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THE ROLE OF LUCAS ALAMAN IN
MEXICAN-UNITED STATES
RELATIONS
1824-1853

A Dissertation
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This topic was suggested to me in November 1968 by my
major professor and adviser at Louisiana State University,
Dr. J. Preston Moore. At the time, I was familiar with
Lucas Alamán only as an historian and a conservative Mexican
politician, and had no inkling of his over-all importance in the
development of Mexican diplomacy during the first half of the
nineteenth century. Due to the fact that Alamán's career was
such a mystery to me, I agreed to undertake a study of this
career as it affected Mexican-United States diplomatic relations.

It soon became evident that Alamán's role in Mexican-United
States contact had remained a mystery to most United States
scholars who have dealt with Latin American history. There
are no secondary studies in English of Alamán or his work,
nor have any articles specifically concerning him appeared in
the leading scholarly journals. In view of his importance in
formulating Mexican foreign policy between 1821 and 1853,
this lack of information on Alamán at present constitutes a
gap in the scholarship relating to Mexican-United States affairs
during the nineteenth century.

Preliminary research revealed that Alamán's role in Mexican-United States relations is generally acknowledged to a certain point. However, the significance of his activities between 1824 and 1853 is not emphasized. There is, I think, a reason for this lack of emphasis--a paucity of manuscript materials hampers the researcher. As I have pointed out in the body of this treatise, even in Mexico City one has difficulty uncovering source materials in conjunction with Alamán's dealings with the United States. This is particularly true in view of the inaccessibility of the Archivo de Relaciones Exteriores, about which more later. But even more significant was the attitude of Alamán himself.

After two and one-half years of research, I am convinced that Alamán intentionally cultivated his role as a man in the background, which he certainly was not. He apparently hoped to be remembered for his historical writings, not for his political career. Thus, he made no effort to keep diaries or to express his political views in his personal correspondence. Nevertheless, that material which is available leaves no doubt as to the importance of his role in Mexican-United States relations between 1824 and 1853. As one of the better educated
and more capable Mexicans of his time, he was able to mold his nation's diplomatic thinking toward the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century.

I owe debts of gratitude to many for the aid and assistance they have given me during the past two years. To Dr. Moore, I owe more than can be repaid. I also owe my appreciation to Dr. Jane L. DeGrummond, who served as the second reader of the manuscript in rough-draft form. What merits of style and form may be exhibited by this work are due to the improvements suggested by Dr. Moore and Dr. DeGrummond. All errors of omission and commission, however, remain mine alone.

I am indebted as well to the other members of the Louisiana State University history faculty who have comprised my doctoral committee--Dr. John L. Loos, Dr. T. Harry Williams, and Dr. Walter C. Richardson--and to Dr. Robert C. West of the Department of Geography and Anthropology. If I can, in future, maintain similar high standards as theirs, yet remain aware of the dignity of the student as they have, then I shall have succeeded as an historian and teacher.

For their cooperation in finding materials, making valuable suggestions, and corresponding with me, I am grateful to the staff members of the Louisiana State University Library, the
University of Texas Library, and the Delta State College Library. Individuals to whom I am especially obligated due to their assistance are Miss Gloria Grajales, Manuscript Curator of the Biblioteca Nacional in Mexico City; John Lind of the Search Division of the National Archives in Washington, D. C.; Mark G. Eckhoff, Director of the Legislative, Judicial, and Diplomatic Records Division of the National Archives; Paul L. Heffron, Acting Chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C.; and, Rafael Alejo and Miguel Capistran of the Hemeroteca Nacional in Mexico City.

Mrs. Allen Dennis, wife of my friend and colleague at Delta State College, typed the final draft of the manuscript, a thankless task, and her competence and diligence are exemplary. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my deep gratitude and appreciation to my wife, Dana, who has been subjected to rather severe strains and tensions since I commenced my graduate study five years ago, but who has persevered through it all.
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ABSTRACT

The development of Mexican-United States diplomatic relations between 1824 and 1853 is one of the more significant occurrences in the history of hemispheric diplomacy. United States interest in the independence of Latin America during the early years of the nineteenth century was evident; however, it was the policy of that government to refrain from official recognition of the new republics until their independence was assured. In following this policy, the United States soon discovered that certain problems resulted, particularly in reference to the nearest of these nations, Mexico.

The Mexican independence movement was initiated in 1810 by the Hidalgo revolt and culminated in 1821. United States recognition of Mexico's independence came in 1822; however, due to certain domestic political considerations, an official American minister was not sent to Mexico until 1825. This
man, Joel R. Poinsett, was an exponent of democracy and of federalism, and he discovered that the situation in Mexico was not what he had anticipated.

Although the Mexicans in 1824 drafted a constitution similar to that of the United States, there were elements which were adverse to the republican system of government thus inaugurated. One of the leaders of these people was Lucas Alamán, a conservative politician noted for his intelligence and ability, and in 1825 the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Born in 1792 in Guanajuato, he was an astute, energetic man who had spent the period between 1814 and 1820 traveling and studying in Europe, serving in 1821 as a Mexican delegate to the Spanish Cortés. Because of his exposure to the prevailing conservative European doctrines of the day, and because of the impression made upon him in his youth by the Hidalgo revolt, Alamán was suspicious of democracy. He favored a centralist-conservative system of government. Thus, he did not trust the United States because of its position as the leading democratic nation in the world.

Alamán was convinced that the United States was an aggressor which had in mind land aggrandizement at his nation's expense. This was his outlook as he inaugurated his
negotiations with Poinsett. It would remain his opinion throughout his career as he dealt intermittently with the United States government. Moreover, the administrations in the United States seemed to confirm Alamán's suspicions, for the major policy pursued by that government during its diplomatic negotiations between 1825 and 1844 was the acquisition of Texas, a province of Mexico.

In his dealings with Poinsett in 1825, and with Anthony Butler in 1830-1832, Alamán as Minister for Foreign Affairs resisted American attempts to gain possession of Texas. In 1830, he promulgated a Colonization Law which was for the purpose of preventing further American colonization in Texas. Also, this law was designed to intimidate Anglo-Saxons already in Texas so that they would leave the area. However, the policy only antagonized the Texas settlers. Due to Mexican political instability in 1835-1836, Texas secured its independence.

Between 1836 and 1844, this problem dominated Mexican-United States diplomacy. Mexico refused to acknowledge Texan independence and worked to prevent annexation of that region to the United States. On the other hand, the United States government pursued a policy of annexation. Animosities increased until they culminated in the Mexican War. After that
contest, the United States absorbed nearly one-half of Mexico's domain. The Mexican people, adhering to Alamán's anti-American principles, retained suspicion of their northern neighbor, a suspicion which lasted throughout the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER I

A BRIEF PANORAMA OF MEXICAN-
UNITED STATES RELATIONS
1825-1853

Official United States reaction to the independence move-
ments of the various Spanish-American and Portuguese-
American colonies between 1808 and 1825 presents one of the
more interesting historical problems in the realm of hemispheric
relations. A relatively new nation itself, the United States
viewed such undertakings to the south with mixed emotions.
Certainly these peoples seeking national sovereignty were
admired and vicariously encouraged; at the same time, there
was an obvious reluctance on the part of the United States
government to become too involved in the affairs of these
emerging southern nations. 1

1An excellent and scholarly discussion of this United
States attitude is found in the second chapter of Samuel Flagg
Bemis' The Latin-American Policy of the United States: An
Historical Interpretation (The Norton Library; New York, 1967),
31-47, passim.
Nevertheless, the possibility that Great Britain would take advantage of a disorganized situation in order to make lucrative trade inroads throughout Latin America gave impetus to United States determination to take a more active part in the unfolding Latin American drama. Of particular interest to the North American government in this respect was the nearest of the major Spanish American dissenters. Due to proximity, Mexico, or Nueva España prior to the outbreak of revolution, would unquestionably be the most logical area in which the United States could develop political and trade ties. Moreover, the Mexican region was contiguous with the United States, another factor which would serve to enhance close relations.

It goes without saying that such relations, whether of a political or an economic nature, or both, were confronted with obstacles from the initial stages. There were the obvious cultural differences between the United States and Mexico, as well as linguistic diversity. Also noteworthy was the historical background of United States independence, which was in large measure one of stability. Unlike its northern neighbor, Mexico had not been subjected to a period of Salutary Neglect during which time a self-sufficiency could be nurtured and expanded. The revolution in Mexico began as a class war between Friar Miguel Hidalgo's ragged, ignorant Indian followers and the
hated Iberian-born peninsulares, and later the American-born creoles. Only in the course of a decade had the direction of the Mexican uprising shifted toward a desire for nationhood and sovereignty. Even then, the newly-independent nation was subjected to the brief but ludicrous spectacle of Agustín Iturbide's self-imposed monarchy from May to December, 1822. 2

As a result of the sudden transition from a totally suppressed and completely regulated Spanish colony to a sovereign nation within a short thirteen-year period, Mexico was unprepared for the responsibilities and complications which accompanied independence. Thus began a long period of frustration and disruption which crippled Mexico throughout most of the nineteenth century. Significantly, the first half of the period was made even more difficult as a result of relations with the United States. According to an eminent Mexican historian, it was during the Iturbide interlude that unofficial relations between the United States and Mexico were initiated, for at that time the Mexicans desired to make contact with foreign nations.

Then, during the term of Mexico's first duly-elected chief executive, Guadalupe Victoria, when it was thought that contact with the United States seemed destined to bring about beneficial results for both nations, Mexico turned to introspection. Thus, the early relationship between the two countries, reconsidered after Mexico's self-analysis and subsequent conclusions, led to United States-related problems of great consequence for the new nation and created certain patterns of diplomacy during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century.  

In the initial period of Mexican-United States affiliation, it soon became evident from the Mexican viewpoint that the northern neighbor was not the humanitarian nor the benevolent friend that it had at first implied. The United States apparently was determined to take advantage of Mexico's post-revolutionary social and political disorder, and to make the most of a good opportunity for specific gains.

At this time the situation in Mexico left something to be desired, for the native Mexican presidents were for the most part less than acceptable improvements over many of the

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3 Carlos Bosch García, Material para la historia diplomática de México (México y los Estados Unidos, 1820-1848) (México, D. F., 1957), 9.
Spanish viceroys; indeed, the early chief executives of the neophyte nation were more correctly dictators who exercised complete control over the people. One man in particular, Antonio López de Santa Anna, dominated Mexican affairs between 1830 and 1850, the period of so much antagonism between Mexico and the United States. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that quibblings and misunderstandings between the two nations materialized, particularly in the period from 1825 to 1829; furthermore, these altercations formed the basis for many of the seemingly irreconcilable differences which would become more serious during the next two decades. Indeed, the worst fears and suspicions which Mexico harbored in reference to the United States would be confirmed in these next twenty

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4Alfred Hoyt Bill, Rehearsal for Conflict: The War with Mexico 1846-1848 (New York, 1947), 75. Valuable for the period of time under consideration in this study are two brief but informative and well-written examinations of general Mexican diplomacy and Mexican-United States diplomacy, respectively: Antonio de la Peña y Reyes, La diplomacia mexicana: pequeña revista histórico, Tomo I en la serie Archivo histórico diplomático mexicano (México, D. F., 1923- ), and Stuart Alexander MacCorkle, "American Policy of Recognition Towards Mexico," The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, LI (1933), 301-419.
years. 5

There were myriad causes for the hostilities and irritations which emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century, and no purpose would be served by an attempt to levy blame and to categorize specific faux pas on the part of each nation. Nevertheless, for a better understanding of the part which Lucas Alamán would play, and the influence he would wield in reference to Mexico's outlook concerning the United States, certain problems warrant examination. For the most part, the basic cause of controversy had to do with territorial and boundary adjustments.

During the three centuries of Spanish colonial control, Spanish officials had pushed the boundaries of Mexico northward until California and the present-day southwestern United States were included as part of the Mexican colony. Little effort was

5 William R. Manning, Early Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Mexico (Baltimore, 1916), ix. This monograph, in spite of its early publication date, is one of the two most outstanding studies dealing with Mexican-United States relations. The other work is George Lockhart Rives' The United States and Mexico 1821-1848: A History of the Relations Between the Two Countries from the Independence of Mexico to the Close of the War with the United States (2 vols.; New York, 1913). Two more recent studies on this subject are Carlos Bosch García's Historia de las relaciones entre México y Los Estados Unidos 1819-1848 (México, D. F., 1961), and Alberto María Carreño's La diplomacia extraordinaria entre México y Los Estados Unidos 1789-1947 (2 vols., segunda edición; México, D. F., 1961).
made throughout the colonial period to settle the vast areas north of the Rio Bravo del Norte; in fact, northern Mexico proper was but sparsely populated as late as the revolutionary period. The newly-established Mexican nation gave no indication that it had any more desire to populate the northern regions than had Spain. Even if there had existed a desire on the part of Mexico, there were not enough Mexicans to undertake such a task. The Mexican government could fill up these areas only if colonization was encouraged from without Mexico proper. Texas, California, and New Mexico were nearly as far removed from actual Mexican authority as was, for example, Oregon.6

By the time of the fait accompli of Mexican independence, the vast expanse of Texas was already attracting pioneers from the Mississippi Valley region, and these hardy peoples encountered few barriers to prevent their penetration of the Texas plain. In addition to the ease with which the settlers could push into those empty spaces on Mexico's northeastern fringe, there was an added incentive of a more complex nature. As early as the 1820's a feeling, quite subtle, but discernible nevertheless, that the United States was destined to spread its

political and social systems throughout the hemisphere was expressed by numerous Americans. This outlook played an important part in the development of Mexican-United States relations, and it either directly or indirectly affected the course of diplomacy between the two nations throughout the first three decades of political affiliation.

In retrospect, the mission-destiny complex found in the United States evinced nothing which could be called beneficial or enriching insofar as Mexico was concerned. Yet at that period of time, the Mexican nation was not one which would engender any great amount of respect among citizens of the United States, who looked upon it as quite backward. As Bosch García noted, after official relations between Mexico and the United States were initiated, and after Manuel Zozaya was sent in 1822 to represent his nation in Washington, Mexicans learned that the United States populace in general considered the people of Latin America to be inferior. Moreover, the United States

Ibid. The idea that the United States would be a "nest" from which the concept of republicanism would be spread was expressed by Thomas Jefferson quite early in the nation's history. Modification of the concept occurred during the 1820's and 1830's until it became the less idealistic "manifest destiny" of the 1840's. For a penetrating analysis of the over-all complex, consult Frederick A. Merk's Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation (New York, 1963).
seemed to assume that such inferiority gave North Americans
the right to become involved in the territorial affairs of the Latin
American nations. 8 The situation in Mexico was such that the
existence of these feelings on the part of United States citizens
was not entirely without justification for a period of years.
People of ability in Mexico generally avoided political activity,
paying blackmail if necessary, so as not to be thrown with the
self-made military men who had come to power during and after
the revolution.

Meanwhile, the country was subjected to the misrule of
such men as Santa Anna. The fact that the creoles could have
changed such a state of affairs had they but exhibited a pittance
of civic spirit made the situation even more deplorable. For
the most part, these men were more concerned with their
comfortable habits of past generations and had no penchant
for reform or corrective activity. There were exceptions.
On both the conservative and the liberal sides, such men as
Lucas Alamán and Valentín Gómez Farías, respectively, fought
for a better existence and a finer country. Although their
methods were at times questionable and the results of their
actions to no avail, these men were sincere and patriotic.

8Bosch García, Historia de las relaciones, 35.
Had it not been for their presence, Mexico might not have survived as a nation. It has been suggested, in fact, that Mexican survival was indeed the result of a miracle, or a series thereof. Mexico did survive; however, its course of action was extremely hazardous after independence, as indicated by the composition and nature of the government after the fall of Iturbide.

When the decision was made by the Mexican Congress to oust Iturbide, or Agustín I, in December 1822, there was evident within this body a determination to guarantee a system of order. Temporary control of Mexican affairs was placed with a military triumverate comprised of Nicolás Bravo, Guadalupe Victoria, and Pedro Celestino Negrete, generals all. It was not yet believed in Mexico that executive power could safely be deposited in the hands of one man. The three generals were imbued with patriotism, and they apparently were well intentioned; however, their forte was in the realm of things military. They understood the battlefield, but civil government mystified them. It was therefore necessary for this impermanent Poder

9Daniel James, Mexico and the Americans (New York, 1963), 43. In James' words, "considering . . . the grave dissensions that threatened Mexico from within and the bellicose powers [the United States, Spain, and France] that threatened her from without, the survival of the Mexican state during this period must be put down as a very real miracle indeed."
Ejecutivo to appoint a cabinet to oversee the requisite functions of government. The several men selected for this task in general were notable only for their dearth of skills. One of them, though, was quite competent, and it was fortunate for Mexico that Lucas Alamán was appointed to the most important post of Minister for Foreign Affairs. He held this position during the critical period between April 1823 and February 1824, prior to the administration of President Victoria.¹⁰

Alamán was captivated with conservatism, but independent Mexico was caught up for the moment in the fervor of republicanism and liberalism. Alamán's counterparts in the liberal group were Miguel Ramós Arizpe and Gómez Farías, who were instrumental in drawing up the Constitution of 1824, the first of several for Mexico. This was a rather naïve and ineffective document, in the main predicated upon the constitution of the United States. Federalism was promulgated, but Mexico was not prepared for such sweeping freedom, as Alamán and the centralists warned.¹¹

¹⁰Herbert I. Priestly, The Mexican Nation: A History (New York, 1926), 259; James, Mexico and the Americans, 43-44.

¹¹As Matías Romero later reviewed this situation, he concluded that "our Constitution of 1824 was a decided victory for the Liberal party, but very far from being a final one. The Church party, though then defeated, was really the stronger of
It seemed in 1824 that the Mexican government had made the decision as to its political direction, that is, to pursue a democracy similar to that in the United States. But such was not the case, for Mexico's federalism was superficial. The nation had settled only the question as to whether there would be a republic or a monarchy. Political clashes would continue to plague the shaky republic for years to come, affording innumerable opportunities for clandestine dictatorships, but dictatorships nevertheless. During these years of turmoil, the conservative centralists would clamor incessantly for a strong national government which would unify and stabilize the country as a whole. Indeed, Santa Anna intermittently took advantage of the centralist-federalist conflict to control Mexico's fate between 1825 and 1855; furthermore, the United States became enmeshed in Mexican affairs because of the actions of its first diplomatic representative to that capital, Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was an outspoken exponent of democracy.12

12James, *Mexico and the Americans*, 43, 45; Romero, *Mexico and the United States*, 353. Poinsett's political outlooks and attitudes toward Mexico will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.
As a contemporary of this period observed, "President Victoria was inaugurated on the 1st of April, 1825, and commenced his administration under the fairest auspices."\(^{13}\) It was believed, and sincerely hoped, in both nations that Victoria's administration would demonstrate a predilection for close ties with the United States. But the United States had yet to send a representative to Mexico, a necessary prerequisite to solid diplomatic relations. Zozaya left Washington in May 1823 with little admiration for the United States, and Poinsett did not reach his post until May 1825. Meanwhile, in the ensuing interim, certain policies were formulated in Mexico which would have an abiding effect on relations between the two neighbors. Alamán had become Minister for Foreign Affairs in May 1824 and remained in that office until September, when he resigned due to a personal conflict. He then was re-appointed by Victoria to the post in January 1825. It was generally acknowledged in Mexico at this time that Alamán was the ablest political figure in the

\(^{13}\)Philip Young, *History of Mexico* (Cincinnati, 1847), 219. Although at times erroneous, Young's history nevertheless is valuable for its penetrating analysis of Mexico in a period when Mexico was a relatively mysterious nation to most citizens of the United States. It further gives an indication of actual United States feelings toward its southern neighbor, feelings of an emotional nature often lacking in recent accounts.
country. His staunch Catholicism and support of the aristocratic centralist cause made him unpopular in some circles, but his abilities were never questioned.

Victoria himself was something of an enigma. He had fought long for Mexico's freedom, but as president he demonstrated no desire to correct long-standing evils in his society. Though a federalist, he was obstinate in his belief that compromise would be the salvation of his nation; as a result, he refused to appoint an all-federalist cabinet to serve under him. Thus, high posts were given to staunch conservatives. The two most forceful members who espoused centralism were Alamán and Manuel Gómez Pedraza, Secretary of War and Navy, who was vehemently anti-democratic. Alamán was no less eager to impugn democratic ways than was Gómez Pedraza; however, he was in possession of a more powerful mentality, was more stable, and was more outstanding. 14

Alamán was in office when Poinsett arrived in Mexico City to begin his diplomatic duties. It was at this point in Mexican-United States relations that the tenor of these was established

14 Bosch García, Historia de las relaciones, 35-36; George Creel, The People Next Door: An Interpretive History of Mexico and the Mexicans (New York, 1926), 55. Gómez Pedraza later supported the liberal elements.
as a result of the brief confrontation between Alamán and Poinsett. The precedents laid down during this short period persisted for the next two decades until events culminated in armed hostilities. 15

Prior to Poinsett's arrival, Alamán had begun to work toward a deferment of United States influence in his country. Even at this early date in the history of Mexican-United States diplomacy, he was wary of the intentions of that nation. An avowed Anglophil, Alamán negotiated with Prime Minister George Canning for British recognition of Mexico, which he valued much more than that of the United States. He also signed a commercial treaty with England. Needless to say, Poinsett did not find the Mexican Foreign Secretary predisposed to negotiate with him in earnest. In fact, Alamán laid obstacles in Poinsett's path at every opportunity, to the point that the United States Minister charged him with perfidy. In September 1825, however, Alamán was forced to resign his office due to growing criticism of his procedures and to animosity toward him personally. The liberal forces engineered Alamán's

15 This episode is discussed in full in Chapter III, infra.
debacle, certainly receiving Poinsett's moral support. 16

Despite Alamán's elimination from the Mexican foreign secretariat, his influence continued. The die was cast, and because of the groundwork prepared by him, the United States soon discovered that Great Britain possessed the advantage in competition for commercial privileges. The northern country was portrayed as aggressively land-hungry by Alamán, an idea promoted by the British. Poinsett, moreover, exacerbated the United States problem. He became involved in the internal affairs of Mexico on behalf of the liberal elements, to the extent that the government accused him of attempting to promote a civil war so that the United States might gain Mexican territory, specifically Texas. Poinsett also became embroiled in the growing Masonic controversy in Mexico. He organized and nurtured the York Rite Masonic Lodge, or the Yorkinos, whose liberal proclivity antagonized the conservative Scots Rite Masons, or Escoceses. More than likely, Poinsett's involvement was innocent enough, but the repercussions led eventually to his recall. The American Minister apparently looked upon the Mexicans with something akin to disdain, and he considered

16 Simpson, Many Mexicoos, 235. The details of Alamán's precipitate fall from his post are in Chapter III, infra.
them incapable of handling their own affairs. His attitude was that of a parent who was constantly correcting his fumbling child. 17

Poinsett had certainly impressed the Mexicans, but it was not the kind of diplomatic opening which the United States desired. At the same time, the animosity which erupted between the United States and Mexican governments was not solely the doing of Poinsett. Indeed, Alamán had worked for just such results. The growing fear of the United States and the lack of confidence in that nation were both attributable to Alamán, who wished to see the ascendancy of Great Britain in Mexico, particularly in the realm of economic activity. 18

Alamán later reflected on these events in his impressive Historia de México. He noted that even though Zozaya was received well by the American government, there had followed no official recognition specifically of Mexico's independence; rather, there was issued a declaration of friendship with respect

17 James, Mexico and the Americans, 46. For Poinsett's general opinions of Mexico and the Mexicans, consult his Notes on Mexico (London, 1825), written after a visit to that country in the early 1820's. For his career, see J. Fred Rippy's Joel R. Poinsett, Versatile American (Durham, N. C., 1935).

