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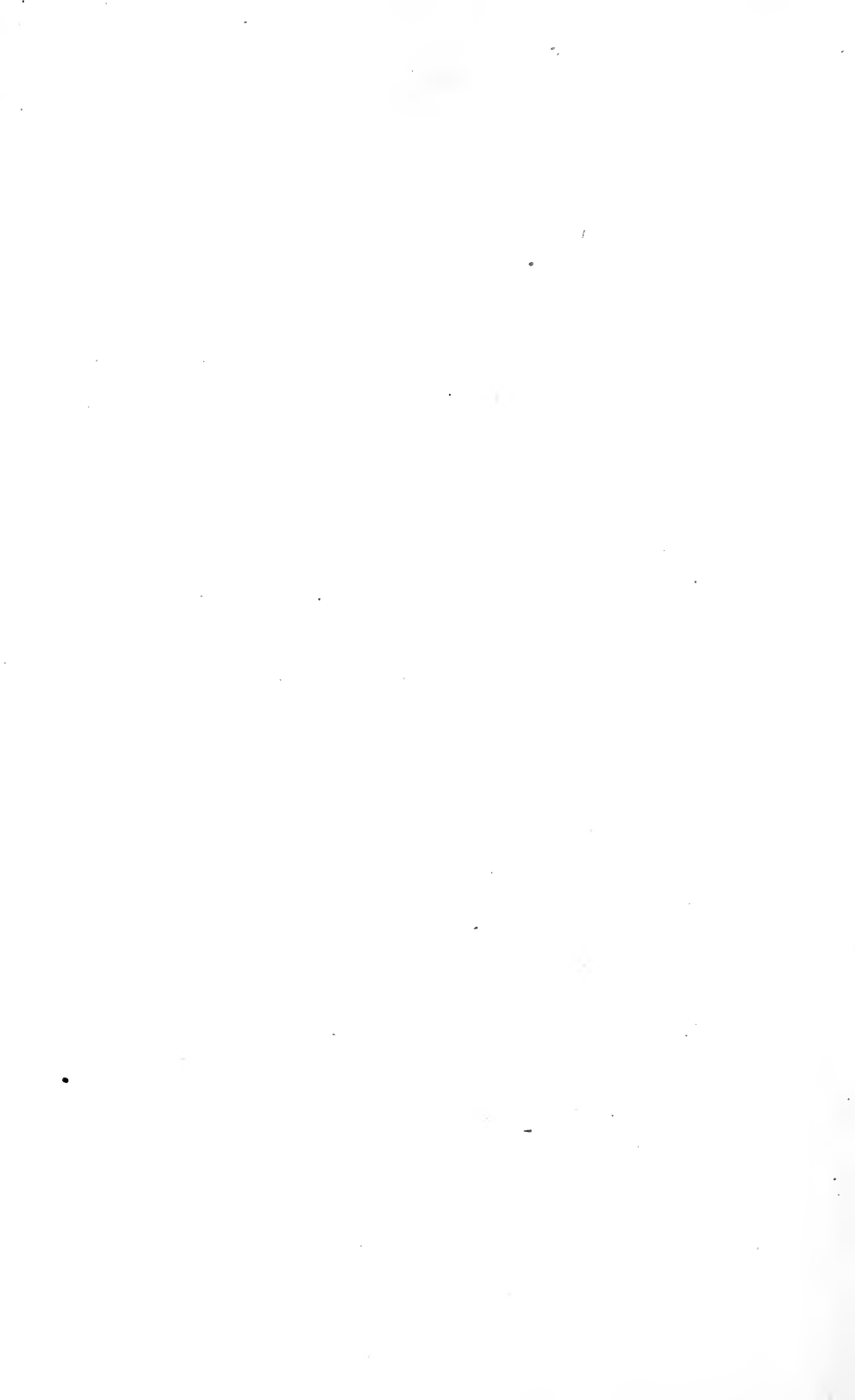
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XIV.—REASONS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FRENCH FROM
MEXICO.

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REASONS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FRENCH FROM MEXICO.

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The intervention of Spain, France, and England, in Mexico, under the convention of October 31, 1861, had its ostensible and nominal motive in a desire to secure justice and respect for international obligations. The measures of the joint expedition were to be limited explicitly to such action as might be necessary to obtain redress of grievances.^a But the development of events quickly proved that both Spain and France had ulterior ends to serve. England promptly repudiated any responsibility for, or sympathy with, plans to subvert the republican government of Mexico,^b while Spain persisted in her endeavors only so long as fortune seemed to favor her aspirations for control to the exclusion of French influence.^c

Napoleon III had given instructions to his agents in Mexico to favor and support the intrigues of Mexican refugees, who wished to establish an empire under his protection,^d his wish being "father to the thought" that these conspirators against their country's existing institutions truly reflected the national

^aThe convention was printed in French and English in Document No. 100, pp. 134-137, Vol. VIII, House Executive Documents, second session, Thirty-seventh Congress. The proclamation of the allies to the people of Mexico, dated Vera Cruz, January 10, 1862, disclaimed "plans of conquest and restorations and of interfering in your politics and government." (See *ibid.*, 177.) Thouvenel assured Dayton in September, 1861, that France had no purpose to obtain a foothold in Mexico or to occupy permanently any of her territory. (*Ibid.*, 212.)

