and another traveled over the length and breadth of the country unable to find a government to receive him. Though the remaining four reached their destination and were relieved, only one of these prolonged his stay beyond a few months and he committed suicide soon after his return to the United States.

This tale of woe is well illustrated by an examination of the brief diplomatic career of Elijah Hise of Kentucky, who accepted appointment as our Minister of Guatemala on

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2. For a full account of the dissolution of the union see Ibid., Chapter X.

April 23, 1848. Unable to obtain direct passage to Guatemala, Hise went to Panama, hoping to find a ship that would carry him to a Pacific port close enough to afford easy access to Guatemala City. From Panama he sent a letter to the Department describing the rigors of the trip across the Isthmus, complaining that his travel allowance had been exhausted, and pleading that a naval vessel be sent to carry him to his destination. After waiting at Panama for seven weeks, the Kentucky diplomat retraced his steps across the Isthmus and sailed to Jamaica, hoping that he could obtain passage to Guatemala at that point. From Jamaica he sent his wife and nephew home to the United States and prepared to go on alone, after complaining to the Department that "if the mission is important the government should enable me to get there or recall me. I have endured much hardship and sickness and been put to great expense in trying to reach my place of destination." Ill with fever at Kingston, Jamaica, Hise traveled to Havana in order to recuperate. There he expressed the hope that the President would see fit to recall him from what had developed into a perilous mission because of his shattered health. He was not recalled but continued

4. Hise to Secretary, April 23, 1848. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America) I, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

5. Same to same, July 17, 1848. Ibid., I.

6. Same to same, September 8, 1848. Ibid., I.

7. Same to same, September 28, 1848. Ibid., I.
his odyssey, finally reaching Guatemala, whence he reported
to Washington that with the aid of pack mules he expected to
reach Guatemala City within ten days. Hise was justly con­
cerned over how he was going to negotiate any treaty that he
might forward to Washington in time for ratification, for if
it had taken him so many months to reach his post, how could
he trust the mail service.\textsuperscript{8} Before being recalled as a
result of the change in administrations, Hise was to complain
thus of his isolation at Guatemala City: "I get no intelli­
gence from the United States by letter, I get no newspapers,
I have received but one short communication from the State
Department, since my departure from New York."\textsuperscript{9}

With the duly commissioned diplomats of the United
States having so much difficulty in reaching their posts, it
might be assumed that there was little diplomatic communica­
tion between the United States and Guatemala in the 1840's.
Such was not the case, for an American citizen, Henry W.
Savage, was to keep Washington well informed of events in
Central America during this decade. As the various official
diplomats departed, they tended to leave the Legation records
in the hands of Savage, who assumed the role of a \textit{de facto}
American diplomatic representative though he was never
officially designated as such. "The only entry regarding

\textsuperscript{8} Same to same, October 26, 1848. \textit{Ibid.}, I.

\textsuperscript{9} Same to same, March 20, 1849. \textit{Ibid.}, I.
him, in the records of the Bureau of Appointments of the Department of State, indicates that he was appointed Consul at Guatemala City, on March 13, 1863 by a recess appointment, which was rejected by the Senate on May 29, 1865."10 Despite lack of official Washington approval, Savage was considered as an American diplomat; and in discussing a claim of Savage against the government of Salvador, the Secretary of State said, "Mr. Savage, who... has resided in Central America almost continuously for half a century, is well known to this Department as having, for a considerable part of that time, discharged with approbation the duties of Consul and Charge d'Affaires of the United States."11 Savage resigned as Consul in 1861, bitterly denouncing the Department for its lack of appreciation of his services.12 Yet he is referred to in 1866 as an American Consul.13

The importance of Savage's indefinite status as an American diplomat obviously lay in the fact that it made negotiations difficult with the Guatemalan government in the


12. Crosby to Seward, August 21, 1861. Despatches, Guatemala, IV.

1840's, especially concerning the proposed treaty. Savage informed the Department that the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs had pointedly asked him if he had the authority to renew the lapsed treaty between the United States and the defunct United Provinces of Central America, but with reference to Guatemala alone. To this query Savage had to answer in the negative, and instead complained to the Department that since the departure of General Murphy Guatemala had recognised him as the agent of the United States, but had lately become diffident toward him. When the invitations to attend the Guatemalan Declaration of Independence ceremonies were made, Savage contended that "an official one to me has been purposely omitted." Savage was undoubtedly hinting that the course of American relations with Guatemala would run much smoother if he were only accorded the diplomatic status he thought he merited.

The first of the regular American diplomats appointed in the decade under consideration was John L. Stephens. He was also undoubtedly the most competent. Stephens, a man of superior intelligence and initiative, knew his way around, and he was healthy enough to stand the rigors of the Central

14. W. S. Murphy, A Special Agent of the United States to Central America, left Guatemala in June 1842, leaving Savage in charge. Savage to Webster, June 18, 1842, Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), I. This would mean that the United States was without official diplomatic representation from 1842 until the arrival of Hise in the autumn of 1848.

15. Savage to Buchanan, March 27, 1847. Ibid., I.
American climate. In addition, his interest in and knowledge of antiquarian studies gave his mission to Central America meaning beyond the mere call of diplomatic duty. Appointed as a Special Agent of the United States to Central America, Stephens was instructed to close the American Legation and to express the official displeasure of the Department toward the instability of the federation government. He was also to check on the status of the treaty of amity, commerce, and friendship signed by former Consul DeWitt, but not yet ratified, to see if the Central American government still wished to ratify it. However, Stephens was unable to find a Central American government to whom he could express American displeasure or with whom he could discuss treaty negotiations. He was to report that Guatemala was very friendly toward the United States but would refuse to recognise any treaty we made with the federation government. Being unable to find the federal government to which he was

16. Lockey, op. cit., p. 282. Stephen's Incidents of Travel in Central America has generally been acknowledged as one of the classic works in its field in the nineteenth century. See also Henry M. Wriston, Executive Agents in American Foreign Relations (Baltimore: 1929), pp. 635-638 and Victor W. Von Hagen, Maya Explorer (Norman, Oklahoma: 1947), pp. 120-136 passim.

17. Vail to Stephens, August 13, 1839. Instructions to American States, XV. General Records, Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

18. Stephens to Forsyth, December 25, 1839. Despatches, Central America, II.

19. Stephens to Forsyth, August 17, 1840. Ibid., II.
accredited, Stephens "put aside all ideas of acting in an official capacity and devoted himself to archeological investigations."20

General William S. Murphy of Ohio was the next American to travel the difficult road to Central America as Special Agent. He was instructed that the interest of the United States in that part of the world was dictated by the fact that our country needed a source of tropical products. It was pointed out to Murphy that as our relations with Central America had always been friendly we should now strive to have the former commercial treaty renewed.21 Murphy presented his credentials to the Guatemalan government in December, 1841, and left for home on March 30, 1842. Though ill with malaria for the three months of his stay, he was able to dispatch home lengthy reports pointing out that there was no hope of reviving the United Provinces of Central America and that there was in Central America a real threat to American interests from the British.

The American agent reported that British interests practically had control of the state. President Carrera was depicted as an ardent national leader but one who was unacquainted with the wiles of British diplomacy. The British Agricultural and Colonizing Society was active in an attempt

20. Lockey, op. cit., p. 287.
21. Webster to Murphy, July 28, 1841. Instructions to American States, XV.
to obtain a renewal of old grants and to obtain new ones, especially at the seaports. According to Murphy "the real object in obtaining these grants, is to give to the Government of Great Britain a fit occasion, as well as a probable claim, to colonize and settle the Main Ports and Rivers of the State, and for the protection of Her colonies, She finds it eventually necessary to erect Forts, Garrison Towns and actually take possession of the country."  

Murphy may have exaggerated the ulterior motives of British attempts to gain land grants, but there was no question about the attitude with which Her Majesty's Government set out to collect money owed British citizens. The British debt resulted from a loan to the old Central American Federation which totaled $47,613 when that government was dissolved. Guatemala was allocated $19,889 as her share of the debt. Unable to collect by peaceful means from a bankrupt government not yet adequately organized, Britain prepared "to proceed by means of its own to effect a settlement." In this crisis the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs turned to the unofficial American representative for help. He, in turn, presented the case to Washington.

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23. Savage to Webster, June 28, 1842. Despatches, Guatemala, (Central America) I.
This British threat to Guatemala passed, but the fear of American diplomats toward British influence did not. "English agents and influences...are alive and at work both in Central America and at London to produce results most inimical to the interests of the United States." Especially was it feared that England had designs on the canal route through Nicaragua. Washington diplomatic representatives reported that American agents were immensely popular because Central America feared the designs of Britain. Partially because of this fear of the English and partially because of disgust with the chronic anarchy within the country, many natives evidenced interest in an American protectorate over Guatemala. During the Carrera rebellion Don Mariano Rivera Paz, who was later President briefly, along with other leaders seriously planned to place Guatemala under the immediate protection of the United States Government. They were prevented from attempting this venture by the lack of an American representative.

In the revolt of 1848 there was some talk of soliciting the protection of the British, but the majority looked to the United States. Henry W. Savage reported to Washington that

24. Hise to Buchanan, May 25, 1849. Ibid., I.
25. Squier to Clayton, August 20, 1849. Ibid., II.
26. Savage to Webster, June 30, 1842. Ibid., I.
everybody wants to know when the North Americans will come to Guatemala, others wish me to assure them, if there be a probability of their coming, so as to live with the hope, as there is no possibility of peace or quietude [sic] until the government of the United States establish its authority here.

This manifestation of general opinion might surprise the government of the United States; nevertheless, it is a fact beyond a doubt that the greater part of the enlightened part of the people...desire anxiously this event, and would submit to the authority of the United States, as the only hope of Salvation for this country; for the revolutions here, are of so terrible a character, that no good is expected from any change of men...and it is a positive belief, that were it not for the proximity of the civilizing influence of the United States, this country would by degrees revert to the aboriginal state in which Alvarado...found it.27

There was quite probably some truth to Mr. Savage's contention that many Guatemalans looked to the United States, though such statements must be weighed against the background of the militancy of nineteenth century Manifest Destiny.

With the American agents on the alert to protect Guatemala from foreign influences (in the best interest of the United States, of course), they became involved in a vain effort to halt the colonizing efforts of a Belgian company. This company sought to gain control of the Port of Santo Tomas, exclusive navigation rights on the Motagua River, and

title to some 150,000 acres. Such grants would have given
the Belgian firm control of the trade of Guatemala through
its domination of the rivers on the Atlantic side. The
English Consul was reported aiding the Belgian firm because
some Englishmen stood to profit from the transaction.
Though passed by the Legislative Assembly of Guatemala, the
Executive held up ratification of the agreement after the
American Special Agent pointed out the manner in which Guat­
temalan trade would be controlled by foreigners.28 Halted
once, the Belgian contract reappeared consistently, with
America's unofficial envoy, Henry W. Savage, laboring dili­
gently to block it. It was tentatively approved on May 4,
1842, only to be held up the following year over the question
of extra-territorial privileges to the Belgian government.
Behind the Belgium efforts to colonize was always the hand
of England, whose agents showed great interest in the trans­
action. The British Consul-General informed Guatemala in
1853 that "his instructions were most positive not only to
support, but even to state, that Her Majesty's Government
might see itself compelled to insist upon the convention"
dealing with the contract of the Belgian Company. The
question might be asked whether this was not an attempt of
Britain to circumvent the Clayton-Bulwer treaty before the
ink was dry on it. Apparently Mr. Savage thought as much,

28. Murphy to Webster, March 1, 1842. Manning, ed.,
Diplomatic Correspondence, III, pp. 189-192.
for he wrote to Washington invoking the Monroe Doctrine.

Now as the ratification of this treaty would imply a right to the permanent establishment of a European Colony, by which means also, it would be brought under more powerful influences than the Belgian Government could exert in its favour, and as it would be in direct opposition to the principle advanced by Mr. Monroe, which it is the duty of America to sustain, I have judged proper, to bring it under your immediate notice.29

Fortunately, the worry was one for Mr. Savage only, for there is no record that the Department at Washington even acknowledged his fears.

During the war between Mexico and the United States the President of Honduras called upon the Central American states to join forces in halting American aggression. The American representative at Guatemala City pointed out that the call was meaningless because the Central American republics did not possess the means to wage war, even if they had the will.30 Guatemala refused the requests of the Mexican agents to buy arms, though she favored the Mexican

29. Savage to Marcy, April 1, 1853. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III. For other despatches dealing with the Belgian contract see Savage to Webster, June 30, 1842; Manning, op. cit., III, pp. 202-203; Savage to Webster, April 25, 1843; Ibid., III, p. 224; Savage to Upshur, September 29, 1843, Ibid., III, p. 225; Savage to Buchanan, December 26, 1846, Ibid., pp. 236-237; Savage to Marcy, March 26, 1853, Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III. The colony was established by the Belgians but was a dismal failure with large numbers succumbing to tropical diseases before the remainder fled to farms on the plateau. Charles A. Barker, ed., Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby (San Marino, California: 1945), p. 89.

cause. The ease of the American conquest, however, caused the Guatemalan officials to be careful not to offend the United States. Some Guatemalans were reported as even fearing that the Washington government might compensate Mexico for territorial losses elsewhere by giving her Central American territory. Such fears were, of course, groundless.

Throughout the decade of the 1840's an attempt was made to renew commercial negotiations with the Central American states. At first, as already noted, the desire was to renew the expired treaty with the federation government. As the American government was reluctant to admit that the union of the Central American states was beyond revival, it dragged its feet whenever treaties with the individual states were concerned. In addition, the State Department was busy with the Oregon question, and the Texas-Mexican problem. Henry W. Savage wrote numerous despatches to Washington soliciting treaty-making authority and calling attention to the commercial benefits to American traders from such a treaty. He complained that the British control "all trade with Central America to the exclusion of the States, and this is owing to the effective protection afforded to their commerce, and by exhibiting occasionally their vessels of War in the ports of this country." The Guatemalan government was also

31. Same to same, December 25, 1847. Ibid., III, pp. 262-264.

32. Savage to Upshur, December 1, 1843. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), I.
repeatedly to solicit official contact with the United States in order to negotiate such a treaty. After Guatemala formally declared her independence from the long dead United Provinces of Central America on March 21, 1847 there was no longer any reason for Washington to delay establishing official diplomatic relations. Therefore, Hise was appointed in 1848 with specific instructions to negotiate a trade treaty.33 Despite his short stay in Guatemala, Hise was successful and on March 20, 1849 informed the department that he had successfully negotiated the desired treaty.34 Unfortunately it was to be three years before the treaty of 1849 was successfully ratified.

The ratification of this treaty established formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Guatemala. Throughout the decade of the 1840's the little official diplomacy carried on was theoretically with the government of the federation. By accepting this treaty the State Department was to acknowledge that the federal government of Central America was non-existent, though it was to continue to encourage its revival. Although the other states were recognised by Washington and for a time received separate diplomatic representatives, the legation at Guatemala City remained the hub of American diplomatic policy in Central America.

33. Buchanan to Hise, June 3, 1848. Instructions to American States, XV.
34. Hise to Secretary, March 20, 1849. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), I.
America until the end of the century. As Guatemala is the largest and most influential of the Central American states such a condition was not only natural but well-nigh inevitable.
CHAPTER II
A DECADE OF DISTRUST

In the decade from 1850 to 1860 American policy in Guatemala was rather badly entangled in the British-American isthmian rivalry and the Walker fiasco in Nicaragua. As we are mainly concerned, however, with Guatemalan and United States relations, only those aspects of the larger story which affect them will be treated here. The decade of the fifties saw the development of American policy in Guatemala suffer one of its few setbacks. It was a period marked by a definite feeling of hostility toward the representatives of the Washington government. The American agents attributed Guatemalan distrust of the United States to the policies of the Conservative Carrera government, to British influence at Guatemala City, and to the activities of Yankee annexationists, especially William Walker.

Certainly it was not a decade in which United States diplomats found service in Guatemala easier than had their predecessors. One of them complained bitterly of the great expense requisite in order to reach Guatemala. This person was also most unhappy about the lack of instruction from Washington and the great difficulty in getting personal mail from the United States.1 Two others were to be even more

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1. Marling to Marcy, July 23, 1855. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III.
unfortunate. William E. Venable arrived at Guatemala City on July 31, 1857, only to die on August 22 of that year.\(^2\)

Beverly L. Clarke was to remain alive in Guatemala long enough to write numerous despatches but eventually was to suffer the same fate. Clarke wrote the Department requesting a three month leave from his post because of ill health and commented: "In consideration that Guatemala has hitherto been the graveyard of American Representatives, I indulge the belief that my request will be granted."\(^3\) Unfortunately, Clarke was not relieved and died at his post on March 17, 1860.\(^4\) Despite the high mortality rate among its representatives at Guatemala City, the Department usually had an official diplomat available at that Central American capital during the decade of the 1850's. In this respect, at least, some improvement was shown over the preceding ten years.

The decade of distrust began with numerous reports that the once friendly feeling displayed toward Americans had markedly cooled. The "servile" or monarchial party in control of the Guatemala government was blamed for the change in attitude. It was alleged that this Conservative party served the interests of England first, mainly because the English would be more likely to be sympathetic to a


\(^3\) Clarke to Cass, September 22, 1859. *Ibid.*, III.

return of monarchial institutions than would the North Americans. Carrera's followers were even blamed for the collapse of the old Federation. The antipathy which the Guatemalan government sought to stir up against the United States was thought to stem from hatred of our democratic institutions. This fear of the Americans prompted Guatemala to sound out the British as to the possibility of their taking over the country as a protectorate. In this proffer, however, she was rebuffed. Lord Palmerston, speaking through the British Charge, rather bluntly stated that "Guatemala must look to her own resources for means of defense and not depend on foreign powers for protection." The Carrera government next considered the possibility of requesting Spain to take Guatemala back as a protectorate (as in the case of Santo Domingo). It was thought that a Minister was accredited to Belgium to solicit that monarch's support of a protectorate for the Central American States by some European nation. It was even stressed that it was

5. Squier to Clayton, March (?), 1850. Ibid., II. The most complete treatment of Anglo-American Isthmian rivalry in the decade of the 1850's is to be found in Mary W. Williams, Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815-1915 (Washington: 1915), and Ira Dudley Travis, "The History of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty," Michigan Political Science Association Publications, 1900.

6. Savage to Webster, April 21, 1851. Ibid., III.
7. Same to same, July 12, 1851. Ibid., III.
8. Savage to Marcy, October 24, 1853. Ibid., III.
essential to arrange for such a protectorate hurriedly so as to prevent the United States from absorbing all of Central America.9

Judging by the nature of the despatches of Henry W. Savage, America's unofficial representative, Guatemala had ample reason to distrust "the Colossus of the North." For Savage was a devout apostle of Manifest Destiny. In discussing the fear of the Guatemalans that the United States would eventually absorb all of Central America, Savage wrote: "They are aware that the North Americans will come and take their country, but they will not extend a helping hand to the subjugation of their native land."10 Savage had little use for the institutions of Guatemala and apparently did not conceal his dislike. To him "Catholicism and military rule have charms" for these people. "The greatest zealots of Military sway, are those who evince the firmest adherence to Catholicism," Savage believed. He complained that on the anniversary of Central American independence a curate of the Catholic Church discussed the divine right of those who govern and ridiculed political liberty. Though concerned

9. Same to same, December 1, 1854. Ibid., III.

10. Savage to Marcy, May 31, 1853. Ibid., III. Professor Manning is of the opinion that instead of "aware" Savage meant "apparently afraid." However, based on the general tenor of Savage's other despatches this writer is ready to accept the use of "aware." See Manning, ed., Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, pp. 340-341.
over discrimination against American traders, Savage wrote, "it is now a question, whether or not, these countries, be fit subjects, with which the United States ought to have Treaties of peace and commerce." There was no question but that a strong feeling of antagonism existed toward the liberal Protestant institutions of the United States on the part of the conservative Catholic Carrera regime. There was likewise no question but that the bellicose attitude of Mr. Savage and other Americans did not help the situation in any way.

Guatemala was also to display some irritation toward the Monroe Doctrine during the decade of the fifties. Her minister to Washington pointed out that the assumption that the United States had the exclusive right to interfere in the political affairs of this continent was not accepted either by Europe or by the Spanish American states. Irisarri informed the Department that "Such guardianship is highly injurious to the rights of those nations whose inherent sovereignty and independence are conceded." Guatemalan resentment was undoubtedly increased because of the colossal stupidity of an American Minister. Seeking to prevent the consistent encroachment of British settlers

11. Savage to Marcy, November 10, 1854. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III.

12. Irisarri to Marcy, May 19, 1856. Notes from Central American Legations, II. General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
over the Belize frontier, Guatemala in 1859 negotiated a treaty settling the boundary with British Honduras. To Minister Clarke this constituted the giving up of territory in violation of both the Monroe Doctrine and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. Clarke saw Britain and Guatemala secretly united against American interests. Hence, he protested vigorously to Guatemala. To these rather foolish objections Guatemala justifiably inquired as to how she could violate a treaty to which she was not a party. It was suggested that if the United States had any objections to the treaty, they should be presented to Great Britain rather than to Guatemala. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala bluntly stated to the American Minister: "I must therefore declare distinctly and categorically that I cannot admit the intervention of a foreign Agent in an affair in which...I cannot consider him to be in any manner authorized to interfere." The State Department apparently was of the same opinion; consequently the matter was dropped.

