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DUP.

DESPATCH

RESPECTING

T H E C I V I L W A R

IN

NORTH AMERICA.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.*  
1863.

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## Despatch respecting the Civil War in North America.

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*Earl Russell to Earl Cowley.*

My Lord,

*Foreign Office, November 13, 1862.*

THE Count de Flahault came to the Foreign Office by appointment on Monday the 10th instant, and read to me a despatch from M. Drouyn de Lhuys relative to the civil war in North America.

In this despatch the Minister for Foreign Affairs states that Europe has followed with painful interest the struggle which has now been going on for more than a year on the American continent. He does justice to the energy and perseverance which have been displayed on both sides, but he observes that these proofs of their courage have been given at the expense of innumerable calamities and immense bloodshed.

To these accompaniments of civil conflict is to be added the apprehension of a servile war, which would be the climax of so many irreparable misfortunes.

If these calamities affected America only, these sufferings of a friendly nation would be enough to excite the anxiety and sympathy of the Emperor. But Europe also has suffered in one of the principal branches of her industry, and her artisans have been subjected to the most cruel trials.

France and the Maritime Powers have, during this struggle, maintained the strictest neutrality, but the sentiments by which they are animated, far from imposing on them anything like indifference, seem on the contrary to require that they should assist the two belligerent parties in an endeavour to escape from a position which appears to have no issue.

The forces of the two sides have hitherto fought with balanced success, and the latest accounts do not show any prospect of a speedy termination of the war.

These circumstances taken together would seem to favour the adoption of measures which might bring about a truce.

The Emperor of the French, therefore, is of opinion that there is now an opportunity of offering to the belligerents the good offices of the Maritime Powers. He therefore proposes to Her Majesty, as well as to the Emperor of Russia, that the three Courts should endeavour, both at Washington, and in communication with the Confederate States, to bring about a suspension of arms for six months, during which every act of hostility, direct or indirect, should cease, at sea, as well as on land. This armistice might, if necessary, be renewed for a further period.

This proposal, M. Drouyn de Lhuys proceeds to say, would not imply, on the part of the three Powers, any judgment on the origin of the war, or any pressure on the negotiations for peace, which it is hoped would take place during the armistice. The three Powers would only interfere to smooth obstacles, and only within limits which the two interested parties would prescribe.

The French Government is of opinion that, even in the event of failure of immediate success, these overtures might be useful in turning the minds of men, now heated by passion, to consider the advantages of conciliation and of peace.

Such is, in substance, the proposal of the Government of the Emperor of the French, and I need hardly say that it has attracted the serious attention of Her Majesty's Government.

Her Majesty is desirous of acting in concurrence with France upon the great questions now agitating the world, and upon none more than on the contingencies connected with the great struggle now going on in North America. Neither Her Majesty the Queen nor the British nation will ever forget the noble and emphatic manner in which the Emperor of the French vindicated the law of nations, and assisted the cause of peace, in the instance of the seizure of the Confederate Commissioners on board the "Trent."

Her Majesty's Government recognize with pleasure, in the design of arresting the progress of war by friendly measures, the benevolent views and humane intentions of the Emperor.

They are also of opinion that if the steps proposed were to be taken, the concurrence of Russia would be extremely desirable.

Her Majesty's Government have, however, not been informed up to the present time that the Russian Government have agreed to co-operate with England and France on this occasion, although that Government may support the endeavours of England and France to attain the end proposed.

But is the end proposed attainable at the present moment by the course suggested by the Government of France?

Such is the question which has been anxiously and carefully examined by Her Majesty's Government.

After weighing all the information which has been received from America, Her Majesty's Government are led to the conclusion that there is no ground at the present moment to hope that the Federal Government would accept the proposal suggested, and a refusal from Washington at present would prevent any speedy renewal of the offer.

Her Majesty's Government think, therefore, that it would be better to watch carefully the progress of opinion in America; and if, as there appears reason to hope, it may be found to have undergone, or may undergo hereafter any change, the three Courts might then avail themselves of such change to offer their friendly counsel with a greater prospect than now exists of its being accepted by the two contending parties.

Her Majesty's Government will communicate to that of France any intelligence they may receive from Washington or Richmond bearing on this important subject.

Your Excellency may read this despatch to M. Drouyn de Lhuys, and give him a copy of it.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) RUSSELL.

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