^bEngland had been suspicious from the first that her allies were not sincere in their disclaimers as to "domestic intervention," and Russell instructed Crampton and Crowley to leave no doubt of England's position. Adams was given cordial assurance of these facts. (See Doc. 100, pp. 192-195, 424, Vol. VIII, House Ex. Docs., second session, Thirty-seventh Congress.)

^cThe final rupture between England and Spain on the one hand and France on the other took place April 9, 1862. (Debidour, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe*, II, 235-236.)

^dJurien's formal instructions, dated November 11, 1861, are summarized in Niox, *Expédition du Mexique*, 43 et seq. On March 20, 1862, the French admiral wrote to General Prim plainly showing the course which was to be pursued. (See U. S. Dipl. Corr., 1862, p. 764.)

longing of Mexico for a stable government under an emperor.^a His conception, too, of his rôle in the arbitrament of national destinies—a part of his fatuous Napoleonic inheritance—urged him forward in the path of intervention. To a degree his course in Mexico was a counterpart of his policy in Italy, in the Papal States, in China, in Algeria. He would prove his empire to be a world power, dispense favors to appease Austria and Holy Church, and win prestige at home and abroad. Finally, as his famous letter to Forey explained,^b he would use a Mexican Empire to introduce a proper counterpoise in America for the Latin peoples against the dominating influence of the United States.

An apparent source of danger for these brilliant plans might be discovered in the sensitiveness of the people of the United States about the extension of European monarchical institutions in America. But apprehensions on that score were allayed by the paralyzing effects of the great American

^aSee especially Lefèvre, Documentos oficiales recogidos en la secretaría privada de Maximiliano.

^bThis letter, dated July 3, 1862, is printed in full in Niox, Expédition du Mexique, 212 et seq.; also in Detroyat, L'Intervention Française au Mexique, 167 et seq. The following paragraphs are of special significance:

"Le but à atteindre n'est pas d'imposer aux Mexicains une forme de gouvernement qui leur serait antipathique, mais de les secourir dans leurs efforts pour établir, selon leur volonté, un gouvernement qui ait des chances de stabilité et puisse garantir à la France le redressement des griefs dont elle a à se plaindre. Il va sans dire que, si les Mexicains préfèrent une monarchie, il est de l'intérêt de la France de les appuyer dans cette voie, et dans ce cas le général pourrait indiquer l'archiduc Maximilien comme le candidat de la France. Il ne manquera pas de gens qui vous demanderont pour qui nous allons dépenser des hommes et de l'argent pour mettre un prince autrichien sur un trône. Dans l'état actuel de la civilisation du monde, la prospérité de l'Amérique n'est pas indifférente à l'Europe, car c'est elle qui alimente notre industrie et fait vivre notre commerce. Nous avons intérêt à ce que la république des Etats-Unis soit puissante et prospère, mais nous n'en avons aucun à ce qu'elle s'empare de tout le golfe du Mexique, domine de là les Antilles et l'Amérique du Sud, et soit la seule dispensatrice des produits du Nouveau Monde. Maitresse du Mexique, et par conséquent de l'Amérique centrale et du passage entre les deux mers, il n'y aurait plus désormais d'autre puissance en Amérique que celle des Etats-Unis. Si, au contraire, le Mexique conquiert son indépendance et maintient l'intégrité de son territoire, si un gouvernement stable s'y constitue par les armes de la France, nous aurons posé un digne infranchissable aux empiétements des Etats-Unis, nous aurons maintenu l'indépendance de nos colonies des Antilles et de celles de l'ingrate Espagne, nous aurons étendu notre influence bienfaisante au centre de l'Amérique; et cette influence rayonnera au Nord comme au Midi, créera des débouchés immenses à notre commerce et procurera les matières indispensables à notre industrie. Quant au prince qui pourrait monter sur le trône du Mexique, il sera toujours forcé d'agir dans les intérêts de la France, non par reconnaissance seulement, mais surtout parce que ceux de son nouveau pays seront d'accord avec les nôtres, et qu'il ne pourra même se soutenir que par notre influence. Ainsi donc aujourd'hui, notre honneur militaire engagé, l'exigence de notre politique, l'intérêt de notre industrie et de notre commerce, tout nous fait un devoir de marcher sur Mexico, d'y planter hardiment notre drapeau, d'y établir soit une monarchie, si elle n'est pas incompatible avec le sentiment national du pays, soit tout au moins un gouvernement qui promette quelque stabilité."

civil war, and by the impotence which was expected to result from animosities and jealousies between an independent Confederate States of America and a dismembered, weakened United States of America. Napoleon even hoped to be the arbiter in that civil strife, and thus secure a guaranty of his plans in Mexico.^a Once embarked in his enterprise, he was impelled by a due regard for national honor and his personal credit to persist through all discouragements until an overpowering necessity compelled its abandonment.