Of more importance as a source of friction between the United States and Guatemala during this decade was the Walker episode. After worrying about the possibility of

13. Clarke to Cass, July 22, 1859. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III.

14. Pedro de Aycinena to Clarke, October 18, 1859. Enc. in Clarke to Cass, October 15, 1859. Ibid., III. Also in Irisarri to Cass, July 9, 1860. Notes from Central American Legations, III.
being absorbed by the United States, many Guatemalans saw
Walker as a semi-official agent designated to carry out that act. It is therefore surprising to find that the official protests of Guatemala through her Minister in Washington were relatively mild. The difficulties the United States encountered in curbing the activities of such adventurers were recognised, as was also the fact that the government at Washington had voiced strong official disapproval of filibustering. Yet, it was consistently pointed out that the United States government was responsible for such expeditions and that more vigorous efforts should be taken to halt recruiting and the purchase of military supplies within the United States. In addition, the tradition of friendship between the Central American States, especially Guatemala, and the United States was emphasized with the suggestion that Walker's activities were endangering this friendship.\textsuperscript{15}

Meanwhile, from Guatemala City came the report that the presence of Walker in Nicaragua had excited so much hostility towards Americans that warships were requested to protect our citizens in case of an uprising.\textsuperscript{16} Apparently the average Guatemalan was less tolerant of American filibustering

\textsuperscript{15} Irisarri to Marcy, November 30, 1855; May 19, 1856; December 5, 1856. Irisarri to Cass, September 14, 1857; November 10, 1857; December 13, 1857; September 21, 1858. Notes from Central American Legations, II, III.

\textsuperscript{16} Marling to Marcy, December 1, 1855. Despatches, Guatemala, (Central America), III.
than their diplomat in Washington. In his instructions to Minister Venable, Secretary Cass stressed the importance of impressing upon Guatemala her responsibilities for the protection of American citizens under the treaty of March 3, 1849. This warning was necessary because of the recent events in Nicaragua which had created some hostility toward citizens of the United States. However, it was felt that though traces of dislike and apprehension still existed, the message of President Buchanan denouncing Walker had done much to remove previous unfavorable impressions that he was an official agent of the United States.

Throughout the decade of the fifties American interest in the isthmus as a transit route caused the diplomatic agents of Washington to be continuously on the alert for examples of British influence. They were to find any number of such examples, fancied or otherwise. We have already noted how the Carrera government of Guatemala was accused of being simply a front for English economic and political interests, and this was an opinion held not simply by one of the American diplomats, but by most of them. The State Department, which hitherto had paid little attention to the problems of its diplomats in Central America, suddenly became interested in that area. Because of the concern for

17. Cass to Venable, April 28, 1857. Instructions to American States, XV.

18. Clarke to Cass, September 20, 1858. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III.
the transit route to California, the Taylor Administration determined to check further encroachments by a stiff policy toward the British.19

In this attitude America was supported by E. George Squier, who used his journalistic experience less as a diplomat than as an enthusiastic promoter of American isthmian interests. Squier reported that British influence was strong in Guatemala but could be lessened by a little display of power. He recommended that if an American man-of-war would "be about," British prominence could be counteracted.20 The various activities of English agents to cut off the transit route were enumerated, such as the Mosquito protectorate, the seizure of Tigre Island, and the blockade of Salvador. To Squier these activities were "a diversion in favor of Carrera, the tool and instrument of England, who has lately secured an English loan."21

This American policy of vigorously resisting British attempts to control one of the most important crossroads in the world was reversed by the change of administrations which followed Taylor's death and Webster's succession as


21. Squier to Clayton, October 25, 1849. Ibid., II.
Secretary of State. Minister Squier did not appreciate the change in Central American policy and accused Secretary Webster of seeking to serve British interests rather than American. The motive for Webster's peculiar extra-nationalism Squier attributed to Webster's being jealous of the fame acquired by Taylor's administration because of the work of Secretary Clayton. Squier wrote Clayton that the new Secretary of State was anxious to get the Whig presidential nomination in 1852, and so was trying to undo Clayton's work in order to eliminate him as a rival.

Britain was accused of fomenting trouble between Guatemala and Honduras, of encouraging the former to "gobble up" the latter so as to extend British domination in Central America. Britain would certainly have profited, as Guatemala was reported to be so completely under Britain's thumb that she was referred to as "alias Great Britain." The frequent bitter attacks on the United States and upon democratic institutions in the official newspaper of Guatemala was likewise blamed on the British. "No one doubts that they were written by an English hand, or at least, dictated by an English heart," the American Minister to Nicaragua reported.

22. Williams, op. cit., p. 426. (Note)


24. Borland to Marcy, November 25, 1853; December 10, 1853; January 11, 1854. Despatches, Nicaragua, I.
The previously cited incident wherein Minister Clarke reproached Guatemala for violating the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty grew out of fear of British aggression. Clarke saw the British-Guatemalan treaty, secretly negotiated, as the beginning of an attempt to drive American interests from Guatemala. Clarke accused the British of using the Walker episode to undermine the American position in Central America by stressing that if it were not for English protection the Central American states would be flooded with filibusters from the United States. Perhaps the recent English loan prompted Guatemala to surrender so much of her sovereignty, or perhaps it was because over one half of Guatemala's imports came from Britain's traders, he suggested. To Clarke the real danger in this treaty drawing Guatemala and Britain closer lay in the fact that

in wealth, in physical resources, and in the strength and stability of its Government, Guatemala is the most potent state in Central America, and is supposed to exercise a vast influence over all the rest; thus Guatemala became an almost indispensable auxiliary in accomplishing the ends of British intrigue and diplomacy; and the inauguration of a policy, by this treaty was, in my opinion, designed to add the weight of Guatemalan influence in directing the conduct of other states.

Clarke then recommended a more aggressive policy by the United States to counteract that of Britain. It was again suggested that the presence of an American naval vessel might prove helpful. Clarke concluded his long despatch by repeating what had become a chronic complaint of Central
American diplomatic agents, that is, that he was in a most difficult position in his dealings with the Guatemalan government because of a lack of instructions from Washington as to what American policy pertaining to that region actually was.25

The decade of distrust closed with the American diplomats still complaining of the hostility of Guatemala to both the United States and to all democratic institutions. It also closed with the Department at Washington continuing the previously established poor practice of not keeping the agents in Central America properly informed concerning American policy toward that region. Perhaps this failure can best be explained by the fact that the Secretary himself was not completely sure what the policy was.

25. Clarke to Cass, October 15, 1859. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), III. What Clarke did not know was that the Secretary of State had given London approval to extend its hold in British Honduras if they halted their aggressive activities elsewhere in Central America. Secretary Marcy instructed the United States plenipotentiary, Dallas, that "'it would not be of very much moment to the United States whether the British tenure at the Belize be enlarged or not.'" Quoted in Stephen L. Caiger, British Honduras Past and Present, (London: 1951), p. 196.
CHAPTER III
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND AFTER

Relations between the United States and Guatemala were mainly uneventful from the decade of distrust in the 1850's until the advent of the Barrios regime in Guatemala in the 1880's. In fact, most of the developments that had an important influence upon the evolvement of American policy in Guatemala took place during the Civil War years while the interesting Elisha Oscar Crosby was the United States Minister.

Crosby was, in many respects, the best qualified minister to represent the United States at Guatemala City of any of the nineteenth century diplomats. A native of New York, with experience as an attorney in New York City, Crosby had made the long trip through the isthmus to California in 1848. There he had helped in laying the constitutional basis of that state's government at the Monterey Convention and had participated in local politics. It was his California background that gave Crosby the qualifications to function so ably as our Minister to Guatemala. Fortunately, he spoke Spanish fluently, and his linguistic ability gave him an advantage over most of his predecessors. Crosby was thus able to converse extensively with President Carrera, who had been aloof to other American Ministers. Though not glossing over the essentially despotic character of the Carrera
regime, Crosby has left a far more flattering picture of the Conservative Guatemalan leader than has any other American of the period who came in contact with Carrera. Residence in California had made Crosby also aware of the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Spanish America. He therefore made it a point to know the Catholic Archbishop of Guatemala, who occupied a position of considerable power under the Carrera government. Referring to the power of the Church, Crosby commented that "to lose sight of that influence and good will a foreign representative would lose at least half of his influence in the country."\textsuperscript{1} After presenting his credentials to the President, Crosby had made his very next call upon the Archbishop.

In reading the section of Crosby's \textit{Memoirs} dealing with Guatemala, one is struck by the interest he shows in the country. Crosby dwells at considerable length upon the economic problems of the nation and only regrets that war conditions made difficult the establishment of closer economic ties between the United States and Guatemala. Though definitely not one who was interested in American domination of Guatemala, in a general way some of Crosby's trade ideas anticipate the more aggressive commercial policy of the United States in the Caribbean area at the onset of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[1.] Charles A. Barker, ed., \textit{Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby}, p. 83.
  \item[2.] \textit{Ibid.}, p. xviii.
\end{itemize}
Crosby's pet project was Negro colonization, and he was to write copious despatches in a vain effort to promote it. Rather, he was to be concerned with Negro colonization after months of writing Seward that Southern sympathizers had fabricated the charge of bigamy against him, and that he most assuredly did not have wives scattered throughout the United States.

With the beginning of the Civil War Secretary of State Seward launched a policy calculated to win friends for the United States among the Spanish American Republics. Most of the new ministers were obviously good Republicans who enthusiastically blamed the South for the filibustering expeditions and expansionist doctrines that had alienated the Spanish Republics in former years. The Latin Americans were informed that if the South won the war, their victory would open the way for a veritable wave of filibustering in the future. In addition, the threat of widespread European intervention that followed the outbreak of the American Civil War caused many Spanish Americans to hope that the United States would remain powerful enough to be able to protect them.⁴

To further American interests Crosby was instructed judiciously to remind the Guatemalan Government that anything upsetting the order of the American Government might set a

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⁴ Nathan L. Ferris, "The Relations of the United States with South America During the American Civil War," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXI (February, 1941), p. 53.
precedent that could have dire consequences for other parts of the Western Hemisphere. The new American Minister to Guatemala was to find little evidence of the new-found friendship for the United States that was being reported from other parts of Spanish America. Instead, he found conditions to indicate that the decade of distrust had been extended. Crosby reported secret negotiations afoot among the controlling interests of Guatemala which he believed to be based upon a desire to restore the authority of a monarchy. The plot supposedly was that when the proposed monarchy was established in Mexico, Guatemala would request annexation to the former country with President Carrera to be retained as Captain-General. The desire of the old ruling class for a restoration of the titles and other trappings of nobility was given as an important motive. England was even blamed as the guiding genius of the plot. Although there was no official recognition of such a proposal, it became a major topic of conversation in the upper circles of Guatemala City. The military and the church strongly backed the better classes in their promotion of the scheme to establish a monarchy. Crosby doubted that Carrera had anything to do with the plot, but its promoters sought to win the favor of

4. Seward to Crosby, March 23, 1861. Instructions to American States, XVI.

5. Crosby to Seward, March 25, 1862. Despatches, Guatemala, IV.
the President by promising that it would be a means by which he could greatly extend his authority.\textsuperscript{6}

However, the death of Dr. Luis Batres, Vice President of Guatemala and one of the principal supporters of the proposal, on June 17, 1862, caused it to be slowly abandoned. Those who only a few weeks before had spoken in favor of the plan to annex Guatemala to Mexico in order to restore monarchical institutions now dropped the subject. The official government band serenaded the United States Legation on the morning of July 4th with their version of our national anthem.\textsuperscript{7} Crosby reported, perhaps with a tinge of cynicism, that as the news of victories of the Union army trickled in,

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\textsuperscript{6} Same to same, May 6, 1862. \textit{Ibid.}, IV. It is interesting to note that this is quite similar to the plots reported a decade earlier that sought to create a monarchy. As Crosby was a sympathetic observer of Guatemalan affairs much credence may be placed upon his reports. Moreover, there is additional evidence to support his suspicions. There is an interesting letter by one Charles d'Hericault dated June 30, 1864 concerning possible European intervention in Mexico. Quoted in E. Lefevre, \textit{Historia de la Intervencion Francesca en Mexico} (Bruselas y Londres, 1869), I., pp. 441-442. The writer relates the fact that there had been plans discussed in European governmental circles concerning the establishment of some prince in Guatemala as well as in Mexico. "The King of the Belgians, had had as a principal object, sounding out his important neighbor on the project of erecting into a kindom the old vice-royalty of Guatemala, Central America, and Yucatan up to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec." The Count of Flanders who was reportedly close to Louis Napoleon was to play the role of Maximilian.

\textsuperscript{7} Same to same, July 6, 1862. \textit{Ibid.}, IV. This practice of an official serenade on Independence Day was to spread to many other Spanish American Republics, and in Washington our government returned the courtesy when their independence day was celebrated. It was another example of the new-found friendship between the republics of the Western Hemisphere. Ferris, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 76.
\end{quote}
evidences of Guatemalan friendship for the United States became more pronounced. Also, many Guatemalans began discussing the future of Central America if Mexico should be annexed by France. They feared that some other European nation might likewise attempt annexation in Central America. Hence, the feeling of friendship for the United States grew in direct proportion to the beliefs of the Guatemalans in their need for a protector.

Crosby attributed the antagonism of Guatemala toward the United States during the previous decade to the fact that most of the American diplomats during that period had been from the slave-holding states. He indirectly patted himself on the back for bringing about a better understanding of the United States in Guatemala.\(^8\) The proposal to annex Guatemala to a monarchist Mexico persisted, but the withdrawal of England and Spain, especially the latter, from participation with the French forces in Mexico caused such a cooling off of interest in the scheme that Crosby warned that it would be better for our government not to protest, as the plan would soon be completely abandoned anyway.\(^9\)

From the evidence of Ministerial despatches of a later date, the Guatemalan Government was even more pro-Southern than Crosby had believed. Under the Barrios regime, when

\(^8\) Same to same, July 21, 1862. Ibid., IV.

\(^9\) Same to same, August 6, 1862; August 21, 1862. Ibid., IV.
the Guatemala officials were seeking favor in the eyes of the United States and also seeking to discredit the old church-conservative faction they had successfully overthrown, Minister Logan was permitted to peruse the official records. He discovered that the Carrera faction believed that "the republic could not live, but that the empire must be substituted for it" (meaning the United States, of course). To help this substitution the Guatemalan Minister to Washington was secretly instructed to use his best efforts in a prudent manner "firstly, to weaken (debilitar) the union sentiment, and secondly, to assist by every possible means, the Southern cause."¹⁰ There is always the possibility that a doctored set of records could have been shown Minister Logan, but on the basis of the previous conduct of the Carrera government this report does not sound too improbable.

The pet project of Crosby during his stay in Guatemala, as mentioned previously, was Negro colonization. Like many northerners who thought slavery abhorrent but who were not yet ready to accept the Negro as their equal, Crosby saw colonization as a way out of a difficult dilemma. To this group, of course, must be added the name of President Lincoln.¹¹ One of the areas seriously considered as a

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¹⁰ Logan to Blaine, May 27, 1881. Despatches, Central America, XVII.

¹¹ For details of Lincoln's plan to colonize the emancipated Negroes in Central America see Warren A. Beck, "Lincoln and Negro Colonization in Central America," Lincoln Quarterly, VI (September, 1950).
possible colonization site was in Central America on the Isthmus of Chiriquí, in what is today northern Panama. In recommending the area, Secretary of the Interior Smith pointed out to President Lincoln that "the settlement of a colony of colored Americans, whose sympathies would naturally be with this country, would ultimately establish there such an influence as would most probably secure to us the absolute control of the country." This was exactly what the Central American countries feared, and primarily as a result of their very vigorous and joint objections to Secretary Seward the entire project was abandoned.

Crosby, of course, saw the unsettled areas of Guatemala as ideal colonization sites. He especially thought that the tropical lowlands would be well suited for the Negroes because of their similarity to their native home in Africa. He selected the exact location for the colony and proposed that the Negroes would settle as immigrants and who later would be naturalized as Guatemalans. At first some of the officials favored Crosby's suggestion, but President Carrera was always opposed to it. The President pointed out the difficulty of assimilating large numbers of English-speaking Negroes who would probably upset the balance among the already mixed races. Crosby was asked, "If the U. S. wants

to colonize the free blacks on territory by themselves, why don't they appropriate some of their own sparsely populated territory to this purpose and keep them themselves?" To this inquiry the American Minister was forced to admit that he was without a ready answer, so the matter was dropped.13

Minister Crosby was succeeded by Fitz Henry Warren of Iowa, who presented his credentials on June 27, 1866. And with this new minister begins a period in which American relations with Guatemala passed into the humdrum stage. Warren reported in detail the attempted revolt of General Cruz, which failed. The Guatemalans were duly shocked by Mexico's execution of Maximilian, as many of them were sympathetic with his objectives. However, as it was pointed out, political executions were no novelty to Guatemala herself.14 Warren was replaced by Silas A. Hudson, also of Iowa, who, judging by the following newspaper report, qualified as a typical diplomatic appointee of the Grant administration.

The report that Silas A. Hudson of Iowa, the newly appointed Minister to Guatemala is a colored man is contradicted by the New York Sun. "The fact is" says the journal, "he is perfectly white. He is a cousin of Gen. Grant, was formerly a cattle driver

13. Barker, ed., Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby, pp. 89-90. However, in a despatch Crosby states that President Carrera was in full approval of the plan to bring in Negro emigrants. Crosby to Seward, July 21, 1861. Despatches, Guatemala, IV.

14. Warren to Seward, July 31, 1867. Despatches, Guatemala, V.
in Oregon, knows a great deal less of the English language than the law allows, served on Grant's staff the last two years of the war, is a plucky, rough, ignorant, manly fellow, about as fit for a foreign mission as a crowbar is for a cambric needle. Nobody but his cousin could ever have invented the idea of appointing him. As he goes to a country where the English language was not spoken, one objection to his appointment is partially removed, but in other respects he will certainly astonish the Dons of Guatemala. He takes the place of that elegant and cultured gentleman, Gen. Fitz Henry Warren, who reckons fluency in the Spanish language and familiarity with the usages of polite society among his accomplishments.15

Fortunately, this pseudo diplomat was to do a minimum of damage to the good relations of the two nations. It was as American Minister during the Liberal revolt in 1871 which successfully overthrew the Conservatives that Hudson was to play a dominant role. He willingly accepted the proffered role of mediator, gave asylum to political refugees, and with the Italian Charge arranged for the peaceful transfer of the government.16 Hudson became so strong in his demands for a warship to back up his diplomatic powers and was so obviously going beyond the proper limits of a neutral diplomat, even after warnings from the Department, that the scholarly Fish found it necessary to administer a verbal spanking. As this instruction so ably applies to all Ministers of the Hudson type, and the United States has had too

15. Enc. in Warren to Fish, May 3, 1869. Ibid., V.
16. Hudson to Fish, June 3, 1871; July 4, 1871; July 16, 1871. Ibid., V.
many of these in the Latin American states, it is quoted in its entirety.

It may be as you remark in the former, that this Department does not fully realize the situation in Guatemala. That, perhaps would be impractical for a person at this distance, even if by travel to that country or otherwise he had become familiar with the places and persons adverted to by you.

Perhaps, however, such a familiarity is not indispensable for the correct application of general rules to the scenes and events which you have witnessed. It cannot be acknowledged as you insinuate, that this government habitually or tamely submits to what you call Spanish injustice, and that the diplomatic representatives of the United States fail to accomplish any good from want of home support. On the contrary this government does not acquiesce in any injury which may be inflicted upon citizens of the United States by authorities of Spain or of any other country. When, and when only, the judicial tribunals of a country can not or do not afford relief, the government does not hesitate to direct application to be made for it through the diplomatic channels. It is only when those applications are ineffectual and justice is believed to have been denied, that recourse may be had to such other measures as cannot be adopted unless authorized by the Congress of the United States.

...It is not, and never has been, our policy to domineer anywhere, even in the Spanish American States. If there should have been anything in the past history, if the great physical strength and resources at least of the United States, should tend to inspire respect anywhere abroad...we may be thankful for the influence which that representative may derive from these in addition to those justly ascribable to his own antecedents, character and abilities. The occasions must, however, be rare in which it would comport with the interest or policy of the United States to wield such an influence for the purpose of favoring or discouraging particular men or measures in a foreign country.