18 Carreño, La diplomacia extraordinaria, I, 162-163.
to all the new American nations. The British government, however, revealed a greater interest in Latin America, especially in the area of trade relations, and had even let it be known to Spain that it would be willing to intervene on behalf of the new nations should the necessity arise.¹⁹ Alamán was quite pleased with such developments, and, as noted earlier, promoted closer ties with Great Britain. In reference to the Poinsett mission, Alamán remained rather aloof in his historical account. Poinsett, he informed, was best remembered in Mexico as the founder of a new Masonic body. As well, he was a man who had opposed the old ways and who had supported expulsion of Spaniards as proposed by Iturbide's "Law of the Three Guarantees," hoping that these middle class merchants would in time be replaced by Americans.²⁰

¹⁹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, desde los primeros movimientos que prepararon su independencia en el año de 1808 hasta la época presente (5 vols.; México, D. F., 1852), V, 815-816.

²⁰Ibid., 822. In his Historia, Alamán was not guilty of attempting to enhance his own political reputation. As a matter of fact, he rarely elaborated upon his political activities within the narrative. In this respect, Alamán followed the once-strict regimen of the historian in which a completely unbiased approach supposedly was taken. His history is notably conservative, but his facts generally are sound. Indeed, Alamán's Historia de Méjico is still recognized as the standard account in the Spanish language. Moreover, such Mexican historians as Alberto María Carreño, José Fuentes Mares, Niceto de Zamacois, and Luis G. Zorrilla relied heavily in their works on the Historia.
Before Poinsett was recalled from Mexico, he was urged by his government to make some sort of commercial agreement and, if possible, to purchase Mexican territory so that the western boundary of the United States could be determined. Mexico in 1827 refused to entertain such proposals, and negotiations remained at a standstill. In that year, furthermore, Alamán, although not in an official position, was considered one of the three outstanding intellectual leaders of the country. These three men, in the words of one observer, left "the impression of their thought upon the conflicts which were to tear Mexico asunder during the nineteenth century." Of the trio, the other two being Lorenzo de Zavala and José María Luis Mora, Alamán was and would remain the most prominent and influential.

Thus, Mexican-United States relations, on the basis of the ideas and actions of Alamán and Poinsett, had by 1827 been determined as to the course which would be followed. Mora, Zavala, and Alamán each wanted Mexican development, but their ideas as to such development differed widely. Mora believed

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21Fayette Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, from the Revolution of Hidalgo to the Present Time (Hartford, Connecticut, 1848), 144; James A. Magner, Men of Mexico (Milwaukee, 1942), 313.
that Mexico could develop on the basis of self-sufficiency; Zavala looked to the United States as the possible catalyst for Mexican achievement; Alamán, though, turned to Europe.  

The fact that the Mexican government selected the latter course, rejecting cooperation with the United States almost with disdain, indicated that the idea alamanista prevailed.

It was hoped in the United States that growing Mexican hostility would dissipate as a result of the 1828 presidential election in that country. The contest had begun in September, and within a short time it degenerated into a power struggle between the yorkinos, who were represented by the more democratic Vicente Guerrero, and the escoceses, represented by Gómez Pedraza. Eventually, both candidates claimed victory, and the presidency was determined only when Santa Anna supported Guerrero, who had received one vote less than Gómez Pedraza in the polling of the nineteen states.  

Poinsett did not actively

\[22\text{Magner, Men of Mexico, 313.}\]

\[23\text{Young, History of Mexico, 226. Simpson has disagreed with this contemporary account of the election. It was his contention that the "York Rite" and "Scottish Rite" parties were not actually so well-defined as to opposing philosophies. In his opinion, the "lodges only in the loosest sense represented opposing philosophies, but were hardly more than pressure groups supporting this or that candidate according to their interests." Many Mexicos, 236.}\]
participate in the campaigning, such as it was; however, there is little doubt that he was pleased by the outcome. But Guerrero's presidency was short-lived.

In 1829, Vice President Anastasio Bustamante, a military officer, pronounced against Guerrero. When the President challenged this revolt, naming José María Bocanegra as interim chief executive while he carried out his military campaign, Luis Quintanar joined with Pedro Vélez and Alamán in opposition to Bocanegra. A declaration to the effect that this new "poder ejecutivo" was a legal creation as provided by Article ninety-seven of the Constitution was made on December 23, 1829:

Habiendo procedido el consejo de gobierno a la elección de los dos asociados que con el Escmo. Sr. presidente de la suprema corte de justicia /Don Pedrc Vélez/ deben ejercer el supremo poder ejecutivo de los Estados-Unidos Mexicanos, según el art. 97 de la constitución, resultaron electos los Escmos. ... Lucius Quintanar y Lucas Alamán ... .24

This regency, in support of Bustamante, gained the favor of the majority of the Mexican states; only Vera Cruz continued to support Guerrero. As a result, Santa Anna remained impassive. Cognizant of his predicament, Guerrero therefore retired to his

24 Archivo Nacional de México, Departamento del Interior MSS, Sección 1a, Doc. 388.
birthplace, Tixtla. The presidency was now open to Bustamante, who returned to Ciudad México, received the oath of office, and formed a cabinet, the most notable member of which was Alamán.\textsuperscript{25}

The Bustamante regime reinstated a conservative government in Mexico. An avid critic of Alamán has suggested that Mexico bordered on the verge of a terroristic police state during this administration.\textsuperscript{26} As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alamán assumed an important role during this period, although a police state per se under his auspices did not exist. Yet, in the opinion of a leading Mexican authority, he was the "soul of this government and the inspirer of its politics." Alamán believed in and adhered to a program of order. And to him, order consisted of the submission, or even destruction if necessary, of those groups

\textsuperscript{25}Magner, Men of Mexico, 319; Baronesa de Wilson, México y sus gobernantes de 1519 a 1910: Biografías, retratas y autógrafas (2 vols.; Barcelona, 1910), II, 41.

\textsuperscript{26}Creel construed the Bustamante presidency to be, in reality, the Alamán dictatorship. -He pointed out that Alamán suppressed all freedoms in Mexico and resorted to a program of hanging, shooting, and exile until there existed "a proper degree of submissiveness." People Next Door, 61-62. Certainly Creel's implications are somewhat exaggerated in that Alamán was not totally dominant in Mexico. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged among historians within this area of specialty--such as Cue Canovas, Vasconcelos, Sierra, and James--that Alamán was the most capable, thus most active, member of the Bustamante government.
or individuals who had supported Guerrero and his cause. 27

This government, or dictatorship as it were, was certainly the antithesis of what the Jackson administration preferred to see in Mexico. Liberals were indeed suppressed. It was government by and for the privileged classes. Alamán, imbued with the concept of centralism, represented the interests of the aristocratic elements, or the "decent people." Mexico seemed to be on the verge of a complete volte-face. Alamán advocated a return to the ways of colonial Mexico. 28

But the Mexican nation apparently had no desire to revert back to the days of colonialism. In fact, many Mexicans who espoused conservatism did not relish a system in which only a few who considered themselves "decent people" controlled the majority of the population at will. The inevitable discontent soon emerged, and this occurrence did not go unnoticed in the United States. In an issue of a leading United States news publication, the Mexican situation under Bustamante was scrutinized.


28 James, Mexico and the Americans, 49-50; Cue Canovas, Historia política de México, 318; Justo Sierra, Evolución política del pueblo mexicano, Tomo XII: Obras completas del maestro Justo Sierra (México, D. F., 1957), 198.
A letter written by an unknown observer in Vera Cruz revealed something of the prevailing American outlook in reference to Mexico. This correspondent offered that while the people of this country are threatened with invasion from old Spain there had been a weak, fruitless Spanish attempt to seize Tampico in late 1829, they make shift to hold together, but, no sooner are they left to themselves, than they engage in civil strife, more ruinous by far to the nation than all the legions which Ferdinand could send against them.

Then, disdainfully, the writer concluded that "it is really ludicrous to hear them boast of their republican government, when in fact, they do not understand its meaning." In the latter part of that same year, it was inferred that the Mexicans had demonstrated their inability to function effectively as a sovereign democracy: "What havoc have the generals made among their fellow citizens... Many years must roll on before the devastations which they have caused shall be repaired..." As the discontent became more pronounced in Mexico, the confusion was intensified. Alamán's policies became more distasteful, especially among federalists, and the dismissal of several state governors and legislators who expressed differing points of view

29Niles' Weekly Register, XXXVIII (April 17, 1830), 141.
30Ibid., XXXIX (November 27, 1830), 224.
did not endear Bustamante's government to the people. The wave of conspiracies and uprisings increased to alarming proportions.  

In the first month of 1832, the imminent debacle occurred. Santa Anna once again played the role of political arbiter as he ousted Bustamante and his subordinates, including Alamán. Gómez Pedraza was placed in office for three months; then, Santa Anna himself assumed the presidency. Thus began the period of Santa Anna's overt dominance of his nation. Except for several interruptions, this period lasted until 1855. The United States could expect no improvement in relations with Mexico, for Santa Anna revealed quite soon that he would implement several policies conceived by Alamán, programs which in time would bring about the Texas independence movement and the ensuing Mexican War.  

There appeared in 1832 a pamphlet, the author of which is unknown, calling for a re-examination of the affairs of Mexico. Improvement was needed in many areas of Mexican life, and the current disruption could lead to no good. The nation was


32 Chapter IV, *infra*, deals at length with these policies and their consequences.
compelled, the writer exhorted, to re-establish its credit both with its people and with foreign nations. Moreover, the latter should be assured "con ella amistad permanente ..." Mexico could only go forward if there was an end to political convulsions, a quiet submission to governmental re-organization, an improvement in the administration of justice, a perfection of military tribunals, a system of effective education, and protection of the arts and of industry. It was truly in the national interest that Mexico make such improvements and changes. Anything less than this, in the writer's opinion, would be in violation of the federal pact which had been approved by the peoples of Mexico. 33

Santa Anna, however, paid no heed to such writings. He aided neither the liberal element nor the conservative group; Santa Anna's predilection was to help himself. For a time, he allowed his liberal Vice President, Gómez Farías, to govern the country. By 1834, though, he sensed a growing conservative strength throughout the nation. In that year he revealed his true

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33Anonymous, Reflexiones sobre las cuestiones del día (México, D. F., 1832), 3, 16. The question was raised concerning the possibility that a European might have authored this pamphlet. Based on conversations with Mexican archivists in Ciudad México, this writer is convinced that the author was a Mexican of liberal political outlook, hence the necessity to write anonymously.
dictatorial tendencies and initiated a period of political activity which culminated in the conflict with the United States in 1844.

In 1835, after Gómez Farías was forced to flee Mexico, Santa Anna reconvened the Congress for the alleged purpose of reforming the Constitution of 1824; actually, he did not intend simply to reform the old document. It was soon obvious that a new constitution would supplant the old. The author of this conservative manuscript, furthermore, was none other than Alamán.\textsuperscript{34} Santa Anna, in the opinion of the brilliant José Vasconcelos, "reinstated the terror . . . and began the ecclesiastical Reformation."\textsuperscript{35} By 1836, moreover, the Texas problem had reached the point of no return.

Mexico's Texas policy was given its definitive status as such during the Bustamante administration and was the creation of Alamán.\textsuperscript{36} The policy reflects Alamán's fear of the designs

\textsuperscript{34}James, Mexico and the Americans, 50, 51. For a period after 1832, Alamán found it expedient to remain as politically inconspicuous as possible. Nevertheless, Santa Anna's adoption of conservative outlooks in 1834 directly influenced Alamán, who remained the most outstanding conservative thinker and theoretician. The ramifications of Alamán's activities during the years of Santa Anna's dominance are discussed in Chapters IV and V, infra.

\textsuperscript{35}Breve historia de México (edición contemporanea; México, D. F., 1956), 317.

\textsuperscript{36}See Chapter IV, infra.
of the United States on the northern province and was quite restrictive in nature. Under Gómez Farías, however, Alamán's restrictions were ignored. Alamán denounced such nonchalance, but to no avail. 37 Santa Anna's seizure of the presidency in 1834 indicated that a harder line toward Texas would be reinstated. But independence fervor was sweeping the Texas area, and the Texans now had the sympathy of the majority of the people in the United States. The early flames of friendship between Mexico and the United States by 1836 had died out, for as they watched the incessant dissensions rend Mexico apart, Americans rapidly lost interest in Mexican-United States fraternalism and acquiesced to a feeling of indifference. 38 What would become "manifest destiny" within nine years was already evident to a strong degree as Texas initiated its break away from Mexican control.

Since 1819, Texas had been a consideration, though somewhat remote at first, of United States protective diplomacy. Alamán's policies, coupled with Santa Anna's treatment of the Texans as if they were rebels when they asked for a redress of

37Vasconcelos, Breve historia de México, 318.

grievances, gave the United States a new outlook toward Texas as well as toward the future of relations with Mexico. Thus, unofficially supported by the United States, the Texans won their freedom from Mexico. Understandably, Mexico refused to recognize Texas, further threatening that any United States effort to absorb Texas would be considered by Mexico as tantamount to a declaration of war.

A new degree of suspicion and hostility between Mexico and the United States was evident by 1840. Santa Anna had led his country to the brink of armed hostilities with the northern nation, and the damage seemed to be irreparable. Humiliated by his failure to thwart the Texas rebellion in 1836, Santa Anna nevertheless regained his pre-war prestige within four years. In the main, he was regarded by liberals in the United States as an incompetent caudillo, leading his nation down the path to destruction.

Certainly there were those who interpreted Santa Anna's course of action in a different light. Among these was Waddy Thompson, who served as Minister to Mexico just prior to the war years in the 1840's. According to Thompson, Santa Anna

\[39\text{Bill, Rehearsal for Conflict, 44, 50.}\]
was not the vascillating *político* as was often suggested in the United States. Rather, he was the father of Mexican nationhood, a man who had played such a conspicuous role in Mexican development that he was an historical figure in his own time. As Thompson recorded, "I regard him, as more than any other man, the author and finisher of the last and successful struggle of Mexico for Independence and a Republican form of government." Moreover, he contended that Santa Anna had favored federalism in Mexico from its inception and had since worked to maintain that system of government. He argued that the Mexican president opposed the centralist elements, but, in Thompson's view, federalism could not succeed in Mexico whether Santa Anna supported the concept or not; indeed, he did not necessarily believe that a republic was the best form of government for Mexico simply because it was so beneficial for his own nation.  

Whatever the significance of Thompson's views concerning Santa Anna's supposed penchant for federalism, there is little doubt as to what he intended for the country. His proclivity was now decidedly conservative, and the *idea alamanista* held sway

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40 *Recollections of Mexico* (New York, 1846), 54-55, 58, 59.
in Mexico. Relations with the United States continued to deteriorate between 1840 and 1844, and neither country gave any sincere indication of a willingness to compromise. Then, the events surrounding the American presidential election of 1844 engendered further diplomatic deterioration between the glowering nations. War erupted within a short time after James Knox Polk's inauguration.

According to one authority, the Mexican War was the terminal portion of the "War of Nationalisms" which had begun in 1836 during the Texas independence movement. Americans of all classes were determined that their government should absorb sections of the old Spanish domain, and Mexico's inability to stabilize its internal affairs caused an increasing disrespect for that nation in the United States. Consequently, when Mexico appeared unable to assert authority over its outlying territories in the north, the United States' land-hunger was whetted.

This "manifest destiny" boded ill for Mexico. Until 1836, most Mexicans had looked upon the United States with grudging admiration; however, between 1836 and 1845, this feeling had undergone a metamorphosis, from which emerged anxiety, then fear. Alamán and those who accepted his admonitions in reference to the dangers of United States encroachments were
not surprised that war resulted. They had inferred that the Americans looked upon the Mexican as an inferior being, incapable of bringing democracy and prosperity to his land. The Mexican War, then, was not only a military action. It was a struggle for the dominance of one of two diverse outlooks. Mexicans for years to come would despise the "gringo" who subjected them to humiliating defeat before the world and who annexed approximately one-half of their national area. Americans, upon the other hand, would scorn the primitive and backward Mexicans, who had been too disoriented to save their national honor. 41

The war itself has been the subject of myriad examinations and treatises and shall not be discussed in this study. The questions of United States aggression and of alleged Mexican stupidity in handling the situation still offer room for discussion. However, it is unlikely that war could have been averted at the time, for attitudes and opinions on both sides were static. As one of the leading specialists on United States expansion during the nineteenth century has pointed out, "the moral inspirations of the expansionists during the war derived from the conception

41 James, Mexico and the Americans, 53, 54.
of a religious duty to regenerate the unfortunate people of the enemy country by bringing them into the life-giving shrine of American democracy. "42 But the Mexican people had no desire to bask in such light, as adherence to Alamán's principles revealed.

As well, there were those Americans who had serious doubts that such military action would inculcate Mexicans with an appreciation of democracy. 43 A more realistic explanation for United States behavior is probably expressed in a terse speech made by Polk's Secretary of State, James Buchanan, in which he asserted that "... Texas ought to be annexed to the Union, because the possession of this territory is necessary to our defence, peace, and security."44 The years of growing antagonism--the immediate result of the Texas problem but given impetus when Alamán was in the position of Secretary for Foreign Affairs--severely weakened any chance for Mexican-American understanding which might have abrogated the cause

42 Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, 161.

43 Ibid.

44 Speech in the United States Senate, June 8, 1844; quoted in Sarah Mytton Maury, Statesmen of America in 1846 (Philadelphia, 1847), 25.
of war. American reassurances to Mexico that the annexation of Texas would in no way smack of insult, disrespect, or indifference toward Mexican dignity fell upon deaf ears. Mexico repeated what had become a common threat—annexation of Texas would mean war.

Be that as it may, the United States government entered the conflict with a sense of self-righteousness, for in the view of a contemporary witness in the United States, "the war between the United States and Mexico arose from various subjects of just complaint on the part of the United States against Mexico." Under the leadership of a president who professed expansionist inclinations, the Americans thus engaged the disorganized and ill-prepared Mexican nation in a rather one-sided military contest. The war was underway only a short time before a movement for the seizure of all Mexico emerged in the United States. President Polk's desire to acquire territory, however, went no

further than California, hence the movement was squelched. 46

The war and the seize-all-Mexico movement had nevertheless
made a distinct impression upon the conservative elements of
the Mexican people and their leaders. In their minds, the fears
of Alamán were justified after all, and the policies he had form-
ulated were considered wise ones. The United States had never
really been the friend of Mexico but had desired only to exploit
its neighbor. On the other hand, those Mexicans who favored a
federalist system of government contended that Alamán's sus-
picions had brought reciprocation from the United States. They
argued that the centralists were to blame for the ills of Mexico,
and for the disruption of Mexican-United States relations.

Whatever the answer, the outstanding fact which emerges is
that the role of Lucas Alamán in the development of Mexican-

46Edward G. Bourne, "The United States and Mexico, 1847-
1848," American Historical Review, V (1899-1900), 492; John D.
P. Fuller, "The Movement for the Acquisition of All Mexico,
1846-1848," The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical
and Political Science, LIV (1936), 12. Also consult Weinberg
for an excellent and thorough discussion of the extensive national
debate which took place in reference to the possible annexation
of Mexico in 1847. Although those who favored annexation used
the pretext of regenerating Mexicans, in the main they feared
that Mexico, in a weakened situation, might fall under the aegis
of some other power. Certainly, there were those who wanted
Mexico simply on the basis of territorial aggrandizement.
Chapter VI, 160-189, passim.
United States relations was critical during the years from the inception of diplomacy until the fall of Santa Anna. Certainly this period is referred to as the era of Santa Anna, for his magnetic personality influenced all aspects of Mexican life. At the same time, it was Alamán, not Santa Anna, who confronted Poinsett, and indeed bested him, to set the tone for relations between the two nations. Moreover, it was Alamán's policy in conjunction with the Texas question which initiated Mexican suspicion and mistrust of the United States as to its territorial ambitions.

Without question, Alamán was a complex personality. Thus, an examination of his early years and long career is necessary for an insight into his outlooks, prejudices, and political philosophy. To a degree, he was a man of two worlds, adhering to the old days of aristocratic supremacy yet desiring to create a modern industrial nation. An understanding, consequently, of Alamán's background and of his career enhances in large measure an appreciation of the course he followed in dealing with the United States.
Lucas Alamán's pronounced suspicion of the United States, and his opposition to the establishment of close diplomatic ties between that nation and his own, evolved as a result of certain conclusions reached during the early, formative years of his career. Moreover, his background was one that reflected an adherence to order and conservatism. He was not attuned to the ideas of the American and French Revolutions prevailing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. That Alamán appreciated order was indicative of his scientific mind, and it was his nature to oppose any disruptive force which conceivably threatened to interfere with systematic processes he deemed essential, whether in reference to his personal life or to the welfare of his country. Because he early concluded that the United States afforded such a threat to the orderly development of Mexico, he steeled himself to oppose any encroachments on the part of that nation.
Born on October 18, 1792, in the important mining center of Guanajuato, Alamán was descended from an old-line Spanish family, for his father was Juan Vicente Alamán, a native of Ochagavia in the Salazar Valley of Navarre. According to Alamán, as recorded in his autobiography, his father's family was "decent and honorable." His mother was a descendant of the Marquis de San Clemente and belonged to one of the principal families in Guanajuato. At the appropriate time, Alamán commenced his education and, as he recorded, learned to read under the tutelage of Josefa Camacho of Guanajuato. He learned to write in the school of Belen, under the guidance of Friar José de San Geronimo, and his father demonstrated his gratitude by paying for the construction of an additional room for the school.

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1Lucas Alamán, Obras (3 vols.; México, D. F., 1899-1901), I, vi.

2Alamán, Documentos diversos (inéditos y muy raros) (4 vols.; compilación de Rafael Aguayo Spencer; México, D. F., 1945-1947), IV, 11. Alamán's complete writings are collected in twelve volumes in the series entitled Colección de grandes autores mexicanos. In this collection are the Disertaciones (3 vols.), the Documentos diversos (4 vols.), and the Historia de México (5 vols.). The compilation of Alamán's works, under the general direction of Carlos Pereyra, was begun in 1942 and completed in 1947. The invaluable University of Texas, Austin, Alamán Archives is included in the Documentos diversos, as are many of his official diplomatic papers, and his autobiography.
"gratitude for the instruction which I received there." At an early age the young Alamán demonstrated a facility for intellectual endeavor. After a mastery of the rudiments, he continued his work with the study of Latin, instructed by Francisco Cornelio Diosado. Within a year, Alamán had mastered the works of Cornelius Nepos, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. On September 6, 1805, he stood for his public examination; his performance was excellent, and Alamán, now almost thirteen years of age, was designated best among all participants.

Having acquired a basic knowledge of reading, writing, and Latin, he then undertook the study of mathematics in the Jesuit college of Purisima Concepción de Guanajuato.⁴

As Alamán developed proficiency in mathematics he became interested also in the science of mineralogy. It was noted in the introductory memoir of an 1825 translation of Alamán's congressional report for that year that "an inhabitant of Guanaxuato could scarcely fail attaining some smattering of mineralogy, and this interesting science found in Alamán an

³Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 11.

