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**THE NEW MONROE DOCTRINE AND THE RETREAT
OF EUROPEAN EMPIRES AFTER 1865**

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Mondi occidentali. La dottrina Monroe al bicentenario

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LA NUOVA DOTTRINA MONROE E IL RITIRO DEGLI IMPERI EUROPEI DOPO IL 1865

*Don H. Doyle **

ABSTRACT

[ENG.] During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, William Seward, and the US diplomatic corps wrapped the emancipation policy in lofty political ideology. The Union, they told the world, was fighting to preserve republican principles, democratic freedom, equality, and opportunity for all. After the war, there were two Reconstructions, domestic and international. International Reconstruction sought to ensure that the Western Hemisphere would become safe for republicanism. Initially a warning against further European colonization of the Americas, after 1865 the Monroe Doctrine propagated the idea that the entire Western Hemisphere must be a haven for republicanism and that monarchy and slavery were no longer welcome.

Keywords: Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 – Seward, William, 1801-1872 – The New Monroe Doctrine – United States – Europe

[It.] Durante la Guerra civile, Abraham Lincoln, William Seward e il corpo diplomatico degli Stati dell'Unione amantarono la politica di emancipazione di una ideologia alta. L'Unione, dissero al mondo, si batteva per preservare i principi repubblicani, la libertà democratica, l'uguaglianza e l'accesso a opportunità per tutti i cittadini. Dopo la guerra, vi furono due Ricostruzioni, una interna e una internazionale. Quella internazionale era volta a garantire che l'Emisfero Occidentale fosse sicuro per il sistema di governo repubblicano. Dapprima monito contro un'ulteriore colonizzazione delle Americhe da parte delle potenze europee, dopo il 1865 la Dottrina Monroe divenne affermazione dell'idea che tutto l'Emisfero Occidentale avrebbe accolto il sistema repubblicano e respinto quello monarchico e la schiavitù.

Parole chiave: Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 – Seward, William, 1801-1872 – La nuova Dottrina Monroe – Stati Uniti – Europa

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1861 an American diplomat, Henry S. Sanford, made his way to Caprera to invite Giuseppe Garibaldi to lead a Union army against the Southern rebellion. Garibaldi had two conditions: one, he wanted total command of the entire army. Two, he wanted to declare war against slavery. «If the war was not being prosecuted to emancipate the Negroes», he told Sanford, it would be nothing more than an «intestine war» over territory and sovereignty, «like any civil war in which the world at large could have little interest or sympathy». Garibaldi had grand plans for carrying out a war of emancipation that would sweep through the US South, the Antilles, and into Brazil. He estimated that forty-two million souls would be emancipated. Clearly, the Italian general envisioned going well beyond the estimated six million enslaved Africans in the hemisphere¹.

What are you fighting for? Garibaldi was asking Sanford. What would he be fighting for? If it was not for emancipation in its broadest sense, he was not willing to raise his sword for America.

Most historians see Lincoln's move toward the Emancipation Proclamation being determined solely by military conditions and public opinion within the US. Instead, I view emancipation as integrally linked to foreign policy and the campaign to win favor with foreign public opinion in Europe. Lincoln realized that once the Union proclaimed emancipation as its cause, no European power would dare take sides with the South in support of slavery. Conversely, if the Union remained neutral on the slavery question, the support of Europeans like Garibaldi was in doubt.

Europeans and Latin Americans had good reason to be cynical about America's intentions. Though Lincoln's Republican Party opposed the *expansion* of slavery, the new president had expressly guaranteed that he had no intention of interfering with slavery in the states where it already existed. Abolitionists constituted one wing of the Republican Party, yet it also included the Know Nothings and temperance reformers who appealed to nativism and Christian nationalism. The US image among European liberals was also tarnished by its war of conquest against Mexico and filibustering raids into Cuba and Central America.