17. Fish to Hudson, November 24, 1871. Instructions, Guatemala, XVII.
Hudson's successor, George Williamson, though more able, also had to be instructed always to remember the neutral obligations of the American Minister. Williamson had proposed a meeting of the five Presidents of the Central American states to discuss plans for union and also to clarify issues that might lead to war. He was instructed:

It is hoped that in your dealings with the politicians in that quarter, particularly when it is borne in mind how frequently they and their schemes are changed, you will be careful to avoid committing yourself so that your usefulness in any event or the friendly disposition toward this government might not be weakened.18

At the time of the expulsion of Minister Russell from Venezuela, Minister Williamson reviewed the problems of a Latin American diplomat on the basis of his experiences in Guatemala. He felt that the Government of that country looked upon all diplomats as mere spies and not as the honored representatives of friendly governments. Williamson attributed this attitude to the following reasons: (1) the rulers of the Central American States had very little knowledge of the rest of the world and the operation of international diplomacy; (2) the leaders realize that their governments are very imperfect and dislike this fact to be reported to the rest of the world; (3) the fact that they cannot treat foreigners with impunity as they do natives causes the rulers to fear that their governments may lose

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18. Davis to Williamson, December 22, 1873. Instructions, Guatemala, XVII.
support among their own people; (4) these governments have undoubtedly suffered many unnecessary humiliations from foreigners who take advantage of the presence of their nation's diplomats; (5) these people are very sensitive and resent persons of official rank who are constantly corresponding about the affairs of their government.  

It was during the tenure of Minister Williamson that Guatemala City narrowly missed losing the position of pre-eminence as the seat of the American Legation. Since 1849 a single minister had handled the diplomacy of both Guatemala and Honduras, with the Legation at Guatemala City. The affairs of Costa Rica, Salvador, and Nicaragua were handled by a minister residing in the latter country. Williamson was appointed in 1873 as Minister to all of Central America. This move was prompted partially by the lack of American interest in Central America, and partially, perhaps, because the State Department sought by that step to promote interest in a revival of the federation. San Jose, Costa Rica, was selected as the seat of the American Legation. However, the hostility of that country toward the United States, primarily because Costa Rica did not take kindly to the union proposals, caused Minister Williamson to continue at Guatemala City.  

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19. Williamson to Evarts, May 18, 1877. Despatches, Central America, XII.  
20. Fish to Williamson, October 27, 1874. Instructions, Costa Rica, XVII.
between Guatemala and the United States continued to refer to most of Central America.

Williamson preferred Guatemala City as the Legation seat and proceeded to pen an excellent defense of his choice, soliciting Departmental approval. The choice of Guatemala City is also, incidentally, a good explanation why Guatemala had taken the lead as the center of Central American diplomacy for so long. Williamson pointed out that the diplomats of other countries were there as were most of the European and American trading firms. Minister Williamson stated the case thus:

Guatemala, possibly owing to her having been the seat of the vice-royalty, before the independence in 1825, possibly because of her larger population, possibly to her freedom from revolution under the reign of Carrera for so many years, possibly to her generally acting in union with Salvador, and possibly to the probable stability of the present administration has an influence in Central American affairs that no other single state possesses. This city is the metropolis of Central America. It is in advance of all of them in education, refinement, liberalism, and freedom from bigotry. In due course of time, under proper influences, there is a probability, it may become a center from which may radiate the rays of genuine republicanism. At present it is impossible to exercise a beneficial influence through social connections so healthfully as in this city.21

Williamson may have overstated the case, but the leadership of Guatemala City as a preferred legation post was to remain unchallenged.

21. Williamson, to Fish, April 3, 1874. Despatches, Central America, V.
The end of the 1870's brought to a close the relative state of dormancy in Guatemalan-United States relations ushered in by the Civil War. The leadership of the aggressive Barrios, who was to try so hard to effect Central American union under his auspices, and the reawakened interest in the isthmian canal, meant that American diplomats were to be able to play a more active role than in the two preceding decades.
The primary interest of the United States in originally establishing diplomatic relations with Guatemala was economic. As previously discussed, the attempts to negotiate a treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Friendship, an effort which was finally successful in 1849, stemmed from an interest in possible trade relations, not only with Guatemala but with all the Central American states. The need for tropical products was emphasized by the Secretary of State in his instructions to American Ministers sent to the Latin American countries. The fear of England in the decade of distrust of the 1850's could be accounted for on the basis of British trade domination, though certain strategic considerations were important. For in this decade more imports entered Guatemala from England than from all other nations together. All of the American Ministers were of the opinion that the presence of American naval vessels in Guatemalan waters would do much to insure the safety of United States commercial interests. However, to a nation with a continent to conquer and an important internal problem to settle, the trade possibilities with the Republic of Guatemala seemed rather trivial. Hence, American economic interest was to be limited for many decades.

In the post-Civil War period the American diplomats tried to arouse more interest on the part of Washington in
the economic exploitation of Guatemala, but their agitation met with little success. Minister Warren in frequent despatches described the economic progress that had been made in Guatemala, especially in coffee production. Warren hoped that ultimately the United States would see fit to purchase most of its coffee supply from the Central American republics. Minister Warren predicted considerable emigration from the United States to take advantage of the opportunities an expanding Guatemalan economy would offer. In this surmise the American Minister was to be proven correct, and a number of Yankee commercial adventurers were soon to find their way to Guatemala, to the sorrow of many of them.

Minister Hudson was to be even more interested in Guatemala's economy than his predecessor. He pleaded that unless the Department gave more positive encouragement to American business enterprises, British interests would develop Guatemala "to the prejudice of United States commercial and political interests." Hudson encouraged cooperation with Guatemala to subsidize the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, so that it could make regular stops at San Jose, Guatemala, on its run between Panama and San Francisco. Such a move, Hudson believed, would not only improve United

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1. Warren to Seward, June 21, 1866; July 17, 1867; September 16, 1867; September 30, 1867. Despatches, Guatemala, V.

2. Hudson to Fish, November 30, 1869. Despatches, Guatemala, V.
States-Guatemalan trade relations but would also effectively halt the encroachment of British commercial interests. He also frequently proposed reduced coffee tariffs as an effective means of improving our trade position. Guatemalan exports for the year 1869 showed that the relative position of the United States in its trade with Guatemala had greatly improved. Out of total exports of $2,497,127 England bought $950,939 worth of commodities and the United States, $863,290.3

The interest of our diplomats in promoting trade between the two nations continued, with Minister Williamson trying to improve the situation in the 1870's. Williamson believed that his main role as minister to Central America was "to bring into operation all legitimate means and agencies to secure to the United States a fair share of the trade of our neighbors in this hemisphere."4 In the carrying out of this objective Williamson wrote lengthy despatches describing the economy, the natural resources, and the political and social institutions of Guatemala. He compiled a series of charts showing the volume of Guatemala in trade with other nations. As one would suspect, the American Minister lamented the subordinate role his nation enjoyed in participating in this trade. However, Williamson did more than worry over the

3. Same to same, February 7, 1870; July 16, 1870. 
Ibid., V.

4. Williamson to Evarts, September 24, 1877. 
Despatches, Central America, XIV.
inferior commercial position of the United States: he tried to find out why that condition existed.

On two occasions this trade-conscious minister sent inquiries to the American Consuls in an effort to learn the reason why the United States was not getting its proportion of Central American business. Williamson concluded that the consular service should be more fully charged with furnishing complete economic reports, so as to encourage American businessmen. Only by being properly informed of the commercial potential of the area could the latter be expected to be interested. The Yankee traders who did try to invade the Central American market were often accused of not trying to understand the Spanish character and habits and of attempting to do business in the same manner as in the states. (This is an accusation which could certainly have been repeated at a later date). Williamson recommended also that because of the openings in commerce, dentistry, medicine, and engineering in Central America, Spanish should be taught in our schools. In addition, United States exporters were accused of not trying to package properly and thus to preserve what they did ship to Central America. They apparently seemed not to realize, or not to care, that much of the imported goods had to be carried on pack animals over primitive trails before reaching their final destination. Consequently, the natural preference of the Guatemalans for American machinery, lard, hams, meat, butter, cheese, canned
fruits, etc., was lost because of the risk in handling their imports. The Europeans, on the other hand, exercised great care in assuring proper delivery of their goods. In addition, the Europeans strengthened their hold on trade by generously extending credit. This credit, Williamson believed, was in the process of enslaving Central America in the same manner that the American South had been enslaved before the Civil War. American trade suffered also because freight rates to Guatemala were much higher from New York than from Europe. One leading German firm of Guatemala City was reported as having found it cheaper to purchase goods from New York City via Hamburg. Williamson concluded his lengthy despatch on the problems of American trade with an intelligent observation which many Americans still do not understand. That is, that we should not expect the Central American states to buy more from us unless in return we were willing to purchase more of their products, especially coffee.5

In an effort to assist American business Williamson proposed to the Department that the consular service be completely reorganized. He desired to eliminate all foreigners from the service, and to replace them with Americans whose main function would then be actively to promote American commercial interests. The current function of consular

5. Williamson to Fish, October 11, 1873. Despatches, Central America, IV. Also repeated almost verbatim in Williamson to Evarts, September 24, 1877. Ibid., XIV.
agents, which was simply to protect our commerce and navigation was represented as not being adequate. (It was suggested that there was very little of either in Central America to protect). With properly trained agents alert to the best interests of American commerce, Williamson believed that our trade with Central America would rapidly increase.®

Minister C. A. Logan, in 1879, was to be so much concerned with trade and the economic well-being of Guatemala that he requested a leave of absence from his post in order to accompany a Guatemalan official to New York City in an effort to raise capital for a railroad.⁷ Logan's conclusions on the American trade problem in Central America were similar to those of his predecessor, but he proposed a more drastic solution. He accused Germany and Britain, especially the former, of seeking to dominate Central America, and recommended that we eliminate their threat by taking over the area as a protectorate.

Besides this brusque method of solving the problem of competing with European traders, the American Minister made more plausible suggestions. He pointed out that the bulk of Guatemala's coffee was sold in the European market, a fact which gave the continental merchants an advantage, in that Guatemala's credits thereby were established in Europe. To remedy this disadvantage, Logan recommended that the United

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6. Williamson to Fish, March 27, 1874. Ibid., V.
7. Logan to Evarts, August 12, 1879. Ibid., XV.
States permit free entry of Guatemalan sugar and coffee. He pointed out that New England textiles could not compete with those from England and France because those countries produced clothes suited to the tastes of Guatemalans. He repeated the previous charge that American goods were poorly packaged. In addition, he accused American businessmen of numerous attempts to cheat their Central American customers by sending them shoddy merchandise that could not be sold in the United States and even of shorting them in weights and measures. These were probably the very businessmen who complained because they lacked foreign markets, Logan suggested.

This interest of the American ministers in Central America in improving trade relations was finally acknowledged in Secretary Frelinghuysen's instructions to Minister Hall in 1884. The latter was informed that this interest in promoting American trade and commercial activities would earn him the commendation of his fellow countrymen. The instructions continued:

It is hoped that, without assuming such a position as might appear undue advocacy of any particular American enterprises, your course with the Guatemalan Government...will be such as to awaken a sense of the benefits which those undeveloped countries must reap from foreign capital and the stimulus of foreign initiative in directions where native enterprise is inadequate or unwilling to venture, and to lead them to realize the need of investing such practical aids from without.

8. Logan to Evarts, February 1, 1881. Ibid., XVII.
9. Frelinghuysen to Hall, June 19, 1882. Instructions to Central America, XVIII.
The foregoing instruction sounds as though it might have come from the pen of Secretary Blaine who was one of the first to fully realize the trade potential of all of Latin America.

But for all the gradual American awakening, the fear of European commercial influence in Guatemala continued to haunt American diplomats. The Spanish were reported as plotting to take Central America under their protecting political wing as late as 1887. But the real villains were thought to be the Germans and the French. The Germans were accused of holding many of the key positions in the Guatemalan Government, and thoroughly dominating the nation's business life. It was charged in 1889 "that the Teutonic element of the foreign population of Guatemala is a financial and commercial absorbent of an Octopus nature, which threatens to grasp in its tentacles, and to swallow up all that is worth having among the possibilities of enterprise and development throughout this Republic."10 The French were also distrusted, since they had been given numerous concessions, especially to build railroads "to the detriment of American Capitalists."11

The promotional activities of the various American ministers to Guatemala undoubtedly helped a great deal in

10. Hosmer to Adee, April 10, 1889. Despatches, Central America, XXX.

11. Hosmer to Blaine, April 22, 1889. Ibid., XXX.
expanding trade relations and investments by United States businessmen. Why the economic policy these men so diligently pursued was less successful can be partially determined by examining a few of the Yankee business ventures that ran into difficulty with the Guatemalan government. Of a great number of dubious enterprises, the following have been selected as examples. They are the Guatemala Gas Light Company Claim, the May Claim and the prolonged and indecisive Hollander Claim.

The Guatemala Gas Light Company was an American firm that obtained the concession to light the streets of Guatemala City with naphtha gas. The company ran into difficulty soon after it began operation because its monthly bills went unpaid. Despite the intercession of the American Minister, payment was still not made. Finally, the company's credit was exhausted and it was unable to purchase more naphtha gas. So Guatemala City was plunged into darkness on the night of March 27, 1881. The contract provided a heavy fine when the lights failed. So a company unable to provide service because its bills went unpaid was being fined by the agency responsible for the non-payment, the Guatemalan government. With the city in darkness, a Guatemala City newspaper agitated against the Gas Company, handbills were circulated against it, reportedly by other Americans who sought the concession, and fines continued to be assessed for not

12. Logan to Blaine, April 2, 1881. Ibid., XVII.
lighting the city streets. The Superintendent of the Gas Company, a Mr. J. B. Hubbard, seeing no way out of the dilemma, committed suicide. Minister Logan wrote the State Department requesting immediate instructions, emphasizing that the American government should take prompt and decisive steps to protect its businessmen in such cases. As was so common with urgent despatches from Guatemala City, Washington ignored this one.

Lacking instructions, Minister Logan acted on his own initiative. He set a price of $40,000 upon the company assets, a sum which President Barrios reluctantly agreed to pay. (Meanwhile, the Gas Company was being operated by another American firm). At first, the Guatemala Gas Light Company rejected the settlement of $40,000. But, after a year of pondering their chances of collecting a larger amount the company decided to accept this sum and authorized the Department to settle for them. Meanwhile, Guatemalan officials had conveniently forgotten having made the offer to settle with the company for $40,000 and vigorously denounced the justice of the claim. Minister Hall observed sagely that the real obstacle to a settlement of the

13. Same to same, April 16, 1881, Ibid., XVII.
14. Same to same, August 2, 1881. Ibid., XVIII.
15. Frelinghuysen, to Hall, July 1, 1882. Instructions to Central America, XVIII.
company's claim lay in the government's inability to pay any amount agreed upon. Acting upon instructions, the American Minister reviewed the entire case, including the original concession and the final seizure of the Gas Company after it had ceased operation subsequent to March 26, 1881. On the basis of his study, Hall recommended that pressure be brought to bear on the Guatemalan government, not only in the interests of justice, but also to establish precedent for the future protection of American business enterprise.

Guatemala, however, saw the matter in an entirely different light. The Gas Company was accused of having violated its contract from the very beginning by providing a less powerful light than stipulated. It was accused of consistently failing to keep the required number of lights going, despite repeated warnings. The government charged that all attempts of the city officials to cooperate with the company to provide better service were rebuffed. The failure to provide any light at all for several days was the last straw to a city which had already suffered so much from an American company that knew only how to present its bills promptly. (The Guatemalan Minister did not mention that they were ever paid). Hence, it insisted that the municipal authorities of

16. Hall to Frelinghuysen, September 21, 1882. Despatches, Central America, XIX.

17. Hall to Frelinghuysen, May 8, 1883; March 26, 1883. Ibid., XX.
Guatemala City were justified in seizing the company. Furthermore, there was no just cause for diplomatic interference because no redress had first been sought in Guatemalan courts.18

Secretary Bayard finally took an interest in the claim and answered the allegations of the Guatemalan Minister at Washington. He pointed out that Guatemala's discussion of the claim made it a fit subject for diplomatic interference, regardless of whether or not the claimants had first had recourse to the Guatemalan courts. So far as the United States government was concerned, there was no question of the justness of the claim. The only point for discussion was the size of the settlement. The Secretary went on to point out that the Department had in its files the statement that the President of Guatemala had been granted the authority to settle this claim and that the American government had urgently requested a prompt settlement of it.19 Two years later Secretary Bayard was to repeat that the United States was interested only in discussing the amount of indemnity Guatemala was prepared to pay, as the justness of the claim was beyond question.20

18. Batres to Frelinghuysen, May 8, 1883. Notes from Central American Legations, VI. Also same to same, October 27, 1884. Ibid., VII.

19. Bayard to Batres, April 24, 1885. Notes to Guatemalan Legation, II.

20. Bayard to Montufar, December 27, 1887. Ibid., II.
Minister Hall was of the opinion that Guatemala had been evading the issue of settlement for the past three years in the hope of ultimately avoiding payment at all. A Guatemalan suggestion that the Gas Company bring suit in the Guatemalan courts was dismissed as impractical. Hall observed that the Minister of Foreign Affairs' complaint that the public treasury was empty should be ignored, as the same condition had prevailed for the past fifteen years and there was little prospect of an improvement in this respect. The American Minister then recommended that the case be submitted to arbitration. To this Secretary Bayard agreed. However, the claim continued to drag on, with Minister Hall urging that strong demands be made that Guatemala submit the claim to arbitration. Again Secretary Bayard concurred, and again Guatemala did not. An offer of $10,000 was made, and promptly rejected. Finally on September 19, 1888, Guatemala signed an agreement to pay $34,000 (American coin) in payment of the claim of the Guatemala Gas Light Company.

The full payment was finally made in February, 1890, after frequent but anticipated delays. Hence, eleven years after these American businessmen ventured into Guatemala,

21. Hall to Bayard, August 28, 1885. Despatches, Central America, XXV.
22. Bayard to Hall, November 4, 1885. Instructions to Central America, XVIII.
23. Hall to Bayard, September 20, 1888. Despatches, Central America, XXIX.
they considered themselves fortunate to receive a settlement approximately equal to their original investment. Surely, Guatemala had not become an "El Dorado" for them. It is small wonder that American businessmen, knowing of this tedious involvement, were reluctant to venture into Central America!

A similar fate befell one Robert H. May, an American who contracted with the Guatemalan government on April 5, 1898 to operate the state-owned railroad. May was to receive $35,000 a month plus compensation for necessary maintenance work. He operated the railroad from April 16, 1898 to September 21 of that year. Each month the government fell behind in its payments until at last May could no longer pay his workmen. When the workers went on strike, the Guatemalan government promptly cancelled May's contract and seized the railroad on the grounds that he was not providing adequate service. May claimed that there had been no criticism of the fulfillment of his contract until he had brought pressure to bear on the government for the monthly payments that had become long overdue. After that, consistent fault was found with his operation of the railroad.24

The American Minister to Guatemala, W. Godfrey Hunter, informed the State Department that there was really nothing to get concerned about in the affair because May's contract

24. Hay to Hunter, November 4, 1898. Instructions to Central America, XXI.
had stipulated that "all questions arising under the contract should be settled by the laws of Guatemala and that no diplomatic interference should be permitted." (Guatemala had apparently tried to protect itself from just this eventuality). Hunter claimed that Guatemala was naturally alarmed when service on its main railroad was halted and that there was no cause to suspect discrimination against the United States because the contract had been turned over to another American. After all, the American Minister continued, the government promised to audit May's books and pay him in full, "and I have every reason to believe in the sincerity of its assurance." 25

In fact, a reading of Hunter's despatches makes it appear that the American Minister is arguing the case of Guatemala against May. The latter was accused of not having a claim because of his refusal to take his case to the native courts or to accept a proffered settlement that Hunter had arranged. Hunter claimed that May did not show any disposition to discuss the disputed points with the government negotiators, and further said that May had stated that either he would get what was coming to him or would not accept a cent. "It seems for some inexplicable reason that May does not want a settlement," Hunter declared. Instead of trying to settle his claim May was reported as spending

25. Hunter to Hay, November 12, 1898. Despatches, Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), XLI.
his time in Guatemala City making "unjustifiable attacks" on the American Minister. 26

However, after proper deliberation the Department completely backed May's case and asked indemnity for him of $127,793 "by reason of his forcible dispossession from said property and for the violation of his contract rights, and also damages for the injury to his reputation, credit, and business standing... and for expenses incurred in defense of said rights." The claim was declared a fit case for arbitration, and the American Minister was instructed so to inform the Guatemalan government. 27 That country reluctantly consented to arbitrate the claim, agreeing to accept the British Minister to Central America as the sole arbitrator. The following year the Briton decided against Guatemala and directed that May be paid $143,750.73 for the amount due him, for money he would have earned, and for personal damages. 28 Guatemala accepted the decision and paid May the amount stipulated. So another American businessman who sought to do business in Guatemala returned home a wiser man, but one who undoubtedly received a more advantageous settlement than did the investors in the Guatemala Gas Light Company.

26. Hunter to Hay, December 24, 1898. Ibid., XLI. April 20, 1899; May 16, 1899. Ibid., XLII. March 31, 1900. Ibid., XLI. 27. Hill to Hunter, October (?), 1899. Instructions, Central America, XXI.

But the foregoing claims of American businessmen against the Guatemalan government fade into insignificance when compared to the Hollander claim. The latter case was to be pressed with vigor by every Secretary of State from 1889 to 1900 and to prompt more diplomatic correspondence between Washington and Guatemala City than any other claim, and perhaps as much as all of them together. Yet, in spite of the pressure applied by the Department in his behalf, Hollander was unable to obtain a settlement from the Guatemalan government.