The problem now to be discussed is the true nature of that overpowering necessity. What circumstances coerced Napoleon III to withdraw the support of the French army and French credit from the task of maintaining Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, upon the throne of the Montezumas?

The customary answer of American historians presents the one-sided view that imminent danger and direct threat of hostile action in Mexico by the rehabilitated Federal Union, with its magnificent veteran army, drove Napoleon to give up his cherished project.^b But candid investigation of essential facts will compel the conclusion that the withdrawal of the French from Mexico was brought about as the cumulative result of a number of contributing causes. The history of this question, as of any diplomatic question, can not be understood satisfactorily without due consideration of all the national interests involved. It is the vice of national historians that their range of vision scarcely extends beyond national boundaries, and their treatment of this particular subject is but one more illustration of that shortsightedness. No one will deny that the consistent friendship of the United States for the republican government of Mexico contributed very materially to the downfall of Maximilian's Empire. Yet that catastrophe was plainly the product of more far-reaching influences than the policy of any single nation, and a proper account of its problem for the historian must include at least four main points, i. e., a statement of the actual conditions in Mexico, a recognition of the demands of French domestic politics, a consideration of complications in European relations, a treat-

^a There were most interesting interrelations of the Mexican intervention, the treatment of Confederate cruisers, projects for recognition of the Confederacy, proposals for French and English mediation in the United States.

^b See Henderson, *American Diplomatic Questions*, 397; Foster, *Century of American Diplomacy*, 401-403; Bancroft, *Seward*, II, 438.

ment of the attitude of the United States toward Napoleon's policy in Mexico.^a

The proof of the correctness of this analysis of causes is to be found chiefly in the official and confidential communications exchanged at the time between the leading actors and in their published memoirs and autobiographies. On some points, to be sure, the evidence leaves something to be desired, for Government archives and private papers of the period under discussion have not yet been fully opened to reveal to the investigator all the secrets they contain. But the diplomatic documents published by the United States, supplemented by selections from the correspondence of Lincoln, Seward, Sumner, Adams, Dayton, and Bigelow, and confirmed by the memoirs of political leaders, sufficiently set forth the determining motives of the American Government.^b On the other hand, the Mexican imperial papers, seized and published by Maximilian's ruthless adversaries,^c Napoleon's confidential letters to Bazaine, given to the world by Gaulot,^d the Mexican *dossier* saved from the destruction of the Tuilleries,^e the series of diplomatic yellow books, the debates of the Sénat and the Corps Législatif, the comments of the well-informed political press,^f and numerous memoirs,^g such as those of Randon, Lebrun, Rothan, du Barail, Vieil-Castel, Fleury, and Basch,

^a Compare Gaulot, *La Vérité sur l'expédition du Mexique*, II, 327-328; De la Gorce, *Second Empire*, IV, 372-386; Debidour, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe*, II, 281, 295. It was a pleasure to find that these writers had reached conclusions very nearly the same as those worked out by independent investigations in the present study. The work of De la Gorce is unusually perspicuous and sane.

^b See the volumes of Diplomatic Correspondence, for 1862-1867; also the two volumes on Mexican Affairs, transmitted to the House by special message on March 20, 1866, but including in the printed form appendices illustrating the subject to June of that year (House Ex. Docs., first session, Thirty-ninth Congress). Additional material by participants is in Grant, *Memoirs*; Sheridan, *Memoirs*; Baneroft, Seward (footnotes); Pierce, Sumner.

^c See Lefèvre, *Documentos* (cited above). A French edition is entitled, *Documents officiels recueillis dans la secrétairerie privée de Maximilien*.

^d Gaulot, *La Vérité sur l'expédition du Mexique*.

^e *Papiers et correspondance de la famille impériale*.

^f See especially the London Times and *L'Indépendance Belge*. The latter's Paris correspondents seem to have been favored with unusual facilities for a correct understanding of political movements.

^g More or less valuable information on the Mexican questions in publications of this general character is to be found in Randon, *Mémoires*; Lebrun, *Souvenirs Militaires*; Rothan, *Origines de la guerre de 1870*; du Barail, *Mes Souvenirs*; Vieil-Castel, *Mémoires*; Fleury, *Souvenirs*; Basch, *Erinnerungen aus Mexico*; Barrot, *Mémoires*; de Massa, *Souvenirs et impressions*; Persigny, *Mémoires*; Darimon, *Le tiers parti sous l'Empire*; Loizillon, *Lettres sur l'expédition du Mexique*; de Schrynmakers, *Le Mexique*; Detroyat, *L'Intervention Française au Mexique*.

explain the French point of view. A critical comparison of these categories of materials emanating from so many sources makes it quite possible to sketch the truth in clear outline.^a