Lincoln, Seward, and the US diplomatic corps sought to answer these doubts by wrapping the Union cause in lofty political ideology. The Union, they told the world, was fighting to preserve republican principles, the republican experiment, democratic freedom, equality, and opportunity for all. The distant war in America was an epic battle in the prolonged contest between the common people and aristocracy that had been ongoing since the American and French Revolutions. Indeed, the American Civil War, in

¹ D.H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War*, Princeton University Press, 2015, 25.

Lincoln and Seward's rendering, would fulfill the revolutionary promise America held up to the world in 1776. It was a struggle between governments based on the ancient principles of dynastic monarchy, aristocracy, and unfree labor, all rooted in inherited status. The Union was struggling to achieve a new future, one of democratic societies based on human equality, free labor, and self-government. If the battle were lost in America, that future would be doomed everywhere. The American contest was the cause of all nations, the last best hope of earth, so it came to be seen by a growing number of foreigners and Americans alike².

These were mighty claims and huge promises. As we know, the Union won, but we must ask: did it, in fact, make a difference to the world? I argue that it did. The Union victory, Lincoln's sudden elevation as a martyr to emancipation and republicanism, and the example of Radical Reconstruction had enormous consequences for the wider world, for the future of democracy, the end of slavery, and for the future of European imperialism in the American hemisphere. This takes us to the Monroe Doctrine on its 200th anniversary.

My fundamental premise is that there were two Reconstructions, domestic and international, each complementary and grounded in a common republican ideology. Domestic Reconstruction aimed at pacifying the South, abolishing slavery, dethroning the slaveholding aristocracy, and rebuilding the South on a firm republican foundation. Slavery and the slaveocracy caused the rebellion. They must be eradicated to prevent future rebellions.

International Reconstruction sought to ensure that the Western Hemisphere would become safe for republicanism. During the Civil War the Union became surrounded by adversaries. Mexico was the most dramatic example. Napoleon III saw the Civil War as an ideal opportunity to realize his vision of regenerating the Latin Race in the Americas, making Mexico a model of monarchical order and Catholic moral discipline. The Confederate States of America would serve as a buffer between the Anglo-Saxon Union and the Mexican Empire of Maximilian.

In speeches and publications, Joshua Leavitt, a New England abolitionist, crystalized the new meaning of the Monroe Doctrine. In July 1865, at a rally for Mexican exiles in New York, he explained: «Both the invasion and the rebellion were parts of one grand conspiracy of the upholders of absolutism in Europe and the upholders of slavery in the United States, to make common cause and strike a united blow against republican liberty on the American continent, in the hope of rendering arbitrary power more secure in both hemispheres». Americans must mount a strenuous defense of the Monroe Doctrine, «make common cause and cherish a common sympathy with the American republics, and welcome them to the common platform of national independence». The US, Leavitt foretold, will be «greater, stronger, and richer in proportion to the elevation of our sister Republic in the South»³.

To justify domestic Reconstruction, Radical Republicans employed a once obscure clause in the US Constitution that committed the federal government to «guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government». The guarantee clause justified the federal government's radical intervention in the Southern states.

² J. Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848*, Princeton University Press, 2017, 600-613.

³ *Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens of New York, to Express Sympathy and Respect for the Mexican Republican Exiles*, J.A. Gray and Green, 1865, 7-10 (quote); J. Leavitt, *The Monroe Doctrine*, S. Tousey, 1863; J. Leavitt, *The Key of a Continent*, in *The New Englander*, No. 23, 1864.

The foreign policy equivalent of the «guarantee clause» was a muscular new version of the Monroe Doctrine that emerged, not as formal policy from William Seward and the State Department but from outrage in Congress and public opinion against France's sinister design to erect a monarchy on the ruins of the Mexican republic. Initially a warning against further European colonization of the Americas, after 1865, the Monroe Doctrine propagated the idea that the entire Western Hemisphere must be a haven for republicanism and that monarchy and slavery were no longer welcome. In this meaning, the Monroe Doctrine's new slogan, «America for Americans», became a Pan-American cause⁴.

2. INTERNATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

William Seward was the principal architect of post-Civil War foreign policy. While Charles Sumner, Thad Stevens, and the other Radical Republicans focused on rebuilding a Republican South, William Seward set out to make the American Continent safe for republicanism by driving out European imperialists, ending slavery, and fostering the spread of republican principles abroad⁵.

The main thrust of International Reconstruction was anti-imperialist, antislavery, and pro-democracy. It played out in two theaters of action. In the American Continent, US foreign policy was the leading force. In Europe, it was the inspiration of the Union victory, Lincoln's martyrdom, and the example of a thriving democracy that affected change.

The most tangible achievement of International Reconstruction was the withdrawal of European empires from the American Continent and the decolonization of British North America. Within days of one another, in the spring of 1867, France pulled its troops out of Mexico, Russia sold Alaska to the United States, and Britain proclaimed the Dominion of Canada an autonomous home-rule State. Spain had already vacated Santo Domingo in the summer of 1865. In 1866, Spain withdrew from wars it had provoked in Peru and Chile and later agreed to accept US mediation to end those wars. In October 1868, Cuban rebels, fed up with their Spanish rulers, proclaimed independence.

These European powers had many factors to calculate before withdrawing, but America's proven military prowess and powerful ideological appeal with the European people were foremost among them. In Britain, France, and Spain, the three European powers that menaced the Union during the war, public support for Lincoln and the Union portended growing opposition to further imperialist ventures in the Americas.

US foreign policy during Reconstruction was anti-imperialist in another sense. Contrary to the familiar claim that Seward and America remained enthralled by Manifest Destiny, the only significant acquisition during this period, indeed during the half-century between 1848 and 1898, was the Alaska Purchase. Further to this point, during the Johnson and Grant administrations, the United States spurned several opportunities for annexing new territories. These included outright invitations to annex Santo Domingo (the Dominican Republic), the Danish West Indies (Virgin Islands), and the Spanish Caribbean (Cuba and Puerto Rico).

⁴ D.H. Doyle, *The Age of Reconstruction: How Lincoln's New Birth of Freedom Remade the World*, Princeton University Press, 2023, 218.

⁵ In contrast, most historians, following Walter LaFeber, see Seward and the Civil War launching US imperialism abroad; see W. LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, 1963; E.N. Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and US Foreign Policy*, Cornell University Press, 1973.

International Reconstruction also should be credited with hastening the abolition of slavery in the Americas. Seward turned US foreign policy against slavery early in 1862 when he signed a treaty that finally put the United States on the right side of Britain's effort to suppress the African slave trade. The Lyons-Seward Treaty sounded a death knell for slavery in Cuba and signaled the antislavery turn in US foreign policy. Later, Seward forcefully stopped Maximilian's scheme to reintroduce slavery in all but name as part of a plan to colonize northern Mexico with ex-Confederates. Seward also objected strongly to Maximilian's plans to enlist enslaved Sudanese soldiers in Maximilian's imperial army. «It is settled», Seward let it be known, «that African slavery, in any form, ought henceforth to cease throughout the world»⁶.

When Spain failed to deliver on promises to abolish slavery after its democratic revolution in 1868, Seward's successor, Hamilton Fish, used the threat of recognizing Cuban rebels to coerce Spain into passing what they called the Fourth of July Law in 1870. The Moret Law, as it was also known, put in motion a plan for gradual abolition, which Fish protested was disingenuous. He kept up the pressure, and in 1873, Spain abolished slavery outright in Puerto Rico and promised the same for Cuba once the rebels lay down their arms. Brazil, the only remaining slave nation, followed the same path by enacting a «free womb» law in 1871. The final death of slavery came to Cuba in 1886 and Brazil in 1888. After roughly four centuries, the vast and hugely profitable regime of African slavery in the Americas had ended⁷.

3. THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE

Allow me to review how the US got to this point and how the Monroe Doctrine took on such importance. During the first forty years of its now two-hundred-year career, the Monroe Doctrine was more notable for its lack of any active role in steering US foreign policy. President Monroe's 1823 pronouncement stated a principle and a warning, but it seemed to be a toothless one. Despite several incidents of European aggression in the American hemisphere (notably, Spain's effort to recolonize Mexico in 1829 and Britain's colonization of Argentina's Malvinas Islands in 1833), the US remained quiescent⁸.

That would change during the 1860s when European aggression in the American hemisphere posed a clear and present danger to US interests and Latin American independence. As Jay Sexton argues, Monroe's doctrine became THE Monroe Doctrine and it was the central plank in US foreign policy going forward⁹.

The reasons for this turn stem from the threat of European aggression during the American Civil War. Suddenly, the United States was surrounded by hostile European adversaries eager to take advantage of the crisis, lend aid to the Confederacy, encroach upon weak Latin American republics, and reassert European imperialism in the American hemisphere.

⁶ S. McGregor, *Seward's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1863-1866*, in *International History Review*, No. 43, 2021, 981-1000; Bigelow to de Luhys, November 22, 1865, Seward to Hale, December 14, 1865, Hale to Seward, Alexandria, January 18, 1866, all in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1865, 426 (quote), 259, 264, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS>; A. Blumberg, *William Seward and the Egyptian Intervention in Mexico*, in *Smithsonian Journal of History*, No. 1, 1967.

⁷ A. Corwin is among the few historians to credit the United States for its role in hastening Spanish emancipation; *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817-1886*, University of Texas Press, 1967, chapter 13.

⁸ D. Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867*, Vol. 2, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933, 6-9, 28.

⁹ J. Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*, Hill and Wang, 2011.

The Spanish Empire, in decline as a major power since the 1810s, saw the Civil War as an ideal opportunity to reassert its influence and domain in the Americas. It began with the invasion and takeover of the Dominican Republic in March 1861. True to expectations, as the US plunged into Civil War the Lincoln administration had no backbone for a foreign war. In his April 1st memorandum to Lincoln, Secretary of State William Seward proposed confronting Spain and France and stated: «I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico and Central America, to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention». Though Seward avoided invoking the Monroe Doctrine as such, the presumption that European intervention in the Americas was, in itself, an unfriendly act to the US was clear. Most historians have treated Seward's bold "April Fool's Day" memorandum as a classic example of his ambition and overreach. But this misses the main point of Seward's alarm. If the US did nothing, it would open the gates to more European aggression. That is exactly what happened.

As soon as it became clear the US would not retaliate against Spain's aggression in the Caribbean, Napoleon III quickly put together plans for a convention in London to form the Tripartite Alliance. In London delegates from France, Spain, and Britain agreed to launch an invasion of Mexico to demand that the new regime of Benito Juárez resume payment of Mexico's foreign debts. For Napoleon III, this was the first step toward his Grand Design to topple the republican regime led by Benito Juárez, replace it with a European monarch, and roll back the liberal reforms limiting the vast powers of the Catholic Church.

Soon after Spain pulled out of the allied invasion of Mexico in April 1862, it launched a belligerent naval campaign in South America in the guise of a scientific expedition. Spain's sudden interest in scientific matters alarmed skeptics in August 1862 when the expedition launched from Cadiz with the scientists on one ship that met up with no less than four powerful warships as their escort. The purpose of the armed expedition, according to the secret instructions given to commanding officer Rear Admiral Luis H. Pinzón, was to settle scores with its former colonies and teach them to respect Spain's «honor and dignity»¹⁰.

The Spanish expedition, chaperoned by a fleet of warships, provoked war with Peru and seized its guano-rich Chincha Islands in April 1864. When Chile refused the Spanish fleet coaling rights and refused a demand that it salute the Spanish flag, a second war erupted. In March 1866 Spain bombarded the defenseless port of Valparaiso before sending the fleet to do the same to Peru's main port, Callao in May 1866.