Yankee John H. Hollander had for many years been editor and publisher of the newspaper *La Estrella* in Guatemala City. In that capacity he enjoyed government favor in regard to official printing and, as a result, no doubt came into contact with governmental leaders. It was therefore a surprise when Hollander was arrested in 1889 on a charge of "calumny and presumption of forgery." Even more surprising was the fact that the original complaint against him was marked "no accuser," as the man he supposedly had libeled refused to press charges. Though the offense was one for which it was common to accept bail, bondsmen in Guatemala City were reportedly warned not to get involved in the matter. The American Consul was privately informed by the judge in the case that he was under orders not to permit Hollander to leave jail under any circumstances. When Consul Hosmer attempted to see the President over the unusual legal
procedures in the case, that gentleman suddenly developed a bad headache after first agreeing to see the American Consul. Further protests over the refusal to grant bail resulted in Hollander's being taken to the coast under heavy military guard and being placed upon a steamer for Panama. All this was done despite repeated requests for delay so that the incoming American Minister could consider the case.²⁹ Thus began the weird and fantastic Hollander claim against Guatemala.

As a result of instructions from the Department, an attempt was made to discover the reason for Hollander's sudden and arbitrary expulsion. The most complete and valid account of the background of the "plot" was provided by James R. Hosmer, Secretary of the American Legation and Consul-General, in a sworn statement made after the investigation began. According to Hosmer the affair got underway when Hollander circulated a petition among the American residents requesting that Minister Henry C. Hall be removed on the grounds that he had accepted a $20,000 gift or bribe from Guatemalan government officials. This $20,000 supposedly came from an overissue of $80,000 in Guatemalan government bonds; the remaining $60,000 being divided among three important Guatemalan officials. Hollander based his charge upon the fact that he had gone to the office of Wolf and

²⁹. Hosmer to Blaine, May 18, 1889. Despatches, Central America, XXX.
Company, the firm handling the bond sale, to determine the selling price of the issue, and had seen an entry in the official ledger book showing that Minister Hall had been credited with bonds to the value of $20,000. A record was made of the entry, but unfortunately for Hollander the official books of Wolf and Company were destroyed in a most convenient fire— which happened soon after the charges were levied. Hollander also produced an affidavit purportedly signed by a Señor Herrera in which the latter stated that he had seen in the office of the Minister of Finance records proving that there had been an overissue of the bonds in question and that $20,000 worth had gone to the American Minister. As Herrera previously had been Minister of Public Instruction, his signature on such a statement gave it considerable importance. Just before his arrest Hollander had appeared before Consul-General Hosmer and had sworn to two affidavits that he had drawn up. The first withdrew his charges on the bond issue on the grounds that he had originally had inaccurate information. The second denied the retraction he had just made on the grounds that it had been exacted by threats against his liberty and property. The retraction was given to Minister Hall, with Hollander retaining the second statement in case it should be needed.30 However, the American editor was hustled out of the country without getting an opportunity to tell his story in court.

30. Hosmer to Blaine, October 7, 1889. Ibid., XXXI.
The incoming American Minister, Lansing B. Mizner, reported that it was most apparent that someone did not want Hollander back in Guatemala, but that it was not definite who this person might be. After investigating the case, Mizner reported that after the loss by fire of the ledgers of Wolf and Company, the whole case rested on the validity of the certificate purportedly signed by Señor A. Herrera. If it was a forgery and Hollander knew it to be so, then he was guilty of the charges against him, Mizner contended. However, if this certificate was genuine, or if Hollander believed it to be, then he was entitled to all of the help the Department could extend him. At the request of Mizner, Herrera, currently a judge of the Court of Appeals, called at the Legation, and after examining the certificate in question denied having written it. To the American Minister it seemed incredible that a man of Judge Herrera's standing would put himself so completely into the hands of a comparative stranger by writing such a paper. But, on the other hand, it was just as incredible that an intelligent man like Hollander should knowingly attempt such a forgery when its falsity could be so easily discovered. Mizner then commented that "it is proper to state that on behalf of Mr. Hollander, it is alleged that at the date of said certificate Mr. Herrera was not on friendly terms with one of the Government officials referred to." Perhaps that was the key to the entire mystery. Hollander may have been the victim of a
private feud in Guatemala. As Mizner suggested, the only way really to clarify the matter would be to return Hollander to Guatemala in order to bring his case to court.31 This however, was not easy of accomplishment.

Naturally Minister Hall protested his innocence and denounced Hollander as a chronic troublemaker. He produced a large number of statements asserting that he was of good character, could not possibly be guilty of such malicious charges, and was innocent of any misconduct. In addition, Hall denounced as a total fabrication Hollander's claim that the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs had offered to pay him $50,000 to drop his charges against that government.32

For the next ten years the State Department was to attempt to get either a fair hearing for Hollander in Guatemala or a just settlement for the private property and business interest he had to leave behind when he was forcibly expelled. And Washington was to press the case with surprising vigor. At first Secretary Blaine asked only a full investigation so as to learn the reasons, actual or otherwise, for the expulsion. In addition, he consistently sought to obtain permission for Hollander to return to Guatemala in order to settle his affairs. To this request Guatemala replied that the President of that country had the unqualified power to expel undesirable foreigners, and that Hollander could as well

31. Mizner to Blaine, January 13, 1890. Ibid., XXXII.
32. Hall to Blaine, May 15, 1889. Ibid., XXX.
settle his affairs through an attorney. After some exchange of such unsatisfactory communications, Secretary Blaine instructed Minister Mizner to notify the Guatemalan Government that the Government of the United States cannot understand why an American citizen cannot return to Guatemala for a sufficient period—say sixty days—to attend to his property interests. No explanation yet given to this Government is satisfactory. Hollander wishes to return for the sole purpose of settling his affairs. To refuse his request will amount to partial confiscation of his property—a design which the Government of the United States could not possibly impute to the Government of Guatemala.33

The American Minister accordingly presented the views of Blaine to Guatemala, but that Government continued to ignore all protests on behalf of Hollander.

To an urgent request from Secretary Blaine that Hollander be permitted to return to Guatemala because of the critical state of his wife's health,34 the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied that if he returned he would be arrested and prosecuted, regardless of the circumstances. A counter offer was made to pay the expenses of shipping Hollander's wife and children to New York City.35 When informed further that there was no point in Hollander returning to settle his business affairs, as his property had all been disposed of

33. Blaine to Mizner, October 4, 1889. Instructions, Central America, XIX.

34. Same to same, October 14, 1889. Ibid., XIX.

35. Mizner to Blaine, October 24, 1889; October 30, 1889; Despatches, Central America, XXXI.
to satisfy his creditors, Blaine protested that such treat-
ment of an American citizen was in violation of the Treaty
of 1849 and that Guatemala's "persistence in this violation
will endanger the friendly relations with the United States."36
Even such threats were not sufficient to prompt a satis-
factory answer from a Guatemalan government which seemed to
be adamant to any attempt to reopen Hollander's case.
Efforts to obtain copies of the indictment of Hollander and
his expulsion order were unsuccessful. Pressure applied
through the Guatemalan Minister at Washington was just as
futile as that applied through the American Minister at Gua-
temala City. Nevertheless, Blaine warned that "the United
States will not cease demanding for this man the right" to
re-enter Guatemala so as to attend to his private affairs.37
To this urgent cable Minister Mizner reported that after
more than a month of waiting Guatemala had still not re-
plied.38

The discussions continued, the issue being whether or
not Hollander could return to Guatemala for a brief period.
It was alleged that an offer had been made to Hollander by
unnamed sources that he would be permitted to return if he

36. Blaine to Mizner, April 21, 1890, Instructions,
    Central America, XIX.
37. Blaine to Mizner, November 14, 1889. Ibid., XIX.
38. Mizner to Blaine, December 18, 1889. Despatches,
    Central America, XXXI.
consented to drop his pending libel suit against the Guatemo-
alan Consul-General at New York City. \(^{39}\) This offer was
gloriously denied by the Guatemalan Minister, who then pro-
cceeded to accuse Secretary Blaine of suggesting originally
that if Hollander were permitted to return to Guatemala
temporarily, he might be induced to drop the libel suit
pending at New York City, as well as other charges against
that country. This suggestion, purported to have come from
the Secretary of State in an oral discussion with the Guate-
malan Minister, was rejected by the authorities at Guatemala
City, who apparently did not want Hollander back under any
conditions.\(^{40}\) Telegrams continued to be sent from Washington
to Guatemala City urging that the case be pressed. Blaine
correctly pointed out that if it were true, as Guatemala
claimed, that Hollander had no property left in Guatemala,
there should be no mortgage proceedings against him.\(^{41}\) To
Minister Cruz at Washington the Secretary complained, "I
have been much surprised that the request of this Government
had made so little impression upon the authorities of
Guatemala."\(^{42}\)

\(^{39}\) Blaine to Cruz, July 31, 1890. Notes to Guate-
malan Legation, II. This suit was decided in Hollander's
favor.

\(^{40}\) Cruz to Blaine, May 8, 1890. Notes from Central
American Legations, VII.

\(^{41}\) Blaine to Mizner, May 31, 1890; June 23, 1890.
Instructions, Central America, XIX.

\(^{42}\) Blaine to Cruz, July 31, 1890. Notes to Guate-
malan Legation, II.
Under the insistent demands of the Department, Guatemala finally permitted Hollander a safe-conduct pass so that he could return to settle his affairs, with the definite stipulation, however, that "Hollander shall not in any manner address any communication whatsoever to any newspapers published in Guatemala." Unfortunately, Hollander was not to find any simple solution to his problems in Guatemala City. He discovered that printing materials valued at $20,000 had been attached for bills he owed of approximately $3200. One of the suits against Hollander was for breach of a printing contract that his expulsion made it impossible for him to carry out. This attachment of his property, plus the fact that police officials frightened away potential purchasers of his assets, was protested by Blaine and by Minister Mizner as a violation of the safe conduct. Mizner wired the Department that the commanding officer of the USS Ranger had come to Guatemala City under orders from the Secretary of the Navy to assist in the case. The request for instructions as to the implied use of force went unanswered by Blaine as the Secretary of State was apparently not yet ready to resort to overt action.

Since Hollander's brief return to Guatemala had been fruitless in the solution of the affair, the case was

43. Mizner to Blaine, December 6, 1890; Mizner to Wharton, December 26, 1890. Despatches, Central America, XXXIII.

44. Mizner to Blaine, December 4, 1890. Ibid., XXXIII.
permitted to remain dormant for a time. When Romulo Pacheco was appointed Minister to Guatemala (and Honduras), he was instructed to again press for a settlement of Hollander's claim, on the ground that the American had been deprived of his property without due process of law of Guatemala as applied to resident foreigners. The denial of bail in the case was cited as sufficient proof of the unjustness of the expulsion. After the usual delays, which had become totally vexatious as well, Guatemala replied in a lengthy memorandum that Minister Pacheco personally carried to Washington. This document is a masterpiece in evasiveness and ambiguity. In it all of the complaints of the United States were either ignored or denied. Hollander was denounced as a quarrelsome troublemaker "who had lied in his claim that he had extensive property in Guatemala." Secretary Blaine was indirectly blamed for much of the misunderstanding that had occurred, because he was supposed to have promised that the entire matter would be dropped if Hollander was permitted to return to Guatemala under safe conduct.

The Department at Washington, after due consideration, denounced Guatemala's lengthy reply as totally unsatisfactory. The Department of State took the position that, after

45. Blaine to Pacheco, November 27, 1891. Instructions, Central America, XIX.

46. Memorandum from Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs to Minister Pacheco. Enc. in Pacheco to Wharton, April 20, 1892. Despatches, Central America, XXXV.
all the attempts made to clarify the situation, the United States government was entitled to a more adequate explanation than the one it had received. The Department very much regretted "that the reply of the Guatemalan Government is so little responsive to the representations of this Government." The new administration, that of President Cleveland in 1893, picked up the Hollander case and instructed the incoming American Minister Young to press for a solution. A detailed statement was drawn up of the monetary claims that the American businessman had against Guatemala. They consisted primarily of a bill for some $31,327 against the government for printing work done, and title to some coffee lands. Minister Young was instructed "to make to the Government of Guatemala a distinct presentation of Hollander's claims...and to request a distinct and early reply." 

After proper investigation, the American Minister made his observations by means of private correspondence to the Department in which he took a pessimistic view not only of the Hollander claim but also of all dealings with Guatemala. Minister Young stated:

I write a personal letter because I do not wish to say in a despatch all that I can say to you privately. I find in this country that to deceive and even to do that which is the opposite of common honesty is of every day occurrence and it

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47. Foster to Pacheco, July 25, 1892. Instructions, Central America, XIX.

48. Gresham to Young, May 6, 1893. Ibid., XX.
is not confined to private individuals but is practiced by high government officials. Promises mean nothing but delay, and no dependence can be placed in the verbal declaration of any of these people—I have put in the Hollander case as strong as I can—but you can not depend upon any practical result unless you back up your demand by a sufficient show of power to enforce your demands. In my opinion only results will come, when you let these people know that you mean to do them harm unless they comply, and then they will put you off to the last minute.49

Minister Young's letter apparently created some interest within the Department, for a note signed by A.A.A. [see] was attached to it and addressed to the Secretary, in which it was pointed out that the letter called attention to an important part of the entire Hollander claim.

How far are we ready to go in pressing Hollander's claim? I have personally so poor an opinion of Hollander and his claims that I could not enthusiastically advocate a resort to moral or material display of force. The fact, however, remains that the intrinsic merits of a complaint or claim have very little weight with these small Spanish American states. They trade on their weakness and our strength, believing that we will forebear to the end, as we generally do, and they stand ready to resort to the standard argument of the strong unjustly constraining the weak if we should at any time practically assert our rights and compel recognition of them.50

In other words, because of Guatemala's complete unwillingness to cooperate in settling what had become a vexatious diplomatic matter, the Department was confronted with the problem of how far it was prepared to go in pressing the claim.

49. Young to Gresham, September 7, 1893. Despatches, Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), XXXVI.

50. Note enc. with Young to Gresham, September 7, 1893. Ibid., XXXVI.
The decision of the State Department apparently was to continue diplomatic efforts to effect a settlement. On October 10, 1893, Minister Young again presented the claim to the Guatemalan government. He reported that though he called at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs every few days to request a reply, he was consistently put off with varied excuses. On December 23, 1893, he finally received an answer. In this reply the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Salazar, expressed doubt that the American Minister had read the correspondence he had sent on the Hollander affair or even that said correspondence had been read by the Department at Washington. If the American officials would only read these communications, Salazar suggested, they would stop bothering Guatemala over a controversy that had long since been considered closed. He denied that the claimant had any coffee lands in Guatemala, as Hollander had made only a down payment on these lands, and had been refused a clear title during his brief return in 1890 as he had not worked the lands during the period of his expulsion. Salazar stressed that Hollander must prove his claims by producing necessary legal documents (Because of the manner in which Hollander had been forced to leave the country, it is most improbable that he had been able to take sufficient documentary evidence along with him). Above all, Salazar emphasized that Secretary Blaine had made a bargain to drop the entire Hollander claim, if the American were only
permitted to return briefly. Guatemala had kept its share of the bargain; now why should not the United States? 

The United States government continued to take the stand that the manner in which Hollander was expelled was sufficient in itself to entitle him to indemnity. His inability to produce adequate evidence to substantiate his claim to coffee lands and to a printing bill owed by the Guatemalan government weakened these claims, however, and prompted the United States to take less positive stand. Nevertheless, to the Department at Washington the real issue in the case remained whether or not Guatemala had the right arbitrarily to expel an American citizen "whose conduct became inconvenient." Guatemala's position in this matter, if permitted to go unchallenged, might set dangerous precedents in other Latin American states.

To Secretary Olney, who was to take such a vital interest in Latin American affairs, the Hollander case was important enough to demand immediate settlement. In a lengthy instruction to Minister Young, Olney stressed the aspects of international law involved in the case. The Secretary

51. Enc. in Young to Gresham, December 31, 1893. Despatches, Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), XXXVI. In most of the Guatemalan notes on the Hollander affair reference to former Secretary Blaine's "bargain" is made.

52. It was reported that Hollander originally had been given his printing presses by the government with the understanding that he take a pro-administration stand in his paper. Young to Gresham, January 17, 1895. Ibid., XXXVII.
attacked Guatemala's argument that Hollander's conduct gave that nation the right to expel him. The contention that "all the practices of international jurisprudence, supposing them to be certain and indisputable, fall down before a law clear that comes immediately from the sovereignty of a nation" Olney refused to accept. Guatemala's contention that whatever a State by legal formula wills to do, it may do, would so make a mockery of all international law that the United States refused to believe that she was serious in her statement. The American Secretary quoted numerous authorities on international law to support his position. The arbitrary expulsion was characterized as a violation of Article XII of the Treaty of 1849 which guaranteed American citizens equal justice in the courts of Guatemala. Olney did not propose to inquire into the reasons why Hollander "was literally hurled out of the country, leaving behind wife and children, business, and property." But, he went on, "the United States takes this ground: The Government of Guatemala, whatever its laws may permit, had not the right in time of peace and domestic tranquillity to expel Hollander without notice or opportunity to make arrangements for his family and business." This arbitrary act, concluded Olney, violated the rules of international law and the existing provisions of the treaty, and was contrary to the practice of civilized nations. In so doing Guatemala did Hollander, and through him the United States, a grievous injury, which cannot
be allowed to go without protest. He is entitled, upon the undisputed facts, to a reasonable indemnity, and you the American Minister are [sic] directed to inform the Government of Guatemala that the United States expects it to be paid.53

This militant position possibly prompted Guatemala to revoke the decree of expulsion against Hollander. It also may have caused that nation to begin discussing the possibility of arbitrating the dispute but the Guatemalan officials were still reluctant to agree to the final details. When it came to the most important point that Secretary Olney had touched upon, the violation of international law, Guatemala refused to back down from its previous stand. The President "took the ground unqualifiedly that his Government could expel anyone it pleased without any regard to all the rest of the world," the Minister of Foreign Affairs declared. The Guatemalan lawyers managed to ferret out authorities on international law who upheld the right of arbitrary expulsion, especially American experts.54 One of the authorities quoted was Webster, "who wrote in 1861." (To this statement someone in the Department added "who died in 1852").

The American effort to bring the Hollander case to arbitration continued, with more delays on the part of Guatemala. The American Minister spent considerable time encouraging the Guatemalan government to take depositions from

53. Olney to Young, January 30, 1896. Instructions, Central America, XX.

54. Coxe to Sherman, May 5, 1897; May 19, 1897. Despatches, Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), XXXIX.
witnesses. Though it was agreed that some of Hollander's claims were exaggerated, there was no question but that he at one time did printing for the Guatemalan government, despite the official denials. The authorities at Guatemala City, however, refused to alter their intransigent minds and denied that any records which would have substantiated Hollander's claim were destroyed. They contended that the evidence he did have was a forgery and that he himself was little more than a common crook. Continuing the attack upon Hollander, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said: "You must have noticed the wickedness of the claimant in some of the parts of his deposition and when he refers to his lack of papers and written proof, he pretends that here, in Guatemala, they have been destroyed to prejudice him."55

The instructions sent in reply to the foregoing despatch was to end the long-drawn out and sometimes acrimonious Hollander case. Secretary Hay directed Minister Hunter to urge that Guatemala submit the claim to arbitration. However, if that nation refused, Secretary Hay decided, "the Department, considering the whole case, is not disposed to enforce the claim by pressure involving the use or the

55. Beaupré to Hay, March 29, 1899. Enc. from Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs to Beaupré, February 27, 1899. Ibid., XLI.
display of military force."56 To this last request for arbitration Guatemala answered with an emphatic refusal.57

So the Hollander claim, the most perplexing and the most important, insofar as the volume of diplomatic correspondence was concerned, was closed. And it ended on just as mysterious a note as it had begun. However, diplomatic history can not concern itself with the veracity of Hollander's charges. Nor can diplomatic history be concerned with the reasons why the Republic of Guatemala stubbornly refused to arbitrate a case where the maximum amount of the claim was only $42,271. The importance of the claim to diplomatic history is in its presentation of the problems of an American businessman in Guatemala. It was important also because of the pretensions of a state to the arbitrary expulsion of unwelcome foreigners in contravention of most of the established principles of international law. At first glance it would appear that Guatemala had successfully carried her point in regard to arbitrary expulsion. But a closer look shows that the answer is not a simple one. Able to withstand all of the pressure the United States brought to bear, Guatemala did not recede from her original position--in this

56. Hay to Hunter, October 24, 1899. Instructions, Central America, XXI. Hay noted also that circumstances had arisen which no longer permit the Department "to accept the unsupported statements of Hollander."

57. Hunter to Hay, May 26, 1900. Despatches, Central America, (Guatemala and Honduras), XLIV.
case. In other cases in which American businessmen ran afoul of Guatemalan law, she was to show a surprising willingness to settle the matters, preferably short of arbitration. And the diplomatic files were to record no more incidents of Americans being rushed out of the country without resort to legal procedures. So the work of the Department can not be said to have been in vain in the Hollander case.