⁴Alamán, Obras, I, vii-viii; Documentos diversos, III, 506; IV, 12.
enthusiastic and accomplished votary."\(^5\) Alamán acquired a knowledge of this discipline under the guidance of his father, and he soon developed a first-hand understanding of metals while working in the mine of Cata in Guanajuato. As Alamán recalled, this first activity gave him a love of mineralogy which he always retained.\(^6\) In 1807, he accompanied his sister and brother-in-law to the colony of Nueva Santander in Tamaulipas province, where the brother-in-law, Manuel Iturbe, was to serve as governor. He remained there until May 1808, returning with his sister to Guanajuato upon the death of their father. Alamán saw to the affairs of his family following his father's death, and he then moved his mother and family to Mexico City, establishing there a permanent residence for them.\(^7\)

In Mexico City, Alamán learned French, studying in the library of Manuel del Valle at 24 Tacuba Street. After this period of study, he and his family returned to Guanajuato, where he continued his scientific studies and read classical Latin.


\(^7\)Alamán, *Obras*, I, viii; *Documentos diversos*, IV, 13.
He also cultivated an appreciation of music, especially that of the guitar. Up to this point, he had led a relatively normal and uncomplicated life, but the year was 1810, and the young man of eighteen was about to witness events which would affect his entire existence and determine the development of his political and social outlooks.

After two years of preparation, on September 16, 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo raised the standard of revolt against Spain in Mexico, issuing a cry of death to the Gachupines. The event occurred in the village of Dolores, and within a short time the Indians who had rallied to Father Hidalgo's grito were swarming into near-by Guanajuato. Twelve days after the call to revolt, the infamous massacre of Spanish residents and soldiers in the Alhondiga de Granaditas took place. Many people were slaughtered indiscriminately by the undisciplined Indians, including the intendant of the province, the enlightened Juan Antonio Riaño, a friend of the Alamán family. This bloody event, according to one authority, "made an indelible impression on Alamán" and probably gave his mind the conservative bent which has so often been lamented.

\[8\text{ibid.}, \text{viii-ix; 13-14.}\]
Alamán took his family and fled to Mexico City. He would never forget the atrocity he had witnessed.

In the normal order of things, Alamán more than likely would have remained in Guanajuato in his family home as a mining engineer; however, as a result of the eruption of violence in 1810, his life changed radically. He returned to Mexico City disgusted with the principles to which Hidalgo's revolution was dedicated. Moreover, he would always remember how the Indians had mistreated him, whom they thought to be one of the hated Gachupines.

Alamán continued his scholastic endeavors in the capital upon arrival there in December 1810, studying chemistry and mineralogy in the Colegio de Minería under Manuel Cotero and Andres del Rio, respectively. On September 11, 1813, he was certified with great honor in both fields. He then began work under the direction of Vicente Cervantes in botany and received similar certification on September 30 of the same year. Eventually, Alamán acquired proficiency as well in calculus and

9 Simpson, Many Mexicos, 212.
10 Alamán, Documentos diversos, I, 3.
11 Ibid., IV, 14.
geometry. He also improved his knowledge of French and studied the English and Italian tongues. It was at this time, as Alamán related, that he decided to make a journey to various countries in Europe, hence the study of the several foreign languages. Furthermore, at this point he had determined to prepare himself for the period of crisis which he foresaw for Mexico, and he concluded that he could best ready himself for service to his country by traveling and studying in Europe.

Alamán departed Vera Cruz in January 1814 on board the Spanish brigantine Perignon, bound for Cadiz via Havana. He was at first accompanied by an old family friend, Tómas González Calderón, but circumstances were such that he could not make the journey; as a result, Alamán had as a traveling companion Dr. Victorino de las Fuentes, a cleric from Irapuato who was a deputy to the Spanish Cortés. After a stopover of several days in Havana, Alamán's ship arrived in Cadiz on May 30, 1814. Dr. Fuentes left forthwith for Madrid, but Alamán remained a month in the port city.

After visiting in Seville several days, "with Ponz's Viaje a España in hand," and observing the artistic attractions

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12 Alamán, Obras, I, ix-x; Documentos diversos, IV, 14.

13 Alamán, State of Mexico, 23.
of that city, he went to Córdoba for the same purpose. Eventually, at the beginning of July he made his way to Madrid. Here he became well acquainted with the various American deputies to the Cortés, in addition to his fellow countrymen. The young Mexican intellectual was particularly pleased to make the acquaintance of numerous distinguished professors of the natural sciences. His eagerness to see the Spanish countryside did not abate after his arrival in Madrid. As he later recounted, he visited several magnificent sites such as the famous Escorial. 14

After an enjoyable and impressionable stay in Madrid, Alamán in October set out for France. He passed through Burgos, Victoria, and Tolosa and arrived in Paris at the beginning of November. Upon arrival, he met Friar Servando Teresa de Mier, and due to his recommendation was taken into a circle of important persons. It was at this time that Alamán became personally familiar with the history of the recent revolution and Napoleonic period while pursuing the study of physics, chemistry, and mineralogy at the University of Paris with acknowledged authorities in these fields. Moreover,

14 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 14-15.
Alamán was in Paris when Napoleon, having escaped from the isle of Elba, returned to the city to initiate his "Hundred Days' Rule." As Alamán remembered the events, the return of Napoleon "with his motive for warfare was the cause for my going to England." He embarked for the island kingdom in April 1815 from Dieppe. 15

The summer of 1815 was spent in England and Scotland. Alamán then returned to Paris in September, where he remained for a time before departing for Italy. 16 It would appear that this sojourn in the British Isles had a profound effect, for thereafter he would demonstrate a marked favoritism toward anything of an English nature. Indeed, it is likely that Alamán developed his outlook toward a modern industrialized Mexico as a result of this summer spent in England.

In March 1816, Alamán and a Mr. Colombelle left Paris to begin a tour of Italy. His traveling companion was introduced to him by Professor Delametairie of the university, who was a mineralogy specialist in whose home Alamán had stayed upon

15Ibid., 15, 16. For a description of Fray Mier and his activities, see Germán Arciniega, Latin America: A Cultural History (New York, 1967), 308-310.

16Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 16.
his return from England. They crossed the Alps as they made their way south, and the two men reached Turin on the sixteenth of April. From there they went to Geneva. After a visit to the sites of the battles of Pavia and Marengo, Alamán and his new friend arrived in Milan at the end of April. During the months of May and June, Alamán journeyed throughout northern Italy. He and Colombelle then traveled to Rome, and Alamán once again became acquainted with important individuals such as Cardinal Gonzalvi, assistant to Pope Pius VII, and Cardinal Bardaji of Spain. Alamán and Colombelle separated at this point, and Alamán alone continued his journey with a visit to Naples. Upon his return to Rome, he encountered and befriended Francisco Fagoaga, a fellow countryman, and the two men after respective separate trips to Florence and Bolougne continued their travels together. They visited the principal cities of Lombardy and Venetia before making their way into Switzerland.\footnote{17 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 16-17; Obras, I, xii-xiii.}

From Switzerland Fagoaga returned to Paris, but Alamán journeyed northward into Germany. It was October of 1817 when he arrived in Saxony, making a visit to the mine at Freyberg. He went from Saxony to Berlin, in which city he met the
naturalist, Leopold de Buch. He also toured the Universities of Gottingen and Marburg, as well as the celebrated Harz mine. By February 1818, Alamán was in the city of Aix-la-Chapelle, and from there he made his way to Holland and the Low Countries. He returned to Paris, finally, on March 21, 1818.  

During these years of extensive travel, Alamán professed to be engaged largely in scientific study. However, he was also studying the nature and the effects of the various systems of government in the nations visited. There can be little doubt that Alamán was influenced by the political atmosphere in Europe at that time, for the Congress of Vienna was attempting to return European governments to the conservative forms in existence prior to the French Revolution. Furthermore, at the Congress, Count Clemens von Metternich of Austria, who wielded control and power as the "Crown Prince of Conservatism," had worked to eliminate all vestiges of democracy and liberalism so odious to him and his peers.

With the memory of the events of Guanajuato quite fresh in his mind, Alamán in all likelihood was impressed by the occurrences of the day, for conservative methods of government and

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18 Ibid., 17-18; xiii.

19 Alamán, State of Mexico, 25.
social organization were reinstated throughout Europe. The concepts of liberalism, of which he was already suspicious, were denounced and, supposedly, suppressed. Although he made no reference to these developments as to his impression of them, the political methods which he would soon employ in Mexico indicate without question that he adhered to the principles propounded by the conservative Congress of Vienna.

Alamán dedicated himself to intensive scientific study after his return to Paris in 1818, examining various mining procedures and methods for an extended period of time. Finally, in April 1819 he departed from Paris and traveled to Navarre, where he visited for a time with his paternal grandparents. On July 4 of that year, he was once more in Madrid. He returned to France for one more visit, leaving on September 12 for Paris, where he remained for a short time. In December he set sail from Le Havre for his native land on a French brigantine, accompanied by the family of Fagoaga. On February 27, 1820, Alamán reached Vera Cruz, and he set foot on Mexican soil for the first time in six years.²⁰

²⁰Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 19-20; Obras, I, xiv-xv.
Alamán's stay in Mexico, however, proved of short duration. He learned upon arrival in Vera Cruz that the liberal Constitution of 1812 had been reinstated in Spain by the revolt of Colonel Rafael Riego, bringing about a new session of the Cortés. Alamán returned to Guanajuato for the purpose of attending to the affairs of his father's estate, and he learned of his selection as the representative from that city to the new Cortés. He was now twenty-nine years of age. He made preparations for the trip to Spain and left Guanajuato for Vera Cruz in December 1820. He boarded the frigate Tres Hermanas in January 1821, with Burdeos as his destination, and arrived in Madrid at the beginning of May. 21

It was as a member of the Mexican delegation to this session of the Spanish Cortés that Alamán first demonstrated his political talents. While the Cortés was meeting, Agustín Iturbide seized control in Mexico and proposed a monarchy under his auspices, hoping to take advantage of the disjointed situation throughout the Spanish New World. Iturbide persuaded the patriotic Vicente Guerrero to join him in an independence movement, and their union brought forth the famous Plan of

21 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 20.
Iguala in February 1821. By September, all resistance was swept aside, and Iturbide was in the Mexican capital. On September 27, he proclaimed the independence of Mexico.

The Mexican delegates in Madrid were confused. Their situation was rather precarious, and it was at this time that Alamán became the unofficial but eloquent spokesman of his group. According to a contemporary account,

no printed records exist . . . of the proceedings of the Cortes at this crisis, but an eyewitness reported that during the severe and constant discussions which this important and overwhelming intelligence of news of the Mexican independence declaration produced in the Spanish Cortes, the splendid talents of Alamán were the admiration of all parties. Night after night, with brilliant and holy eloquence, with undaunted courage, and unanswerable arguments, he vindicated the cause and conduct of his self-delivered country . . . . To Spain, free and regenerated, the deputy of Guanaxuato wished prosperity and success, and trusting that in future, between Spain and Mexico, fidelity would turn to friendship and allegiance to affection, the American deputy claimed the privileges and withdrew. 22

As a result of this speech, Alamán was selected as the general secretary of the Cortes session. The body remained seated for three more months, then dismissed itself. 23 Alamán decided

22 Alaman, State of Mexico, 35-37.

23 Alaman, Documentos diversos, III, 509; Disertaciones, I, xi.
to travel to France before returning to Mexico. Accompanied by a fellow Cortés delegate, Juan Antonio Yandiola, he arrived in Paris on March 1, 1822. From Paris he made his way throughout the countryside in an attempt to see various places not visited during his prior sojourn in France. He returned to Paris in April, remained there until September, then departed from Le Havre for Mexico.²⁴

Upon arrival in his native land, Alamán discovered that the political situation was chaotic. Iturbide's self-proclaimed monarchy had collapsed in December 1822, and the "emperor" fled into exile. Now, in March 1823, Alamán learned that the government of Mexico was in a dangerous transitional stage, under the direction of a provisional executive consisting of three generals. Because of the ability he had exhibited in Madrid as a Cortés delegate, on April 12 Alamán at age thirty was appointed by the interim government to the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs and Interior Relations. He thus

²⁴It was during this summer that Alamán, having met the naturalist Baron von Humboldt, considered the possibility of establishing either a French or English-financed company to develop Mexico's mining industry. Humboldt encouraged such a venture and supplied some German monetary support. A company subsequently was formed with English backing, and Alamán later was given credit for promoting extensive foreign investment in Mexico. Documentos diversos, III, 510, 511; IV, 20-21.
assumed his first political office for Mexico, initiating an impressive and, for Mexico, critical career of service. Soon after this appointment, he wed Narcisa García Castrillo, the daughter of a well-to-do Guanajuato merchant of Spanish origin, and the newly-married couple then established a home in the capital. 25

Alamán assumed his new duties in earnest, as was his nature. Because of the reputation he had acquired in the Spanish Cortés, Alamán's talents and knowledge were appreciated by his colleagues. In spite of the confused situation in which he found himself, he worked diligently at his task. He devoted himself to the establishment and organization of a general archives for the nation, and he was responsible for the creation of a Museum of Ancient and Natural History. In this way was he able to fulfill one of his personal goals--the preservation of ancient Mexican and Spanish documents and artifacts. Also during this tenure in office, Alamán negotiated an important commercial treaty with Great Britain, which had recently recognized Mexican independence, and the two nations exchanged ministers.

25 Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 511; IV, 22; State of Mexico, 39.
Alamán's endeavors were not without difficulty. The coming of independence caused many Mexicans to strike out against reminders of centuries of Spanish control, and in September 1823 an attempt to desecrate the bones of Hernán Cortés was prevented only because of the diligence of the Foreign Secretary, who had the great conquistadore's corpse moved from its sepulcher in the Iglesia del Hospital de Jesús to another site, unknown except to certain government officials. This act on his part "freed his country from the ignominy of such a deed."26

The general disorder in Mexico continued and grew even more serious; indeed, in February 1824, due to increased criticism of his actions, and in particular because of the Sabala revolt led by General José María Lobato, Alamán resigned as Foreign Affairs Minister.27 Before this resignation, however, he had for the first time in his career dealt with the United States, which was the initial foreign power to acknowledge Mexican independence. As one authority observed, in his early political

26 Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 511-512; Obras, I, xiii-xiv; Disertaciones, I, xiii.

27 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 22-23; Simpson, Many Mexicos, 234.
life, Alamán followed a policy of equilibrium. Consequently, he negotiated with the neighbor to the north in spite of his suspicions of that country.

Alamán nevertheless questioned the good faith of the United States. He favored treating with Great Britain, as indicated by his efforts to negotiate trade agreements as soon as he took office. It goes without saying that his misgivings in this matter were not simply based on prejudices. After recognition of the Mexican nation, the United States indicated that it would name an envoy extraordinary and a minister plenipotentiary, as well as various consuls. It was anticipated that other nations would act likewise; therefore, it was the desire of the United States to gain a trade advantage. Soon, in fact, a capitalistic battleground in Mexico was a reality, principally between the United States and Great Britain. Just prior to his resignation, Alamán nevertheless dutifully informed the Mexican Congress on November 8, 1823, of the action of recognition on the part of the United States and of the continuing good relations between the two countries.

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28 Alamán, Semblanzas e ideario (prologo y selección de Arturo Arnáiz y Freg; México, D. F., 1939), xiv.

29 Agustín Cue Canovas, Historia social y económica de México 1521-1854 (tercera edición corregida; México, D. F., 1963), 267-268.
In this message there seemed to be no covert animosity or prejudice. For the time being at least, Alamán apparently was willing to give the United States an opportunity to engender a sense of sincere good will toward Mexico.\(^3^0\)

After his resignation from the government in February 1824, Alamán turned his interests to a commission which was organized to study mining possibilities in Mexico. Within a brief time, however, he once more was involved in the political affairs of his country.\(^3^1\) The congress which had assembled in November 1823 drafted a constitution quite similar to that of the United States and had divided the country into states and territories. The states were to elect their own governors and legislatures; in turn, the legislatures were charged with the selection of the president and vice president of the newly-declared republic. Félix Fernández, who during the revolutionary years had taken the name Guadalupe Victoria, was designated

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\(^{30}\)Alamán, Documentos diversos, I, 60-61. As to the possibility that the United States would come to the aid of the Latin American countries in case of a European invasion, as proposed by the Quadruple Alliance members with the exception of Great Britain, Alamán earlier had reported to Congress on November 1 that he doubted the Monroe policy statement concerning no European intervention would actually be enforced. See Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1927), 151.

\(^{31}\)Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 22-23.
the nation's first president, and Nicolás Bravo was named vice president. 32

In May 1824, Alamán again served as Minister for Foreign Affairs during the change-over period in government, relinquishing this post in September. Cognizant of the fact that Alamán was a most capable politician, in January 1825 President-designate Victoria appointed him as his Minister for Foreign Affairs. Consequently, for the third time since the debacle of Iturbide's monarchy, Alamán was selected to oversee the internal and external affairs and the foreign relations of Mexico. 33

Alamán served President Victoria as Foreign Affairs Minister until September 26, 1825, a relatively brief tenure. However, it was during this eight-month period that the direction of Mexican-United States relations was set, particularly for the first half of the nineteenth century. Joel R. Poinsett arrived in May as minister to Mexico from the United States. He and Alamán

32 Alamán, Historia de México (5 vols.; segunda edición; Mexico, D. F., 1969), V, 508-509. This edition of Alamán's history is not edited, nor is it abridged. It is a reprint of the original work, though the pagination is different. It is this writer's hope someday to edit, with commentary, Alamán's Historia de México.

33 Personas que han tenido a su cargo la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores desde 1821 hasta 1924, Tomo VI en la serie Archivo historico diplomático mexicano.
subsequently treated with one another briefly before Alamán's resignation in September, and this confrontation convinced Alamán of United States insincerity. 34

In the opinion of one writer, it was at this time that Alamán used his position to influence President Victoria toward the conservative point of view, and worked intentionally for the destruction of friendly relations with the United States. In that critic's words,

As the Federalists denounced him, naturally enough Victoria turned more and more to Alaman and the Conservatives, pathetically endeavoring to niche himself in their favor... With the President in his pocket, Alamán now proceeded to a plan which not only shaped the thought and policy of the time, but which is still [in 1926] revered by many Mexican politicians as a sacred tradition. Setting to work as calmly as though it had been a chess problem, he commenced the destruction of the amicable relations existing between the United States and Mexico, filling the hearts of his people with suspicion and hatred for the "Colossus of the North." 35

Whether or not Alamán with such deliberate calculation intentionally planned for the disruption of relations between Mexico and the United States is open to debate, for he was

34See Chapter III, infra, for details of the Alamán-Poinsett negotiations and the results of these.

35Creel, People Next Door, 55-56.
not a man with inherent destructive tendencies. Still, in view of his fear of federalism and democracy, it is more than likely true that he could not view relations with the United States as anything less than a threat to his nation. Thus, Creel's analysis of Alamán's actions, if somewhat harsh, is most probably sound. Not only did Alamán desire to prevent the development of close ties with the United States, he also hoped to erect a barrier between the countries which "would prevent Mexicans from viewing the successful progress of the American experiment. . . ." Then, according to Creel, he could restore the absolutism which was so dear to him. 36

The Mexican federalists obviously were unwilling to submit to the strangulation of their policies by Alamán, and they were able in September 1825 to engineer his resignation. Alamán's contention that Mexico could not function under a federalist system of government, and that a strong cohesive centralism alone would enable Mexico to enjoy political stability, seemed to be borne out when he returned several years later in a position of authority. Indeed, the federal system, which had brought about unity in the United States, when applied in Mexico resulted in

36Ibid., 56.
disunity. 37

Between 1825 and 1830, Alamán was not officially active within the Mexican government, though he remained the leading conservative political figure. Moreover, in spite of the fact that he was acknowledged to be an obstacle to strong Mexican-United States cooperation, a brief exposition appeared in 1825 in a United States publication which referred to him as "among the most enlightened statesmen of the south. . . ."38 He was still a respected figure in spite of his forced resignation from the government, and as such Alamán turned his energies to one of his prime areas of interest—mining in Mexico. He undertook the direction of the English-financed Compañía Unida de Minas, and in this executive capacity Alamán traveled throughout Mexico and visited most of the states. As director of the company, furthermore, he was responsible for the construction of the first ironworks in Mexico. This factory was built in the state of Durango. 39

37José Fuentes Mares, Poinsett: historia de una gran intriga (México, D. F., 1958), 87.

38The North American Review, XXI (October, 1825), 432-433.

39Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 512.
The United Mining Company of Mexico represented extensive English investment in Mexican industry, a situation Alamán had promoted. It also enabled the British to explore Mexico's mining possibilities for further investment. Alamán returned to Europe on various occasions between 1825 and 1830, spending the most time in England. According to a contemporary observer, it was during this period that Alamán became completely prejudiced in favor of British ways, developed further animosity toward France and the United States, and made every effort to give Great Britain favorable opportunities to develop its trade and economic privileges in Mexico. Also, he became the administrator of the estate of the Marquisate of Oaxaca, inheritor of Hernán Cortés' vast holdings. This was the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone, who resided in Palermo, Sicily.

Alamán would remain in this capacity until his death, for he considered it extremely important to maintain the possessions of the conquest for Mexico's posterity.

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40 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 270. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alamán had unintentionally revealed this pro-British predilection when he announced England and the United States' plans to trade with the newly-recognized Mexican nation. The references to Great Britain by Alamán in his address to the nation indicate an obvious preferability for that nation as compared to his statements concerning the United States. See his State of Mexico, 65-67, passim.
Thus began a new era for Mexico as that country attempted to promote industry. It was Alamán's desire to place his nation on the level of those in Europe. For such achievement Mexico had to experience internal peace and industrial development. In time, although industrial success would not be forthcoming due to the political chaos, Mexico still derived benefit from Alamán's efforts, particularly in the area of mining.

While Alamán labored to industrialize Mexico, the political situation deteriorated. Liberal dissatisfaction with Victoria's government culminated in an attempted revolution against the President in 1827, led by Vice President Bravo. The uprising failed, and Bravo was exiled. However, in 1828 the scheduled presidential election inaugurated a fresh crisis, resulting in a struggle for power between Gómez Pedraza, supported by the conservatives, and Vicente Guerrero, who received liberal support. As noted in the preceding chapter, although Pedraza

41 Alamán, Disertaciones, I, xii-xiv; Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 276. For an excellent discussion of Alamán's attempt to develop industry and mining in his country, see Chapter VI of José C. Valadés, Alamán: Estadista e historiador (México, D. F., 1938). This monograph is the standard secondary account of Alamán's career and is actually the only extensive work on Alamán.

42 Alamán's personal account of this period is found in Documentos diversos, IV, 23-25, passim.
received the requisite number of votes for election, Guerrero was backed by Santa Anna, who ousted Pedraza by means of a pronouncement in favor of the liberal contender. Thus, Guerrero took office supported by the liberals and opposed by the conservatives. In his personal account of this situation, Alamán revealed that he and his father-in-law decided as a result of the federalist victory in the so-called election to go with their families to Europe. But the father-in-law died unexpectedly, and his death in February 1829 ended the plan to flee abroad, though Alamán lamented "would to God . . . we had made it."43

His uneasiness and despair were premature, however, for the Guerrero government was unstable. As a result, it proved to be quite brief in duration. Throughout 1829 conservatives continued to chafe at the rule of the peasant-born Guerrero, and early next year an army uprising proved to be the spark of revolt. Vice President Anastasio Bustamante, whom Guerrero had supported because of his "loyalty," pronounced against the President, who was forced to flee the capital. Prior to the fall of the President, Luis Quintanar, Pedro Vélez, and Alamán declared themselves a temporary poder ejecutivo in opposition

43 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 25.
to Guerrero, and when Bustamante rose in revolt he received the support of the triumverate. Consequently, in part due to such support, but largely because of his political eminence and conservative doctrines, Alamán was immediately appointed Bustamante's Minister for Foreign Affairs. Again he was in a position of political prominence. 44

There can be little doubt that Alamán reached the apex of his public power during the first administration of Bustamante. In future years, to be sure, he would wield formidable political influence, but not in a public capacity. As Bustamante's Minister for Foreign Affairs, he virtually governed the country alone. For approximately two years he was the de facto executive authority in Mexico. Santa Anna bided his time and made no overt political commitments. He desired to gauge the ideological mood of the country before attempting to seize power. Meanwhile, Alamán began to implement those policies which he believed were necessary to return Mexico to a degree of stability. Apparently, Bustamante acquiesced willingly in Alamán's policies.