The seizure of the Chincha Islands coincided with the ascent of Maximilian as emperor of Mexico in May 1864 and added to the wave of outrage that erupted across Latin America. Spain's attack on Peru was an assault on all American republics, as Latin American liberals saw things.

In November 1864, Peru's government called for delegates from all American nations to meet in Lima to discuss the threat of European aggression. Representatives from seven South American republics (Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela) met in Lima for the Inter-American

¹⁰ W.C. Davis, *The Last Conquistadores: The Spanish Intervention in Peru and Chile, 1863-1866*, University of Georgia Press, 1950, 9-12; R.R. Miller, *For Science and National Glory: The Spanish Scientific Expedition to America, 1862-1866*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1968. For the text of the secret instructions, see P. de Novo y Colson, *Historia de la Guerra de España en el Pacífico*, Fortanet, 1882, 86-87 (last quote) and B.V. Mackenna, *Historia de la guerra de Chile con España (de 1863 a 1866)*, Victoria de H. Izquierdo, 1883, 16-17.

Congress in November 1864 to discuss the common threat of European aggression and forge an American union or military alliance¹¹.

Seward was alarmed at the sight of Spain, Britain, and France preying like vultures on helpless Latin American neighbors. He later reflected on this moment in his career: «The old order of things was coming back, and [European powers] could resume the building of their empires on monarchical lines. The Monroe Doctrine could safely be ignored, and the interference of America need not be feared [...]. The whole fabric of American republics threatened to fall like a house of cards»¹².

Yet, he and President Lincoln feared that any move to thwart such aggression might push European powers into the welcome arms of the Southern rebels. The French intervention in Mexico and Spain's incursions in the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Chile reified the Union's message that its struggle against the Southern rebels was not just about secession or slavery and did not concern only the United States. America's Civil War was part of the contest between monarchy and republicanism, aristocracy and democratic self-rule, and slavery and freedom that Monroe addressed in 1823¹³.

The Union wartime narrative of a world divided between monarchists and republicans found continued nourishment in the rhetoric of the new Monroe Doctrine. The American hemisphere was to be the asylum of republicanism, protected from European imperialists that threatened the peace and well-being of American republics. The old doctrine had posed a shield against European efforts to reclaim or expand their American empires. By 1865, the Monroe Doctrine became a weapon against European imperialist designs backed by US military prowess and a new sense of duty to defend the republican experiment in the Americas. The celebrated poet and publisher William Cullen Bryant explained to a New York audience gathered to support Mexico in 1864: «We of the United States have constituted ourselves a sort of police of this New World»¹⁴.

During the last few months of the Civil War, fears of a European alliance with the Confederacy gave way to outspoken resentment of European aggression, especially in Mexico. Democrats and Radical Republicans took turns lambasting Seward and Lincoln for failing to defend the Monroe Doctrine. As the war drew to a close, this impatient anger came to a boil in Congress and the press. Behind the scenes, Mexico's ambassador to Washington, Matías Romero, worked diligently with members of Congress who planned to issue resolutions condemning French intervention and threatening Maximilian's throne. Maximilian was on his way from Trieste to Mexico, with stops in Rome and Paris, to be crowned emperor of Mexico in the spring of 1864. Romero hoped a bold resolution from Congress might stop him in his tracks¹⁵.

¹¹ W.C. Davis, *The Last Conquistadores*, cit., 115-17; R.W. Frazer, *The Role of the Lima Congress, 1864-1865, in the Development of Pan-Americanism*, in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, No. 3, 1949, 319-348. Among the many examples of publications are M.J. Carrillo, *Perú y España: Documentos relativos a los últimos sucesos ocurridos en el Perú*, Star and Herald, 1864; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *Cuestión entre el Perú y la España*, Imprenta del gobierno, Lima, 1864.

¹² F.W. Seward, *Reminiscences of a War-Time Statesman and Diplomat: 1830-1915*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916, 148-149.

¹³ D.H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations*, cit.