Many years intervene between the original establishment of American economic interest in Guatemala in the 1840's and the problems of the Guatemala Gas Light Company, the May Case, and the Hollander Claim, but there is a very definite continuity in these affairs. American businessmen went to the Central American republic to take advantage of the opportunities in an underdeveloped region. If they had not faced and solved the problems of how to do business in Guatemala, the tremendous investments of American capital in that nation in the twentieth century would never have been possible.
While American businessmen were being encouraged to go to Guatemala to develop that country and to participate in its trade, many Americans discovered that living there could be more difficult than in their native land. Hence, the diplomatic representatives of the United States were kept busy getting their nationals out of difficulty with the Guatemalan authorities. In addition, occasionally the American diplomats themselves became so enmeshed in the affairs of the nation to which they were accredited that they forgot their neutral status. This was to be true of Minister Mizner at the time of the Colima and Barrundia incidents. Individually the problems of American citizens and American diplomats as they ran afoul of Guatemalan law or international law are not important. Collectively they form a story that constitutes an important part of American policy in Guatemala.

Many of the problems arising out of attacks on American citizens stemmed from the irresponsible acts of minor Guatemalan officials over whom the government did not exercise proper control. One of these problems, the Magee case, in 1874, grew out of an assault upon the British vice-consul. John Magee, the British official involved, was flogged, imprisoned, and condemned to be shot by a drunken Guatemalan
port official who became angry when Magee refused a summons to come before him. Through the intercession of the American consul, Magee was released. The American Minister emphasized the importance of setting the precedent of a stiff penalty for the offending official, lest all foreigners residing in the departments distant from the capital should be in grave danger of unprovoked attacks by irresponsible local politicians. In this case, Guatemala was prompt to make proper apologies, to promise to punish the offender, and to pay reparations. In fact, the Guatemalan authorities were so solicitous of American reaction to the Magee beating that one senses that they wanted to turn to the United States for protection in case the British showed undue resentment.

The United States declined to participate in the affair except to remind Guatemala that the Department was of the opinion "that the civilization of the age and the immunity which the intercourse of governments exacts for their representatives in other lands, entitle it to expect the stern visitation of the law upon the perpetrators of the violence committed upon a consular representative." The affair was closed when Guatemala promptly paid the $50,000 indemnity demanded and fired a twenty-one gun salute to the British.

1. Williamson to Fish, April 25, 1874; May 5, 1874. Despatches, Central America, V.
2. Fish to Williamson, June 8, 1874. Instructions, Costa Rica, XVII.
That there were so few cases involving American citizens during the early period of diplomatic relations no doubt stems from the fact that there were so few Americans in Guatemala and that the Carrera government was able to maintain law and order. In the post-Civil War period the American ministers complained that large numbers of Americans who claimed their support in clashes with the Guatemalan authorities had the thinnest possible coating of citizenship. In fact, Minister Logan requested that the Department give him the authority to "denaturalize" some of these recent citizens who claimed the protection of the American flag for strictly business reasons.

An examination of the career of one of them, a Louis Schlesinger, will serve as an example of the problem. (The following sarcastic appraisal was furnished by Minister Logan). An Hungarian who followed Kossuth, Schlesinger found his way to New York City. "Brimful of the inspirations of Liberty he immediately became a Tammany Democrat; took a short cut to American citizenship, and for a brief time rendered the state some doubtful service in the capacity of a political bummer." Looking about for greener pastures, "Schlesinger joined the Lopez expedition against Cuba, which came very near ending his earthly career." Returning

3. Williamson to Fish, November 7, 1874. Despatches, Central America, VI.
to New Orleans with an "unperforated body" this adventurer's next opportunity came when he joined Walker. Minister Logan continued:

After some campaigning together in Nicaragua, Walker became seized with the conviction that Schlesinger was, firstly a coward, and secondly, a traitor. Under this belief, he expressed a desire to shoot Schlesinger, and made inquiry for him, with that purpose in view. Schlesinger however, had a prior engagement with the Allied Central-American forces, to accompany them against his late associates. The final result was, that Walker was shot, and Schlesinger received his stipulated pieces of silver.4

Schlesinger was depicted as being typical of the European adventurer who obtained his American citizenship, left the country, and in Central America used that citizenship to claim the protection of the flag of the United States. It was alleged that three-fourths of all the cases resulting in diplomatic intervention involved men like Schlesinger or native Americans who left the United States at an early age and adopted another country with no intention of returning to their homeland. A case was cited of a native German naturalized as an American who claimed the citizenship of whichever nation that supplied him immediate advantage.

Minister Logan wanted to know why the American diplomats need waste so much time on men who had no intention of returning to the United States. Why should not Americans residing abroad be required to furnish more positive proof of

4. Logan to Evarts, January 18, 1881. Ibid., XVII.
their citizenship, Logan asked.5

To the frequent inquiries of the American ministers on this very complex question of when American nationals residing abroad cease to be citizens, Secretary Fish was most cautious. The Secretary concluded that the most generally accepted yardstick to use was to determine whether the citizen, naturalized or native, left the United States without any definite plans of returning. If he showed no such intent, citizenship could be declared forfeited and American diplomats freed of the responsibility of protecting such persons. The purchase and cultivation of land abroad is usually accepted as legal evidence that person does not intend to return to his homeland, Fish contended. Naturally, he conceded, this was not an absolute rule and there would be many exceptions. However, in the case of Louis Schlesinger, Secretary Fish was of the opinion that there was very little basis for a claim to American citizenship because of his long residence abroad.6

His long self-expatriation indicated that he had no intention to return to the United States. Secretary Evarts pointed out that, though Congress had declared that the right of voluntary expatriation existed, it did not define it. Usually, when an American citizen assumed the

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5. Same to same, August 20, 1879. Ibid., XV.
6. Fish to Williamson, June 5, 1876. Instructions, Costa Rica, XVII.
responsibility of citizenship in another nation, he ceased to be considered an American. However, the Secretary warned, in the absence of more definite congressional legislation defining the act of expatriation by American citizens, it would not be practical for the Department to make a sweeping declaration that American residents abroad for a certain period of time ceased to be citizens.7

This problem of American citizenship was to continue to be a perplexing one to our diplomats. In 1903 it was presented in a different manner when the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs protested that numerous citizens of that country went to the United States to obtain citizenship and then returned to enjoy American diplomatic protection and freedom from the restraints and obligations of Guatemalan nationals. To this protest the American Minister answered that the United States does not bestow citizenship lightly, but when it does it fully protects its citizens. According to Minister Combs, a principle of the greatest importance was involved, as the Guatemalan Constitution states, as does also that of the United States, "that all persons born in the country are citizens thereof."8 Under Guatemalan law this provision was to apply regardless of naturalization. The incident was provoked when a naturalized American born

7. Evarts to Logan, October 7, 1879. Ibid., XVIII.
8. Combs to Hay, March 23 and 25, 1903. Despatches, Central America, (Guatemala and Honduras), XLVII.
in Guatemala was jailed for not paying a forced loan. He was released when the Department instructed the American Minister to lodge the most vigorous protests in his behalf.\footnote{9}

When not protecting Americans whose claim to citizenship was at best doubtful, the United States diplomats were kept busy protecting the Chinese from unwarranted attack by Guatemalan officials. Such intervention came about as a result of the representation of China's interests by the American government.\footnote{10} Apparently a large number of the Chinese were merchants, for most of the clashes with Guatemalan officials concerned that class. Usually problems arose as a result of assaults upon the property and person of the Chinese by irresponsible officials. For example, one Felix Sing, reportedly a reputable merchant, was accosted by two policemen who requested a "loan." When refused, they became abusive and relieved the Chinaman of his billfold containing $300. Because of the outcry of the victim a large crowd gathered, so Mr. Sing was jailed for disturbing the peace. He was released upon the protest of the American Minister.\footnote{11} The other frequent attacks were of a similar trivial nature and were usually promptly settled. Minister

\footnotesize{\begin{tabular}{ll}
9. & Loomis to Combs, March 24, 1903. Hay to Combs, April 18, 1903. \textit{Instructions, Central America}, XXII. \\
10. & Gresham to Young, August 18, 1894. \textit{Ibid.}, XX. \\
11. & Combs to Hay, April 24, 1903. \textit{Despatches, Central America}, (Guatemala and Honduras), XLVIII. \\
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Combs reported that "I have investigated rigidly all alleged cases of outrage upon the Chinese here and have pressed all meritorious cases vigorously to a proper settlement."\(^{12}\)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, mainly as a result of an influx of American laborers to work for American firms, the United States diplomats were kept busy keeping their own nationals out of the clutches of Guatemalan law. Guatemalan officialdom stated that there was no intent to discriminate against Americans, but that what was objected to as unfair treatment was common practice, even against Guatemalan citizens. There were numerous reports of Americans being beaten after unjustified arrests, especially in the outlying departments. Usually, these cases were disposed of by proper protests and apologies, or by seeing that the accused was given a fair trial. However, the case of Simon Shine and George Milliken was to attain an importance in terms of the volume of diplomatic correspondence out of all proportion to its actual significance. These two American Negroes were reported to have been beaten by one General Ariz, governor of a department, and his friends as a result of an altercation in Shine's saloon over the closing time.\(^{13}\) The case assumed importance when the American Consul directed the two men to complain directly to President Roosevelt, as

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12. Same to same, June 19, 1903. Ibid., XLIX.

13. Sands to Secretary, October 14, 1907. Numerical File No. 9160, Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
the American Minister Lee was in no condition physically and mentally because of his "continued intemperance" to properly present their protests to the Guatemalan government. For this gross breach of diplomatic conduct, the criticising of his superior officer to the President, Consul Reed was reprimanded and warned "that a repetition of any such action on his part will convince the Department that his usefulness as a consular officer is at an end."

The President turned the matter over to the State Department with a request that a complete investigation be made. After full inquiry, the Department charged that the attack was unprovoked. General Ariz was described as a cruel and blood-thirsty monster who had been doing too much celebrating at the time of the attack. It was claimed that it was necessary to teach Ariz that he could not mistreat

14. Reed to Secretary, November 30, 1907. File No. 9160. However, William Sands, who was sent as a special envoy to report on the state of Minister Lee's health, attributed the American Minister's condition to a more sinister influence than alcoholism. Sands contends that Lee, a personal friend of President Roosevelt, was so feared in Central America that President Carrera wanted him out of the way. The Guatemalan President therefore requested that the American diplomat be treated by his personal physician who was described as the "presidential poisoner." Sands charged that "there is no doubt that (Lee) had been incapacitated by secret administrations of some insidious drug." In William F. Sands, Our Jungle Diplomacy (Chapel Hill: 1944), p. 86. It should be stressed that this accusation appears in Sands book more than three decades later and was not found in the diplomatic correspondence.
Americans "just for the fun of the thing." The General, however, had a defender in an American official of the Guatemalan Railroad. In a private letter, forwarded to the State Department, this official protested that the Department should not lose sight of all the good things that General Aríz had done in helping to protect American property; that it would be regrettable to ruin the career of a man over a single mistake. It was feared that too vigorous protests in this trivial matter might bring reprisals in more important areas. "Why our Government will take up every saloon row and neglect important matters has always been a mystery to me," he declared. The American Chargé accused the management of the American operated railroad of trying to get the case dropped "as they expect much from President Cabrera through General Aríz."

After evaluating the evidence in the case Chargé Sands recommended to the Department that Guatemala be requested to pay Shine and Milliken $5,000 each for the unprovoked attack upon them. Acting upon the following recommendation of Adee, the Department concurred.

15. Kent to Secretary, October 2, 1907. File No. 9160.

16. Williamson to Keith, November 4, 1907. File No. 9160.

17. Sands to Secretary, November 6, 1907. File No. 9160.
Acceptance of money indemnity and judicial punishment of minor offenders seems most effective, both as a remedy, and as a deterrent example. Attempts to convict the Governor and his gang would probably fail and failure be followed by a three year dispute, with possible indemnity at the end. Best strike while the iron is hot.18

Guatemala attempted to delay a settlement, claiming that the assault only occurred when Milliken and Shine refused to accompany the police. In a personal letter to the Department, Charge Sands stated that testimony was being taken to prove that General Ariz was in another part of the country at the time of the attack, and that a large number of witnesses would swear to this late testimony so as to curry favor with the government. Such evidence would be hard to shake in a Guatemalan court, yet Sands stated that he was absolutely certain of the justice of the American contention. The American Charge maintained that unless the matter was pressed to a favorable decision, American citizens would be subject to the same kind of frequent attacks suffered by the nationals of other nations. Charge Sands declared "I hope that the Department, in the press of its affairs, will not overlook that in these semi-civilized countries matters like the one in question seriously affect our influence by the manner in which they are handled."19

18. Adee to Bacon, November 9, 1907. Department Memo in File No. 9160.

As further investigation revealed that neither Shine nor Milliken was as innocent as first depicted, the Department accepted the offer of $1,000 to each of the two men, and Guatemala promised to punish the offenders.\textsuperscript{20} Hence, despite the acrimonious feeling at first stirred up, the matter was finally settled to the satisfaction of both governments. This petty case is merely intended as an example of the countless others that taxed the energies of the American diplomats in Guatemala.

Diplomatic relations between Guatemala and the United States were to be surprisingly free of conflict in, or even reference to, religious affairs. This toleration was maintained, undoubtedly, because after the overthrow of the Conservatives in 1871 the Liberal party in power tended to be anti-clerical. In fact, the Barrios government dealt harshly with the religious institutions, banning the convents and monasteries, and prohibiting the wearing of clerical garb in public.\textsuperscript{21} On the only important occasion of a difficulty of a religious nature the Guatemalan government acted promptly to make amends. In 1905 an American missionary building was

\textsuperscript{20} Secretary to Sands, January 9, 1908. File No. 9160.

\textsuperscript{21} Williamson to Fish, March 23, 1874. Despatches, Central America, V. Minister Williamson offered an American nun asylum in the Legation. Speaking like the typical nineteenth century Protestant diplomat to Latin America he observed: "Her religious doctrines, I presume, interpose an insurmountable obstacle to her acceptance of an invitation that would bring her in daily contact with the heretical protestants that compose my family."
stoned by an irate mob, which managed to do considerable damage. Fortunately, troops arrived to rescue the Americans present before any physical harm was inflicted on their persons. It was reported that the attack was prompted because a Protestant was supposed to have thrown a stone that broke an image in a Good Friday procession. The Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs promptly called at the American Legation and formally apologized. He promised that better police protection would be provided to prevent any such attack in the future. Payment for the damages done to the building and punishment of the offenders was also promised. Above all, he emphasized that Guatemala guaranteed absolute freedom of worship to all religious groups and reaffirmed that the government intended to take whatever steps were necessary to carry out that guarantee. Hence, what might in this instance have become an embarrassing diplomatic case was promptly disposed of as a result of the mature attitude of the Guatemalan officials.

Minister W. Godfrey Hunter, who was to display an amazing ability to write copious despatches dealing with the most trivial matters, called the Department's attention to another kind of religious controversy. This dispute arose within the ranks of the Presbyterian Church, the most important American Protestant body within the country. A certain

22. Combs to Hay, April 26, 1905. Despatches, Central America (Guatemala and Honduras), LI.
D. V. Iddings, formerly employed as a missionary by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, had been called home to report and had been subsequently dismissed, presumably as a result of his masonic activities. Returning to Guatemala, Iddings continued to operate a commercial print shop in a church building that had originally been set up to print religious tracts. The representative of the Board of Foreign Missions, a Reverend E. M. Haymaker, attempted to evict Iddings from the church property, charging him with operating an illegal distillery in addition to the print shop. In the vigorous controversy which resulted the Americans residing in Guatemala City were reported as taking sides. The voluminous testimony sent to the Department on the matter shows a most unchristian ability to assault character. The police finally closed the printing shop, thus ostensibly rendering the decision in favor of Reverend Haymaker.23

The problems of American nationals as they ran afoul Guatemala municipal law seem relatively unimportant when contrasted with the problems of the American Ministers as they ran afoul international law. Minister Lansing B. Mizner, who was to have the dubious distinction of being the only American minister recalled because of his official mistakes, had the most difficulty in this respect. It was not that Minister Mizner was any less competent than many of the

23. Hunter to Hay, July 25, 1899. Ibid., XLII.
others, or even that he knew less of proper diplomatic protocol and international law; it was more likely only that he happened to be the American Minister when events made necessary important decisions on his part. And Mizner seemed to have had an uncanny knack of making the wrong decision at the wrong time.

The troublesome period that brought an abrupt end to the diplomatic career of Lansing B. Mizner grew out of a very brief conflict between El Salvador and Guatemala in 1890. Partially through the mediation of the American Minister, the struggle was actually terminated before it really got under way. But the diplomatic altercations growing out of the "war" were not to be ended so easily.

The first of these controversies arose from Guatemala's seizure of arms aboard the American vessel Colima, owned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. This ship left San Francisco with a consignment of arms reportedly destined for El Salvador. Though no legal state of war existed between El Salvador and Guatemala at the time, Guatemala maintained that seizure of the arms would be justified because there existed "practically a state of war." The Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs even threatened to formally declare war on El Salvador to have an excuse to halt the arms shipment.24 The Colima was detained at San Jose de Guatemala.

24. Mizner to Blaine, July 16, 1890. Despatches, Central America, XXXII.
pending approval of Minister Mizner's proposal that the arms be landed in a neutral port until the tension between the two Central-American countries had diminished.

The instructions from Washington were prompt and vigorous. The seizure of the vessel and its cargo when no war existed was inadmissible under international law. Even though war was to be declared later, such prior unlawful acts would not be validated. Washington insisted that while the United States stood ready to aid impartially in the promotion of friendly relations among the Central American states, our government could not "countenance injuries... against our citizens and their property."25 The next day Secretary Blaine sent even more specific instructions: "Demand of Government of Guatemala instant surrender of the Colima with all her cargo. That government had no right whatsoever to detail the steamer. She had committed no offense against international law or any existing treaty. Act promptly."26

These urgent instructions never reached Minister Mizner. An investigation later revealed that many telegrams were held up, probably by Guatemalan officials who did not want them received. The United States government charged that the right to inspect telegraphic communications, claimed by

25. Adee to Mizner, July 19, 1890. Instructions, Central America, XIX.

26. Blaine to Mizner, July 20, 1890. Ibid., XIX.
many of the governments of Central America, was invalid. As this tampering with official messages had also occurred in 1885, the Department demanded an immediate and full investigation because "the right of inviolable and unimpeded communication between a government and its envoy in another country is one of the most important in the intercourse of nations." It was emphasized that this was especially important in Central America, where the effectiveness of a minister accredited to five states was dependent upon his ability to communicate freely with all of the states and with Washington.27

It was not until instructions were sent to Guatemala City via the American Minister in Mexico City that Minister Mizner became aware of the decisions reached in Washington concerning the seizure of the Colima. By that time Minister Mizner had made decisions of his own. He promoted an arrangement between the steamship company and Guatemalan authorities that the arms were either to be turned over to the United States Consul at San José de Guatemala or returned to some neutral port. This arrangement was justified on the ground that the contract between the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and the Guatemalan government prohibited the former from carrying troops or munitions to any port adjacent to Guatemala, if there should be any reason to believe that

27. Wharton to Mizner, August 6, 1890. Ibid., XIX.
they might eventually be used against that nation.28

It was charged by Minister Mizner that Guatemala had proceeded to seize the arms in question in violation of the above understanding. While the munitions were being transferred from the Colima to another ship belonging to the same company but going in the opposite direction, and hence away from El Salvador, Guatemalan authorities seized them. Worse still in the eyes of the Department, the American ship was forced to unload the cargo in question under a threat to sink her if the ship's officers refused to comply with such orders.29 Secretary Blaine vigorously protested that "an American ship and her passengers were menaced and threatened with destruction. Whether her owners had or had not violated some contract entered into with the local Government was no excuse whatsoever for the action of the Guatemalan authorities." Furthermore, the Secretary contended that the previously discussed contract between the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and Guatemala was not acceptable under international law. Blaine concluded that "this Government considers that it is clearly entitled to some satisfactory apology or reparation from the Government of Guatemala for the indignity thus offered to an American ship."30

28. Mizner to Blaine, July 28, 1890; August 4, 1890. Despatches, Central America, XXXII.

29. Same to same, September 10, 1890. Ibid., XXXIII.

30. Blaine to Kimberly, December 22, 1890. Instructions, Central America, XIX.
The arms seized were promptly returned, but the Guatemalan authorities had difficulty properly comprehending the seriousness of their action. For that matter the Department had considerable trouble making its representatives in Guatemala understand the full significance of what had happened. Despite the most explicit instructions to the contrary, Charge Kimberly made arrangements to permit the officer responsible for the seizure of the arms to apologize formally to a representative of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Guatemala thought that this act constituted the kind of apology Secretary Blaine had requested and considered the matter closed. However, the Department pointed out that the affair was not one just between a commercial carrier and the Guatemalan government. The question was one that concerned the wrongful seizure and resulting indignity to a vessel flying the American flag. It was even hoped that the government of Guatemala was prepared to make an adequate offer of reparations for their wrongful act. Unfortunately, the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to see the principle involved and continued to insist that the apology already tendered was sufficient.