In the beginning of his enterprise Napoleon III's expectations of speedy success in the establishment of a Mexican monarchy dependent upon France were unclouded by doubts. Conservative and clerical refugees had convinced him that a small contingent of his troops would suffice to overcome any factious opposition by liberals. The minister of foreign affairs was doubtless sincere at the time in his assurances to the United States that France would not attempt to coerce the people of Mexico to choose any particular form of government.^b He believed that the French flag would be acclaimed everywhere as a symbol of deliverance from anarchy and oppression, and under its protection a free national choice would speedily result in the organization of a stable monarchy. These expectations received a series of rude shocks from the checks suffered by the "army of deliverance" (notably before Puebla) at the hands of the troops of the Republic. General Forey succeeded in vindicating the honor of the French arms by his victorious march from Puebla to the capital in the spring and summer of 1863. Thereupon M. de Saligny, Napoleon's political representative, supported by Forey, proceeded at once to execute instructions by forming an assembly of notables, proclaiming an empire, and offering the crown to Maximilian. Unfortunately for these

^aThe best of the French secondary works on this special subject are: Gaulot, *La Vérité sur l'expédition du Mexique*; Niox, *Expédition du Mexique*; Kératry, *L'Élévation et la chute de l'Empereur Maximilien*; Domenech, *Histoire du Mexique*. More general treatments are given in Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vols. IV and V, *passim*; and in De la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vols. IV and V, *passim*—the latter being accurate and judicious.

^bSee Dayton's dispatch to Seward, September 27, 1861, in Dpc. No. 100, page 212, House Ex. Docs., second session, Thirty-seventh Congress. Some interest attaches to an explanation of his plans given by Napoleon in a personal letter to Gen. James Watson Webb on March 22, 1863. "You are greatly mistaken," said Napoleon, "if you believe that any motive of ambition or cupidity has led me to Mexico. Engaged in this enterprise by Spain, and led by the doings of Juarez, I reluctantly sent first 2,000 men; afterwards, the national honor being compromised, my troops were increased to 8,000; finally, the repulse at Puebla having engaged our military honor, I sent over 35,000 men. It is, therefore, much against my inclination that I am compelled to wage war at such a distance from France, and it is in no way for the purpose of taking possession of the mines of the Sonora that my soldiers are fighting. But now that the French flag is in Mexico, it is difficult for me to foretell what may happen; at all events, my intention is to withdraw as soon as honor and the interests now engaged allow me." (Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, IV, 343.)

zealous agents, Napoleon's policy had undergone a transformation. Randon and Drouyn de Lhuys, aided by a majority in the cabinet, had convinced him that he ought to withdraw from Mexico, appeased by the prestige of victory, and content to treat with the republican Government for redress of grievances. But the news of the rapid movements of Saligny and Forey again changed the aspect of the Mexican question. The Emperor manifested his displeasure by the recall of Saligny and Forey, although he now felt that he could not draw back from the policy to which he stood publicly committed.^a Large reinforcements and extensive operations became necessary to establish an empire which the inhabitants of Mexico would not receive gladly. No successes on the field of battle sufficed to stamp out armed resistance to the invading foreigner. No distribution of 35,000 soldiers in garrisons could destroy the authority of the republican Government in regions not continuously policed by strong military forces.^b Maximilian's final acceptance of the imperial crown^c was followed by only a few months of seeming progress toward complete pacification. While official dispatches and semiofficial announcements maintained the hollow pretense of success in the objects of the intervention, frank reports of actual conditions were being received from trusted agents. In April, 1865, M. Rouher might assure the Corps Législatif that the objects of the intervention were being rapidly attained, and M. Corta could picture a brilliant industrial future for Mexico, both orators seeking to encourage the French investing public to buy more bonds for the support of the new empire.^d But at the same time Napoleon was not left in ignorance of the unsurmounted obstacles which made necessary the presence of a large army in the midst of a population alleged to

^a Randon, Mémoires, II, 81, 84-85; Vieil-Castel, Mémoires, VI, 288. Note also the character of Dayton's dispatches in Dipl. Corr., 1863, Vol. II, 726, 730, 745, 760, 773. The following brief paragraph from Randon is explicit:

"Au fond, comme tous les membres du conseil, le maréchal était contraire à l'expédition Mexicaine et aurait voulu la terminer le plus vite possible. Le patriotisme Mexicain s'exaltait, et l'opinion publique, en France, se montrait, de jour en jour, plus contraire à l'expédition. Les vives attaques des membres de l'opposition, au palais Bourbon, contre le gouvernement impérial, servaient d'encouragement à nos adversaires."

^b The dispatches of United States Consul Creel from Chihuahua during 1865 illustrate the inability of the French to gain the confidence of the Mexican people. (Mexican Affairs, II, 516-523.)

^c For the guaranties under which Maximilian assumed his dangerous position, see Diplomatic Correspondence, 1864, p. 74.