It was Alamán's desire to bring order to Mexico, and order to him was synonymous with a conservative, centralist government.

44Alamán, Obras, I, xxx-xxxi.
Various liberal elements, which considered him anathema, were unwilling to submit to his dictums, and resistance was forthcoming. Because of the events of his youth, and as a result of the impressions made on him during his six-year stay in a Europe imbued with the doctrines espoused by Metternich and the Congress of Vienna, he gave short shrift to the federalists. In his mind they were repugnant trouble-makers, who could only destroy without offering alternate solutions. In view of this outlook, it is therefore understandable that he initiated a stringent program of control in all phases of political activity.

As one authority observed, Alamán was without question the only man in Mexico who, in 1830, could truly be called a statesman. This was due to his fairly broad knowledge of history, his recent observation of and participation in European political affairs, and his "superficial yet impressive" reasoning ability. Alamán, however, was a Metternichian statesman, "wily and insecure, wholly unable to sympathize with democracy and profoundly in love with force." As actual ruler of Mexico, he suppressed any and all who did not adhere to the decrees of the government, willingly ignoring the law if necessary. Although such procedure engendered efficiency in administration, it also alienated large segments of the populace. In an attempt "to
represent democracy and privilege, progress and reaction, the past and the future, a self-governing state and an all-controlling church at one and the same time, "the Alamán-guided government sought to achieve the impossible, and in doing so only intensified opposition to itself. 45

All was not suppression and restriction under Alamán, for it was at this juncture that he made a concerted effort to inaugurate a program of manufacturing and industry for México. He was responsible for the creation of a bank, the Banco de Avío, which was to promote the economic program by making available public funds to manufacturers. He dreamed of cotton fields spreading throughout the plains of México, of merino sheep and Kashmir goats grazing on the country's hillsides, of groves of mulberry trees supporting silk-worms, of bees imported to produce the wax required for candles, and of numerous factories which would absorb the wealth of raw materials and yield finished products. There were those who made an honest effort to carry out his plans; however, for the most part industrial development did not happen. When funds were no longer available, as was the case within several years, numerous half-

45 Justin H. Smith, The War with Mexico (2 vols.; New York, 1919), 1, 43-44.
finished plants came to a halt, and much machinery rusted before installation. 46

Alamán thus failed to accomplish one of his pressing goals, but his failure was not his attempt to industrialize Mexico. Rather, he failed because he was blind to an obvious fact—the Mexican people simply were not prepared for the implementation of the industrial revolution. Moreover, they did not understand, hence could not appreciate, Alamán's insistence upon protection of an infant, or better, stillborn, industry. His near-obsession for a self-sufficient Mexico which had no historical basis as such was incomprehensible to the mass of people. So Alamán was forced to abandon his grandiose scheme for Mexican industrialization. Besides, his attention was turned elsewhere, for the confrontation with the United States, which he had long regarded as inexorable, was imminent.

His distrust of the aims of the United States in reference to its relations had received, in his opinion, substantiation after Poinsett's mission in Mexico. Thus, by 1830, to a large degree his suspicions developed into an open fear of the northern neighbor. His desire was to bring about self-sufficiency for

46 Ibid., 16-17.
Mexico, but he believed such was not feasible as long as the United States continued to allow Anglo-Saxons to pour into Mexico's northern regions, especially the province of Texas. The Texas situation epitomized his fears concerning the actual objective of the United States: territorial aggrandizement at Mexico's expense, possibly to the extent that sovereignty and national identity would be lost as well. Significantly, it was while Alamán commanded such power during the first Bustamante administration that he promulgated his Texas policy.

Given the opportunity, he had therefore striven to mold Mexico into the kind of political, social, and economic unit he considered worthwhile, that is, a conservative, Catholic-oriented, self-sufficient, sovereign nation, aloof from the machinations of Mexican liberals and the meddlesome United States. But such a nation did not exist by 1832, and the rumblings of the discontented liberal elements became more audible. Alamán's conservative idealism had overpowered his capacity for realistic evaluation of Mexico's status at the beginning of the third decade of the century. Mexico was not the nation he desired it to be. Furthermore, he discerned that the United States was apparently eager

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47 Chapter IV, infra, is devoted to this policy and to its subsequent ramifications.
to take full advantage of the Mexican dilemma.

Alamán made a twofold miscalculation. He assumed that Mexico could be industrialized and could develop self-sufficiency. Working under this assumption, he moved to block further significant United States involvement in Mexican affairs, mistakenly concluding that Mexico could withstand this challenge. As to the first phase of this miscalculation, the lack of self-sufficiency actually had no immediate harmful effect on Mexico per se; indeed, Mexico was more advanced than most of the Latin American nations. As to the second phase, however, the intentional attempt at alienation of the United States would have ominous overtones in the near future, though Alamán, and most Mexicans, gave no indication whatsoever that their country had any other course of action concerning the United States. Alamán's bubble burst as a result, and his control of Mexico's affairs was shaken.

In the opinion of one student of Alamán's career, he utilized his decisive influence to act as the representative of "men of religion, of honor, of probity, of education, and of power."48 In so doing, he ignored the other people, who came to know him

48 Arnáiz y Freg in Alamán's Semblanzas e ideario, xix.
only as a symbol of oppression. This situation, coupled with
the failure of his industrialization scheme, the ineffectiveness
of his Texas policy, and the incessant criticism from the
liberals, resulted in the collapse of the Alamán-controlled
Bustamante government in 1832.

The instigator of the revolt against the conservatives was
none other than Santa Anna, who pronounced in favor of Gómez
Pedraza. Since 1829, when he had repulsed a feeble attempt
by the Spanish Crown to reassert its control in Mexico, Santa
Anna had made no political alliances. Indeed, he played the
waiting game in order to see which group--the liberals or the
conservatives--would become predominant. Accordingly, in
1832 he decided that the pendulum of public opinion was swinging
away from Bustamante's conservative-centralist government due
to the unpopular programs of Alamán, so he had raised the
standard of revolt in favor of Gómez Pedraza and the liberal
elements. Santa Anna himself was not personally enamored
of the liberal philosophy; however, in his utilitarian manner
he cast his lot with the forces which he believed to be in the
ascendancy.

Santa Anna's overthrow of Bustamante's government boded
ill for Alamán, who was rather unpopular at this point. Much
animosity toward Alamán had accrued as a result of the execution of Vicente Guerrero, one of the old stalwarts of the independence struggle. In 1831, Alamán ordered the death of the popular revolutionary in hopes of restoring order in the south, where Guerrero had joined forces with Juan Alvarez. A tumult of protest erupted after the execution, and when Bustamante was ousted, most of the opprobrium of the administration was saddled on Alamán. For the next several years, he was involved in an effort to absolve himself and his colleagues from the rash of charges made against him. Indeed, after the installation of a liberal government, for a short time under Gómez Pedraza and then under the radical Valentín Gómez Farías, Alamán was in actual physical danger. Allowed to rule by the grace of Santa Anna, Gómez Farías brought indictments against all ministers who had served Bustamante, and he was especially desirous of punishing Alamán. As a result, Alamán was compelled to go into hiding to avoid arrest, and possibly even execution. 49

His whereabouts remained unknown for approximately

49 For an excellent contemporary, though conservative, account of these events, and of Alamán's impact on them, consult Luis Gonzaga Cuevas, Porvenir de México, o juicio sobre su estado político en 1821 y 1851 (México, D. F., 1851), passim.
fifteen months. It was later reported that he had secluded himself in a convent, where "he learned to restrain his political enmities and ambition. . . ."50 Meanwhile, Santa Anna had become disenchanted with the reform zeal of Gómez Farías; as well, his sensitive political ears were attuned to the growing discontent in Mexico due to Gómez Farías' methods. In April 1834, Santa Anna ousted the liberal government and seized complete control himself, at last ending his charade to reveal that he was indeed a dictator.

During this period, Alamán reappeared in the capital, and the circumstances of his return were as mysterious as those of his seclusion.51 In the period between 1833 and 1834, moreover, he had written two pamphlets concerning the Bustamante government. One was a defense of the ministers who had served in that body, and the other was an "impartial examination" of the Bustamante regime.52 These were well-written pamphlets which indicated political facility. In part because of these works, Alamán once more was a free and respected citizen, having

50 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 278.

51 Ibid.

52 See Valadés' Alamán for an analysis of these pamphlets, which are found in Documentos diversos, III.
defended his actions and apparently having received official pardon from the government. For the next two years, until 1836, Alamán did not participate in the government of Mexico in any official capacity. This is not to imply, however, that he was not politically involved during this two-year span.

After Santa Anna's overt seizure of the government in April 1834, he served as president for eight months before turning over the day-to-day duties of the chief executive to a subordinate. In December, he called into session a new hand-picked Congress, which was rather conservative, even reactionary. Santa Anna's attention was now turning to the increasingly bothersome Alamán-initiated Texas problem; therefore, he expressed little interest in the work of the legislative body. Meanwhile, the so-called "Church Party" was in the ascendancy at the beginning of 1835 and undertook to abrogate the odious effects, in the eyes of conservatives, of the 1824 constitution. Bases for a new constitution were issued in October 1835, which for all practical means destroyed liberal legislation in existence in the country. A new document was issued in December 1836, under the title of "Constitutional

53 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 26; Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 279.
Laws," and the federalist system of government was no more.  

The Constitutional Laws of the Republic of Mexico returned the nation to conservative ways. A new executive organization, the Poder Conservador, was established with wide-ranging authority which would insure dominance of conservative control and principles. Although Alamán supposedly had no official position in reference to the formulation and drafting of the new constitution, the document had characteristics dear to his philosophical and political outlooks. Indeed, despite his alleged inactivity at this time, there is little doubt that he was in fact the author of the Constitution of 1836, for he was the acknowledged conservative-centralist theoretician. With the promulgation of this document and the return of the country to a "safe" political situation, he could turn his attention to other important matters.

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54Romero, Mexico and the United States, 354. In the interim from the time that the bases were issued until the proclamation of the new constitution, the inhabitants of Texas, vigorously protesting that they were loyal Mexicans who adhered to the 1824 constitution, were set upon by Santa Anna, and Texas gained independence in the consequent fighting. Alamán's fears had become reality.

55For the text of this constitution, consult Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers (166 vols.; London, 1841- ), XXV, 683-725.

56James, Mexico and the Americans, 51.
Intermittently, for the next ten years Alamán continued to work in private for the betterment of Mexico's intellectual, industrial, and economic climate. Also, he reconciled himself to Santa Anna, who had driven him from office in 1832. He remained behind the scenes in political affairs for the majority of the ten-year span. 57

In 1836, Alamán joined with two brothers, the Legrands, in the construction of a large factory near Orizaba for the manufacture of yarn and cotton fabric. He was also instrumental in the establishment of a cloth factory in Celaya, as well as a blanket factory. However, as noted previously, there were few truly serious men who were willing to pursue such activity in earnest, and industrial development still did not come to Mexico. Alamán next was involved in a venture having to do with French financing of his industrial plans, but eventually he himself was bankrupt by 1841. 58

Industrial endeavor was not his only activity. In 1836, the government appointed Alamán plenipotentiary to treat with the French concerning a treaty of commerce. These negotiations

57 An extensive examination of Alamán's efforts to develop Mexican industry and to promote progress is found in Valadés' Alamán, Chapters IX and X.

58 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 27; III, 515; Smith, War with Mexico, I, 17.
were unsuccessful and quite short, and soon thereafter France became involved with Mexico in a brief and somewhat ludicrous war, known as the "Pastry War," concerning claims of a French citizen against the Mexican government. In reference to Alamán's efforts during this period, an article appeared in a 1950 Mexico City newspaper to the effect that "the fancy of Don Lucas consisted of his pretending to create a burgeoning industry, in the shadow of the Banco de Avío, and perpetuating, at the same time, the economic power of the clerics and the monopoly of the land in the hands of the large landowners."59 Thus, Alamán's failure to realize that industrial and economic progress was virtually impossible within the framework of continued privileges among the upper classes and vicissitudes in government was in large part responsible for his lack of private success in industrial activity.

While Alamán was concerned with constructing his factories in 1836-1837, Mexico's political situation once more disintegrated. Santa Anna's humiliation in his Texas fiasco forced him to curtail his manipulation of the Mexican government for the time being,

59Diorama de la cultura de Excelsior (Ciudad México), April 2, 1950.
and a confusing power struggle resulted. From this contest
Anastasio Bustamante, having come out of exile, emerged
as the most powerful figure. Soon Alamán was swept up in
the political affairs of his country.

Bustamante was formally elected to the presidency in
April 1837. Alamán received the second largest number of
votes cast, however, thus becoming the power behind Bustamante
for a second time. 60 This Bustamante presidency lasted four
years and was far less notable than the first. In spite of his
high rank, during this period Alamán was not involved actively
in the affairs of government. He concerned himself with the
education of his sons, personally seeing to their program of
study and selecting the schools in the capital which they were
to attend. 61 There was, however, one very significant occurrence during this period of time insofar as Alamán's political
activity was concerned. In February 1837, Alamán composed
and sent a lengthy letter to Santa Anna. This epistle is important
for the insight it lends into Alamán's outlooks at this point in his
career.

60 Alamán, Documentos diversos, IV, 27; Robinson,
Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 279.

61 Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 517.
In reference to the new constitution, he informed Santa Anna that, in his opinion, the new document was much more effective than its predecessor, "ella muy superior a la que le precedio." He sympathized with Santa Anna due to the latter's failure in Texas and pointed out that the enemies of Mexico would use that unfortunate situation to attempt to re-establish the 1824 constitution. He warned against liberal elements which would undermine the nation and urged Santa Anna to pursue a conservative credo. 62 The two men, who five years before were mortal enemies, now appeared to be in sympathy with one another. Santa Anna would not forget this circumstance in his return to power in the near future.

By 1839 the difficulties of the government were mounting, and Bustamante apparently retained office without any challenge simply because no other conservative of any stature wanted it. The financial situation was critical, and uneasiness prevailed throughout most of the country. A liberal revolt was attempted in 1840 but failed when rumors that Santa Anna might intervene caused various liberal leaders to return into exile.

62Ibid., Alamán to Santa Anna, February 23, 1837, IV, 152-156, passim.
Santa Anna had derived political capital out of his Texas venture, blaming the failures involved on other military figures. Then, his defense of Vera Cruz during the "Pastry War" endeared him to the people once more. In 1841, a series of confusing pronouncements resulted in the overthrow of Bustamante, and Santa Anna came forth as dictator. Faced with a Congress composed of moderates, though, Santa Anna retired to his famous Vera Cruz estate, Manga de Clavo, and left the task of dissolving the Congress to Nicolás Bravo. But Bravo was unable to cope with the situation, and Santa Anna became the all-powerful president of Mexico. 63

After the fall of Bustamante a second time, Alamán attempted to detach himself from affairs of government, again immersing himself in the world of business. This activity soon led to the condition of bankruptcy alluded to above. The failure of the Banco de Avío in 1841 saddled Alamán with a large debt and caused consternation throughout the country. He nevertheless accepted his failure with equanimity. 64 But he would no longer pursue that dream of an industrialized, self-sufficient Mexico.

63 For a vivid description of these confusing but interesting events, see Simpson's Many Mexico, 247-249.

64 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 281.
He continued to oversee the affairs of the Duque de Terranova y Monteleone and seemed unconcerned with politics. The actual position of Alamán between 1841 and 1844, though, is somewhat mysterious. Was he, or was he not, a participant in the affairs of government? According to two contemporary witnesses during this period, he supposedly served in the position of Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Santa Anna.

In her delightful and invaluable account of her sojourn in Mexico, Mme. Calderón de la Barca recalled her impression of Alamán in 1842:

It is very much the case in Mexico at present, that the most distinguished men are those who live most retired; those who have played their part on the arena of public life, have seen the inutility of their efforts in favor of their country, and have now retreated into the bosom of their families, where they endeavor to forget public evils in domestic retirement and literary occupation.

Amongst these may be reckoned Don Lucas Alaman, who passed many years in Europe, and in 1820, was deputy to the Spanish Cortes. Shortly after his return, he became minister of foreign relations, which high office he has filled during various seasons of difficulty. He is a man of learning, and has always been a protector of art and science. In conversation he is . . . reserved, . . . always expressing his opinion with caution, but very ready and able to give information on
anything in this country, unconnected with politics. 65

From this passage, one would understandably conclude that Alamán was not involved in political affairs. However, a footnote insertion in the above portion dealing with him as Secretary for Foreign Affairs informed the reader that "he is now, September, 1842, once more filling the same situation under General Santa Anna." 66 Likewise, Robinson recorded that in spite of the knowledge that Alamán would have executed him during Bustamante's first administration if given the opportunity, Santa Anna "protected him, and not unfrequently . . . consulted him in his fiscal difficulties when he first succeeded to power. In 1842 he became again minister of foreign affairs. . . ." 67 Yet there is no indication in the available official records that he served as Minister for Foreign Affairs during the period 1842-1844. 68

65Life in Mexico During a Residence of Two Years in that Country (2 vols.; Boston, 1843), II, 126-127.

66Ibid., 127n.

67Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 281.

68See Volume VI, 10-21, in Archivo historico diplomático mexicano for a list of the ministers between 1823 and 1853.
Why Alamán was acknowledged by two interested contemporaries as Foreign Secretary in 1842, but is not officially recorded as such, is not known. It is possible that he served as de facto minister during this period of Santa Anna's dictatorship—hence the omission of his name in the official listing—but was not an official minister, though both observers may have assumed that he was. Whatever the case, the mystery of Alamán's actual role in government during the early years of the 1840's must remain unsolved until the Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Relations in Ciudad México is open to all scholars. One fact is clear: Alamán, if he did serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs, carried out no distinct program at that time, especially in reference to the United States.

69 The inaccessibility of this important archival holding is a serious handicap to the researcher who wishes to investigate this phase of Alamán's career. This writer must point out that he was not denied access merely because of his status as a Ph. D. candidate; indeed, Louis M. Teitelbaum, on p. 331 in the bibliographical essay of his Woodrow Wilson and the Mexican Revolution (1913-1916): A History of United States-Mexican Relations (New York, 1967), pointed out that both he and R. E. Quirk, editor currently of the Hispanic American Historical Review, were refused access to this archives. In a private letter to this writer, Howard F. Cline indicated "one of the reasons that you were denied access to that archives is that it is completely disorganized, and not knowing what is in it, Mexicans are very reluctant to let even their own researchers plow through the unsorted materials." September 1, 1970.
Furthermore, there is no mention of such service in Alamán's own account of his career.

In 1844, as Mexican-United States relations continued to decay because of the Texas problem, Alamán began the composition of his most notable literary works, *Disertaciones sobre la historia de la Republica Mejicana, desde la conquista hasta la independencia* and the *Historia de México*. Much of his time until 1849 was devoted to his literary efforts, even during the war with the United States. Nevertheless, he again became enmeshed in Mexico's political affairs during the war years. Santa Anna's supreme rule came to a sudden end in 1844 when a popular insurrection erupted while he was attempting to suppress the Paredes rebellion. Defeated by Paredes, Santa Anna was captured by government troops no longer loyal to him and then was sent into exile in Cuba. José Joaquín Herrera took the presidency, was in office a year, and was in turn overthrown by General Paredes when he indicated a willingness, to the dismay of the conservatives, to treat with the Polk administration concerning the status of Texas. Paredes seized power

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70 Valadés in Alamán devotes Chapter XI to an examination of Alamán's literary activity between 1844 and 1849.

71 See Chapter V, *infra*, for an extensive analysis of these years.
in 1845 and represented himself as the spokesman of national pride; nevertheless, he soon discovered that the United States would not hesitate to go to war with Mexico. Hostilities commenced in the summer of 1846.

Alamán appears to have been instrumental in the Paredes coup against Herrera, for in early 1846 he was listed as a representative from Guanajuato to the junta which was responsible for approval of Paredes as dictator. He seems also to have played a major role in the dictatorship, short-lived though it was, serving as chief unofficial adviser. After Paredes was overthrown as well, Mexico fell into the political disarray which had marked the nation's history since independence.

As United States forces pushed into Mexico, Santa Anna was allowed by the Americans to return to Mexico after he assured President Polk that he would arrange a peace. This promise, needless to say, was a ruse, and Santa Anna was welcomed as a hero by the Mexicans. At the time, the liberal elements, under Gómez Farías, were dominant, and it was their plan to

72Niceto de Zamacois, Historia de México (25 vols.; México, D. F., 1876-1905), XII, 409; James Morton Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York, 1932), 162. Also see National Archives, Department of State MSS, Record Group 59, United States Consular Despatches, Mexico City, for reports of Alamán's role in the Paredes government.
control the government while Santa Anna fought the war. As for Alamán, he was disgusted by the liberal ascendancy and had, it seems, seriously begun to consider the possibility of inviting a foreign monarch to rule Mexico. After Mexico's ignominious defeat in the war, Alamán, now fifty-six years old, viewed with concern the 1848 Mexican scene. The nation was prostrate, and a new generation of Mexicans was growing increasingly impatient with the old ways, flouting tradition and espousing a new way of life.

Before the commencement of a new era in Mexico known as "La Reforma," the conservatives, among whom Alamán was the most prominent, seized upon what was considered one more opportunity to stabilize the affairs of the country. The conservative elements talked more frequently about a European prince to rule Mexico; however, the first priority was to gain control of the nation. It was decided that only one man possessed the charisma and energy to bring about such control, and so Santa Anna was asked to return from Venezuela, where he had gone into self-imposed exile after the Mexican War. Alamán, who in 1849 had become president of the Mexico City Council,

\[73^\text{See Chapter V, infra.}\]
a prestigious position, more than likely handled the arrangements for Santa Anna's return. 74

Mariano Arista, who in 1850 had succeeded President Herrera in the first orderly transfer of authority since independence, and whose government was honest and efficient, was overthrown in January 1853 by a conservative revolt. Still in exile, Santa Anna was then appointed by the conservatives as dictator for one year. He returned in April 1853 and resumed his old way of life. Upon being appointed Santa Anna's Minister for Foreign Affairs, it was Alamán's desire to inaugurate a program of economic improvement and staunch control. Centralization returned to Mexico, and Alamán dominated the country's affairs once more. Or so it seemed. In June 1853, he died, and Santa Anna reverted to his former demagogic ways, since Alamán, the only restraining influence on him, was no longer present. With the death of Alamán, a political period in Mexico ended. Santa Anna within a short time would be overthrown in the revolution of Ayutla, which inaugurated the era of Benito Juárez and La Reforma.

