

Essay III [untitled]¹

No 3 Could the Island of Cuba remain in the hands of its present possessors, altho' not the most amicable of neighbours, their torpid character and weak government would never excite our apprehension: the developement of their agricultural & commercial resources would be usefull to us; a necessary intercourse, would make us better acquainted with each other, and we would gradually form the most intimate and friendly relations: we should become mutually usefull, and they would form a barrier against any of the hostile interprizes before enumerated. But from the course the revolution has taken it seems impossible that Spain can preserve her important American Colonies. The inhabitants of Cuba have as yet remained quiet & faithfull to their Metropolis. They have however not been blind to their situation; their commerce has been flourishing and until lately they have found a good market for their produce in the U. S.: in short they have been well off, and wisely determined while they were so not to anticipate events. They are sensible that according to the natural course of things this turn must come, and it is the opinion of the men of the most wisdom & influence among them, that when the day arrives, they ought to seek the protection and alliance of the U. S. as their natural friends. I am well persuaded, indeed, I am assured that they will never submit to pass into the hands of any other European power without a bloody struggle. The numbers of regular Spanish troops in Cuba is very inconsiderable[,] probably not 5000 men distributed over the whole Island, but they have a numerous militia, detachments from which are constantly in service, and I am well assured that they can if occasion requires it bring 40,000 men into the field, which in such a climate are sufficient for defensive war. They expect that England will make an attempt, on some specious pretext of protection to occupy and garrison Havana, which they are determined to resist and to apply to the United States for assistance. This contingency seems inevitable in case of war between the U. S. and Great Britain. In such a crisis they would require

from us, arms, ammunition and money and probably an auxilliary regular force, which it will most undoubtedly be the policy of the american people to furnish with a liberal hand.

Then whether Cuba form a part of the Mexican Empire, whether it be an independent State, or whether it be incorporated into our Union ought not in good policy to be an object of great solicitude with us; by destroying their dependence on Europe we secure and consolidate both our interests and theirs; the choice may be with the utmost safety be deferred to them, for neither of the former are incompatible with our interests: Our policy as it relates to Europe must ever be the same. But it is in every manner probable that they would spontaneously prefer the latter, for with Mexico they have no interests in common, except language, laws, & religion, and many years must elapse before that country can acquire a sufficient degree of consistency at home and respectability abroad to insure tranquility and protection to a distant insular province of that importance; and at present at least Cuba does not possess the means necessary to form a respectable political corps, and to maintain her independence among nations without foreign aid.

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