^d Debates of April 10-15, 1865.

be pacified, and which required frequent subventions from the French treasury to supply deficiencies in ordinary revenues. For example, Lieutenant-Colonel Bressonnet wrote in April and June, 1865, that the pacification of Mexico had scarcely been begun, and no one could foresee its final accomplishment. In August and September the same officer sent even more discouraging reports of frightful disorders, alleging that Mexican society was rotten to the core, and that he saw no hope of success under Maximilian or in the presence of such conditions.^a Generals Douay and Neigre declared also, in September, 1865, that Maximilian was not able to maintain order and peace, even with the help of the French army.^b Likewise, friction had developed between Bazaine, the military administrator of Mexico, and Maximilian, the nominal ruler of her destinies.^c Each wrote complaints against the other to the common master of both—the former charging Maximilian with incompetence and ingratitude, the latter caviling at the measures of the officer who merely executed his patron's orders. Bazaine retained the confidence of his commander, despite the difficulties of his anomalous position. Maximilian betrayed his own incapacity by his un wisdom, and alienated the good will which was his only reliance. Napoleon progressed from discouragement to disgust, and then from despair of success to a disposition to seek relief from fruitless sacrifices.^d

^a Papiers et correspondance de la famille impériale, letters of April 27, June 10, August 9, September 8. Letters of later date from the same officer reinforce these warnings, and other correspondents wrote to the same effect.

^b Gaulot, *La Vérité*, II, 266-267. Randon's complaints to Bazaine are illustrated in *ibid.*, 241-242.

^c Gaulot, *La Vérité*, II, 293, 301, and *passim*.

^d This was plainly manifested in the summer of 1865 and became insistent in November of that year. See Gaulot, II, 261, 293, 301. Napoleon's confidential expression of November 29 to Bazaine was as follows: "J'ai reçu ce matin votre lettre du 28 octobre, et je vois que les choses au Mexique ne vont pas bien. Il est indispensable que je prenne une résolution énergique, car nous ne pouvons pas rester sans cesse dans cet état d'incertitude, qui paralyse tous les progrès et augmente les charges de la France. Je vais mûrement réfléchir aux mesures à prendre; en attendant, mettez tous vos soins à organiser l'armée Mexicaine, afin que nous puissions dans un temps donné, évacuer le pays. J'espère que les Américains, malgré leur jactance, ne voudront pas entrer en guerre avec nous; mais, ce danger écarté, il s'agit de savoir dans quel état nous laisserons le Mexique après notre départ. Il faut que l'Empereur Maximilien comprenne que nous ne pouvons rester indéfiniment au Mexique, et qu'au lieu de bâtir des théâtres et des palais, il est essentiel de mettre de l'ordre dans les finances et sur les grandes routes. Qu'il sache bien qu'il sera beaucoup plus facile d'abandonner un gouvernement qui n'a rien fait pour pouvoir vivre que de le soutenir malgré lui. Recevez, mon cher Maréchal, l'assurance de ma sincère amitié."

The tendency of questions of domestic politics was to accentuate such an inclination. Under a fair exterior the affairs of France were in serious disorder.^a Ambitious schemes had been entertained in all directions, at home and abroad, always with the effect of laying heavy burdens upon the treasury. A series of deficits finally compelled the adoption of a programme of retrenchment, insisted upon by M. Fould.^b In common with other members of the cabinet, this minister disapproved of the Mexican expedition, and could easily show that there was no reasonable hope of making the new empire self-supporting.^c France could ill afford to supply soldiers and pay the cost of civil administration for Maximilian, while the effective force of the national army at home must be further reduced, as it was in 1865, in order to secure a balanced budget.^d These facts had been no less obvious to the opposition, and MM. Thiers and Picard led in outspoken attacks upon the Government for the failures of the distant intervention and for its burdensome demands upon the treasury.^e The language of the press left no doubt that the Emperor's Mexican policy was decidedly unpopular with the public as well as among the politicians of all schools.^f The Corps Législatif were thereupon informed repeatedly in 1864 that no permanent occupation of Mexico was intended,^g and by January, 1865, 8,000 of the expeditionary corps were returned to France. Debates upon an opposition amendment to the address to the throne in April, 1865, drew from M. Rouher the declaration that more

^aDelord, *Second Empire*, IV and V, *passim*; De la Gorce, *Second Empire*, IV and V, *passim*; Persigny, *Mémoires*, 351 et seq.; Darimon, *Le tiers parti sous l'Empire*, 407 et seq.

^bA convenient summary of French finances for the years 1865-66, together with searching criticisms by Thiers, is in *Annuaire des deux mondes*, 1864-65, p. 84.

^cSee an important letter from Fould to Napoleon in *Papiers et corr. fam. imp.*, II, 73-77, which reviewed and condemned the expedition. One of the statements is the following: "Plus de deux ans se sont écoulés dans ces luttes intestines, sans qu'aucune amélioration réelle ait été faite au point de vue administratif au financier. Les dépenses, non-seulement de la guerre, mais de l'administration intérieure, ont été supportées par la France, soit sous forme de subventions, soit sous celle d'emprunts contractés à Paris."

^dRandon, *Mémoires*, II, 107-110; Rothan, *Origines de la guerre de 1870*, 216-236, 313.

^eThiers, *Discours parlementaires*, IX, 447 et seq.