74 Alamán, Obras, I, xlviii. There is no conclusive evidence that Alamán handled this affair; however, he was the logical person to do so by virtue of his position of leadership in the Conservative Party.
Although Alamán's death ended the conservative power in Mexico as it reflected the philosophy of colonial Spanish control, his political thought did not die. Indeed, the idea alamanista was nurtured by many Mexicans to the extent that it grew stronger, especially in reference to the United States. Also, his monarchical concepts more than likely were instrumental in the conservative acceptance of Emperor Napoleon III's seizure of Mexico in 1861, although full consideration of this event lies beyond the realm of this treatise. Alamán's political philosophy was relatively simple, a pure declaration of conservatism.

Throughout his career, he was consistent in adherence to his philosophy. Such was the especial case when he dealt with the United States.

Much of his foreign policy during his long career was initiated because of and directed toward the country to the north. Consequently, the history of Mexican-United States relations in the first half of the nineteenth century is a reflection, to a great extent, of Alamán's political philosophy. Alamán was not the average Mexican político as imagined by many Americans of that day. A contemporary description of Alamán informed that

his stature is low, his forehead broad, wide, and unwrinkled. His hair is black and silky,
his eyes keen and piercing, and his complexion certainly would not betoken him to belong to the Spanish race, but to be a child of some colder climate than Mexico. One would think him feeble, irresolute, and indolent. In doing so a great error would be committed. He is possessed, in fact, of great determination, of a moral energy capable of anything, and of ceaseless perseverance. His activity of mind prompts him to undertake all conceivable schemes, even those which would be thought most incompatible with his inclinations. He is said to speak perfectly well French, Italian, and English, and what is yet more rare among his countrymen, to speak pure Spanish and to write it correctly. 75

Alamán's intellectual ability more than likely caused him as much hardship in Mexico as it proved beneficial, in view of the average Mexican's inability to understand what he desired to accomplish. Nevertheless, his apparent iron will and determination resulted in the long years of his significant involvement in the affairs of his nation. Throughout his career, he looked upon the United States with uneasiness, and he was determined to prevent the submission of his country to that power.

As indicated previously, Alamán developed a wariness of the United States quite early. He observed and studied carefully the foreign policy of the northern country long before the two

75 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 268.
nations initiated formal diplomatic relations. The result of such observation was Alamán's conclusion that sooner or later the United States would attempt to put Mexico in political and ideological bondage. Consequently, Alamán sought to prevent this occurrence as soon as he was in a position of power by organizing a strongly centralized government, free, he hoped, from internal strife. Such was Alamán's plan of preventive action, which reflected his fear of democracy and liberalism, as represented by the United States. Alamán was oblivious to the arguments put forth in Mexico to the effect that only good would come from close Mexican-United States ties. Indeed, many Mexican writers in the twentieth century have pointed out rather vigorously that most of Alamán's predictions concerning the dangers afforded by the United States came to pass. 76 In 1848, moreover, many Mexican officials, whether liberal or conservative, and despite their agreement or disagreement with his politics, acknowledged that Alamán was a true patriot and a man with considerable foresight. 77

76 José de Onís, Los Estados Unidos vistos por escritores hispanoamericanos (Madrid, 1956), 232-233. Those writers mentioned by De Onís are Antonio Caso, Carlos Pereyra, Esquivel Obregón, and José Vasconcelos.

77 De Onís, Los Estados Unidos, 233.
Certainly Alamán had his detractors both in the United States and in his own country. In the opinion of one critic, Alamán's political philosophy when transformed into actual policy did Mexico little good and brought about much misfortune. In that writer's view, Alamán's basic problem was a result of the fact that he inherited all of the deep-seated prejudices of the ruling class. When linked with his memories of the Hidalgo revolt and its consequences, this traditional outlook led him to conclude without question that democracy was nothing more than the reign of a wild, unprincipled mob. Mexico needed order, and for approximately thirty years Alamán attempted to impose this order by preventing popular government in Mexico. This legacy of suppression was not forgot in that country, "and it is as 'the man with the black brains' that he lives in the memory of Mexico." 78

There is little doubt that in adherence to his political philosophy, Alamán imposed restrictions on individual rights whenever he could. But the allegation that he was inherently evil, as implied by the reference to "black brains," is unfounded, and misleading as well. Alamán believed in what he was

78Creel, People Next Door, 55.
undertaking; that he was sincere is unquestionable. However, as one scholar has pointed out, "order became Alamán's god; to achieve order he allied himself with those who had destroyed order, and with the man who was to destroy Mexico, . . . Santa Anna." Thus, Alamán's sincerity in his undertakings, and even his concern for the Mexican nation as he knew it, was genuine. On the other hand, his judgment left much to be desired. In his efforts to checkmate the United States, he only antagonized that nation. In the end, Mexico proved unable to withstand the subsequent assault from the north. Alamán never admitted, and probably never believed, that his policies proved to be the foundation upon which Mexican-United States hostility was based. He would likely have contended that this antagonism was the result of liberal disruption, which shattered the order he would have imposed on Mexico.

When not in an official position of authority, he attempted to carry out his programs through the Partido Conservador, which he founded. This party came to represent the political views of the Church hierarchy, of the wealthy upper class, and of the army. It would have returned Mexico, one writer insisted,

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79Simpson, Many Mexicos, 233.
to the Spanish colonial system if given the opportunity. The Conservative Party, or Church Party, was staunchly anti-
United States and professed Alamán's philosophies.

Without doubt Alamán was one of the most able and pene-
trating political thinkers of nineteenth-century Mexico. At
the outset of his career, he concluded that Mexico's national
progress would by necessity have to be slow. Actually, he
preferred to dream of a Mexico independent from Spain, but
functioning under a colonial-type power based on complete
centralization. Such a system he admitted was unrealistic;
therefore, he dedicated himself to the creation of a nation in
the Spanish tradition of strong, centralized control, which
would be released from such control only gradually. According
to a leading authority on Alamán, "his fundamental political
principle was simple: he had to act in accordance with 'those
customs formed over three-hundred years,' 'the established
opinions,' and 'the vested interests." He thus became the
champion of the status quo in Mexico, of colonial institutions,

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81 Sierra, Evolución política, 186.

82 Arnaiz y Freg in Alamán's Semblanzas e ideario, xvii.
and of the privileged classes, which had triumphed in the consummation of political independence. The greatest single threat to his proposed plan for Mexican political evolution, he believed, was the United States.

Alamán's fear of the United States had deep roots, and much of his political thinking evolved because of that fear. Moreover, animosity toward the United States was not initially a self-imposed concept. One scholar has suggested that it is quite conceivable that under a different set of circumstances, he might have developed a favorable outlook toward the neighbor north of the Rio Bravo del Norte. From the beginning, however, he witnessed only an imperialistic ambition on the part of that country toward his own. As a result, he feared that relations between the two countries could lead only to internal chaos in Mexico, and he formulated his policies accordingly. His political philosophy, according to Simpson, was in keeping with the benevolent despotism of the eighteenth century; he hated the "half-baked Jacobinism of the liberals" and combated that outlook by imposing his centralized government. Finally, "he had a clear vision of the growing might of the United States,

83 C. Canovas, Historia política de México, 145.
84 De Onis, Los Estados Unidos, 233.
and opposed Manifest Destiny at every turn."\textsuperscript{85}

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, he was thus imbued with a strong iberoamerican preoccupation. He was certainly a patriot, but he also hoped to work within the concept that all the people of Hispanic America could act together, and that such cooperation would be beneficial for the future of Mexico. His courage in attempting to prevent a United States hegemony in the Latin American area even elicited an expression of admiration from Anthony Butler, whom he bested in diplomatic negotiations at a critical time in Mexican-United States relations. Butler referred to Alamán as an "astute and wise man."\textsuperscript{86}

It was Alamán's habit, unfortunately for the investigator, to remain detached, impassive, and formal in his official diplomatic correspondence. In fact, there is no indication of a bias or hostility toward the United States throughout such correspondence. It is possible that such stoicism on his part was the factor which caused Poinsett and Butler to underestimate him. He did not remain so impassive, however, when he was determined to exonerate himself and other ministers who served in the first Bustamante government. In his "Examen imparcial,"

\textsuperscript{85}Many Mexico\textsc{s}, 233.

\textsuperscript{86}Arnáiz y Freg in Alamán's Semblanzas e ideario, xviii.
written shortly after his ouster from the government in 1832, Alamán expressed some of his viewpoints concerning the United States system of political operation.

It was Alamán's apparent purpose to examine various weaknesses of the Mexican political system in conjunction with federalism. In doing so, he discovered certain features of the United States political system, especially concerning the powers of the executive, which he found attractive. Indeed, although he could not accept the federal system as a whole, he agreed with specific features it exhibited in reference to methods of maintaining order and control given to the chief executive. He noted that the United States president, for example, was granted certain distinct powers by the constitution. He could dismiss at will, without giving cause or reason, any employee of the military service or any department of government except justices. This could be done, Alamán discerned, without consideration of their pension or retirement. Then he conveyed to the reader that this practice was common, whenever and for whatever reason the chief executive desired to act. Moreover, the United States president had the power to pardon all penalties and punishments imposed by the courts except in a situation of high treason against the nation. Alamán's reaction to these
provisions? "What confusion, what difficulties would be avoided among us if our constitution had given this power to the President!" 87

Alamán obviously had missed the point of checks and balances, but he revealed his basic desire for a central authority with which to maintain order. The Mexican constitution drafted in 1824 did not provide for such presidential power, though within a few short years after he wrote these words in 1832, a new document would indeed guarantee centralized control.

This, then, was the man who represented Mexico in the critical years of initial contact between that country and the United States. In dealing first with Poinsett and then with Butler, he would prove himself a formidable opponent. His intelligence, combined with complete dedication to the centralist-conservative political philosophy and with his suspicions of the United States, enabled him to guide Mexico away from a path which might have led to cooperation with the northern nation. Convinced that the United States harbored no feeling of genuine good will toward Mexico, he was prepared to take those steps he deemed necessary to thwart United States designs and to

87 Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 249-250, 251.
safeguard the sovereignty of his country. His dealings with Poinsett and Butler, to be treated in succeeding chapters, proved to be the bedrock upon which many subsequent years of relations between the two nations were based. These confrontations, therefore, are the focal points in his diplomatic career and, in a broader aspect, are the key to an understanding of Mexican-United States contact in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
CHAPTER III

INITIAL MEXICAN-UNITED STATES RELATIONS:
THE ALAMÁN-POINSETT CONFRONTATION AND
ITS AFTERMATH 1825-1829

It was during Alamán's third tenure as Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs, from January to September 1825, that he experienced his first personal contact with an official representative of the United States government. Prior to this time, his uneasiness as to the intentions of that government toward his nation was based on his doubts about democracy. But he had no concrete reason to question the good will of the United States except that it was the foremost representative of democracy in the world. In spite of a lack of evidence that the policies of the United States presented a danger to the welfare of the Mexican nation, he remained apprehensive. It seems that the reason he had such feelings was due to the fact that official United States recognition of Mexican independence was proclaimed in 1822, yet as late as January 1825, no diplomatic representative had arrived from Washington.
The situation concerning the outlook of the United States government toward Mexico, which aroused Alamán's suspicions, was complicated. In 1824, John Quincy Adams defeated Andrew Jackson and several other candidates in a heated presidential election and replaced James Monroe as chief executive of the United States. Adams had served as Monroe's Secretary of State, and in this capacity he dealt with the question of the independence of the Latin American nations. In fact, it was partly because of Adams' official hesitancy to support the Latin American states until they demonstrated self-sufficiency that no representative of the American government was sent to Mexico between 1822 and the first month of 1825. Adams expressed the point of view that the United States should recognize the fact of the independence of the Hispanic-Portuguese New World; however, he had misgivings about official recognition and its binding commitments as called for by such leading politicians as Henry Clay.  

Regardless of this initial hesitancy, Adams soon was in favor of more contact with the Latin American area, particularly

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1See Samuel Flagg Bemis' excellent study, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy (New York, 1949), for an examination of Adams' outlook on this question.
Mexico. After official recognition was proclaimed in 1822, in May 1824 Adams suggested that "a safe intercourse between the citizens of this Government and the northern and eastern parts of the Mexican dominions, will awaken the inhabitants of the latter to the blessings of a republican system of government."

Continuing, he intimated that these were blessings "which the American people wish all nations to enjoy, and the value of which will be more deeply impressed on the minds of strangers by an experimental knowledge of our enjoyments." Such an expression of the intentions of the United States government was exactly what Alamán feared; consequently, when official diplomatic contacts were later inaugurated, it is understandable that he approached such confrontation with caution.

Meanwhile, upon assumption of the duties of president, Adams concluded that the United States would be compelled to take a more active role in the affairs of Mexico. The delay in the appointment of a minister to that country after official recognition in 1822 was the result of political machinations in Washington. This situation, furthermore, proved quite

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convenient for the British. As one specialist in this period noted, during the time that the United States government was attempting to settle upon a politically-acceptable appointee as minister to Mexico, the British government, led by George Canning, who expressed an anti-American outlook, "was making good use of its advantage to establish . . . a powerful British influence over the Mexican government." By doing this, the British hoped "to elicit the deep gratitude of the Mexican people for British promises of favor and protection which made the earlier recognition of Mexico's independence by the United States seem of trifling importance. . . ."^3

Alamán was obviously the Mexican promoter of such British activity due to his role as president of the British-financed United Mining Company. Moreover, this procedure was in keeping with his basic pro-British, anti-United States tenets. At the same time, he knew that official diplomatic ties with the United States government were inevitable. But if that government was thwarted from the beginning in its dealings with Mexico, it was likely that discouragement might lead to indifference. As an official representative of his

^3Manning, Early Diplomatic Relations, vii-viii.
government, he thus could determine what would be the Mexican diplomatic viewpoint. United States reaction, in turn, was dependent upon the character and outlook of the minister who was not yet appointed in January 1825.

In his first term as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alamán carefully began to formulate a policy of diplomatic relations, especially concerning the United States. From the beginning of his political service, he was concerned about the situation of the common boundary line between his nation and the United States. This circumstance was particularly bothersome in the northeast, for there remained in 1823 confusion as to what constituted the geographical line of separation between the two countries. Acquisition of the Louisiana Territory from France and the Florida area from Spain had resulted in a consequent interest in territorial expansion among many United States residents.

Soon after Mexican independence, a native of Connecticut, Moses Austin, appeared in Mexico City and obtained a large land grant in the Mexican border colony of Texas. No problems were foreseen by the Mexican government; in fact, there seemed to be a general feeling of official relief, for it was believed that the Texas region would serve as a buffer area between Mexico
proper and the southwestern area of the United States. What Alamán thought of this land grant is not known. In view of his beliefs, however, there can be little doubt that he was disturbed by such a transaction. Quite early, then, Alamán was hopeful of resolving the question of the actual boundary line between his country and the United States, that is, was it or was it not the Sabine River.

In the summer of 1823, the charges d'affaires who had replaced Zozaya in Washington, Anastasio Torrens, made a report to Alamán which disturbed the Foreign Affairs Minister. According to Torrens' information, an expedition was preparing to depart from Kentucky and to make its way to Santa Fe. This expedition had as its purpose the development of a new mine which had recently been discovered. Thus, it was well-equipped and heavily supplied with merchandise. Torrens was of the opinion that this expedition could portend no good for Mexico. If some type of regulation was not forthcoming, this caravan would only be an inkling of what was to come. 4 Alamán agreed with Torrens'
evaluation of the situation. On August 21, 1823, he made an official notation that he had contacted Torrens in reference to the procedure to be followed in dealing with the United States government. Even though it was not possible at that juncture to establish formal diplomatic relations between the two countries because of the provisional status of the Mexican government, Alamán instructed Torrens to cultivate friendly relations with the United States government. He noted the possibility of conflict over the questionable boundary line, and he expressed a determination to prevent "any aggression or interruption in our territory." Torrens was to request a United States statement of clarification on the boundary question, and he sent a map of the area which Torrens was instructed to present to Henry Clay.  

On October 1, 1823, Alamán sent further instructions to Torrens. The charges d'affaires was told to secure as quickly as possible a determination of the boundary limits established by the 1819 treaty between the United States and Spain. However, such information was not provided by the government in the United States; in fact, at the beginning of 1824 Alamán received word from several Mexican officials in the Department

5Alamán, Documentos diversos, I, 563-564.
of Texas that the United States was contemplating the abrogation of that treaty so that the territory in question could be included within the territorial limits of the United States. This area would include all land between the source of the Rio Bravo del Norte and its mouth on the coast of Tamaulipas province. Such an arrangement would not be acceptable in Mexico; however, the only action which could be taken in favor of the Mexican government would be the settlement of a specific boundary line beneficial to that nation.

Soon after Alamán learned of alleged United States intentions in the Texas area, he resigned his position as Minister for Foreign Affairs. This was in February 1824. He served his second term in office from May to September 1824, again resigning the ministry. Then, on January 12, 1825, the newly-elected President of Mexico, Victoria, asked him to resume this post once more. As noted previously, he was selected for this office by Victoria because of his reputation as the most capable political figure in Mexico. Alamán's biographer, however, has questioned his wisdom in accepting the position for a third time. As that authority observed, "if Alamán committed

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6 Cue Canovas, Historia política de México, 340.
errors in his political career, one of the greatest of these was his participation in the ministry of a president who . . . is considered a fool." Had Alamán not served as Victoria's first Minister for Foreign Affairs, it is conceivable that Mexican-United States diplomatic relations might have been of a different nature altogether. This was not the case. Alamán did accept the appointment, bringing into that important office once again his hostile attitude toward the government of the United States. Thus began the famous "era alamanista." 8

During the time that President Victoria's government was taking shape, the United States leaders were discussing the possibility of acquiring more territory west of the Mississippi River, in the area of the questionable boundary line between Mexico and the United States. President Adams and his Secretary of State, Henry Clay, by early 1825 concluded that it would be advantageous for their government to acquire all of the Texas area, or at least a large portion of it, through

7 Valadés, Alamán, 198-199.

8 Ibid., 203.
negotiation with the Mexican authorities. For such talks to be initiated, it was imperative that a minister to Mexico be appointed posthaste.

In Mexico, meanwhile, the British charges d'affaires, Henry G. Ward, was taking advantage of Mexican uneasiness about the intentions of the United States government in reference to Texas. He warned various Mexican officials that the present policy which allowed unlimited American settlement in the province of Texas was dangerous to Mexican sovereignty. In Ward's opinion, it would be wise for Mexico to forbid American settlement west of the Sabine River. Ward was supported in this argument by José María Tornel, an active public figure "peculiarly unfriendly toward the United States, who was now a Deputy in Congress and private secretary to the President. . . ."10

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alamán was leery of the efforts of the United States government in this particular area of diplomacy. In his opinion, the loss of Texas, or of any Mexican territory, to the United States could only prove disastrous for his nation. His suspicions of that government's

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10Ibid. See also Ward's Mexico in 1827 (2 vols.; London, 1829).
designs on his country thus were intensified as soon as he began serving his third term in the Foreign Ministry. It would be difficult for any United States representative to convince the Mexican Minister that his nation, espousing a philosophy and a system which Alamán disdained, could be trusted.

From the beginning, the question of a representative to Mexico proved a troublesome one for the United States government. Appointment of respective ministers to the newly-independent nations should have followed official United States recognition of the Hispanic-American republics. This, unfortunately, was not the case in reference to Mexico, which was the nearest of these states, and probably the most strategic as far as the United States was concerned. For three years the debate as to who would represent the United States in Mexico dragged on, with political priorities quite in evidence. At first, recognition by the United States, abstract though it was, had encouraged the none-too-stable Mexican government, as had the philanthropic American declarations of interest in the Mexican nation and people. In fact, among various Mexican officials there were expressions of admiration for and gratitude to the people of that nation for such interest in the affairs of Mexico. Then there followed the drawn-out delay in establishing
actual diplomatic contact with the Mexican government by its counterpart in the United States. American relations, as far as the Mexican nation was concerned, had thus become cold and platonic.\(^{11}\)

The appointment of a representative to Mexico was not ignored by the United States government for three years. In January 1823, the post was offered to a Senator Brown of Mississippi, "a man of ability, learning, and means." Brown, however, would not accept the position. Conditions were rather unsettled in Mexico, and he did not believe that his wife could safely accompany him to that country. On February 19 of the same year, Secretary of State Adams next offered the post to Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. But Jackson was obviously to be a candidate in the upcoming presidential election, for the Tennessee state legislature had given him an overwhelming endorsement. Furthermore, since Adams was also interested in seeking the presidency, the offer to Jackson smacked of political convenience on Adams' behalf.

Needless to say, Jackson declined the offer.\textsuperscript{12}

It was at this point that Joel Roberts Poinsett of South Carolina was first approached on the question of the appointment to Mexico. He expressed a reluctance to undertake such a diplomatic mission in view of the chaotic situation which existed in Mexico. Poinsett did not believe it would be a propitious time to inaugurate negotiations with the Mexican government, in particular the imperial government proclaimed by Iturbide. He indicated that he would consider the circumstances personally embarrassing if he were sent as the representative of the United States to an autocratic state. Therefore, Poinsett was not given the appointment. After the fall of Iturbide's government, there followed another period of delay concerning the position. In early 1824, Senator Ninian Edwards of Illinois was offered the position, and he accepted it. But shortly thereafter he became involved in a personal controversy with Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford and had to resign. Other men then considered for the appointment throughout 1824 were George M. Dallas, Thomas Hart Benton, William Henry Harrison, Henry

\textsuperscript{12}Rippy, \textit{Poinsett}, 104.
Wheaton, and, once again, Poinsett. 13

Poinsett apparently was considered to be the logical candidate for the position, for he had experience in dealing in Latin American affairs, having earlier served minor appointments as a trade commissioner in Argentina and Chile. Moreover, he was fluent in the Spanish language and had visited Mexico several years before. This visit resulted in a brief monograph about Mexico, which was rather widely read and which was thought to reveal a thorough understanding of Mexicans and their affairs. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, as a fellow South Carolinian, had, upon the first offer of the position, advised Poinsett to consider the situation carefully. As a member of the South Carolina delegation to the House of Representatives, Poinsett could possibly play a decisive role in determining the presidential ballot of his state if the election were forced into the House. Calhoun did not hesitate to point out this fact. When the offer was repeated several days later by the Secretary of the Navy, caution was again urged. Consequently, Poinsett declined to accept the post, giving the

13Ibid., 104-105. For Ninian Edward's letter of resignation, see National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Edwards to John Quincy Adams, June 22, 1824, II.
aforementioned reason of personal embarrassment, but actually for the basic reason that he was more interested in national politics than in foreign diplomacy. 14

In the presidential election to which Poinsett's interest was drawn, Adams was victorious amid charges of "bargain and corruption" hurled by Jackson's supporters. Unpreturbed by the furor of election events, Adams on the day after his inauguration sent for Poinsett, and the South Carolinian again was urged to accept the post of minister to Mexico. Poinsett once more expressed reservations about accepting the appointment. He indicated that he was reluctant to relinquish his congressional seat in order to take the foreign post. Also, he urged President Adams to appoint Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri to the position. He was informed quite frankly, however, that under no circumstances would Benton be asked to serve as minister to Mexico.

Poinsett, apparently under pressure at this point, agreed to give careful consideration to the matter, and he assured the President that he would let him know his decision the next day.

On March 6, 1825, President Adams received word from Poinsett

that he would accept the appointment.\footnote{Rippy, \textit{Poinsett}, 105.} Thus, after three years, a representative to Mexico from the United States was selected. The fact that the appointment process had taken so long is understandable in view of political maneuvering in the United States. Nevertheless, such dilatoriness on the part of the American government did nothing to enhance the chance for successful initial Mexican-United States relations. In fact, taking into consideration Alamán's eminence within the Mexican government and his opinions of the United States, that nation's prestige diminished in the eyes of official Mexico.