¹⁴ M. Romero, *Dinner to Señor Matías Romero, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Mexico, on the 29th of March, 1864*, n.p., 1866, 26.

¹⁵ D. Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867*, John Hopkins University Press, 1933, Vol. 2, 449-452; M. Romero, *Correspondencia de la Legación mexicana en Washington durante la intervención extranjera, 1860-1868*, Imprenta del Gobierno, 1871, Vol. 4, 9, 20-21, 77-78, 122, and *passim*.

4. THE NEW MONROE DOCTRINE

Henry Winter Davis, a Radical Republican representing Maryland, issued a resolution in Congress expressing the new spirit of the Monroe Doctrine and made it clear that the United States would not stand by as France and other European monarchies established a regime hostile to American republicanism next door:

Resolved, That the Congress of the United States are unwilling by silence to have the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the Republic of Mexico, and that they think fit to declare that it does not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government in America under the auspices of any European power¹⁶.

«Our party», Davis told the Senate, wishes «to cultivate friendship with our republican brethren of Mexico and South America, to aid in consolidating republican principles, to retain popular government in all this continent from the fangs of monarchical or aristocratic power, and to lead the sisterhood of American republics in the paths of peace, prosperity, and power»¹⁷.

Two months later, the Republican Party's 1864 campaign platform endorsed the congressional resolution and added pointedly that the United States «will view with extreme jealousy, as menacing to the peace and independence of their own country, the efforts of any such power to obtain new footholds for Monarchical Government, sustained by foreign military force, in near proximity to the United States»¹⁸.

Chile sent Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, a prominent historian and politician, to arouse American sympathy for his country's courageous stand against Spain. Mackenna made a passionate appeal to Pan-American solidarity and the Monroe Doctrine at a massive rally at the Cooper Union in New York on January 6, 1866. «Beyond your southern frontier», he addressed the boisterous crowd, «there exists another America, sister to yours, unknown and forgotten to you». He took the audience through the litany of Spanish depredations against Santo Domingo, Mexico, and now Peru and Chile. Chile stood up to Spain to defend «a Monroe Doctrine of our own». The Latin American Monroe Doctrine, he explained, simply meant that «the monarchical Governments of Europe will not be permitted to interfere with republican institutions in the New World». The crowd went wild, «rising to their feet, waving their hats and handkerchiefs for several minutes, shouting vivas and hurrahs for Chili» in «a perfect storm of applause»¹⁹.

The aggressive tone of the new Monroe Doctrine surfaced again during the supposed peace talks between Confederate and Union representatives at Hampton Roads, Virginia, in February 1865. Rumors circulated that North and South might cease their war with one another and join forces in an invasion

¹⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (April 4, 1864), 1408; G.F. Tucker, *The Monroe Doctrine: A Concise History of Its Origin and Growth*, George B. Reed, 1885, 102-103.

¹⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (April 4, 1864), 1408.

¹⁸ *Republican Party Platform of 1864*, June 7, 1864, Political Party Platforms, The American Presidency Project, University of California, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29621>.

¹⁹ *The Monroe Doctrine: Meeting at the Cooper Institute*, in *The New York Times*, January 8, 1866. Note: Chili was the common spelling at this time; see also *Traveler's Club Lecture by Senor Don Benjamin Vicuna Mackenna*, in *The New York Times*, December 4, 1865; D.J. Hunter [Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna], *A Sketch of Chili*, S. Hallet, 1866.

of Mexico to vindicate the Monroe Doctrine. The peace talks failed, but the prospect of war in Mexico sent alarm bells off in Europe²⁰.

The bellicose rhetoric from America was not all that gave Europe reason to worry. European revolutionaries encouraged the United States to lead the march toward the «Universal Republic» and attack European imperialists in North America. In June 1865, Giuseppe Mazzini, the exiled Italian nationalist, issued a public appeal to America to lead what he called the «Universal Republican Alliance» an international army that would begin by assaulting the «outpost of Caesarism» France was building in Mexico. In a widely circulated public letter, Mazzini told Americans: «You are summoned by the admiration, the sympathies, and expectations of all progressive Europe to affirm yourselves before kings and people, and to carry out a service for the general progress of Humanity». Mazzini and his European revolutionaries wanted, in effect, to globalize the Monroe Doctrine and build a transatlantic republican offensive against autocratic monarchies in the Old and New World²¹.