^f*L'Indépendance Belge*, 1865, *passim*; De la Gorce, IV, 378; *London Times*, leader, January 17, 1866. M. Rouher subsequently admitted this unpopularity in an apology for the course of the Government. "Oui, nous avons délibéré tristement et solennellement; oui, nous avons interrogé les fluctuations de l'opinion publique, et nous nous sommes résignés à prononcer le mot d'évacuation." *Annales du Sénat et du Corps Législatif*, 1867, p. 118.

^g*Annales du Sénat et du Corps Législatif*, session 1864, *passim*.

troops were on the way from Mexico, and that all would be brought back as rapidly as circumstances would permit.^a

The relation of France to the readjustment of European national boundaries and the aggressive policy of Bismarck was another source of anxiety to Napoleon. He had remained neutral in the struggle for Italian consolidation, obtaining Savoy and Nice as the price of his policy. And although he had not wholly abandoned his rôle of protector of the Pope, he had antagonized both the Papacy and Italy and repelled all other powers by the annexation. His proposal to settle the disorders of Poland and the status of the Danish Duchies by a general congress had been rejected. The outcome of the Schleswig-Holstein war brought him face to face with the problem of the undue aggrandisement of Prussia. He clearly foresaw an impending struggle for supremacy between Prussia and Austria. He must be prepared for any eventualities, all his forces must be well in hand, if his position were to command respect, and if he were to obtain substantial benefits for France.^b Freedom from the embarrassments of the Mexican intervention might become essential to the security of French interests in the grave crisis of European complications.^c

Finally, if any pressure were needed to enforce the lesson of events in Europe and Mexico, such influence was exerted

^aAnnales du Sénat et du Corps Législatif, session 1865, under dates of April 10-15. The Emperor's address of February 15 had congratulated the legislature that the army was returning from Mexico. (See Napoléon III, Œuvres, V, 228.)

^bDe la Gorée, IV, 376, comments upon European complications and the fears of the Emperor's counsellors in 1865.

^cNapoleon did not act promptly upon these considerations because he dreaded the odium of deserting his puppet and the discredit of confessing his defeat. Further, he believed that the approaching war would be a prolonged struggle with the chances of victory in favor of Austria—and this was another reason for postponing precipitate retreat from Mexico. His situation in July, 1866, brought most serious consequences to France when Prussia so rapidly and unexpectedly overwhelmed Austria. There were still 28,000 French troops in Mexico, but the loss to the effective force of the army caused by the Mexican expedition far exceeded the amount indicated by those figures. On the 5th of July, 1866, Drouyn de Lhuys seemingly convinced Napoleon that he ought at once to convoke the Chambers, mobilize the army, and intervene to check Prussia. The adversaries of this policy, by their insistence upon the relative weakness of the army at the moment, induced the Emperor to postpone decisive action. Randon in vain contended that the army would prove equal to the demands of the occasion. (See Randon, Mémoires, II, 145-240; Napoléon III, Œuvres Posthumes, 122-137; Lebrun, Souvenirs Militaires, 1-5; De la Gorée, Second Empire, V, 17; Persigny, Mémoires, 342-343, 351; du Barail, Souvenirs, II, 293-294; Leygot, M. Rouher et le Second Empire, 57-58, 66; Rothan, Origines de la guerre de 1870, 32-64, 210-236; D'Harcourt, Les Quatre Ministres de Drouyn de Lhuys, 260-261; Seignobos, Europe contemporaine, 756-761; Debidour, Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe, II, 276, 281, 295.)

by the knowledge that the American people were hostile to Maximilian's Empire. The diplomatic representatives of the United States always and even ostentatiously admitted the right of France to make war upon Mexico.^a While they had never failed to express partiality for republican institutions, and frequently argued against the wisdom of any propaganda for the establishment of a monarchy in America,^b they had avoided all mention of a Monroe doctrine.^c For nearly four years they professed a confiding trust in denials by the French that the occupation of Mexico might be an excuse for imposing a monarchy upon an unwilling people.^d Lincoln and Seward were not really deceived by insincere professions,^e but they keenly appreciated the danger of provoking Napoleon to a recognition of the Confederacy while the tremendous task of saving the Union required all the nation's energies.^f Nor did Johnson and Seward yield to the clamor for vigorous measures against the French, which arose as soon as the Federal Union was triumphant. During the progress of months of the most delicate negotiations in 1865, the Government of the United States resisted the almost unanimous sentiment of its people for war with France,^g when the state of affairs in Mexico, the demands of domestic politics in France, and the critical nature of European complications were not understood by the American public as they were by the Administration. Nevertheless, with a gradual development of plain-spokenness, Seward made known to Napoleon the dif-

^a This was the consistent point of view of American diplomacy—that France and the republican Government of Mexico were at war.

^b Compare Seward's dispatches of June 21, 1862, and June 30, 1865.

^c Bancroft, Seward, II, makes a special point of this.

^d Compare the dispatches of 1861, 1863, and those of 1865.

^e The letters of Seward, Adams, Dayton, Bigelow, Schurz, and Corwin repeatedly called attention to Napoleon's real motives. (E. g., Document No. 100, pp. 206-208; House Ex. Docs., second session, Thirty-seventh Congress.)