The situation, however, was still far from hopeless. In his capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alamán might be hostile toward the United States government and political system. Yet he was also a man desirous of improving the lot of his nation. As a respected, capable political figure in charge of the strategic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, more than anyone else he could make decisions which might help, or hinder, national progress. In early 1825, Mexico obviously could not make its own way in terms of the political situation and the economy. Aid had to be sought from a friendly and powerful foreign nation. As his
biographer emphasized, not only did Alamán exhibit a tenacity in his work to develop Mexico internally, he also put great emphasis on Mexico's foreign affairs. In turn, there were two specific nations toward which Alamán's foreign policy would be directed—Great Britain and the United States. 16

Since Alamán was prejudiced toward the British due to his past experiences, the United States government would be forced to prove to the Mexican minister that it could offer as much to his nation as could the British. Therefore, Poinsett's approach to the situation was critical. It was his task to restore official Mexican confidence in the pledges made by his government in 1822. Moreover, he had to convince the Mexican government that its hope for future advancement depended upon close ties with the United States rather than with Great Britain.

There is little question that Poinsett was an able and sincere man, and he was as well qualified as anyone for the position which he accepted. He had lived in Latin America between 1809 and 1816, in Buenos Aires and Santiago, Chile, and had become familiar with Hispanic-American customs and

16Valadés, Alamán, 175.
ways of life. He also spoke Spanish, an important asset for a diplomatic representative to Mexico. Because of his book, Notes on Mexico, published after his visit there, he was considered by many people in the United States something of an expert on that country. Poinsett was in sympathy with the independence movements of the various Latin American countries, and he had a genuine interest in that area of the hemisphere. But it was his political emphasis which endangered his possible effectiveness as minister to Mexico, and which offset most of his above-mentioned qualifications. He was, in the words of his most knowledgeable examiner, "a flaming evangel of democracy..." While in Chile, for example, he "had revealed both an imprudent aggressiveness and a disposition to violate the rules of diplomatic decorum." In view of Alamán's predispositions, Poinsett certainly was not the man required for the task of resurrecting good feelings between the governments of Mexico and the United States. But these things were unknown at that time. It was believed that Poinsett was the best qualified and most able man for the position, and the United States government anticipated success as a result of his mission to Mexico.

17 Rippy, Poinsett, 105-106.
Poinsett did not go to Mexico intentionally to antagonize Alamán and other members of that government. To insinuate that he did is to suggest that he desired his mission to fail. Indeed, in large measure it was his zeal to succeed which caused his ultimate failure. Poinsett was imbued with nationalism to the extent that he believed it was his duty to promote the American way of life in other parts of the hemisphere. In other words, he "conceived himself as something of an apostle." He was firmly convinced that the new nations of Latin America would welcome the introduction of the democratic institutions of the United States. These nations, he discerned, were politically and socially prostrated after three centuries of Spanish misrule, "and the virtue of republican principles should be clearly shown in contrast to those of the monarchies of the Old World." 18

Poinsett's point of view was not unusual in this period of United States foreign relations, for various American diplomats appeared to hold such convictions. One scholar has suggested that this outlook was such that it led to a situation in which

The United States was . . . to be portrayed as a sort of friendly guide and protector to this younger American relative.

18Putnam, Joel Roberts Poinsett, 68.
Such an attitude is often particularly resented by an aspiring youth of the family as it suggests his own inexperience and inability. And this resentment is especially keen if the elder is known to covet some of the younger's possessions for it gives the appeal to kinship a tinge of hypocrisy. 19

What apparently was not at all understood by Poinsett and other United States officials was the significance of Alamán or of his foreign policy. The feelings expressed by the newly-appointed American envoy were the antitheses of those of Alamán. British influence by 1825 was strong in Mexican political and economic affairs, and there were even subtle British hints that eventually Mexico should bring about the establishment of a monarchical or aristocratic system of government. 20 In view of Alamán's background experiences and beliefs, it is safe to assume that he was instrumental in the promotion of such an idea. Consequently, Poinsett's determination to present to the Mexican government the advantages of a federal republican system as practiced in the United States could only alienate further and antagonize Alamán, who already nurtured serious doubts about the efficacy of dealing with that power.

19Ibid., 69.

An inkling of the course that initial discussions between the United States representative and Alamán would take was evident in January 1825, before Poinsett's appointment. In a report sent to the Mexican Congress on the eleventh day of that month, Alamán's enthusiasm for ties with Great Britain, and his lack of it for those with the United States, was obvious. In this message, he pointed out that

The consul-general appointed by his Britannic majesty, and other consuls for the principal ports of the Republic, are in the full exercise of their functions, and their commissions have been acknowledged by official Exequatur. The Diplomatic Agents from that Government have been received and regarded with the consideration due to a nation which was the first among those of Europe to open relations of friendship and good correspondence with the Republic. These will become more intimate...

As to relations with the United States, the first nation which had acknowledged and officially recognized Mexico's independence, he tersely reported that "the friendship that has subsisted with the United States of America since [our] Declaration of Independence, has not been interrupted." But this feeling

21Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, XII, 985.

22Ibid. The Spanish version can be seen in Alamán, Documentos diversos, I, 122. Also see Manning, Early Diplomatic Relations, 67-68, for further examination of this obvious difference in feeling exhibited by Alamán.
of "friendship" was indeed about to be interrupted. Not only would Poinsett's concepts prove offensive to the Mexican government; they would be particularly so to Alamán. The determination of the United States government to secure a portion of the Mexican domain would also strain relations. Alamán would take full advantage of this tension.

Concerning the intentions of the government of the United States in dealing with Mexico, it was generally agreed among Mexican political officials, whether they supported or opposed close ties with the United States, that the government of that country desired to annex a part of Mexico. Many public figures and leading newspapers in the United States took note of that desire. A major problem insofar as Mexico was concerned had to do with the amount and location of the territory under consideration by American officials. The thought of any territorial loss bothered most Mexican politicians; however, there is little doubt that some leaders in Mexico were at least willing to entertain the offer. One who was not, though, was Alamán. On this point of no territorial loss he was adamant.

23 Burton in American Secretaries of State, ed. Bemis, IV, 133.
Prior to his departure for his post in Mexico, Poinsett received his instructions from Clay, and these were directed toward the acquisition of territory from Mexico. It was Clay's hope that settlement of the boundary question would favor the United States. Rather than continuing to recognize the Sabine River, as provided in the 1819 treaty with Spain, Poinsett as the American minister was to request that the new boundary be either the Brazos River, the Colorado River, the Snow Mountains, or the line of the Rio Grande-Pecos. The Sabine, Clay noted, was so located that it would place the capital of Mexico too far from the center of the country; moreover, the vast expanse of territory between the Sabine and the populated areas of Mexico proper would encourage "collisions." In subsequent instructions, Clay mentioned to Poinsett that extensive land grants by the Mexican government to Americans apparently indicated that little importance was attached to those areas included in such grants. Therefore, Poinsett was instructed to offer $1,000,000 for a section of territory which included over half of the area of modern Texas. If the Mexicans were not agreeable, Poinsett was then to offer $500,000 for a
grant of land of lesser proportion.\textsuperscript{24}

Numerous officials in the United States government seemed to believe that such action by their country would benefit both the United States and Mexico. The Mexican government, it was reckoned, had no substantial interest in the territory under consideration, for no effort had ever been made to develop it. American development of the region would bring about increased contact between the countries, and it was generally assumed among American politicians that the Mexican people would reap great gains from such contact.

On January 25, 1825, Senator Benton in a speech before his peers urged the promotion of internal trade with Mexico. Benton argued that increased interchange between his nation and Mexico was imperative. He pointed out that "an unmolested passage between Mexico and the United States, is as necessary in a political, as in a commercial point of view." Continuing, Benton emphasized that the two countries were "neighboring powers, inhabitants of the same continent, their territories contiguous, and their settlements approximating each other."

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 133-134. The text of Clay's first letter of instructions concerning these points can be consulted in Great Britain, Foreign Office, \textit{British and Foreign State Papers}, XXVI, 830.
In his opinion, the United States and Mexico had a common interest: "they are the two chief powers of the New World, and stand at the head of that cordon of Republics, which, stretching from pole to pole, across the two Americas, are destined to make the last stand in defence of human liberty."

Benton was disturbed by the fact that the United States and Mexico, as neighboring nations, had not yet made significant contact with one another. He contended that it was a time of crisis, for "the time has come when the monarch and the republican can no longer breathe the same atmosphere. . . . We Americans (I use the word in the broadest sense) . . . see and hear all [the commotion in Europe in opposition to republican freedom], yet we remain strangers to each other. . . ."

Therefore, Benton concluded, the proposed bill for internal trade between Mexico and the United States "will bring together the two nations whose power and whose positions make them responsible to the world for the preservation of the Republican system."25

This was the early crux of the matter in reference to

relations between Mexico and the United States. Many well-meaning American officials sincerely believed that the Mexican government was striving to promote a republican system molded upon that in the United States. These men, including Clay, Poinsett, and Benton, were not cognizant of the true status of Mexican political affairs. Although Victoria's administration espoused a republican system based on the constitution drawn up in 1824, in actuality Alamán's political philosophy based upon conservative centralism was dominant. Thus, from the beginning Mexican politicians were wary of the objectives of the northern government, especially on the question of territorial settlement.

Unaware of this attitude, particularly that of Alamán, Poinsett departed for Mexico on May 3, 1825, on board the United States gunboat Constellation. Seven days later, he arrived in Mexico, and made his way from Vera Cruz to Jalapa. Leaving this city, Poinsett then journeyed from the coastal area into the high plateau region of the Valle de Mexico, arriving in the capital on the twenty-sixth day of the month.26

Before his departure for Mexico, Poinsett received a note

from Clay concerning the importance of the mission. His assignment, Clay informed him, at any time would be considered urgent; however, at that particular time it was especially so. Clay noted to Poinsett that "everywhere on this continent, but on the side of the United Mexican States, the United States are touched by the colonial territories of some sovereign authority fixed in Europe." Poinsett had the distinction, asserted the Secretary of State, of being the first United States minister to go from his country to reside in the capital of a nation established "on this continent whose territories are coterminous with our own." Mistakenly suggesting that Poinsett would be the first minister "received by that power from any foreign state, except from those which have recently sprung out of Spanish America," Clay implored Poinsett to keep in mind that the Mexican government should be given highest consideration, for Mexico ranked "among the first Powers of America." The position of Mexico as such a power would be important in impending negotiations; thus, Clay suggested that "the final establishment of the limits between the territories of the United States and those of the United Mexican States is an
interesting object, to which you will direct your attention." 27

That Poinsett was fully aware of the desire of his government to bring about a boundary settlement with the Mexican nation is unquestionable. While achieving this settlement, Poinsett also was expected to cement good relations between his government and that of Mexico. Actually, in view of Mexican fears as exemplified by Alamán's position, Poinsett's undertaking from its inception was arduous. Indeed, "few envoys have been called upon to face a greater combination of difficulties." 28 Even before Poinsett was to present his credentials, the Mexican government had begun to look upon the United States as a natural rival, due in part to British influence. Likewise, the Mexican minister to Washington referred to Poinsett as a man who possessed no "great talents." 29

After his arrival in Mexico City on May 26, Poinsett learned that he was to be greeted officially by the Mexican President on June 1 at a diplomatic reception. At the appointed


28 J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico (Boston, 1926), 5; Poinsett, 106.

29 Rippy, United States and Mexico, 5.
time on that day, he presented his credentials to President Victoria and was courteously welcomed by his host. However, this reception was also cold and formal, according to one authority, due to the influence which Alamán wielded over Victoria. 30

Whether or not Poinsett met Alamán at this function is not known, although it is doubtful. It was apparent that Poinsett was not to receive the warm welcome afforded the British representative, Ward, the day before at his own reception. In spite of the lack of hospitality shown him by President Victoria, Poinsett nevertheless reported to Clay that he dutifully addressed the Mexican Chief Executive concerning the purpose of his mission. He wrote to the Secretary of State that after acknowledging the distinguished character of his host, he noted that

The United States of America recognize the right every nation possesses to adopt the form of government it may judge best adapted to its circumstances and most likely to secure the happiness of its people. It cannot, however, be denied, that they regard with deep interest the political movements of this country and the final decision of the Mexican people. It is with unfeigned satisfaction, that they have seen the only free government that borders on them, erect itself into a sister republic, and it has been peculiarly flattering to them, that it should

have made choice of an Federal Constitution so similar to their own. 31

If Alamán previously was able to dislike the United States only because of suspicion, this declaration by Poinsett of the interest of his country in the establishment of a similar political system in Mexico probably convinced Alamán that the government which Poinsett represented was indeed a threat to the internal sovereignty of Mexico. It is likely that Alamán made the critical decision to sabotage the discussions which would soon be carried on with Poinsett after the American minister stated the pleasure with which his government viewed Mexican political developments. To the contrary, political development in Mexico was not at all satisfying insofar as Alamán was concerned.

Regardless of the uncomfortable way in which he was received, Poinsett was at ease in Mexico City because of his earlier visit to the country. He had made various Mexican acquaintances, and it has even been suggested that because he was included within the social circle of the city, in the company of beautiful women and distinguished gentlemen, "Poinsett

31National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Poinsett to Clay, June 4, 1825, II.
acquired great popularity in the country." In a news magazine in the United States, it was announced that Poinsett had been received in Mexico "with every proper testimonial of respect." It was further revealed that after his official reception, Poinsett was the guest of honor at a supper party given by the Consul of the United States in the Mexican capital, James Smith Wilcocks. Then, the reporter concluded, it is supposed for dramatic effect, with the observation that "the president of the republic, Guadaloupe Victoria, was present." At first, it seemed that Poinsett's stay in Mexico might possibly be pleasant and, it was hoped in Washington, productive. Actually, the groundwork for Poinsett's coming difficulty was already prepared.

Although it is possible that Poinsett was able to circulate with ease among the elite social groups in Mexico, official opinion was set against him. On May 31, the day before Poinsett was received by Victoria, Ward presented his credentials to the Mexican government as the British representative to that country. Ward had been in Mexico since March and had established friendly personal contacts with Tornel, Victoria's private secretary, with Secretary of the Treasury Esteva, 

32 Delgado, España y México, I, 303.

33 Niles' Weekly Register, XXVIII (July 9, 1825), 294.
and with Alamán. But Alamán and Ward soon clashed due to a seeming personality problem, though Alamán continued to support close Mexican political and economic ties with Great Britain.

The Alamán-Ward animosity was in no way beneficial to Poinsett, for Alamán's dislike of Ward was strictly personal. He had not yet become acquainted with Poinsett; nevertheless, Alamán did not, and would not, care for the American minister. This feeling was not necessarily personal. Poinsett represented to Alamán a system of government which he considered repugnant and dangerous. Furthermore, he considered Poinsett a personification of that system due to the American's zealous promotion of the United States political complex. Alamán as the leading Mexican statesman in turn convinced other Mexican officials that Poinsett and his government were a latent threat to them. Poinsett soon discovered that in spite of its existence by virtue of a constitution similar to that of the United States, the Mexican government was not at all what he had hoped to encounter in terms of ideology. He learned that the instructions given him by Secretary Clay were more of a hindrance than a help. Exhorted to represent democracy, Poinsett discerned

34Cue Canovas, Historia política de México, 306-308.
that most prominent Mexican government officials were
monarchists and aristocrats, or both. As the representative
of the United States government in Mexico, Poinsett was ex-
pected to promulgate the concepts of the Monroe policy statement
against foreign intervention and interference in the western
hemisphere. But he realized quite early after he commenced
his official duties that the Mexican government had a tendency
to seek European affiliation, not avoid it.

Great Britain had made impressive trade inroads in Mexico
by 1825, largely due to Alamán's efforts. It was Poinsett's
unenviable task to place his government in the dominant foreign
position in Mexico. He was charged to promote a "most-favored-
nation" trade concept in Mexico, with the United States in that
role. But the Mexican government indicated that it favored
mutual trade concessions in conjunction with the other Hispanic-
American states. Finally, it was Poinsett's assignment to
acquire territory from Mexico, even though the suggestion of
such an action, he would find, infuriated the Mexican officials. 35
The advantage obviously was with Alamán as the Mexican
Minister for Foreign Affairs and the United States minister
prepared to open their negotiations.

35Rippy, Poinsett, 106-107.
Poinsett was perturbed by the official Mexican display of friendship toward Great Britain, and he began to strive to offset British gains, thus engendering the animosity of Ward. President Victoria was an Anglophil, largely because of Alamán's influence, who "represented . . . British interests" in the Mexican Cabinet. In spite of his personal dislike of Ward, Alamán nevertheless contended that the British charges d'affaires represented the nation which had worked diligently to help Mexico gain and maintain its independence. This recognition by Alamán was an obvious insinuation that the United States, on the other hand, had done little to aid Mexico in its struggle to survive as a free and independent nation. The ensuing contest between Ward and Poinsett is a story unto itself and shall not be followed in this treatise. Suffice it to say that Ward prevailed as the British maintained their position of foreign pre-eminence in Mexico.

Especially aggravating to Poinsett was the fact that on

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36Cue Canovas, Historia política de México, 308.

37De Onís, Los Estados Unidos, 163-164.

38For an over-all examination of United States-British rivalry in Mexico and its significance, see J. Fred Rippy's Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain Over Latin America (1808-1830) (Baltimore, 1929).
April 6, 1825, Alamán had initiated negotiations for an important commercial treaty with the government of Great Britain. Moreover, in this treaty he was careful to see to the insertion of a most-favored-nation clause which specifically named Mexico as a beneficiary. Poinsett at first was of the opinion that this treaty was the work of President Victoria, for it was his belief that the Mexican leader desired to establish a confederation of Hispanic-American states, of which Mexico would be the dominant member. This was not the case, obviously, for Alamán handled Mexico's foreign negotiations at this time. Poinsett thought, too, that he and Ward might be able to join forces to prevent such a Latin American union; however, Ward feared the possibility that, if such joint action took place, Poinsett's political influence might be augmented. Thus, he maintained his support for the treaty which his government had negotiated with Mexico. Poinsett was able to gain nothing for his government. 39

Mexican reasoning in requesting the most-favored-nation

39 Fuentes Mares, Poinsett, 71, 72. On May 5, 1825, Poinsett had informed Clay that "the British Gov't. has anticipated us" and revealed that the treaty was on the verge of ratification by the Mexican Congress. He obviously was disappointed. See National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Poinsett to Clay, May 5, 1825, II. A copy of the treaty, signed by Alamán, Esteva, and Ward, was attached to Poinsett's letter to Clay.
provision in the treaty with Great Britain involved more than consideration of economic advantages. It was an effort on the part of the Mexican government, led by Alamán, to offset the impact of Monroe's policy statement of 1823, for that decree was considered by Mexico and other Latin American nations as the equivalent of a declaration of United States dominance on all questions concerning the New World nations. Therefore, according to Vasconcelos, out of the most-favored-nation stipulation with Great Britain was born a plan between Mexico and Colombia which it was hoped eventually would bring about annexation of Cuba to Mexico to prevent the island from falling under the aegis of the United States. Poinsett was bothered by this alleged plan and hoped to prevent it. Alamán, however, was dedicated to the alliance of his government and that in Colombia for the purpose of preventing what was believed to be desires for a United States New World hegemony. It was at this point that Secretary Clay, speaking for his government, guaranteed that the Monroe policy statement assured all American nations of their independence, and Colombia decided not to ratify an agreement with Mexico. 40

40 Vasconcelos, Breve historia de México, 304, 305, 306.
Although Alamán was thwarted in this endeavor, the United States government could reap no political profit. In fact, the position of that government in the Mexican-Colombian matter only served to alienate Alamán further. He more than likely considered the actions taken by the United States to be proof that Mexican self-determination was endangered due to American machinations.

Such was the political atmosphere in Mexico City when agreement at last was reached as to when formal discussions between Alamán and Poinsett would be initiated. On several occasions in June, the two men met informally to determine the major points for consideration in their formal meetings. Poinsett apparently attempted to bring up important questions during this time, assuring Alamán that it was his government's intention to fix a permanent boundary line. But Alamán refused to consider any matters "until the Boundary line shall be settled." Since Alamán would not discuss any questions to be considered unless in a formal conference, Poinsett agreed to inaugurate such discussions. Alamán informed him that they would meet officially on July 10. The subjects to be considered

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41 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Poinsett to Clay, June 18, 1825, II.
were those concerning the boundary issue and the manner of
conducting negotiations for treaties of commerce and navi-
gation. 42 The first meeting between Alamán and Poinsett was
held as scheduled, and thus began one of the most important
events in conjunction with the development of Mexican-United
States relations during the nineteenth century.

The first of a series of meetings, which lasted from July
to September, was relatively uneventful, though each man
attempted to gauge the capabilities of the other. Poinsett at
once broached the subject of a new frontier line between the
respective countries. Alamán, however, indicated that such
a matter could be discussed only after certain conditions were
met by the two governments. Poinsett contended that the topic
should be settled as quickly as possible. He suggested that the
Sabine River should not remain the boundary line because it was
too insignificant to separate two such important neighbors. He
then intimated that his government would find the Rio Brazos
more acceptable, obviously because, as such, this boundary

42 William R. Manning, "Texas and the Boundary Issue,
1822-1829," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVII,
no. 3 (1913), 226; Thomas Maitland Marshall, A History of
the Western Boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, 1819-1841
(University of California Publications in History, II; Berkeley,
1914), 76.
line would give the United States a larger portion of territory. Mexico would be compensated for this land by a large sum of money. Alamán did not acquiesce. Before any negotiation could transpire, Alamán was of the opinion that a commission should be appointed to investigate the territories and claims under question. This suggestion seemed to displease Poinsett, who pointed out that if such action were taken, two years could pass before any settlement. It would take at least a year to arrange for a suitable joint commission and another year for it to complete its investigation and to prepare a report. But Alamán would not be moved; his government could not and would not act on the settlement of new limits without having adequate information. Reluctantly, Poinsett said that he would be willing to submit the question to his government. 43

The willingness of Poinsett to defer immediate settlement of the boundary question pleased both Alamán and Victoria. By indicating that his government might be agreeable to the establishment of a new boundary after an investigation by a

joint commission, Poinsett gave Alamán the mistaken impression that the Mexican government might have an opportunity ultimately to push back the boundary to the Mississippi River.44 But this was not the case.

The United States government immediately supported Poinsett's position that a commission of investigation really was unnecessary until Alamán and Poinsett decided upon a definite boundary line. After the first meeting between the two negotiators, there followed a long and drawn-out period of maneuvering, and most questions were dealt with through diplomatic notes. Alamán and Poinsett met again in person only a few times.

After his conference with Alamán, Poinsett sent a despatch to Secretary Clay concerning the results of this session. Informing his superior that he and Alamán had agreed to treat the subjects of a commercial treaty and the treaty of limits separately, he then related the pertinent points of the discussion between himself and Alamán. From the tone of this letter, it would appear that Poinsett had not yet concluded that Alamán was unwilling to agree to a new boundary line if the United

44Smith, War with Mexico, I, 60.
States also acquired territory as a result of the settlement.