31. Kimberly to Blaine, January 24, 1891. Despatches, Central America, XXXIII.

32. Blaine to Pacheco, February 28, 1891. Wharton to Pacheco, August 22, 1891. Instructions, Central America, XIX.
Running parallel to the Colima arms seizure was the problem arising out of the death of General Barrundia aboard an American vessel. Both cases had a common origin in that they grew out of the abortive conflict between Guatemala and El Salvador. Barrundia, a former Secretary of War who had been exiled from Guatemala, sought to take advantage of the confusion growing out of the possible conflict and thereby rise to power in his homeland. His attempted invasion from Mexico at the outset of that conflict having failed, Barrundia took passage on an American ship bound for Panama. It was in the successful efforts of the Guatemalan authorities to apprehend this general when the ship put in at a Guatemalan port that put American Minister Mizner in so much difficulty. The story of the affair reveals that the American Minister had become so close to the Guatemalan officials that he was prepared to do their bidding when elementary common sense should have told him that the interests of the government he represented were contradictory.

The details of the Barrundia case are briefly as follows. When the American steamer Acapulco put in at the Guatemalan port of Champerico, an attempt was made to arrest Barrundia on the basis of an opinion by Consul-General Hosmer that such action was permissible. The American ship captain refused to allow the arrest without the written approval of the American Minister. This approval was furnished in the form of an order from Minister Mizner:
If your ship is within one league of the territory of Guatemala, and you have on board General J. M. Barrundia, it becomes your duty, under the law of nations, to deliver him to the authorities of Guatemala upon their demand, allegations having been made to this legation that said Barrundia is hostile to and an enemy to this Republic. Guarantees have been made to me by this Government that his life shall not be in danger, and that he shall be tried only for crimes growing out of the insurrection.33

Acting under this authority and a further order from the American Minister, the ship captain permitted Guatemalan officials to board his ship to make the arrest. In the ensuing gunfight Barrundia was killed. Acting Secretary Wharton recognized the poor judgment displayed by Minister Mizner and so promptly informed him by telegram. He stated that the Department regretted that Mizner had consented to or advised the capture of Barrundia, especially when there was no specific charge against him.34 To this reprimand Mizner answered that Barrundia was guilty of "high treason and other crimes" and that the contract the steamship company had with Guatemala made absolutely necessary the surrender of the former general.35

After carefully studying all of the evidence in the case, Secretary Blaine recalled Minister Mizner from his

33. Mizner to Captain W. G. Pitts, August 27, 1890 in Blaine to Mizner, November 18, 1890. Ibid., XIX. This is the letter of recall and contains the entire story of the incident including much of the documentation.

34. Wharton to Mizner, August 30, 1890. Ibid., XIX.

35. Mizner to Blaine, September 4, 1890. Despatches, Central America, XXXIII.
post. In a brilliant lawyer's brief the Secretary of State reviewed all of the facts in the case, many of which Mizner had neglected to report. Blaine then proceeded to demolish all justification for the surrender of Earrundia on a basis of existing precedents under international law. First, Blaine attacked the contention that the seizure was justified under an extradition treaty between the United States and Guatemala. This treaty, not operative at the time, specifically exempted political prisoners from extradition, and the only charges against the man was the very vague one of high treason.

The right of asylum to political refugees has long been accepted by most civilized nations. And a ship of a neutral nation has usually been classified in the same category as a legation insofar as the right of asylum is concerned, the Secretary contended. Nowhere in the world had the practice been more commonly recognized than in the Spanish-American countries with their frequent revolutions. Blaine cited numerous precedents in Cuba, in Nicaragua, and in El Salvador where American diplomats had cooperated with American ship captains to protect political refugees from seizure. Such practices were so common that it was inconceivable that such a violation of an accepted custom could occur. In fact, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company had carried scores of such persons to safety. (This no doubt explains the reluctance of Captain Pitts to surrender his passenger.)
The contention of both Mizner and the Guatemalan authorities that the surrender of Barrundia was mandatory because of the contract between the steamship company and Guatemala, which prohibited the carrying of munitions or dangerous persons to ports so near as to threaten the internal security of Guatemala was denounced. Blaine pointed out that no contract entered into by companies or individuals could contravene the established principles of international law. And if Barrundia was truly "contraband," why should not the general amnesty that had been granted to political offenders on almost the very day of the incident apply also to him? To Mizner's contention that the seizure was justified under the pressure of war conditions, it was pointed out that the American Minister had only the day before helped draft the peace agreement. The mere existence of a war declaration does not automatically make it possible to claim that conditions of war exist. Nor does a declaration of martial law mean that the actual conditions which justify more extreme legal measures exist. The conditions that are accepted as necessary to prompt such a declaration must also exist. To Blaine the seizure could not be justified under the martial law declaration.

Minister Mizner claimed that he had only advised Guatemala of her rights under international law. To this rebuttal Blaine replied that the American Minister had actually issued the warrant for Barrundia's arrest when he ordered Captain
Pitts to surrender his prisoner. This action was taken without any real criminal charges being filed against Barrundia or even an official warrant issued for his arrest. An American diplomat, then, had actively engaged in promoting the arrest of a political refugee and was guilty of making the deck of an American merchant vessel "the theater of illegal violence, upon groundless and unlawful excuses, and without even the pretense of legal formality."

The Secretary admitted that the decks of merchant vessels are not exempt from the municipal laws of the ports they enter, as are men-of-war. The case of a murder aboard a Belgian vessel while anchored in Jersey City was cited as an example. Despite the claims of Belgium to jurisdiction, the United States Supreme Court decided that such jurisdiction properly belonged to this government. However, this rule was not absolute and the exception usually was made in the case of political refugees.

Minister Mizner was also denounced for not accepting the offer of an American naval officer to give asylum to Barrundia on one of our vessels. Blaine pointed out that Britain had established the principle of permitting political prisoners to take refuge upon Her Majesty's ships, especially at the time of the Italian revolt in 1848. This precedent had since been adopted by most of the navies of the world and there was no reason why the offer of the American Navy to grant such asylum should have been refused.
Blaine was especially vitriolic in dealing with Mizner’s excuse that he only consented to surrender Barrundia out of fear for the safety of the passengers and crew when Guatemala threatened to sink the vessel if the General was not surrendered. This would have been an act of war and Mizner knew it and so did Guatemala, Blaine contended. Furthermore, the Secretary stated, such an attack by Guatemalan shore batteries upon an unarmed vessel flying the American flag would have no doubt led to an immediate conflict with the two American naval vessels in the harbor. As it was, "the naval force in those waters thus became an acquiescent spectator of events." Blaine concluded:

for your course, therefore, in intervening to permit the authorities of Guatemala to accomplish their desire to capture General Barrundia, I can discover no justification. I am now directed by the President to inform you that it is disavowed. The President is, moreover, of the opinion that your usefulness in Central America is at an end. 36

To this complete indictment of his activity, Mizner could only pen a bewildered reply. He feebly attempted to justify his actions on the basis of international law. However, Mizner complained more that he was at a loss to understand how after being commended by the President for successfully bringing the war in Central America to a close, 37

36. Blaine to Mizner, November 18, 1890. Instructions Central America, XIX. See also John Bassett Moore, A Digest of International Law (Washington: 1906), II, 871-877.

he should be condemned because of his handling of a mere incident of that war—the attempted arrest of a single person. According to the American Minister, "the entire diplomatic corps in Central America, excepting the representative from Mexico, have in writing indorsed my course in the Barrundia case."38

The mistakes of Minister Mizner in the Barrundia case can not be explained on the basis of his misinterpretation of international law or even upon a basis of poor judgment. As previously suggested, his difficulties stemmed from the fact that he was too close to the Guatemalan officials. A reference Mizner made to the fact that the decisions in the Barrundia case were made with the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the latter's parlor indicated this, a fact which he only tardily relayed to the Department. Secretary Blaine refers to the fact that Mizner, by his own admission, realized that he was violating established practice when he spoke of the Barrundia case as an "unusual one." This is also apparent when Mizner was careful to stress the fact that Barrundia fired the first shot in the fatal gun duel.

The unfortunate plight of Minister Lansing B. Mizner was, then, to be the most important of the series of legal entanglements, national and international, with which

38. Mizner to Blaine, December 31, 1890. Despatches, Central America, XXXIII.
American Ministers had to contend in the development of American policy in nineteenth century Guatemala.
CHAPTER VI
THE MEXICAN BOUNDARY DISPUTE

American policy in Guatemala was to play a vital role in the boundary dispute between Mexico and Guatemala. And, naturally enough, that policy was directed toward protecting the Central American state from the aggressions of its more powerful neighbor to the north. This boundary dispute was similar to the scores of others in Spanish America in that its roots reached far back into colonial history. While Spain controlled the territory, there was no reason to be unduly concerned over the exact limits of a Viceroyalty, a Captaincy-General, or other political subdivisions. Usually the areas over which disputes later arose were of such insignificance economically that there was no incentive in any event to make accurate surveys. The turmoil of revolution and the proclamation of autonomy heightened the original confusion as to exact boundaries. As previously noted, the Captaincy-General of Guatemala was briefly annexed to Mexico under Iturbide. Hence, it was not until the independence of the United Provinces of Central America had been established that the question of the boundary with Mexico became an issue.

Soon after the revolt against Spain began, the state of Chiapas proclaimed its independence and voted to join Mexico. Though this province had been a part of the Captaincy-General
of Guatemala, it had been considered as a part of Mexico during the period of the Central American Federation, and the earlier Guatemalan governments made few serious claims to ownership. Guatemalans were not ready to admit the fact, but on the basis of continued possession of the state Mexico was securely in control of Chiapas. However, this possession did not preclude the officials at Guatemala City from making occasional claims to the state on the basis of historical connection.

Guatemala, however, had a far better claim to Soconusco, actually a province of the state of Chiapas. Mexico and Guatemala had agreed in 1824 to allow the status of Soconusco to be that of a neutral area between the two countries; during which time, for a period of twenty years, it was to be under its own municipal rule. The former nation was, so it was claimed, willing to await the decision of the people in the disputed area. An attempt of Mexico to settle not only the fate of Soconusco but also that of the entire boundary with Central America was made in 1832, when a special mission was sent to Guatemala City. This mission failed because the Central-American authorities were reluctant to cooperate with Mexico, or were unsure that any agreements could be reached that would be to their advantage.


2. The above work presents the full story of this mission from the Mexican viewpoint.
In 1842 Santa Anna decided to end the existing stalemate. He led an army into Soconusco and simply annexed the province by force. At no time could Guatemala have done anything to contest Mexico's action, but in 1842 she was even weaker than usual. Hence, she did what she was to do throughout this boundary conflict with Mexico, first protest vigorously, and then appeal to the United States for support. A copy of the official protest to Mexico was handed to Henry Savage, the unofficial American diplomat at Guatemala City, who in turn relayed it to the Department. It was claimed that Soconusco was an integral part of Guatemala, that it had always been, and that, hence, there was absolutely no justification for the annexation. At Washington the Guatemalan Minister also attempted to promote the sympathetic attention of the United States government. Nothing tangible resulted from these appeals, but Guatemala did establish a later pattern of leaning upon the United States for protection against her powerful neighbor to the north. "In sum, then, from practically the beginning of the republic Guatemala was on the defensive."

3. Enc. in Savage to Webster, September 30, 1842; October 15, 1842. Despatches, Guatemala, (Central America), I.

4. Aycinena to Webster, November 19, 1842. Notes from Central American Legations, I.

5. Chester Lloyd Jones, Guatemala: Past and Present (Minneapolis: 1940), p. 76.
Through the years there were to be numerous efforts to adjust the question of the boundary and the ownership of the province of Soconusco; but all of these attempts proved unsuccessful. Even attempts to submit the problem to arbitration were futile. Much of the reason for the delay in reaching any kind of satisfactory settlement arose out of the unsettled internal conditions in both countries, but especially in Mexico.

The boundary question was revived in 1870, when an exiled Guatemalan, General Granados, organized a revolutionary force to invade Guatemala, allegedly with the cooperation of the Mexican authorities in Chiapas. It was charged that the latter group were deliberately aiding potential revolutionists in order to alter the existing boundaries. In 1874 it was reported that Mexican newspapers had begun a campaign to justify Mexican possession of Soconusco and to build up a claim to even more Guatemalan territory. The American Minister to Guatemala feared that if the rumors were true that Mexico proposed to sell some of its northern provinces to the United States, she might seek "to allay the irritation of national pride by claiming...acquisitions in this quarter."  

6. Enc. in Hudson to Fish, August 31, 1870. Despatches, Guatemala, V.

7. Williamson to Fish, October 5, 1874. Despatches, Central America, VI.
In 1377 a convention was signed between the two disputants to create a commission to study the boundary and to make recommendations. However, Guatemala disliked certain details of the arrangements and withdrew. Before doing so, she requested the American State Department to recommend an engineer to serve on the commission. The necessity for some kind of a settlement became more imperative when Mexican forces invaded the border area of Guatemala in September, 1880 and, it was charged, coerced the inhabitants to sign acts of annexation to Mexico.

The complicated problem of the boundaries between Guatemala and Mexico rose to paramount importance in 1881. At that time it became so completely entangled in the plan of President Barrios, of Guatemala, to effect a union of the Central American states that it is difficult to separate the two. Barrios was eager to obtain the goodwill of the United States in order to promote such a union, and he did not intend to permit what he apparently considered a minor boundary dispute to stand in his way. The Guatemalan President planned a trip to Washington to discuss the basis upon which the United States would support his attempt to promote union. He had some "ill-defined idea of ceding Soconusco" to the United States, perhaps as payment for help in

8. Dardon to Evarts, August 1, 1878. Notes from Central American Legations, VI.
9. Logan to Blaine, May 2, 1881. Despatches, Central America, XVII.
promoting union. When the showdown finally came, President Barrios conceded most of the points in question to Mexico, so that the boundary dispute would not hamper his attempt to recreate the old Central-American Federation. But much was to happen diplomatically before this settlement.

It was reported in May of 1881 that Mexico was at last prepared to force the issue and was moving troops into the disputed territory, but was hesitant to do so because she realized she was not strong enough to conquer and hold all of Central America, which she apparently desired. The previously rumored suggestion of ceding Soconusco to the United States was being discussed in Guatemala City, the idea apparently being that this territory would be colonized by Americans "through whom a barrier would be raised between the Mexicans and Guatemaltecos." (Barrios' ownership of a large estate in the disputed province was mentioned as a possible reason for his willingness to see it in the hands of the United States). Behind such a barrier Guatemala would be immune from possible Mexican aggression and could then turn its attention toward the federation with the rest of Central America. More timid souls feared that if the United States spurned Barrios' offer, he would then turn to a European state for support. Minister Logan felt, as did also most of the other ministers to Guatemala during the nineteenth century, that the best way to prevent foreign intervention in Central America was for the United States to
create a protectorate over the area. 10

Guatemala next appealed directly to the United States for support against what it believed to be Mexico's aggressive intentions throughout Central America. The Guatemalan Minister to Washington wrote, "All peaceful means of conciliation appearing to be exhausted, my Government sees no resource left but to appeal to that of the United States as the natural protector of the integrity of the Central American territory." 11 To Secretary Blaine, with his ever keen interest in Latin American affairs, this was a challenge he enjoyed meeting. He replied the following day that the American Minister at Mexico City had been instructed to impress upon that government that such armed conflicts over boundaries were detrimental to the best interests of republican institutions. Nevertheless, Blaine was careful to stress that Guatemala as well as Mexico had to refrain from any act that might provoke hostilities and that the United States would not express an opinion as to whose claim was the more just. "It is not the policy, or the desire of this government, to constitute itself the arbiter of the destinies...of its sister Republics. It is its single aim to be

10. Same to same, May 24, 1881; May 27, 1881. Ibid., XVII.

11. Ubico to Blaine, June 15, 1881. Notes from Central American Legations, VI. For a worthwhile secondary treatment of Secretary Blaine's interest in this boundary dispute see, Alice Felt Tyler, The Foreign Policy of James G. Blaine. (Minneapolis: 1927), pp. 52-64.
the impartial friend of each and all, and to be always ready
to tender frank and earnest counsel touching anything which
may menace the peace and prosperity of its neighbors,"
Blaine said.12

Minister Morgan in Mexico City was given the background
of the boundary controversy and instructed to say the United
States should be "the unbiased counsellor" of both nations.
Apparently the Secretary was well aware of the cool recep­
tion this nation would receive as arbiter from the Díaz
government. For he proceeded cautiously, stressing the fact
that the American government was only interested as a result
of the formal request of Guatemala and stated that Washington
would be just as ready to assist Mexico if the situation
were reversed. Above all, Morgan was warned to present the
position of the United States to the Mexican Minister of
Foreign Affairs with the utmost delicacy.13

The Department was no doubt anxious about the situation,
for several more instructions were sent to Mexico City.
Secretary Blaine this time reminded Mexico that any kind of
a war would weaken the Spanish American nations and make
easier foreign intervention. In fact, he declared, "there
is good reason to think that, if driven to extremities,

12. Blaine to Ubico, June 16, 1881. Notes to Guate­
mala Legation, II.

13. Blaine to Morgan, June 16, 1881. Instructions,
Mexico, XX. General Records of the Department of State,
National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Guatemala might cede her territorial rights in dispute to some European power. In view of the anxiety which several of these have shown of late to gain some footing, however slight, on the Pacific coast of the Isthmus, this is a contingency not to be overlooked." The Secretary stressed that the policy of fixed boundaries in the Western Hemisphere had been long established and warned Mexico that "any movement directly leading to the absorption, in whole or in part, of her weaker neighbors would be deemed an act unfriendly to the best interests of America." It was urgently requested that any contemplated hostilities against Guatemala be suspended, as the "United States tenders its good offices in the interests of peace."14

Judging from the tenor of the despatches from Mexico City, there was ample reason for the concern displayed by Secretary Blaine. It was reported that Mexico was not interested in arbitrating because of Guatemala's insult to Mexico. Minister Morgan informed Washington that this insult consisted of the destruction of some stone crosses Mexico had erected in the disputed territory and there could be no arbitration of the boundary until this insult was settled. It was admitted that Mexican troops had been sent into the disputed area. Apparently finding it difficult to discuss the matter calmly with Señor Mariscal, the Minister

14. Blaine to Morgan, June 21, 1881; June 23, 1881. Ibid., XX.
of Foreign Affairs, who reportedly became most excited over the United States offer to mediate, Minister Morgan became very pointed, almost threatening in his remarks. The American Minister pointed out that the presence of troops in the disputed area could easily lead to war, a war in which Mexico was bound to win. And as Guatemala could not pay indemnity, there would be annexation of territory. This absorption the United States would look upon with disfavor, as our government was against all territorial aggression as had been proven by our defense of Mexico at the time of the Maximilian venture.  

A wave of nationalistic feeling in Mexico that had stirred up the boundary controversy apparently became channeled off in a wave of Yankeephobia. Minister Morgan reported that hardly a day went by without an anti-American tirade in the semi-official press, which soon became directed against United States economic interests in Mexico. He stated:

The subject is on every tongue. It is constantly discussed by the press, and I feel it my duty to say that nothing has occurred since I have been here which has excited so much bad feeling against us as this proffer of arbitration. Say what I may to the contrary, it is considered as a menace. Every one I meet speaks to me upon the subject. To all I have held the same language, viz., that

15. Morgan to Blaine, July 12, 1881; July 19, 1881. Despatches, Mexico, LXXIII.

16. Morgan to Blaine, November 2, 1881; also September 22, 1881. Ibid., LXXIV.
the United States had no other object in suggesting an arbitration beyond wishing to make a war between Mexico and Guatemala unnecessary.

Part of the resentment against the United States stemmed from the Mexican fear of a promotion of Central American union under the auspices of Washington. Such a federation could become strong enough to attack Mexico; so it might be wiser to dispose of Guatemala at once. Mexico ridiculed the suggestion that Guatemala might cede the disputed territory to a European state, because it was common knowledge that the United States would never permit alienation of American territory to a European power. Mexican officials also were of the opinion that the Americans would not back Guatemala too far because of their large economic interests in Mexico. Mexico was said to be prepared to fight the United States before ceding the state of Chiapas. Minister Morgan was of the opinion that if the United States withdrew, the atmosphere was such that Guatemala would be promptly "gobbled up." 17

In fact, Minister Morgan decided that war was practically inevitable in any event; thus it was unnecessary to further alienate Mexico. Morgan recommended that we "leave the matter where it is." To this suggestion Secretary Blaine took vigorous exception. Blaine denied that such a course was possible and said that the United States could

17. Same to same, August 5, 1881; August 11, 1881; August 25, 1881. Ibid., LXXIII.
not under the normal operations of international courtesy brush aside Guatemala's request to mediate the dispute. And once the tender of good offices by a government has been made, it can not be lightly brushed aside. The Secretary emphasized that the role of the United States in this boundary conflict was of the utmost importance. To step out and permit Mexico to annex all or even part of Guatemala would mean that the right of conquest on this continent would be again demonstrated. In addition Blaine was most unhappy about the Mexican objections to the plans for Central American union, a project which he readily admitted the American government actively sponsored.18

Not all the diplomatic exchange concerning the boundary conflict was to emanate from Mexico City. From Guatemala City Minister Logan continued to stress the theme that if we did not protect Guatemala from aggression, she would turn to someone who would.19 In the meantime the Guatemalan Minister at Washington made sure that the Department was kept well informed of his nation's rights in the dispute. In a series of notes Minister Montúfar reviewed the history of the conflict over the unsettled area, stressing mainly the claim of Soconusco and denouncing Mexico for her persistent

18. Blaine to Morgan, November 28, 1881. Instructions Mexico, XX.

19. Logan to Blaine, June 28, 1881. Despatches, Central America, XVII.
efforts to extend the boundary into territory long considered a part of Guatemala. Mexico was blamed for the failure of the commission established by the Uriarte-Vallarta Treaty in 1877. Above all, Montúfar consistently stressed that Guatemala was turning to the United States, the protector of the Latin American republics, to see that justice was done. Guatemala was depicted as being ready to follow the lead of the United States. The Guatemalan Minister declared: "If a proposition for settlement is offered by the Government of the United States, Guatemala will accept it, considering it not as an attempt to assert power or to secure...dominion, but as an act of kindness, and sincere friendship."20

Guatemala was placing such complete trust in the power of the United States because she realized that her bargaining position was not good alone. By way of even further admission that the claim to Chiapas and Soconusco was not too well founded, an offer was made by Guatemala to renounce all claim to the disputed area if Mexico would pay an indemnity of $4,000,000.21 This the stronger nation in the dispute was not willing to do. However, the negotiations continued at Washington under the auspices of the State Department between Minister Montufar of Guatemala and Minister Romero of Mexico.