^f Nicolay and Hay, Lincoln, VII, 423. Note the wise treatment of the bellicose resolution unananimously adopted by the House of Representatives on April 4, 1864. Also see Lincoln's comment upon a hostile resolution in the declarations of the Union National Convention. (Pierce, Sumner, IV, 118; Rhodes, United States, IV, 471-472; Nicolay and Hay, Lincoln, VII, 407-410.)

^g For example, see Grant, Memoirs, II, 545-547; Sheridan, Memoirs, II, ch. ix; Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, 380-382. Grant says that he regarded the intervention in Mexico as a "direct act of war against the United States by the powers engaged, and supposed, as a matter of course, that the United States would treat it as such when their hands were free to strike." Some of the American correspondence of the London Times gave valuable commentaries upon public opinion. See the issues of November 18, 1865; January 15 and 22, 1866.

difficulties of a situation from which there was to be only one peaceful mode of escape. From February to July the dominant note in Seward's instructions to Bigelow was one of reiterated assurance that the United States would not pursue any policy of aggression in regard to Mexico. From July to September the American dispatches consisted mainly of complaints about the relations of Mexico to the disbanded forces of the Confederate States. On September 6 and September 20, Seward undertook cautious discussions of the political problems arising out of French policy in Mexico, suggesting the dangers of friction which arose from the pressure of public opinion in the United States. On November 6 he argued plainly for the first time that the presence of a French army supporting Maximilian was in antagonism to the policy of the United States. Not until December 16 did he state that the policy of peace with France might be in imminent jeopardy unless France should desist from intervention in Mexico.^a

The responses of the French minister of foreign affairs to this series of communications had shown a thorough appreciation of the necessities of his situation. He asserted repeatedly that his Government had always intended to withdraw its forces from Mexico as soon as satisfaction for grievances could be obtained from a stable government.^b Bigelow reported his own opinion that these were correct statements of the wish and intention of the imperial administration.^c The public pledges which had been given to the Corps Législatif were supplemented as early as September, 1865, by diplomatic guaranties that the progressive and early return of the army was the settled policy of the Emperor.^d A suggestion that the United States ought to accord recognition of Maximilian as the price of prompt withdrawal of the French army—evidently made with the faint hope that Napoleon's credit might thus be saved—served only to elicit a curt rebuff, followed by Seward's December menaces. Before January 9, 1866,

^a These crucial communications, together with the French replies, are in the volumes on Mexican Affairs, House Ex. Docs., first session, Thirty-ninth Congress, as well as in the Diplomatic Correspondence, 1865.

^b See preceding note.

^c See Bigelow's dispatch, February 17, 1865.

^d See Bigelow's dispatch, September 21, 1865. Randon was writing to Bazaine in August that he must expect a time limit to the intervention. (Gaulot, II, 261.)

Napoleon had concluded that circumstances required him to accept even these humiliations.^a

After having received definite information of Napoleon's intentions,^b and therefore believing that war was hardly to be feared, the American Secretary of State yielded at last to the feeling of Congress and the people and wrote his peremptory dispatch of February 12, 1866, to demand the assignment of a time limit to intervention in Mexico.^c Whatever might have been the original purposes of the expedition, said he, they had become subordinate to the maintenance of a political revolution by armed intervention. The presence of the French in Mexico had become a source of apprehension and danger to all republican states in America. There need be no fear lest the United States might itself be unfaithful to the policy of nonintervention, and therefore Napoleon should not delay to give the President information as to the time within which French military operations might be expected to cease in Mexico. The public response of Napoleon was not made until the announcement of April 5, 1866, that the French army would retire from Mexico in three divisions, in Novem-

^a Dispatches to Montholon and Dano and letters to Bazaine fully prove this. (See Gaulot, II, 321-322.) Bigelow's dispatches of January 11, 25, and 30 also reflected the actual situation of the issue. The painful dilemma of Napoleon was well stated in a London Times leading article on January 17, 1866. The Paris correspondent of *L'Indépendance Belge* correctly explained the decision of the French Government in the first week of January, 1866. Bazaine's confidential correspondence during 1865 shows serious attention to the problems which might arise from armed intervention in Mexico by the United States, but there was no real expectation that war would result. (See Gaulot, II, 228, 236, 238-242, 258.)

^b Mexican Affairs, I, 286. A dispatch from Drouyn de Lhuys to Montholon, dated January 9, was shown to Seward on January 29 to let him know what was to be expected. It will be noted also that the imperial speech of January 22 had announced the intention of withdrawal. (See Napoleon III, *Œuvres*, 252-253.) No satisfactory proof has been found of the part played by unofficial communications and personal representatives. The mission of Schofield in Paris in December, 1865, is quite obscure. The General thought of himself as instructed to convince Napoleon that war would result if France did not satisfy American public opinion by prompt withdrawal. (Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*, 380-382.) The newspapers were much impressed by his presence in Paris. (*L'Indépendance Belge*, December 4-15, 1865.) Frederic Bancroft believes that Schofield's alleged mission was merely a ruse by Seward to remove the General from the Rio Grande, where he might have caused an open rupture with the French commander. (Seward, II, 435.) The part played by General James Watson Webb in November, 1865, is also doubtful. Jerrold reports that Webb had an interview with Napoleon on November 10, in the course of which the latter authorized the former to assure Johnson that the French troops would withdraw from Mexico in twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four months. Jerrold further quotes an article in the *New York Times*, April 10, 1869, to the effect that Seward was fully informed of all this before December 6, 1865. (Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, IV, 344-345.)