"With respect to the Treaty of Limits," he wrote, "I suggested that, although the Government of the United States held itself bound to carry into effect the Treaty of Limits concluded with . . . Spain the 22nd of February, 1819, still, it would appear more becoming the independent character of this Government to lay aside that Treaty altogether, and to endeavor to establish a boundary which would be more easily defined, and which might be mutually more advantageous." It was Poinsett's opinion that "the Secretary expressed himself much gratified by such a suggestion. . . ." However, Alamán had then "proposed that the 2 Governments should forthwith appoint commissioners to make a reconnoissance of the country bordering, on the line formerly settled with Spain. . . ." The purpose of this body, Alamán held, would be "to obtain such information in regard to that portion of our respective territories as would enable us to act understandingly on the subject." Poinsett noted that "I objected to this proposal the limited powers of the President of the United States, and that such an appointment could not well be made until the next meeting of Congress." Alamán in turn had replied "that his Government would be very averse permanently to fix the limits between the two nations on the very
slender information they at present possessed of that frontier country."
To conclude the discussion, Alamán agreed to "address me a Note stating the views of his Government in relation to the proposed Convention of Limits."

Alamán thus had made his move and had deliberately delayed further discussion of the proposal of the United States government to fix a common boundary line which would also result in American acquisition of territory. Alamán had no intention of agreeing to such an arrangement. Indeed, if he could have his way, the boundary line would be fixed as the Mississippi River. On July 20, Alamán penned a note to Poinsett in reference to another question which the American minister had raised. On June 17, Poinsett had addressed Alamán in a letter and had revealed that it was his government's desire for a road to be surveyed, marked out, and protected which would lead from frontier settlements on the Missouri River to the nearest settlements in the New Mexico area. The United States Congress had made provisions for this road, and Poinsett assured the Mexican government that the spirit of friendship of his nation for Mexico was the reason the

45 Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, Poinsett to Clay, July 18, 1825, XXVI, 831. This letter is not available in RG 59 of the National Archives Department of State MSS.
road was desired. This route would result in more commerce and friendly interchange between the two countries. 46

In his reply of July 20, Alamán informed Poinsett that his government could not consider the question of the road alone, for that subject was subordinate to a more pressing one. He reminded the American minister that upon his reception by President Victoria, he had declared it was the purpose of the government of the United States to conclude with Mexico treaties of commerce and limits. Alamán then played his trump card, pointing out that "certainly the opening of this new road supposes the existence of these Treaties, by virtue of which the limits which divide this Republic from that will be settled, as well as the Regulations which are to govern the commercial relations of both Nations; nor will it be easy to separate them, without incurring inconveniences very difficult to avoid." Alamán continued by informing Poinsett of his government's belief that the settlement of the treaties should be undertaken first. The marking of a road could be accomplished later. He emphasized

46 Manning, Early Diplomatic Relations, 166, 170-171; Fuentes Mares, Poinsett, 70; Zorrilla, Historia de las relaciones, I, 68. For Poinsett's letter of June 17 to Alamán, see National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, II.
that his government could not sign a treaty of limits to settle
the boundary question without careful study. "The marking
out of limits, by its nature, and the particular difficulties
which in our case attend such work," he explained, "both by
want of . . . topographical information . . . and from the
series of trigonometrical observations which it would be
necessary to make . . . , is subject to delays that . . . would
consume a great deal of time. . . ." Moreover, it was the
opinion of Alamán, and he was supported by his government,
that commerce and limits simply could not be discussed to-
gether, as was Poinsett's initial request. Alamán suggested
that "we might . . . , if your Excellency thought proper . . . ,
proceed immediately to negotiate the Treaty of Commerce,
leaving on one side the point of limits. . . ." After a commercial
treaty was agreed upon, Alamán proposed "that we might
negotiate on this subject [of limits], the 2 Governments might
name their Commissioners, who, on examining together the
country within a given latitude, from one sea to the other, might
present exact information, upon which the limits might be estab-
lished as is desired." Anticipating Poinsett's reluctance to
accept his suggestion because of the time element involved, he
concluded his note by reminding the American minister that it
was the ends, and not the means, which was important in reference to the boundary settlement. Besides, the Mexican proposal would assure that "we might proceed with more certainty, and we should possess more exact information to go upon." 47

This maneuver by Alamán, according to his biographer, "has no equal in the diplomatic history of Mexico." By his action he had succeeded in placing Mexico on an equal basis of negotiation with the United States government. 48 Alamán had anticipated Poinsett's approach to negotiations and subsequently had countered the United States government's intention of quickly settling the boundary issue in its favor. After Alamán had thus acted, Poinsett was placed in a difficult position. If he acquiesced, it was likely that a detailed survey of the territory in question would result in a settlement more favorable to Mexico. But if he pushed the Mexican government to settle the boundary issue at once, so that territory would be gained by his government, it was certain that he would encounter Mexican resistance.

47 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Alamán to Poinsett, July 20, 1825, II.

48 Valadés, Alamán, 207.
On July 27, Poinsett sent Clay the letter he had received from Alamán. He also made his own observations to the Secretary of State, observations which indicated that he was perturbed by the reluctance of Alamán to enter into meaningful discussions of the boundary question without delay. But Poinsett was not a foolish man, and he related "that there exists great apprehension in the minds of the people of this country, that the Government of The United States contemplate renewing their claim to the territory north of the Rio Bravo del Norte. . . ." Now wondering if persistence in pushing the claims of his government was wise, he suggested the possibility that the United States "consider their great sensibility on this subject. . . ."49

This is not to imply that Poinsett had capitulated to the Mexican viewpoint; however, he was convinced after meeting with Alamán that the United States government, to achieve what it desired, would have to act carefully and not antagonize the Mexican government, which obviously was sensitive on the boundary question. He did not yet understand how Alamán felt about the American government, nor was he fully aware of the

49National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Poinsett to Clay, July 27, 1825, II.
fact that Alamán intended to see the boundary discussions drag on until they would finally be terminated without a decision unless it favored Mexico.

On the same day he sent his communication to Clay, Poinsett also addressed himself to the Mexican minister in a diplomatic note. He expressed his disappointment that the Mexican government had decided to pursue its cautious course. "Although very unwilling to urge [your] Government to adopt a measure which it apprehends may be attended with unavoidable inconveniences, I cannot but regret this delay," which he feared would be "injurious to a commerce, just rising into existence, between the Western States of North America and New Mexico," Poinsett argued that the delays foreseen by the Mexican government would not occur, and he indicated that the road he had proposed would prove beneficial to both nations. On the other hand, "to postpone this business until the appointment of Commissioners to survey that part of the country, with a view to the final adjustment of our limits, will embarrass that trade very much. . . ." Poinsett made a plea that Alamán and his government reconsider the decision to carry out a time-consuming investigation of the limits issue and that "your Excellency . . . enter into some arrangement with me by which this desirable end may be sooner
accomplished." He was not opposed to the Mexican proposal per se, but "I see only one serious objection to it, and that is the great delay such a course is likely to occasion."50

Alamán would not relent, however, and Poinsett became more discouraged. He still did not openly suspect Alamán, for on August 5 he wrote a ciphered despatch to Clay in which he expressed the opinion that Victoria was probably the cause of the problems he was encountering, for the Mexican president was a "weak man," under the control of his ministers. He did acknowledge that especially powerful in Mexico at the time was Alamán, a talented and well-educated man more able than the average Mexican of comparable stature.51

Throughout the first part of August, no further action was taken on the matters under consideration. Then, on August 10, Alamán addressed a despatch to Poinsett in which he indicated that his government was willing to continue separate negotiations on the questions of commercial agreements and limits. However, he again asserted that in spite of the delays which an investigating commission on the boundary issue might entail, his government

50Ibid., Poinsett to Alamán, July 27, 1825.

51Ibid., Poinsett to Clay, August 5, 1825.
could take no other course of action, "for the limits cannot be
definitively settled until the reconnoissance of the country has
been made. . . ." At any time suitable for Poinsett, he would
be happy to continue negotiations. 52

Poinsett without doubt was now in a quandary. He was
beginning to suspect that the Mexican government was being
less than sincere with him as to its true intentions. He was of
the opinion that Mexican officials, Alamán above all, were
desirous of pushing the boundary line farther to the east rather
than allowing his government to establish it west of the original
line on the Sabine River. He therefore requested another con-
ference with Alamán, and this second formal meeting was
scheduled for September 20, 1825. On that date the two min-
isters again confronted one another, for there was no longer
any illusion of genuine cooperation. Poinsett probably had in
mind to pressure Alamán into some sort of commitment; how-
ever, the Mexican proved too elusive for the American.

52 Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State
Papers, Alamán to Poinsett, August 10, 1825, XXVI, 835.
This communication is missing from RG 59 of the National
Archives Dept. of State MSS. On that same day, Poinsett
wrote Clay that Alamán was entirely devoted to England and
was not inclined to "cultivate friendly relations with the United
States." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Dip-
lomatic Despatches, Mexico, II.
As Poinsett recalled in his report of the meeting to Clay, as soon as the conference was underway, Alamán asked him to trace the exact line of the boundary settlement made between the United States and Spain in 1795. Alamán had this done because "he wished to ascertain the ancient boundaries between The United States and the Spanish possessions, as defined by the Treaty of 1795. . . ." Poinsett complied, but he reminded Alamán that the treaty in question had been negotiated before the cession of the Louisiana Territory. After tracing the line on a map, Poinsett "inquired his object in wishing to ascertain the boundaries." Alamán replied that "he thought it would be advisable in the Treaty we were about concluding to specify the ancient boundary until a new line was agreed upon." This play by Alamán--referring back to the treaty of 1795 rather than to that of 1819--apparently irritated Poinsett. He bluntly pointed out to Alamán that in the 1819 treaty between the United States and Spain, the former had at first claimed territorial limits to the Rio Bravo del Norte, though the latter had insisted upon the Mississippi River as the limit. Eventually, a compromise was made, and the result of that treaty was binding upon Mexico, "having been concluded before . . . emancipation from Spain . . ." had occurred. Because of particular questions
of uncertainty which had subsequently emerged since 1819, the United States had not "carried the Treaty into full effect . . . only /because of/ motives of delicacy towards Mexico." In keeping with the desire of his government to consider Mexican feelings, Poinsett asserted that he had proposed a new treaty which would not encumber the Mexicans with the agreement between the United States and Spain. However, he made it clear "that in doing so I did not intend to yield one square inch of land which was included within the limits of the United States according to the Boundary Line at that time agreed upon." 53

In other words, the United States government would not consider any line east of the Sabine.

Poinsett thus had made his move, and he awaited the reaction of Alamán. The Mexican minister was not to be intimidated by insinuations that the government of the United States was negotiating with Mexico out of a sense of compassion. Indeed, his dealings with Poinsett during the past two months had convinced him that the northern government was up to no good. He had no doubt that only a boundary settlement in which

53 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Poinsett to Clay, September 20, 1825, II.
territorial gain was involved would be acceptable to the United States. It was at this point in Mexican-United States relations that the tenor for subsequent diplomatic contact was established for the first half of the nineteenth century. Alamán did not respond to Poinsett's urgency. He again told Poinsett that his government could make no agreement as to limits until after the careful survey of the territory by a joint commission. Since nothing else could be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.

Poinsett's feelings at this moment in his diplomatic mission to Mexico are unknown, for in his personal papers he made few significant references to Alamán. It is likely, however, that his attitude was now similar to that of his young aide, Edward Thornton Tayloe, who on August 15, 1825, informed his brother that

The government of Mexico, I regret to say, is a feeble one. The president is, I dare to say & sincerely hope, conscientiously upright, but his talents are feeble--his health bad, and he is in entire submission to his advisers. The Secretary of State, Lucas Alamán, is a travelled and ought to be, & perhaps is, an intelligent man--but as a statesman, I venture to say (perhaps I am presumptuous to judge) that he has, in the world, many superiors--I admire neither his style nor sentiments nor reasoning. 54

Alamán certainly had superiors in the realm of statesmanship, but in September 1825, Joel R. Poinsett could not be counted among these. He undoubtedly knew that he had been bested by the representative of a government and country that was believed inferior to his own. As one authority on this event has contended, "by a single astute move on the part of Alamán, Clay's house of cards was toppled over and the absurdity of the American position disclosed." The United States was thus thwarted in its initial effort to secure territory in Texas province, or the entire province itself. More important, a deep hostility between the two nations emerged, which boded ill for future relations.

Convinced that his government could not get Texas or other territory as a result of a boundary settlement, Poinsett nevertheless determined to carry on negotiations with the Mexican government and its representative. On September 27, 1825, Alamán was urged in a letter from Jared Sparks to cooperate with Poinsett, especially in "procuring documentary materials for the history of the Mexican revolution. . . ." Sparks expressed a sincere hope that his nation and Mexico could work together and draw nearer. However, little was known about the Latin American nations among his countrymen, although

55 Marshall, Western Boundary, 78.
"there is universal sympathy in this country with the rising republics of the south. . . ." It was Sparks' desire, "since the interests of the two parts of the continent are so intimately blended, and their political spirit and institutions are so similar," to educate the American people toward a better understanding of Latin America in the pages of his magazine, the *North American Review*. 56 Alamán made no response to Sparks' appeal, for he more than likely assumed that Sparks was in the minority with such outlooks.

Alamán was adamant in his dislike of the government, and generally the people, of the United States. He had so indicated this predilection in his dealings with Poinsett. Indeed, one of his critics has suggested that, although United States absorption of Texas would have alleviated a threatening Indian menace to both the border areas of the United States and Mexico, Alamán ignored every fact in the case and "propagandized to the effect that the 'Colossus of the North' was planning to steal Mexican territory--by bribes, if possible; if not, by force."57


Whatever the case, Alamán had scored a diplomatic victory. From the beginning, Secretary Clay was convinced that Poinsett, in whom he had much confidence, would have little trouble acquiring what the American government sought. But a man whom he looked upon as inexperienced had out-maneuvered Poinsett. Henceforth, Alamán was often referred to by various American officials as "the man with black brains."58

In his future dealings with Alamán, Poinsett was convinced that he would have to be wary of the able Mexican official.

In August, when Alamán informed Poinsett that he would be willing to resume negotiations concerning the issues under discussion, he suggested that a separate treaty of commerce and one of limits be considered. In most accounts of the subsequent meeting in September, the question of limits dominates. However, at that time Alamán, accompanied by José Esteva, Secretary of the Treasury, also presented a projet for a commercial treaty. It was not what Poinsett had hoped for, in that it did not concede certain prerogatives to his country as was the case with the Mexican-British agreement.59 Thus, in considering

58 Fuentes Mares, Poinsett, 69; Valadés, Alamán, 205.
59 Valadés, Alamán, 207-208.
the sum of his official dealings with Alamán, Poinsett could not boast of any noticeable gains. His only hope lay in the possibility that Alamán would be replaced by a less able negotiator. Furthermore, this possibility was not a figment of his imagination, for in September 1825, Alamán was in a politically precarious position.

On September 28, Poinsett informed Clay that he had been responsible, indirectly, for the dismissal of the bothersome Alamán:

Anxious to conclude the pending negotiations, . . .
I urged the President of these States, either to permit Alaman to continue them, or to appoint another Plenipotentiary. He preferred the latter alternative, and has given powers to Don Jose Gomez Pedraza, the Secretary of War, who now holds the portfolio of the Minister of Foreign Relations, ad interim. 60

Poinsett obviously flattered himself as to his power of persuasion with President Victoria. Actually, Alamán's resignation as Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 27 was the result strictly of internal Mexican affairs.

Alamán had his differences with several leading political figures in the country, who were either resentful of the power he wielded or who sincerely disagreed with his policies. Among

these was Miguel Ramós Arizpe, the congressional leader when that body promulgated and passed the constitution of 1824. It is the opinion of one specialist that Arizpe engineered Alamán's forced resignation; however, the actual, immediate cause of his fall from office was in part due to his own actions. It seems that he, Tornel, and Esteva had attempted to secure the appointment of the Bishop of Puebla to the Cabinet. This man, a Spaniard by birth, could have been manipulated by this pro-European trio. Therefore, his appointment was opposed by various liberals. In the ensuing dispute, President Victoria was induced, probably by Arizpe, to consider Alamán's dismissal, since he led the movement in favor of the Bishop. Furthermore, "Ward, because of personal pique at Alamán, exerted his influence to the same end." Alamán surmised that the forces against him were powerful, and so he resigned before being dismissed. 61

With the dispatch of Alamán from his position in the Mexican government, it would seem that Poinsett's situation should have

61 Valadés, Alamán, 208; Manning, American Journal of International Law, VII, 794. In his Mexico in 1827, Ward never alluded to Alamán, directly or indirectly. In view of Alamán's influence in Mexico, this omission of his name by Ward is proof enough of their personal dislike for one another.
improved noticeably. This was not the case, for Alamán's influence remained strong. Furthermore, Alamán prior to his resignation successfully sowed seeds of distrust among the majority of the Mexican officials as far as Poinsett's reputation was concerned. The United States representative certainly believed he was in a position of control after Alamán's debacle, for he informed his government that with the fall of Alamán, the North American group among Mexican politicians had gained the ascendancy over those who aligned themselves with the British. 62

On October 12, 1825, Poinsett recounted to Clay in a coded message his version of Alamán's resignation. He pointed out that Ward exercised a powerful influence over President Victoria. Also, Tornel was the object of British attention, for Poinsett had noticed that Ward and his subordinates "paid great court to . . . the secretary of the President. . . ." In his opinion, Tornel was "a vain and venal man who exercises great influence over his chief." As for Alamán, Poinsett noted that in spite of his talents, he was guilty of a European bias and thus supported such views. Also, Poinsett reminded Clay that "I before told you that he received a salary from a British

62 Valadés, Alamán, 209.
mining company." Having explained the circumstances of British influence, Poinsett then gave the details of Alamán's fall from his post, relating how Esteva and Alamán, aided by the Colombian minister Santa María and one Countess of Regla, attempted to have Pablo de la Llave removed as Minister for Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs and replaced by the Bishop of Puebla. Poinsett, finally, was of the opinion that due to personal reasons, Ward opposed Alamán, who resigned when he became aware of the extent of the opposition to him in Congress. "The fall of Alaman," Poinsett concluded, "struck the European party with terror."⁶³ He had earlier intimated that his pressure was instrumental as well in Alamán's downfall. But in spite of his optimism because of this event, Poinsett's situation actually had not improved.

The American minister discovered to his consternation that Alamán's successors, interim Secretary Pedraza and the new appointee, Sebastian Camacho, continued the same approach to negotiations that Alamán had pursued. Alamán, though out of office, was not out of the political picture, and he openly

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expressed a bitter hostility toward Poinsett. It was his contention that Poinsett was determined to bring an end to aristocratic influences in the Mexican government; however, Poinsett planned to replace such influence not with democracy, which Alamán pointed out could not exist in a country where most of the people did not participate in public affairs, but with a few ambitious and less respectable individuals. 64

Poinsett reciprocated Alamán's animosity. In January 1826, he wrote to Jared Sparks concerning the former Mexican minister who still represented the conservative elements in Mexico. Poinsett left no doubt about his feelings toward Alamán in his letter to Sparks:

You had fair opportunity of judging Mr. Alamán's talents, and in that respect your paper does him no more than justice. But of his patriotism and virtues a doubt may be fairly entertained, and I have no hesitation in assuring you that his political views are altogether unsound. I found him decidedly hostile to an intimate connection with us, and disposed to unite his country too intimately with Europe. He left the administration with my entire consent, for it would have been difficult to have maintained terms of friendship with this government if he had remained at the head of the

64 Alamán, Historia de Méjico, V, 822-823; Zamacois, Historia de México, XI, 615; Manning, American Journal of International Law, VII, 797.
foreign affairs. 65

Poinsett also took an opportunity in his letter to Sparks to point out the current political situation in Mexico. He mildly chastised Sparks for the latter's favorable mention of a centralist government in Mexico. Poinsett contended that, in the beginning after independence, most leading Mexicans had favored centralism. Only a few "enlightened men" had supported federalism, but "fortunately for the country, the latter prevailed. . . ." Poinsett had no doubt that in Mexico centralism would lead to monarchy, a condition for which Alamán worked. It was his arrival, Poinsett averred, which had thwarted Alamán's designs for Mexico. 66

Once again, Poinsett was expressing an optimism and a self-importance which was not justified. In actuality, he was suspect among most Mexicans of any importance, no matter what their views. Alamán had done his work well. Almost all of Poinsett's efforts toward diplomatic negotiations were suspected by his Mexican counterparts. Manning has argued that because of Mexican reluctance to deal with Poinsett on several questions, "the few years of orderly government in Mexico

65Adams, ed., Sparks, Poinsett to Sparks, January 12, 1826, I, 311.

66Ibid., 311-312.
during which under more favorable circumstances friendly
relations might have been established with the United States,
thus obviating a half century of discord and a century of dis-trust, were passed in quibblings and misunderstandings. "67

Poinsett alone certainly cannot be blamed for the early
deterioration of Mexican-United States relations, for he was
representing the views of his government as much as he repre-
resented his own. But Alamán inferred that Poinsett's beliefs
were the same as those of all Americans. In doing so, he
apparently convinced the Mexican government of the dangers
which would accrue if close ties with the United States were
pursued. Thus, because of Poinsett's dedication to the cause
of federalism in Mexico, he became involved in activities which
enabled Alamán successfully to charge him with meddling in
the internal affairs of that country. 68

67 Early Diplomatic Relations, viii-ix; Burton in The Ameri-
can Secretaries of State, IV, 132, has concurred with Manning's
assessment of Poinsett's impact: "Transactions with Mexico
during Clay's service as Secretary of State furnish an important
cue to our diplomacy with that country from that day to this
/1928/. Through successive decades these relations had been
coloured by Mexican distrust of the motives of the United
States. . . ." 68

68 Manning, American Journal of International Law, VII,
789.
Poinsett's persistence in the face of growing adversity was admirable, if unrealistic. Throughout the first months of 1826, he tried to work out a settlement of the limits and commercial questions with an obviously reluctant Mexican government. Personally, in terms of land acquisition, Poinsett looked beyond Texas, for he would have liked to have gained New Mexico, California, and parts of Baja California, Sonora, Coahuila, and Nuevo Leon as well. Needless to say, however, his rather blundering diplomatic methods aroused Mexican suspicion to the extent that he got none of these territories; in fact, one historian stated bluntly that Poinsett "accomplished nothing."69

Poinsett's situation, in retrospect, appears quite precarious. When viewed by contemporary observers, though, the Mexican scene did not seem too agitated. An article in a leading United States news publication of that day informed the reader that "Mexico is represented as being very quiet and prosperous; and great respect is paid to the laws." Concerning Poinsett's problems, as of the summer of 1826 there was no mention of

them. The only reference to Poinsett in this publication was that "it is mentioned as probable that Mr. Poinsett will soon have concluded a commercial treaty between the United States and Mexico." 70 There was, furthermore, the intimation that a settlement might be possible in conjunction with the boundary question, for "there is considerable migration from the south-western states to Austin's settlement in Texas. The settlers already feel strong enough to protect themselves against the Indians. . . ." 71 By November 1826, however, there were evidently feelings of discontent in the disputed area, for the Mexican government gave no indication that it intended to relinquish control over the Texas province. It was reported that "the Americans in these provinces [Texas and Coahuila] have become dissatisfied with the [Mexican] government, and unless a speedy change takes place in affairs, they will most undoubtedly abandon their farms, and seek asylum in a land where freedom is not a bye-word only. . . ." 72 No territorial change occurred, but in the next month there was a presidential announcement that

70 Niles' Weekly Register, XXX (April 15, 1826), 117; (August 12, 1826), 421.

71 Ibid., XXXI (September 2, 1826), 3.

72 Ibid., (November 4, 1826), 157.
Poinsett had finally been able to conclude a treaty with Mexico.

On December 5, 1826, President Adams announced that "a treaty of amity, navigation, and commerce has, in the course of last summer, been concluded by your minister plenipotentiary at Mexico with the United States of that confederacy. . . ." This negotiation had reached fruition on the tenth of July. In Poinsett's mind, it was not at all the culmination of American aims in dealings with the Mexican government. In fact, the United States Senate, after consideration of the document, refused to ratify it, declaring that approval of this treaty could come about only after negotiation and settlement of the boundary question. 73

The impact of Alamán's strategy was becoming more obvious. Due to his policy of procrastination on the question of the boundary settlement, the United States government was stymied. The commercial arrangement was unquestionably secondary in American priorities. What dominated the official United States Mexican policy was land acquisition. Influenced by Alamán's preachments and admonitions, Mexican officials

73 U. S., Congress, American State Papers, VI, 210; Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 143; for the text, in Spanish and in English, of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, see American State Papers, VI, 952-962.
had thus come to suspect United States intentions toward their
country as had Alamán prior to the opening of negotiations.
It is a point of fact, then, that Poinsett's chances for any
actual diplomatic success were nil by the end of 1826.