Much of Seward's wartime posturing was a calculated strategy to thwart European intervention in favor of the Confederacy. His foreign policy had been defined by the harrowing experience of watching the Union become surrounded by European adversaries, either aiding the Confederacy or invading and subjugating America's defenseless Latin American neighbors. He came out of four years of diplomatic intrigue a master of statecraft. His overriding goal after the war was national security and peace, not territorial aggrandizement or imperialist conquest.

To that end, Seward sought to rid North America of European empires and create a zone of independent, stable, ideally republican nations surrounding the United States. The Caribbean had been especially troublesome during the war, when most ports were in the hands of Union adversaries, Spain, Britain, and France. All had recognized the Confederacy as a belligerent and provided safe harbor to its warships, piratical raiders, and blockade runners. The United States had no Caribbean possessions, no ports to which it might have towed captured Confederate ships, blockade runners, or the British mail ship Trent, which carried Confederate diplomats to Europe. Seward did not «set out to obtain clear title» of the Caribbean, as the historian Walter LaFeber claimed. He sought naval bases to sustain a US maritime presence in the region, provide coal, protect merchant vessels, and establish a prize court where the US Navy could bring captured enemy ships. The United States needed naval bases, and Seward sought them energetically, but he repeatedly spurned invitations to acquire and govern Caribbean islands²².

After the Civil War ended in Union victory. European powers had reason to fear US aggression. It was entirely in keeping with European traditions of warfare for the victors to take possession of enemy

²⁰ W.C. Harris, *The Hampton Roads Peace Conference: A Final Test of Lincoln's Presidential Leadership*, in *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, No. 1, 2000.

²¹ G. Mazzini, *Address to the Friends of Republican Principles in America from the Friends of Those Principles in Europe*», n.p., 1865; *Letter from Mazzini*, in *The New York Times*, June 15, 1865; H.R. Marraro, *Mazzini on American Intervention in European Affairs*, in *Journal of Modern History*, No. 2, 1949; J. Rossi, *The Image of America in Mazzini's Writings*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1954, 137-148; S. Recchia, N. Urbinati (Eds.), *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations*, Princeton University Press, 2009, 219-223. For an earlier example of transatlantic revolutionary plans, see K. Blind, J. Mazzini, A.A. Ledru-Rollin to A. Lincoln, London, April 24, 1862, in Library of Congress, Abraham Lincoln Papers, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mal.1567000/?sp=2&st=pdf>.

²² W. LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, 1963, 37 (quote); E.N. Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and US Foreign Policy*, Cornell University Press, 1973, 118-128; F. Bancroft, *Seward's Ideas of Territorial Expansion*, in *North American Review*, No. 500, 1898, 87; J.G. Whealan, *William Henry Seward, Expansionist*, PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1959; F. Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, Princeton University Press, 1998, chapter 3.

territory as reparations to defray the cost of war. The Union had the largest armed force in the world at that moment: a nation at arms with one million battle-hardened soldiers and at least that many veterans ready to join their forces.

The war had left the United States with an enormous debt, a nation of war-weary citizens, and experienced leaders who knew better than to take on another war. No sooner did the Union Army finish the Grand Review in Washington than the volunteer army melted away almost overnight. The government reduced the regular army to less than 55,000 men, deployed to Reconstruction in the South, suppressing Indians in the West, and clerical duties in Washington (including the massive task of creating an official record of the War of the Rebellion). The Navy scrapped most of its 700 ships, including 65 ironclads, and reduced the number of sailors proportionally. Postwar America prepared for peace, not imperialist aggression²³.