^c Mexican Affairs, II, 548 et seq.

ber, 1866, and in March and November, 1867,^a but confidential and positive orders of similar tenor had been given to Bazaine on January 15 and 31, 1866, and M. Saillard had been sent to Mexico to assist in preparing for the movement of troops.^b The haughty tone of Seward's dispatches at this juncture, after the main issue had been fully and explicitly decided, was peculiarly irritating to the French Government, but a natural resentment was not permitted to alter the wise policy of withdrawal from American embarrassments. Questions of ways and means, matters of detail, might still be the subject of inquiry and negotiation, but Maximilian was to be abandoned in order that France might have a free hand to secure her interests in Europe.^c

Certainly this game of diplomacy had been skillfully played by Seward. In the days of national adversity he had returned to France the soft answer which turneth away wrath. Biding his time, he waited until he knew that circumstances, stronger than Napoleon's wishes, had clearly doomed the Mexican enterprise to failure. Then, and not until then, was the United

^a Bigelow to Seward, April 6, 1866, and Drouyn de Lhuys to Montholon, April 5, in conjunction with the publication in the *Moniteur* of April 5.

^b Gaulot, II, 321-322, prints the following in the confidential letter of January 15 from Napoleon to Bazaine: "Les difficultés que me suscite sans cesse l'expédition du Mexique me forcent de fixer définitivement l'époque du rappel de mes troupes. Le plus longtemps que je puisse accorder pour le rapatriement du corps d'armée, qui ne doit se faire que successivement, est le commencement de l'année prochaine. Je vous envoie le baron Saillard pour qu'il s'entende avec vous et avec l'Empereur Maximilien relativement à l'exécution de cette mesure. Je voudrais que l'évacuation du Mexique ne compromette pas le pouvoir de l'Empereur. Avisez donc aux moyens d'organiser solidement la légion étrangère et l'armée Mexicaine. Il faut que l'Empereur montre une grande énergie et trouve dans son pays les ressources nécessaires pour subvenir à ses dépenses. Je viens d'ailleurs d'écrire dans ce sens à l'Empereur Maximilien lui-même." Randon reinforced this on the same date in writing to Bazaine: "Nous ne pouvons pas prolonger indéfiniment notre séjour au Mexique; plusieurs raisons qu'il est inutile d'énumérer font une loi au gouvernement de l'Empereur de poser des termes à notre occupation. Le rapatriement devra commencer l'hiver prochain ou mieux encore à l'automne; il devra continuer sans précipitation mais sans être interrompu." (Niox, *Expédition du Mexique*, 550.) Napoleon wrote further to Bazaine on January 31: "Quoique je n'aie rien de nouveau à vous écrire, je tiens cependant à vous répéter ce que j'ai chargé M. Saillard de vous dire. Les circonstances, plus fortes que ma volonté, m'obligent à évacuer le Mexique, mais je ne veux le faire qu'en laissant derrière moi à l'Empereur Maximilien toutes les chances de se maintenir avec ses propres forces et la légion étrangère. Il faut donc que vous mettiez tout votre zèle et toute votre intelligence à organiser quelque chose de durable dans le pays, afin que nos efforts n'aient pas été en pure perte. Vous avez, pour accomplir cette difficile tâche, un an ou dix-huit mois." (Gaulot, II, 326.)

^c It does not come within the scope of this paper to treat the period after April, 1866, because there could no longer be any doubt, after that date, that the French would soon withdraw from Mexico. Nor is it necessary to discuss questions such as the effort of Napoleon to induce Maximilian to abdicate, or the peremptory demands of the United States in the famous cable dispatch of November 23, 1866.

States committed to demands which must receive satisfaction because the adversary could not afford to bid defiance. The attainment of national ends by the ways of peace, without the suffering and horror of war, is the ideal of enlightened statesmanship. Seward obtained the credit of such a triumph. But if this paper presents a reasonable interpretation of the situation in which Mexico and Maximilian, France and Napoleon, Europe and Bismarck, the United States and Seward found themselves from 1864 to 1866, the withdrawal of French support from the Mexican Empire of Maximilian had been determined mainly by influences over which the United States could exert only slight and indirect control. Persistent refusals to admit that Juarez had ceased to be the legal representative of the Mexican National Government certainly gave courage to the republicans and made them feel that their cause could not be hopeless. They were enabled by the arms, clandestinely supplied to them after 1865, to equip their troops for the final contest with Maximilian. But circumstances relating chiefly to Mexico herself, and to Napoleon's position in France and in Europe, had already determined the abandonment of an intervention which had been unsuccessful, burdensome, and dangerous.