20. Montúfar to Blaine, November 2, 1881; November 7, 1881; November 21, 1881; April 10, 1882. Notes from Central American Legations, VI.

21. Montufar to Frelinghuysen, May 28, 1882. Ibid., VI.
President Barrios, apparently not feeling that matters were progressing satisfactorily, decided to settle the dispute himself. Therefore, before leaving for the United States he had the Assembly vote him full powers to settle the boundary question in any manner that he considered to be in the best interests of Guatemala. At Washington Barrios felt that only he could handle the complex problem in a manner that would prevent war. Hence, he proceeded to ignore all of the previous negotiations, especially the strong case for Guatemala that Minister Montúfar had developed so laboriously. (In fact, Barrios probably did not even glance at the documents presented to him). When Barrios proposed to surrender all claims to Chiapas and Soconusco, Minister Montúfar resigned his post and went into exile. Now free to conduct matters as he desired, the Guatemalan President hurriedly drew up preliminary articles for a direct understanding with Mexico. These articles were drafted into a final treaty that was signed in Mexico City on September 27, 1882. The covenant provided that the Mexican claim to Chiapas and Soconusco should be recognised and that no indemnity would be expected. The preliminary articles stated that in case the exact boundary between the

22. Minister Montúfar had considerable difficulty explaining the significance of this special decree at Washington as the Guatemalan constitution specifically granted the executive power to make treaties. Paul Burgess, Justo Rufino Barrios (Philadelphia: 1926), p. 208.
two states could not be agreed upon, the President of the United States was to be accepted as the arbitrator. However, the final treaty omitted this provision upon Mexico's insistence—to Guatemala's later regret.23

President Barrios apparently sensed that his readiness to surrender claim to an area that Guatemalans had for so long insisted was rightfully theirs would be unpopular. Therefore, upon his return home the Guatemalan President admitted that many of his followers did not approve the boundary settlement. Yet, Barrios stressed that it had been of great importance to end the prolonged dispute short of war so as better to continue the improvements in Guatemala already begun.24

Despite numerous accusations that Barrios had willingly given away as much as one-fifth of the national territory of his homeland, the fact remains that under the circumstances his was unquestionably the wiser course. Mexico had repeatedly stated that she would not surrender the disputed area without war, and in such a conflict there would have been no question as to the victor. It should be stressed that the region in question was not worth fighting for, as it was not an important part of the effective national territory of Guatemala in 1882, nor is much of the area economically important even today. It was Guatemala's national pride that


was wounded by this territorial loss and not her vital
interests.

As previously mentioned, Barrios came to Washington
with the primary interest of obtaining American blessing,
official or unofficial, for his proposed attempt to effect a
union of the Central American republics. Hence, he was
eager to dispose of what he considered a vexatious and minor
boundary conflict. Unlike many of his countrymen, Barrios
was perfectly willing to sacrifice national pride in the in­
terests of a more important objective, Central American
union. This fact helps explain his undue eagerness to get a
settlement, regardless of the terms. And though President
Barrios certainly displayed elements of statesmanship in
effecting a settlement short of war, his precipitous actions
were also to prove costly to Guatemala. Failure to insist
upon arbitration in case the boundary could not be deter­
mined was Barrios' first mistake, one which was to enable
Mexico to demand more territory than it had originally
claimed. Another mistake was for Guatemala to have renounced
all claims to indemnity without insisting that Mexico do
likewise. A biographer of Barrios concludes: "Barrios may
have the credit of having averted a war which would have
been disastrous to his country...but because of his precipi­
tation and excessive self-confidence, he must take the chief
responsibility for the losses which his country sustained in
Despite the good intentions of Guatemala, the settlement of 1882 was not to be the definitive one in the boundary dispute with Mexico. The dispute continued because the boundary line agreed upon at the conference table was difficult to establish in the field. And as the years passed without a settlement, Guatemalan interests were to suffer, since actual possession had been agreed upon as one of the bases for determining title to dubious regions, and Mexico displayed consistent militancy by sending troops into disputed areas which she then claimed on the grounds of actual possession. Hence, there were numerous appeals by Guatemala to Washington for protection against the rapacity of her neighbor. This was especially true in 1887, when it was again feared that war might result through Mexico's aggressive actions. As usual, the American Minister at Guatemala City took the side of the nation to which he was accredited. Minister Hall described Mexico as a nation "whose arrogance in dealing with her weaker neighbors is such as her own Government would not submit to without protesting before all the powers of Christendom."

25. Burgess, op. cit., p. 211.

26. See Appendix A for map showing the details of the settlement.

27. Hall to Bayard, July 20, 1887. Despatches, Central America, XXVIII. Professor Robertson suggests that the United States did not push its requests for arbitration after Secretary Blair resigned in 1881. William Spence Robertson, Hispanic American Relations with the United States (New York: 1923), p. 155.
Most of the boundary was agreed upon soon after the treaty of 1882. As usual in such boundary disputes, the stumbling-block was provided because of the inability to identify the river referred to in the treaty. It had been stipulated that the boundary should follow an astronomical line to the Rio Usumacinta and thence proceed along this river to another astronomical line. The problem arose out of the fact that the above named river was formed mainly by two tributaries at the designated point. Guatemala insisted that the tributary referred to was the Rio Chixoy (Salinas), whereas Mexico contended that it was the Rio de la Pasion. Between these two rivers the area in dispute was a rectangle of approximately 6,000 to 7,000 square miles. Of vital importance to Guatemala was the fact that forfeiture of the disputed area would mean that effective contact with the district of Peten would be lost. Only a narrow corridor would have remained, and Mexico could have expected soon to claim the entire region. Therefore, Guatemala again appealed to the United States in 1887 to arbitrate the controversy. To this proposed arbitration Mexico voiced vigorous objections, perhaps because she felt her influence in Central America should not be secondary to that of the United States.

28. See map in Appendix A for the disputed area.
29. Hall to Bayard, February 21, 1888. Ibid., XXIX.
30. Same to same, February 17, 1888. Ibid., XXIX.
American attempts to mediate in 1890 proved unsuccessful and Mexico continued to insist upon her extreme demands and to resent interference from the United States. In 1894, obviously desiring to humble Guatemala, Mexico demanded that before any settlement of the boundary question could be discussed, she be paid indemnity for the expense of the troops she had found necessary to station on the Guatemalan frontier. In addition, she demanded that Professor Miles Rock, an American, be dismissed as one of the Guatemalan experts on the boundary commission.31

The controversy dragged on, with the United States continuing in its role as protector of Guatemala. The American interest was based upon the fact that the difficulty was an outgrowth of the treaty of 1882, which had been negotiated largely as a result of the Department's efforts. Mexico continued to be hostile to American intervention, claiming that a question of national honor was at stake in the boundary dispute which could not be submitted to arbitration. However, though continuing to be threatening, Mexico showed a willingness to cooperate after Washington insisted that arbitration was the only practical means to solve the conflict.32

On April 1, 1895 it was agreed by representatives of

31. State Department Memorandum dated November 30, 1894, in Notes from Guatemala, VIII.

the two nations that if Mexico and Guatemala could not ami-
ably settle the boundary conflict it would be submitted to
arbitration. 33 Finally, on May 8, 1899 treaty ratifications
were completed, with Guatemala retaining the area she
claimed. 34

The significance of the long drawn-out boundary con-
flict between Guatemala and Mexico does not lie in the fact
that the latter nation made good its claim to Chiapas and
Soconusco, nor in the fact that Guatemala was able to retain
a few thousand square miles of mosquito-infested lowlands.
Rather, this boundary conflict is an important chapter in
the story of American policy in Guatemala because it well
illustrates the great dependence that Guatemala placed upon
the United States as its protector against the aggressive
designs of a more powerful neighbor. With the restraining
influence of the United States removed, it would not be un-
reasonable to suggest that Mexico might well have absorbed
part, or perhaps even all of Guatemala, perhaps even all of
Central America. This boundary conflict is also significant
because it again shows that the "big brother" role of the
United States in insisting upon mediation was the primary
factor in preventing what would have been a very foolish

33. Young to Gresham, April 3, 1895. Despatches,  
Central America, (Guatemala and Honduras), XXXVII.

34. Clayton to Hay, May 22, 1899. Despatches, Central
America, (Guatemala and Honduras), XLII.
CHAPTER VII
CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION

Throughout the nineteenth century American policy in Guatemala was actively directed toward the promotion of an effective union of the five Central American republics. Practically every Minister sent to Guatemala City was reminded that the creation of such a union was one of the basic tenets of our foreign policy. It has been noted repeatedly that the question how best to promote such a federation was discussed in connection with other topics. In fact, the efforts of American diplomats to promote Central American unity is the most important theme running through American policy in Guatemala in the nineteenth century.

It was only natural that Guatemala should be considered the key nation in any potential plans to create a federation government. First of all, Guatemala City was the seat of most of the diplomatic corps, and, as has been previously noted, the nation tended to take the lead in Central American affairs. It was the largest of the states in terms of population and wealth. In addition, its historical position as capital of the old Captaincy-General and the ill-fated United Provinces of Central America gave Guatemala considerable prestige when it came to promoting union.

The first attempt to effect federation was through the United Provinces of Central America, officially launched by the constitution of 1825. The United States promptly recog-
nised this new North American union and established treaty relations with it. However, this first attempt at federation did not long endure, and with the granting of permission in 1838 to the individual states to create their own governments it was practically non-existent. Though this attempt at union failed, "the ideal of uniting Central America under one government has been one of the strongest forces which have influenced internal policies and international relations in the Isthmus from the declaration of Independence down to the present day."¹

As this work is so largely concerned with the role of American policy in promoting Central American union, it is unnecessary to do more than summarize the reasons for the original failure at federation.² The federation failed because the community of interest necessary to bind such a union together was sadly lacking. Even under the Captaincy-General problems of transportation and communication made difficult a centralized administration. Once the unifying hand of Spanish rule was removed, local interests took precedence and union was doomed. It is even probable that in

the later period of Spanish control tendencies toward local political control were already present. The failure of the union to create a federal district and the consequent location of the capital at Guatemala City caused considerable distrust and jealousy among the smaller states. The constitution of the federation contained many weaknesses, one of which was the failure to adequately provide for a Supreme Court. Perhaps of even more importance was the fact that too few Central Americans sufficiently understood the operation of government under such a document. To many, federation was doomed to fail because of the anti-clerical policy of the first government of the United Provinces.3

The problem of whether or not the American diplomats should be commissioned to what had become a defunct federation government or to the individual states has been previously discussed. As each representative of the Department at Washington left for Guatemala, he was instructed officially to encourage the re-establishment of the union government. However, all of the American ministers reported that there was no union government with which to deal and that federation sentiment was practically non-existent. The United States was reluctant to accept the dissolution of the United Provinces, and so delayed in sending diplomats to the individual states.

3. Slade, op. cit., p. 74; Perry, op. cit., p. 30. Also Bancroft, Central America, III, Chapter X.
When Guatemala, the most important state in Central America, declared its formal independence from the old federation on March 21, 1847, the existing condition was recognized by the State Department and attempts made to establish diplomatic relations with the individual states. In his instructions to Elijah Hise Secretary Buchanan emphasized the interest of the United States in federation. After reviewing the history of Central American union, Buchanan pointed out that each of the small states was so feeble as to invite aggression from foreign powers. Though it was emphasized by the Secretary that the established policy of the United States was non-intervention in the affairs of other states Buchanan stated: "you are instructed by your counsel and advice...to promote the reunion of the States which formed the federation of Central America. In a federal union among themselves consists their strength." By such a union domestic dissensions would be avoided and Central American republicanism would be respected throughout the world. Hise was instructed to use the most powerful arguments in presenting the case for union.4

Though hardly a year passed in the 1840's and 1850's without some activity on the part of the Central Americans themselves to recreate the federation, all were to fail. President Carrera of Guatemala was accused of blocking such

4. Buchanan to Hise, June 3, 1848. Instructions, American States, XV.
plans at the dictates of the clerical group supporting him. In addition, Costa Rica was hostile to federation proposals. However, in the eyes of the American diplomats the real "villain" preventing union was Britain. The dark hand of "Perfidious Albion" was depicted as being everywhere; bribing, threatening, and stooping to all vile deeds to prevent the United States from creating a Central American federation. The British agents were accused of fomenting revolutions to that end. It was alleged that British gold financed Guatemala's invasion of El Salvador in 1849, so as to halt the latter nation's attempt to effect union. The British motives in seeking to keep the Central American states independent, and hence weak, stemmed largely from her interest in isthmian affairs. The British were even blamed for the dissolution of the former union. Minister Squier claimed that "the men who were most active in destroying the old Federation of Central America, the so-called nobles of Guatemala and their adherents...are those who may be said to be in the English interest."

The active interest of the Department in promoting union when the government of Guatemala was opposed to it caused much of the distrust displayed toward American

5. Squier to Clayton, August 20, 1849; September 12, 1849; November 2, 1849; March (?), 1850. Despatches, Guatemala (Central America), II. Also see Ephraim George Squier, Nicaragua (New York: 1860), p. 559.

6. Squier to Clayton, March (?), 1850. Ibid., II.
diplomats in the 1850's. It was reported in Guatemala in 1851 that the latent hostility of the conservative ruling groups toward the United States was very evident. There was a prevalent belief that Washington was sending a minister to Central America for the purpose of encouraging Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua to attack Guatemala because she was hostile to the union they favored. Despite such reports showing that Guatemala especially was opposed to union, the Department continued to attempt to promote it and so instructed the American diplomats in Central America.

Though there were to be further attempts to bring about union in the 1860's, these were no more successful than previous efforts. It was not until the conservative-clerical faction that had supported Carrera had been effectively replaced by the liberals under Barrios in the 1870's that union had even a chance to succeed. At that time, apparently sensing the improved possibilities for federation, the

7. Savage to Webster, April 10, 1851. Despatches, Guatemala, (Central America), III.

8. An English historian suggests an interesting contradiction to the policy of the United States in promoting a Central American federation. This writer claims that one of the main reasons the government at Washington failed to support the Walker intervention arose from fear that the "grey eyed man of destiny" might succeed in uniting the Central American states. "The formation of a powerful independent Central American Federation was not palatable to the Cabinet at Washington, for the principal reason, that the monopoly of the Isthmus would no longer be in the hands of Americans, but be open to the world." See Bedford Pim, Gate of the Pacific (London, 1863), p. 47.
Department again took an active interest. Only one minister was accredited to all five states, as it was hoped that they would soon be one. Minister Williamson was instructed that "One of the objects of your mission...will be to endeavor to bring about a reunion of those States." It was stressed that this activity must be carried out "cautiously and discreetly" so that the role of the United States would not be misunderstood.  

Minister Williamson reported that everyone in Guatemala favored union except a few officeholders, and that he lost no opportunity to remind those with whom he came into contact of the advantages of federation.  

There continued to be reports of conventions signed between one nation and another endorsing union, but as usual nothing came of them. One hopeful attempt was the signing of a treaty in 1873 between Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. It was expected that Honduras would also soon adhere, so that only Costa Rica would be left out. However, when the latter nation let it be known that it most emphatically was not interested in joining any proposed union, this attempt also failed.

9. Fish to Williamson, June 17, 1873. Instructions to Costa Rica, XVII. The intention to locate the American Legation at San Jose, Costa Rica, perhaps arose from the desire to win that nation to the union cause. However, her hostility toward the United States over federation prompted Minister Williamson to remain at Guatemala City.

10. Williamson to Fish, September 14, 1873. Despatches, Central America, IV.
The entire problem of Central American Union was reviewed by the American Minister in 1874. He offered little encouragement for the formation of such a union. The reasons for this lack of assurance were: (1) the memory of the anarchy that existed under the first federation was still strong; (2) the large foreign debt contracted by the old federation was still a thorny issue; (3) the local prejudices would make very difficult the operation of such a government (to prove the point the bitterness between the cities of Leon and Granada in Nicaragua was cited); (4) the fact that no state was prepared to grant priority to another state in anything; (5) the lack of a common interest among the states; (6) the lack of a homogeneous population; (7) the lack of a prominent leader to bring federation about; (8) the lack of communications (Minister Williamson claimed that it was easier to go from New York to Constantinople than from Guatemala City to San Jose, Costa Rica); and (9) the absolute refusal of Costa Rica to have anything to do with the other states.12

Justo Rufino Barrios, the liberal who became President of Guatemala in 1873, was to be the kind of leader Williamson referred to, and the only man to come close to bringing about the ideal. Barrios, aggressive and ambitious, was

11. Same to same, November 2, 1873; November 5, 1873. Ibid., IV.
12. Same to same, June 24, 1874. Ibid., VI.
desirous of creating a federation that would be worthy of
the leadership of a man such as himself. In other words, he
desired to absorb the rest of the Central American states
into Guatemala. And by putting into office in the neighbor­
ing countries carefully selected weaklings responsible to
himself alone, Barrios was only narrowly to miss succeeding
in his ambitious undertaking.

In 1875 Barrios sent a circular to the other Central
American capitals outlining the basis for federation. Min­
ister Williamson described the document as so offensive to
nations which claim to be sovereign that it would not
further the cause of union.13 A special meeting was held
the following spring to discuss the proposals for union,
but as one of the chronic revolution combinations was in
progress at the time nothing came from the discussions.14
Though this effort was unsuccessful, Barrios tried again in
1877. The American Minister emphasized that this time the
attempt was based more upon persuasion than upon force. If
Barrios' plan succeeds it "may not be an unmixed evil to
Central America,"15 Minister Williamson decided.

In his attempts to promote union Barrios was to rely
heavily on American assistance. In 1873 the Guatemalan
President was reported as having informed Williamson that

13. Same to same, September 28, 1875. Ibid., X.
14. Same to same, April 4, 1876. Ibid., X.
15. Williamson to Evarts, April 25, 1877. Ibid., XII.
the time for acting to effect union had been reached, and that the representative of the United States Government was the most logical choice to take the lead.16

The scheming of President Barrios to use the United States in his effort to recreate Central American union became very much involved. Into it was entangled the boundary dispute with Mexico, discussed in the preceding chapter, his offer to sell the Bay Islands to the United States, and an offer to grant the canal rights to Nicaragua in exchange for American assistance in promoting federation.