In early 1866, while visiting the Dominican Republic, Seward explained his vision of America's role in the hemisphere in a brief address to the country's president, Buenaventura Baez:

We have built up in the northern part of the American continent a republic. We have laid for it a broad foundation. It has grown up on our hands to be an imposing, possibly a majestic empire. Like every other structure of large proportions, it requires outward buttresses. Those buttresses will arise in the development of civilization in this hemisphere. They will consist of republics like our own, founded in adjacent countries and islands, upon the principle of the equal rights of men. To us, it matters not of what race or lineage these republics shall be. They are necessary for our security against external forces, and, perhaps, for the security of our internal peace. We desire those buttresses to be multiplied, and strengthened, as fast as it can be done, without the exercise of fraud or force on our own part²⁴.

Here was Seward's optimistic vision of a United States surrounded by friendly neighbors bound by common republican principles and shared enmity toward European monarchy. The «buttresses» supporting his «majestic empire» would consist of independent, liberal nations, not colonial appendages of predatory European empires and not colonies of the United States. They would coexist in democratic peace in a hemisphere free of monarchy and slavery, the natural enemies of American republicanism²⁵.

Thirty years later, with the onset of the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the takeover of Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific, the Monroe Doctrine, previously invoked as a defensive shield protecting American republicanism from European imperialism, now justified US imperialism. Though it seemed an abrupt departure, the imperialist turn followed logically from Seward's idea of outlying buttresses supporting America. Should those buttresses become unstable and endanger the main edifice, intervention would be required. The premise that monarchy and republicanism were inherently hostile and incompatible neighbors also pointed to trouble with such vestiges of ancient empires as Spain's Caribbean colonies.

²³ C.R. Newell, C.R. Shrader, *Of Duty Well and Faithfully Done: A History of the Regular Army in the Civil War*, University of Nebraska Press, 2011, 304; N. Miller, *The U.S. Navy: A History*, Naval Institute Press, 1997, 144; see also *US Military Manpower, 1789 to 1997*, in http://www.alternatewars.com/BBOW/Stats/US_Mil_Manpower_1789-1997.htm.

²⁴ F.W. Seward, Address to President Baez, January 14, 1866, *Seward at Washington, 1861-72*, Derby and Miller, 1891, 310.

²⁵ Post-Civil War foreign policy resembles today's democratic peace theory in many ways. See C. Rauch, *The Power of Perception: Democratic Peace Theory and the American Civil War*, in *European Review of International Studies*, No. 3, 201; M.E. Brown, S.M. Lynn-Jones, S.E. Miller (Eds.), *Debating the Democratic Peace*, MIT Press, 1996; M.W. Doyle, *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays*, Routledge, 2012.

New conditions also influenced the imperialist turn in US foreign policy in the latter half of the 1890s. It occurred within a rising tide of bellicose nationalism, fueled by a potent strain of Anglo-Saxon supremacy, the scramble among European rivals for empire in Africa and Asia, and growing interest in naval power as part of America's ascendancy as a world power.

Theodore Roosevelt embodied the new generation of Americans that came of age after the Civil War era. He and others of his age seemed itching for «a splendid little war» that would prove America's new power in the world and assert a “manly” role in spreading American institutions among the backward races of the world. By Roosevelt's lights, an aggressive new Monroe Doctrine would demand «that ultimately every European power should be driven out of America, and every foot of American soil, including the nearest islands in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, should be in the hands of independent American states, and so far as possible in the possession of the United States or under its protection». It was telling that the leading opponents of America's imperialist turn were veterans of the Civil War generation. Their framing of the war as a contest between republicanism and monarchy led them to shun imperialist aggrandizement after the war. Those men and their principles were part of a forgotten era when America sought to redeem its founding ideals²⁶.

²⁶ Roosevelt quote from Frank Ninkovich, *Theodore Roosevelt: Civilization as Ideology*, in *Diplomatic History* No. 3, 1986, 235; J. Sexton, *Monroe Doctrine*, cit., 211-215.