First, Barrios offered to sell the Bay Islands to the United States, ostensibly on the grounds that he was bankrupt. He stressed that these islands would be very valuable to the United States as a naval base. (Incidentally, such use would keep them from falling into British hands). When Minister Logan reminded President Barrios that the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty precluded the purchase on our part, Barrios replied that Britain would find some means of evading the treaty anyway. To the American Minister this remark suggested that the same offer might be made to the British if we were so foolish as to decline it. It was rumored that the islands

16. Williamson to Fish, November 26, 1873. Ibid., IV. Barrios was accused by his enemies of trying to subjugate all Central America when he invaded El Salvador in 1876. To counter this charge the Guatemalan President announced that he had no plans for union and that in any event such union could not be obtained through force. A biographer of Barrios feels that he missed a golden opportunity to effect Central American union then. See Burgess, Justo Rufino Barrios, p. 157.
had been offered to the French also. Although the islands belonged to Honduras, it was felt that Barrios could sell them because, according to Minister Logan, "President Soto of Honduras is a mere clerk of Barrios, the former keeping the books of state at Tegucigalpa for the latter." 17

This offer to dispose of the Bay Islands, which had reached the Department from other sources, also, was declined. Secretary Evarts emphasized the fact that neither the United States nor Great Britain could purchase the islands under the terms of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. In addition, as the position of the United States relative to any further acquisitions by European powers in the Western Hemisphere was well known, the Department was doubtful that France would be a possible purchaser, as had been suggested. However, Minister Logan was instructed to carefully watch the situation and report to the Department any new developments concerning the islands. 18

Barrios, however, was apparently most desirous of getting the United States involved in Central American affairs in order to assist his promotion of federation. He next offered to sell Soconusco in addition to the Bay Islands, and Minister Logan claimed that the Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested "that the bay of Ocos, on the

17. Logan to Evarts, October 10, 1879. Ibid., XV. Same to same, April 14, 1880. Ibid., XVI.

18. Evarts to Logan, March 4, 1880. Instructions, Costa Rica, XVIII.
coast of Soconusco, would make a capital coaling station for the United States, which would furnish a pretext for the introduction of Americans into the country.19

But the main effort of Barrios to effect an alliance so as to fulfill his ambitions was the offer to grant the United States the canal rights in Nicaragua in return for American sponsorship of Central American federation. In December of 1879 the Guatemalan Minister at Washington visited the Department and expressed the wish that construction of the canal would soon begin.20 This visit takes on new meaning when considered along with Minister Logan's despatch of February 6, 1880. The American Minister stated that "President Barrios quite unbosomed himself of some of his secret purposes." The most important of these secret purposes was to promote union at all costs. In this connection Barrios stressed the fact that because of the pending federation Nicaragua was no longer in a position to grant canal concessions without consulting with other Central American states. If she did, the Guatemalan President declared that he would promptly declare federation and take Nicaragua into it by force. It was strongly implied that if the United States really wanted to build an isthmian canal,

19. Logan to Elaine, May 27, 1881. Despatches, Central America, XVII.

20. State Department Memorandum, December 11, 1879. Notes from Central American Legations, VI.
Barrios was the man to deal with. The American interest in the Nicaragua canal rights was, then, to be the primary bargaining weapon Barrios was to use in seeking Washington's blessing upon federation.

Minister Logan, however, believed that the best path to Central American union was to have the United States take over the area as a protectorate. Logan advocated an immediate termination of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, if it was felt that it constituted an obstacle to the establishment of a protectorate. Only such a protectorate would enable the weak individual states to be transformed into a single powerful republic that would be capable of withstanding foreign aggression, Logan claimed. To any objections that might be raised that "the avowed policy of the United States is non-intervention in the affairs of other nations," the American Minister would answer that "if your present interpretation of the Monroe doctrine is to be maintained in good earnest, intervention manifestly becomes but a question of circumstances, time, and method." Logan indicated that Barrios was prepared to go along with such a scheme: "President Barrios has indicated his willingness to accept

21. Logan to Evarts, February 6, 1880. Despatches, Central America, XVI.

22. For the most complete treatment of this view see J. Fred Rippy, "Justo Rufino Barrios and the Nicaraguan Canal," Hispanic American Historical Review, XX (1940).
it in a cautious conversation I have had" with him. Logan pointed out that as the Guatemalan President now controlled Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, Costa Rica would no doubt welcome such a protectorate because of fear of Barrios.

Though interested in the promotion of federation, this path to its accomplishment was too drastic for the Department. Logan was instructed that the policy of the United States was to support union morally, and if requested, through our good offices. Secretary Blaine reportedly told Minister Logan that "I have but one instruction to give you, and that is verbal, do what you can to unite those Central American States." But as enthusiastic an advocate of union as Blaine was, he nevertheless cautioned Logan that it would be premature for this nation to do more than express our interest in a general manner until it became apparent that public opinion in the Central American states "was ripe for the execution of such a plan."25

In a lengthy instruction the Secretary reviewed the history of union attempts and outlined the policy that he desired followed so as to achieve federation. Blaine stated that the prosperity and well-being of these states was of

23. Logan to Evarts, April 14, 1880; May 4, 1880. Despatches, Central America, XVI.

24. Evarts to Logan, March 4, 1880. Instructions, Central America, XVIII.

25. Blaine to Logan, May 7, 1881. Ibid., XVIII.
vital concern to the United States. He pointed to the example of the United States as proof that such a union can succeed and to Mexico's growth and prosperity as an example of what union might do for Central America. Blaine continued, "You cannot impress too strongly upon the government to which you are accredited, or upon the public men with whom you associate, the importance which the government of the United States attaches to such a confederation of Central America as will respond to the wants and wishes of their people." The Secretary then requested that a comprehensive report of the political, social, and financial conditions of the Central American states be compiled that might be of use in effecting union. In addition, he requested definite suggestions from the agents in Central America as to how the United States could best act in the interest of confederation. Blaine concluded by trying to quiet the fear of Minister Logan that some European state might intervene in Central America unless the United States immediately took over the area as a protectorate. He simply referred to the Monroe Doctrine as a part of the fixed foreign policy that the United States would have to support in the unlikely event of European aggression in Central America.26

Blaine in writing to Senor Ubico, the Guatemalan representative at Washington, in reference to the boundary dispute that country had with Mexico, was to use this occasion

26. Same to same, May 7, 1881. Ibid., XVIII.
to express again his desire for union. He stressed the fact that "the government of the United States is...anxious to do any and everything which will tend to strengthen the indispensable and natural union of the republics of the continent in the face of tendencies which operate from without to influence the internal affairs of Spanish America."27

With Secretary of State Blaine showing such interest in a cause that Guatemala had so long championed, Senor Ubico promptly replied. Ubico agreed with Blaine on the immediate need for union and reviewed the past history of Guatemala's attempts to promote it. He claimed that federation was popular everywhere in Central America, except with those few who would be deprived of office. Senor Ubico carefully pointed out that as Guatemala had more than one-half the population of Central America, it should take the lead, but that in doing so it would need the support of the United States. He concluded by outlining a definite plan whereby union could be effected, and submitted a draft of a proposed treaty between the United States and the soon-to-be-created federation. Perhaps the most important clause in this draft treaty stipulated that "the Government of the United States guarantees the sovereignty and integrity of the Central American Territory."28

27. Blaine to Ubico, June 16, 1881. Notes to Guatemalan Legation, II.

28. Ubico to Blaine, June 17, 1881; June 22, 1881. Notes from Central American Legations, VI.
Meanwhile President Barrios displayed further interest in how the United States could assist him in recreating the federation. In an interview he modestly declared that he was the only man capable of accomplishing union in the immediate future. And this could be attained with only a little help from Guatemala's good friend, the United States. What Barrios was really requesting was a loan of two million dollars. This money was needed to prepare his armies for a revolt against the clerical faction in El Salvador and Honduras who were bitterly opposed to union. With this loan the Guatemalan President was ready to promise union within four months, and probably without firing a gun. The threat of force was believed necessary because there were those who would not accept voluntary federation. Barrios quoted a statement attributed to Secretary Blaine to the effect that "there were but two things before these states, either to form a strong union, or to be absorbed." The Guatemalan President even proposed that he accompany Minister Logan to Washington to present the case directly to President Garfield and Secretary Blaine. Later Barrios was prepared to act without the loan from the United States. He claimed that four of the states could be successfully united (Costa Rica was the exception) by his decree, if there were advance assurances that Washington would promptly recognise the new

29. Logan to Blaine, June 24, 1881. Despatches, Central America, XVII.
Such assurances were not forthcoming and another opportunity to effect union was lost.

We have already noted the visit of President Barrios to Washington in 1882, ostensibly to settle the boundary controversy with Mexico. Though the documentary evidence is sketchy, most authorities are of the opinion that Barrios really came to obtain American support for his scheme to bring about Central American union. And his haste in settling with Mexico possibly stemmed from Barrios' desire to get on with what he considered the important issue.

After settling the boundary controversy, Barrios went to Europe where his plans for union probably were crystallized. In Europe he was undoubtedly made aware of the relative unimportance of Guatemala in the family of nations. Then too, the success of Cavour and Bismarck in similar endeavors were still fresh in the minds of everyone. At any rate the whole project of union was renewed upon his return. However, there was little support for union except in Guatemala.

30. Same to same, December 28, 1881. Ibid., XVIII. It is interesting, but futile, to speculate on what might have happened to Central American union if Blaine had not been relieved as Secretary in December, 1881.

31. Bancroft, History of Central America, III, p. 440. Professor Stuart claims that "the results of Barrios visit to Washington showed that the administration undoubtedly encouraged him in his plans for a union." Graham H. Stuart, Latin America and the United States (New York: 1938), p. 335. Professor Rippy is in substantial agreement with the above (in Rippy, op. cit.).

Barrios sensed that one of the major obstacles to union was his personal unpopularity outside of Guatemala. Therefore, he first sought to resign as President of Guatemala on December 29, 1882, so as to be free to promote union as a private citizen. As was to be expected, the Assembly refused to accept his resignation. Next, the Guatemalan President attempted to answer the charges that his intention was simply to extend his dictatorship to include all of Central America. He declared that he would not be coaxed to accept the leadership of a united state under any conditions. He was only trying to create a federation for the best interests of his fellow countrymen in Central America.

Barrios was to have his hands full managing his puppets in Honduras and El Salvador in addition to worrying about public opinion. For while he had been in Europe, President Soto, whom he had put into office in Honduras, had been busy with his own plans for Central American union. This rivalry Barrios obviously could not tolerate, and the bitter letters exchanged between the two were finally made public. Unable to contend with Barrios, President Soto obtained permission from the Honduran Congress to go to the United States.

34. Ibid., pp. 440-446.
35. Enc. in Hall to Frelinghuysen, August 18, 1883. Despatches, Central America, XXI.
"to receive much needed medical attention."

While Barrios was busy mending diplomatic fences in Guatemala and awaiting a suitable opportunity to realize his union plans, he was busy helping the United States negotiate a canal treaty with Nicaragua. He advised the Nicaraguan President confidentially on details of the proposed treaty. Barrios tried to allay any fears that the United States might use the treaty as a basis for aggressive acts. He advised the Nicaraguan President that

today there is a brilliant opportunity offered to Central America by the favorable disposition of the Government and Congress of the United States for securing that highway which will expand the future of these Republics: later perhaps the same favorable opportunity may not present itself, and that most interesting work may remain unfinished or indefinitely postponed.

President Barrios even offered to accompany the American Minister Hall to Nicaragua to assist in drafting the treaty. Perhaps this interest stemmed from the concern for the overall welfare of Central America in which Barrios was so much interested.

36. Burgess, op. cit., p. 224. From San Francisco Soto wrote Barrios reproaching him for having forced him into exile. "My heart is in Honduras," he protested. "Barrios answered it was fortunate Soto had left his heart in Honduras, for he had taken everything else out of the country."

37. Enc. in Hall to Frelinghuysen, August 2, 1884. Despatches, Central America, XXII.

38. Same to same, June 20, 1884; June 26, 1884; July 21, 1884; July 29, 1884. Ibid., XXII. Also same to same, September 28, 1884; October 15, 1884; October 22, 1884; December 4, 1884. Ibid., XXIII.
The Guatemalan President apparently decided that union was not to be accomplished by moral persuasion or by diplomatic negotiations. For on February 28, 1885 he issued a decree to create the union of Central America, with himself as the head of state. Coming as it did sandwiched between a decree creating a new professorship and one cancelling a railroad contract, it took Guatemala City as well as the rest of Central America by surprise. The decree cited the usual arguments for union and presented a plan whereby a Constituent Assembly would meet to draft a constitution. It was a document intended to appeal to the people of Central America, not to their rulers. For three days Guatemala City celebrated and shouted "Vive la Union." But more preparation for the decree had been made than was first apparent. During the celebration the Guatemalan army was readied for the conflict Barrios knew he had precipitated.

Only Honduras accepted Barrios' plan without question. Costa Rica replied that she was not interested in any union. Nicaragua refused to recognise the proclamation of union, reportedly because of the influence of British merchants upon President Cardenas. But the key to the possible success of the proclamation was President Zaldivar of El


41. Slade, op. cit., p. 144.
Salvador, who had been one of Barrios’ most trusted henchmen. When the Guatemalan President gave Zaldivar his position, he was warned that the latter was a conservative from the school of Carrera and that he could not be trusted. Zaldivar was to select this critical time to prove his infidelity. At first Zaldivar wired his approval and promised to support Barrios and the union. But he was merely stalling for time to arouse Salvadorean patriotism so as to put an army into the field.

The American Minister correctly appraised the situation when he wired Washington:

The decree of the President of Guatemala relative to a union of Central American states without consent, not even consultation, and his uninvited assumption of the command of all their military forces is considered as an unwarranted usurpation. The movement will be resisted by Salvador, by Nicaragua, and by Costa Rica. It is said Honduras adheres to the movement. It will result without doubt in much wanton bloodshed and perhaps anarchy.

The Department promptly replied that though the United States continued to support a voluntary union in Central America, "no display of force on the part of any one or more States to coerce the others can be countenanced." Mexico indicated that she too looked with displeasure upon such a move and sent an army to the Guatemalan border.

42. Ibid., p. 145.
43. Hall to Bayard, March 9, 1885. Despatches, Central America, XXIII.
44. Bayard to Hall, March 10, 1885. Instructions, Central America, XVIII.
That Barrios was most sensitive to the attitude of the United States was evidenced by a wire he sent to President Cleveland. He explained that it was only the demands of the people of Central America that prompted him to declare union and that the opposition came only from a few leaders of other states. He emphasized that there was nothing against the Nicaraguan Canal negotiations in the attempt to promote union. Barrios declared: "I have ever been and am a decided partisan of the American Government and I would like to know its suggestions in this matter." 45

The defenders of Barrios have used the fact that many of the instructions sent explaining the position of the Department were held up in El Salvador, as the telegraph lines passed through that country. They, and many objective historians, contend that if some of the telegrams showing Washington's hostile attitude toward union by force had been delivered before the eve of battle, President Barrios would have receded from his position before it was too late. Though many important messages were intentionally delayed by El Salvador, that of March 10 wherein the United States condemned union by force was received, and Minister Hall presented its contents to the Guatemalan President at once. 46 So Barrios definitely knew that he could expect no support.

45. President Barrios to President Cleveland, March 21, 1885. Despatches, Central America, XXIII.

46. Hall to Bayard, March 15, 1885. Ibid., XXIII.
from the United States.

The despatches of Minister Hall also indicate that Barrios well knew the stand of the United States. Barrios protested that though he had sent an army to the frontier, he had no intention of invading neighboring states. Mexico was even blamed for instigating military action. Minister Hall was able to obtain assurance from Nicaragua and Honduras that they would commit no overt act until the position of the Department was made known. So matters were not permitted to drift because of the interruption of communications.

On March 23, Barrios left for the Salvador frontier. The conflict started not because the United States did not act promptly enough to avert it, but because El Salvador and Nicaragua were convinced that only by getting rid of Barrios would they be safe from further coercion. On April 2 President Barrios unnecessarily exposed himself on the battlefield and was instantly killed. The news of their President's death demoralized the Guatemalan forces and brought an end to the conflict within a few days.

The dramatic passing of Guatemala's greatest statesman—and very good friend of the United States—ended the last real attempt to promote a federation of the Central American States. A biographer of Barrios put it well when he wrote:

So the cause of Union passed out of the realm of the real and tangible, to be the dream of poets

47. Same to same, April 2, 1885. Ibid., XXIV.
and the catchword of demagogues. Little men with little plans and little visions again occupied the stage and Central America returned to its old divided, intriguing life. But the life and the death of Barrios live on in the memory and in the imagination of those who sincerely desire Union.48

One of the little men who sought to promote union was President Zaldivar of El Salvador, who, a few weeks before paradoxically enough, had been so instrumental in defeating it. He sent a circular to the other four states inviting their cooperation in effecting federation. Each state was invited to send delegates to a congress that would adopt a constitution. Guatemala replied that under the circumstances this was not the time for such an effort. Costa Rica also declined to participate for similar reasons, and Nicaragua was almost insulting in her refusal. Only Honduras accepted the invitation.49

In 1888 a wave of anxiety swept Central America because of rumors that President Barillas, Barrios' successor in Guatemala, was also preparing to attempt federation by force. The American Minister was instructed to convey to the government of Guatemala the information that the Department was against coercive union.50 The rumors that Guatemala was again planning federation by force were promptly denied, and

49. Hall to Bayard, May 8, 1886. Despatches, Central America, XXIV.
50. Bayard to Hall, February 27, 1888. Instructions, Central America, XIX.
it was strongly stated that after one unfortunate experience Guatemala was only interested in Central American union if it could be accomplished by means other than force.\textsuperscript{51}

With James G. Blaine as Secretary of State again, interest in the promotion of Central American union increased. However, it was reported that one of the reasons for much opposition to union came from the fact that the United States supported it. Some Central Americans reportedly believed that as long as they were weak and divided they had nothing to fear, because the United States would protect them. They reasoned that if they were united and strong, they would have to pay for their own protection.\textsuperscript{52}

Nevertheless, on October 15, 1889, a congress meeting at San Salvador drew up a provisional pact of union. In its earlier stages the union was intended to be only in the area of foreign affairs. Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador ratified the pact, with Nicaragua and Costa Rica remaining aloof.\textsuperscript{53} The revolution in El Salvador, partially over the cause of union, led to a brief conflict with Guatemala (discussed in connection with legal problems)\textsuperscript{54} and effectively

\textsuperscript{51.} Hall to Bayard, April 5, 1888. Despatches, Central America, XXIX.
\textsuperscript{52.} Mizner to Blaine, October 28, 1889. Ibid., XXXI.
\textsuperscript{53.} Mizner to Blaine, February 10, 1890. Ibid., XXXII.
\textsuperscript{54.} General Barrundia had been Barrios' Minister of War and in his attempt to promote revolution in 1890 he relied upon pro-union sentiment in Guatemala. In his state-room aboard the Acapulco were quantities of handbills calling for the people to revolt in the interests of union.
prevented the pact of union, signed and ratified by the
three states from becoming operative.

Nevertheless Secretary Blaine continued to encourage
federation. In answering a note from the Guatemalan Minis-
ter at Washington dealing with the above pact, Blaine
repeated his old arguments in favor of union and pledged the
moral support of the United States to promote it.55 In
addition the Secretary of State instructed the American Min-
ister at Guatemala City to advance the cause of union as
tactfully as possible.56

The last real attempt at union in the nineteenth cen-
tury grew out of the pact between Honduras, Nicaragua, and
El Salvador which actually lasted for all of three years,
and to which the United States granted official recognition.57

The Greater Republic of Central America was created on Dec-
ember 29, 1896. (The word "Greater" was to be dropped as
soon as Guatemala and Costa Rica joined). Actually it was
nothing more than "an association whereby certain represen-
tative functions were delegated to a tripartite commission,
rather than a federation possessing centralized powers of

55. Blaine to Cruz, January 11, 1890; March 18, 1890. Notes to Guatemala, II.
56. Blaine to Mizner, March 18, 1890. Instructions, Central America, XIX.
57. Olney to Mendoza, December 29, 1896. Notes to Guatemala, II.
government and administration."58

Guatemala was reported as being hostile to this attempt at federation, and along with Costa Rica refused to adhere to it. It was reported that the officials of the latter government were of the opinion that it would not endure long. Minister Coxe felt that all attempts at union should wait until a more effective system of transportation was developed, so as to bring the states closer together. It was even reported that this attempt at union was a result of Mexican intrigue that had as its real objective the domination of all of Central America.59

The twentieth century has thus far repeated the story of good intentions and futility which surrounded American policy in Guatemala during the nineteenth century in its efforts to promote Central American unity. The most notable attempt was made at the conference at Washington in 1907. The creation of the Central American Court of Justice was hailed by many as an important step on the road to union. Many were disappointed that the conference carefully sidestepped any real discussion of the union question. Perhaps Charge Brown best described the whole problem in a despatch wherein he reviewed the past attempts and appraised the

58. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, XIII, pp. 6325-6326.
59. Coxe to Olney, October 15, 1896. Despatches, Central America, (Guatemala and Honduras), XXXVIII.
possibilities of future endeavors. Commenting upon the statement of a Salvadorean writer that "the Union of Central America is a dream of the present, a fact of the future," Brown declared that it would be more accurate to say that "the union is a fact of the past, a dream of the future."60

A Central American has rather forcefully evaluated the role of union upon the five republics:

The history of the question of Central American nationality is a history of tears and blood. The word has not been pronounced a single time by the governments of Central America without being followed by one of these insensate struggles in which no one knows the object of the dispute in which all lose: struggles in which we have exhausted our strength, we have destroyed our prosperity, we have closed the fountains of our progress; we have blotted our name from the great book in which the world records the names of the enlightened nations; we have killed our credit, we have covered ourselves with opprobrium and shame, we have demoralized our country and finally we have put off the day of its reconstruction...The name of "Central American Union" has been the constant declaration of our wars,...the kiss of Judas under which we have disguised our hatreds, the hypocritical word with which we leave hidden our miserable ambitions.61

60. Brown to Root, August 12, 1905. Ibid., LII.
61. Enc. in Hall to Frelinghuysen, March 27, 1883. Despatches, Central America, XX.
SKETCH
OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA
BY
E. ROCKSTROH.
1837

EXPLANATION.
- Boundaries with Mexico before the Treaty of 1821
- Boundaries with Mexico after the Treaty of 1821
- Boundaries of the basing States
- Territory disputed with Mexico
- Monuments built
- Mistakes

Scale of 40 Miles

MAP 1
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*The New York Times*
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