As noted in the previous chapter, Alamán after his resig-
nation had turned much of his energy to an attempt to develop
Mexico's mining facilities and potential. An examination of
his papers, and those of Poinsett, indicates that the two men
had no further personal contact. But the significance of their
brief confrontation cannot be emphasized enough as to the
subsequent impact it had upon Mexican-United States relations
between 1825 and 1846, and to a lesser degree until 1853.
The tenor of relations was established between the two countries
because of that short period in the late summer and early fall
of 1825. Mexican official suspicion and distrust of the objectives
of the United States government increased, as did American dis-
dain for and aggravation with the outlook of the Mexican govern-
ment. Most noticeable was the increased hostility of each side
for the other.

In addition to the attitudes for which he was responsible as
a result of his negotiations with Alamán, Poinsett unintentionally
became involved in the promotion of increased Mexican hostility
toward his government. Again, Alamán represented the opposing viewpoint, though indirectly. This situation concerned Poinsett's activity in the Masonic controversy, briefly alluded to in prior discussion. His participation in the Masonic movement was sincere; however, as one Poinsett scholar has indicated, it was his founding of the York Rite Masonic Lodge which was used more than any one thing for his vilification among the Mexican people throughout the nineteenth century.

Soon after his arrival in Mexico, Poinsett, an active Mason, learned of the existence of several lodges of York Masons in the capital. The members of these lodges subsequently prevailed upon him as a fellow Mason to work for a charter for them, and he applied for this document with the Grand Lodge of New York. It was granted, and the American minister installed the Mexican Grand Lodge in his own home, little aware of the controversy such action would initiate.

There was also in Mexico an older Masonic Lodge, which had originated the movement in the country. This body obtained its charter from Scotland and was the Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge.

74Putnam, Joel Roberts Poinsett, 74.

75Ibid. Poinsett's account of this event is in National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, II.
Composed of members of the upper class in Mexican society, the Scottish Rite Masons, or the Escoceses, favored a monarchical form of government, were conservatives, and hated federalism. Indeed, the York Rite Lodges apparently were organized to counteract the influence of the Escoceses; therefore, when the York Rite Masons, or Yorkinos, received their charter, the Escoceses became incensed. The Yorkinos were devoted to the federalist system of government, adhered to democracy, and were relatively liberal in their outlooks. The fears of the Escoceses, moreover, were exacerbated when the membership of the Yorkinos increased rapidly as lodges were formed throughout the country. Nicolás Bravo, Vice President of the nation, was the leader of the Escoceses, and many distinguished politicians and soldiers were members of that body. On the other hand, such men as Santa Anna, Guerrero, and Zavala were counted among the members of the Yorkinos. 76

It was inevitable, considering the political atmosphere in Mexico at this time, that the rival Masonic lodges soon became

76 Young, History of Mexico, 222; Putnam, Joel Roberts Poinsett, 74. There is no mention of Alamán as a member of the Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge. Undoubtedly he held such membership, particularly in view of the political influence which the Masonic bodies came to wield.
representative of the two party factions in Mexico. The conservative-centralists and the Escoceses became synonymous, as was the case with the federalists and the Yorkinos. Alamán insinuated that Poinsett's action in chartering the York Rite Lodge in Mexico was the cause of the consequent fragmentation and polarization among the political groups. In Alamán's words, "with the arrival of Poinsett, Zavala and the priest of Cunduacan in Tabasco, D. José María Alpuche, . . . separated from the escoceses . . . to form a rival masonic body, which Poinsett offered to incorporate into the York Rite, dominant in the United States."

Within a short time, the two groups were contending with one another for political dominance in Mexico, and this contest in turn led to chaotic conditions in the country.

Although Poinsett severed his relationship with the Yorkinos when it became clear that theirs was a decided political involvement, "the organization remained . . . synonymous with the

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77 Historia de México, V, 824; Zamacois' later account of this particular event is almost verbatim. See his Historia de México, XI, 621: "D. Lorenzo Zavala y Don José María Alpuche, cura de Cunduacan, en Tabasco, . . . separados de los escoceses . . . por formar una masonería diversa, fueron los primeros que confiaron a Poinsett su proyecto. El ministro norteamericano les aplaudió la idea, y les ofreció incorporar, en el rito de York, que se hallaba preponderante en los Estados-Unidos."
group which he so frequently designated as the American party."
As a result, "with his avowed sympathy for the tenets of liberal-
ism, it was easy for his enemies to convince the public that
Poinsett was the . . . founder and guiding spirit of the Yorkinos."
Indeed, "his initial act was surely a blunder."\(^{78}\) The conser-
vativedentralists took advantage of this blunder to argue that
Poinsett's presence in Mexico constituted a danger to the nation.
He soon was considered persona non grata by the Mexican govern-
ment, in large measure because of the labors of Alamán.\(^ {79}\)

By 1827 Poinsett was convinced that his work in Mexico
had come to an end. The Mexican government, and many
Mexicans as well, looked upon Poinsett as Alamán depicted
him: the eager representative of a government which had as
its basic policy territorial aggrandizement. Poinsett was un-
questionably zealous in his support of federalism and in his
desire for land acquisition. At the same time, he was a

\(^{78}\)Putnam, Joel Roberts Poinsett, 74.

\(^{79}\)For further discussion of Poinsett and his involvement
in the Masonic controversy in Mexico, see Rippy's Poinsett,
Chapter IX; Manning's American Journal of International Law,
VII., 798-806; and Justin H. Smith's "Poinsett's Career in
Mexico," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society,
New series, XXIV (1914), 77-92, passim.
realist who now suggested to his government that it might be more profitable in the long run to wait until Texas filled up with more head-strong American settlers before pressing the Texas question any further. 80 This advice was not followed, and Alamán was able to checkmate Poinsett. Then, the Masonic controversy undermined Poinsett's remaining bit of effectiveness. Upon the rejection of the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation by the United States Senate late in 1826 because the question of limits remained unsettled, Poinsett made the decision to ask that he be recalled from his post in Mexico.

Perhaps Poinsett's release from his duties at this point would have helped restore better relations between his government and that of Mexico. However, personality was not so much involved. As leader of the group opposed to United States involvement in Mexico, Alamán seemingly had no personal dislike of Poinsett. He more than likely would have followed the same course with any minister the United States sent. Nevertheless, Poinsett was not at all popular in Mexico in early 1827, and his recall could possibly have been interpreted as an American gesture to rectify the situation.

President Adams did not act upon Poinsett's request, even though such action might have prevented the odium of complete failure from falling upon Poinsett's shoulders. But another presidential election was approaching in the United States, and so Adams decided to leave this ardent friend of his certain opponent, Andrew Jackson, in Mexico. At least the failure of his government's Mexican policy, Adams must have reasoned, could be attributed to the Jacksonians, and such considerations during an election, whether completely factual or not, could prove beneficial to his own efforts.

Poinsett consequently was urged to remain in Mexico even though he thought better of it. He was fully aware of Mexican animosity toward him, yet in April 1827, in a message to the Mexican Congress, President Victoria contended that Mexican-United States relations were not strained. Mexico continued to look upon the government in the United States with good feelings. He pointed out, moreover, that

Nothing has occurred to interrupt our friendly relations with the United States of North America--the treaties of navigation, commerce and amity, concluded with their minister plenipotentiary have been ratified by both houses of Congress. The Congress

81Rippy, Poinsett, 124.
view with peculiar interest this important negotiation with a nation so near to us, and whose system of government is so analogous to our own; in short, a nation who must ever be united to us by every sympathetic bond. 82

What purpose Victoria had in mind in making such statements is unknown. The fact remained that Mexican-United States relations were tense, and that the object of much of this tension, Poinsett, continued in his post in Mexico. Furthermore, the Mexican political situation was shaky as the conservative and liberal elements jockeyed for control of the national government. As a supporter of the liberal faction, Poinsett was considered a political enemy by the conservatives, led by Alamán.

Throughout 1827, the American public was kept informed of the growing hostility of the Mexican government and people toward the country, and Mexican political affairs were also watched. In June, it was noted that a leading Mexico City newspaper, El Sol, bitterly referred to the United States and compared the country unfavorably to Great Britain in reference to friendship with Mexico. As well, the Mexican newspaper asserted that successful negotiations with the United States

82Niles' Weekly Register, XXXII (April 7, 1827), 105.
were impossible "until the question of territorial limits between the Mexican union and ours, should be settled." 83

In July, the state legislature of Vera Cruz issued a strong condemnation of Poinsett, who was accused of an attempt to instigate internal upheaval. Poinsett answered the charge in a declaration that he had "never taken any part in the internal concerns of Mexico, --unless to advocate, in a Republic, on every fitting occasion, the superiority of a republican form of government over all others. . . ." Poinsett also believed that it was his duty "to explain the practical benefits of the institutions of the United States and the blessings which his countrymen have enjoyed and still continue to enjoy under them. . . ." 84

But the conservative elements were in the ascendancy, and Poinsett's arguments in favor of the institutions of his country as the answer to Mexican instability were not well-received.

In the United States, there was growing evidence that the incessant insults and verbal attacks on Poinsett by Mexican public officials and the Mexican conservative press also were

83Ibid., (June 23, 1827), 282.

considered as insults heaped upon the United States itself. The author of an article in a leading newspaper which appeared in September observed that a person in a position such as that enjoyed by Poinsett should not have to "find it necessary to vindicate himself, in such a manner, against such a body as [the Vera Cruz legislature]." Affairs did not improve throughout the remainder of 1827. It was reported later that a British newspaper literally exulted in the fact that Mexican-United States relations were floundering. It was also noted that it was generally understood that the Mexican Congress would not act upon any agreement with the United States if it adversely affected Great Britain. In October, Poinsett wrote to Dr. Joseph Johnson of Charleston that because he had founded and organized a republican party, the Yorkinos, he was violently opposed by the monarchists. There can be little doubt that

85 New York Daily Advertiser quoted in Niles' Weekly Register, XXXIII (September 1, 1827), 13.

86 Niles' Weekly Register, XXXIII (September 8, 1827), 19.

87 Joel R. Poinsett Papers, The Henry D. Gilpin Collection, Philadelphia, Poinsett to Dr. Joseph Johnson, October 1827, Entry 69. In November, Clay wrote Poinsett a letter to encourage him in the face of the Mexican criticism. He assured Poinsett that the President did not desire his resignation and hoped he would "conform to your own inclination" in reference to remaining in Mexico. National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Instructions, All Countries, Clay to Poinsett, November 19, 1837, XII.
Poinsett's was an unpleasant existence at the beginning of 1828, especially in view of the Mexican presidential election which was held, and the results of that election.

In that contest in Mexico, the liberal York Rite party supported Guerrero against the candidate of the conservative Scottish Rite party, Gómez Pedraza. The election was heated, and Gómez Pedraza won the official contest by the count of ten states to nine. However, as mentioned previously, Santa Anna encouraged Guerrero to contest the results of the election and supported him in this undertaking. Thus, the liberal party was able to retain control of the government, though this control was limited. There is no extant evidence to show that Poinsett was directly involved in the election activity on behalf of the liberal party. At the same time, there is little doubt that Guerrero's victory, illegal though it might have been, was for Poinsett a sweet one. It would also prove to be elusive as well.

Interest in the Mexican election was evident in the United States. In November, the outcome of the balloting was reported, with an indication that Gómez Pedraza had won the presidency. It was further observed that "the country appears to be in a very unsettled state, and . . . the bitterness of party has not
even spared our minister, of whom the 'Sol' says--'There is not wanting a suspicion, with foundation, that the American minister is the secret agent of Spain, instructed and well paid for dividing and destroying us. . . .'

This charge against Poinsett was resented by many in the United States: people who had come to view affairs in Mexico with a tinge of disgust. As one newspaper article stated the case, "the charge of Poinsett's being a bribed agent of the Spanish government, can excite no other emotion in the bosoms of Americans than those of indignation and contempt. . . ." It was also noted that there was reason to believe "that Mr. Poinsett is on the point of returning to the United States." 89

Poinsett was not contemplating an end to his diplomatic mission as was intimated, for the victory of Guerrero gave him encouragement. It was, according to a leading Mexican historian, "the triumph of 'the Americans.'" 90 Besides, the election of Andrew Jackson to the American presidency renewed his hope that notable diplomatic achievements between the United

88Niles' Weekly Register, XXXV (November 1, 1828), 155.
89Ibid., (November 29, 1828), 213.
90Vasconcelos, Breve historia de México, 299.
States and Mexico now could be brought about. As soon as the Jackson administration took office, Poinsett sent a communication to Secretary of State Martin van Buren, who was currently faced with the Texas question, in which he gave a recapitulation of major diplomatic events between Mexico and the United States since his arrival in that country. In this lengthy despatch, Poinsett expressed a dislike for Alamán, whom he referred to as a member of the Mexican aristocracy which had hopes of establishing a monarchy in that country with a Bourbon prince on the throne. Furthermore, Poinsett asserted that he believed Alamán and Prime Minister Canning of Great Britain had schemed against him to negotiate a new boundary treaty which would reduce the territorial claims of the United States. 91

President Jackson viewed the Mexican situation as one of importance, and in consideration of Poinsett's observations and efforts, he desired to purchase Texas if possible. Thus, Poinsett again was given the responsibility of attempting to negotiate with the Mexican government for the acquisition of Texas. Van Buren apparently did not share Jackson's enthusiasm for quick action in this matter, as he did not take it up.

91 Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence... Independence, Poinsett to Van Buren, March 10, 1829, III, Doc. 921, 1673-1685, passim.
for six months. Then, on August 25, 1829, he contacted
Poinsett as to the latter's procedures. Much of Van Buren's
information about Texas was given him by Colonel Anthony
Butler via a report to President Jackson.  Butler, a native
of Mississippi, was a friend of the President and a schemer
for United States ownership of Texas. As the man who was
soon to replace Poinsett, he too would come to learn that
Alamán was an individual of ability and dedication to his tenets.

Butler's report was given to Van Buren by Jackson, and the
Secretary of State used it to formulate a policy by which Poinsett
would purchase Texas from Mexico. In his August despatch to
Poinsett, Van Buren suggested four possible boundary lines.
The most expansive, thus desirable, was that which ran from
the Gulf of Mexico northward through the desert, or the Grand
Prairie, between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande River.
The second choice would be the line of the Lavaca River; third,
the Colorado River; and last, the Brazos River, which would be
the least acceptable. If Mexico could be persuaded to agree on
the first line, Poinsett was authorized to pay $4,000,000, possibly
$5,000,000, for the territory. Proportionate amounts were to be

92 See Library of Congress, Martin Van Buren MSS,
Jackson to Van Buren, August 12, 1829.
paid for the other areas in their order of importance. 93

The Mexican government still refused to negotiate with the American minister. Alamán's influence remained strong, though Poinsett was not surprised. His bitterness toward the Mexican government was evident in a despatch to Van Buren in March 1829, even before he was told to resume his negotiation efforts. He wrote that "it would lead you into error to compare them with the free and civilized nations of America and Europe. . . ." Indeed, he declared, "it is even a matter of some doubt whether this Nation had advanced one step in knowledge and civilization, from the time of conquest to the moment of declaring themselves Independent."94 Poinsett, cognizant of the fact that there was little chance, if any, for meaningful negotiation with Mexican officials, lived a fruitless diplomatic existence until his departure from Mexico at the beginning of the next year.

Animosity toward Poinsett and the government he represented mounted throughout Mexico among the conservatives in the summer of 1829. Likewise, there was an obvious dis-


94 Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence . . . Independence, Poinsett to Van Buren, March 10, 1829, III, Doc. 921, 1673.
satisfaction with the Guerrero government during this period. It was apparent that the conservative elements were continuing to gain strength and influence, and this trend in Mexico was noted in the United States. In the early fall of 1829, an article appeared in an American publication relevant to Poinsett's position in Mexico. The reporter informed his readers that "the situation of our minister in Mexico, would appear . . . to be very unpleasant, if not dangerously critical. . . ." An excerpt was then given from the Mexican newspaper, El Sol, referring to the suggestion rampant throughout Mexico that Poinsett be ordered out of the country: "Is the presence of Mr. Poinsett in the republic more consequence than union among Mexicans? Oh Washington! rise from thy sepulchre, rise and present to those who oppose this measure, thy well known maxim." There followed the blunt reminder "how fearful to all free systems is foreign influence." The American reporter, finally, expressed concern for Poinsett, revealing that "some of the papers hint openly enough that unless he leaves the country, he may be made a bloody example."95 Although there

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95Niles' Weekly Register, XXXVII (September 26, 1829), 71. In August, Poinsett had issued a reply to charges made against him by the Mexican Congress. He expressed his surprise and disappointment that Mexicans could believe him
is little probability that Poinsett was in actual physical danger, the constant inveighing against him was unnerving.

Poinsett did not hesitate to defend himself and his government against the verbal assaults to which he was subjected during the last months of his residence in Mexico. Moreover, he received moral support from various sources in the United States. It was suggested, for example, that Poinsett's efforts were wasted on a nation which was undeserving of such:

Mr. Poinsett's reply to certain accusations preferred against him in Mexico as strongly shews as any thing else that we have met with, the unfitness of the people of that country to live under the mild and generous principles of republicanism. They are, at once, the agents and the victims of foreign intriguants and domestic aspirants, and the rights of things do not seem at all respected, except as they may be rendered subserviant to contests of power. . . . It is every way our interest, that the Mexicans should become a great and prosperous, and truly independent and free people; and every act of our government has tended to shew it. 96

96 Niles' Weekly Register, XXXVII (October 3, 1829), 81.
Had he read the above declaration, Alamán likely would have agreed with its contention, except for the final observations concerning the efforts of the United States government. Indeed, it was his hope that the Mexican people would not be subjected to the "mild and generous principles of republicanism," whether fit or unfit.

In contesting with Poinsett, Alamán sought to prevent United States involvement in Mexican affairs. But Poinsett insisted that he was not guilty of such action. To demands that he leave Mexico due to his meddling, he replied that "he totally denies that he has interfered, either directly or indirectly, in the most remote degree, with the business of the interior of this republic. . . ." He continued, however, by qualifying this statement with the observation that some might consider, though he did not, "his decided preference for republican institutions, and his ardent desire that no part of America should be under the influence of any European power . . ." to be interference. Furthermore, Poinsett warned that the development of competition between Mexico and the United States would have grave consequences. The United States desired only the best for Mexico, and the Mexican people could "rest assured, that the policy of the United States is free from
all stratagem and disguise. "97 Despite such protestations of
good will and good intentions, Poinsett was no longer wanted
in Mexico, and he was asked to take his leave to return to the
United States.

The Mexican government, in requesting that Poinsett be
relieved of his duties as United States representative to Mexico,
made no specific accusations against him. Indeed, as one
authority observed, "if our minister deserved . . . condem­
nation, the Mexicans were justified in regarding with deep
suspicion the country that sent him and supported him. . . ."98
Alamán's fears concerning the intentions of the United States
government had thus been proved correct as far as his own was
concerned. Following the advice of his superiors, the United
States minister had made a blatant attempt to secure territory
which belonged to Mexico. In addition, he had promoted a
system of government for Mexico which many Mexicans con­
sidered dangerous. Relations at the end of 1829, therefore,
were in an unhealthy state of affairs. The early apprehensions
expressed by Alamán had gained wide acceptance in Mexico.

97Ibid., 92.

98Smith, American Antiquarian Society, XXIV, 77-78.
On the other hand, the discourteous treatment of Poinsett during his residence in Mexico had insulted and angered the United States government and people. 99

It was at this juncture in Mexican-United States relations that there was a pressing need for a skilled American diplomat who successfully could allay Mexican fears, especially those of the conservative faction. Whether or not this alleviation could have occurred is in the realm of speculation, but it would have been worth the effort. As it was, the man sent to replace Poinsett was less able than his predecessor. Unfortunately for the United States government, the Mexican official with whom Anthony Butler would initially deal at a critical time was none other than Lucas Alamán.

Poinsett requested his passport on December 23, 1829, though he remained in Mexico until January 2, 1830. During this short period he undoubtedly watched with interested concern the debacle of Guerrero's government. 100 But such things were no longer his affair. He returned to his own country, where he continued a political career. The first

99 Rippy, United States and Mexico, 6.

100 Bosch García, Historia de las relaciones, 44.
United States minister to Mexico, however, left that country an humbled man in the eyes of most Mexicans. This condition was attributable to Alamán, who within a short time would become the dominant political figure in the country for approximately two years. Poinsett's failure in Mexico was not because of personal incompetence; rather, he had not anticipated the mood of Mexico or the ability of Alamán upon his arrival there.

According to an eminent Mexican historian and writer, Alamán alone was the only man in government able to oppose Poinsett in the negotiations which were undertaken. As a means of comparison, this authority has contended that Alamán was the Mexican counterpart of such famous Americans as Hamilton, John Quincy Adams, and Clay. But Alamán was the only man of such eminence in Mexico, and that is the reason for the disgrace of Mexico insofar as its relations with the United States were concerned.\(^{101}\) As long as he was in a position of influence, however, Alamán performed his duties well, whether his policies generally were acceptable or not. Indeed, if the United States government and its people were embarrassed as

\(^{101}\text{Vasconcelos, Breve historia de México, 299, 315, 316.}\)
a result of Alamán's performance in his dealings with Poinsett, both officially and unofficially, between 1825 and 1829, they were to be stunned by the humiliation the Mexican statesman was to heap upon Poinsett's stumbling successor.
When Poinsett decided to leave Mexico in December 1829, diplomatic relations between the Mexican and United States governments were strained. At that point, however, there was still the possibility that friendly contact could be engendered in spite of the ill-will spawned by the American representative. Alamán had not been active in the affairs of government and therefore was not believed by United States officials to be as influential as in the months before. The government of Guerrero had reached its nadir and was on the verge of collapse. If the current Mexican administration was overthrown, a distinct probability, then there was the chance that a new Mexican chief executive would be more inclined to treat with the United States government.

Thus, it was to the advantage of the Jackson administration to give careful consideration to the appointment of a replacement for Poinsett. But such caution was not followed, for as early as
October 1829, prior to Poinsett's recall, Jackson had decided to appoint his friend, Anthony Butler, to that post. Moreover, as fate, or chance, would have it, events in Mexico followed such a course that by January 1830, Alamán once more was in the position of Foreign Secretary.

In the confusion of Mexican politics at the end of 1829, Guerrero found himself confronted with several revolts. On December 23, led by the Vice President, Anastasio Bustamante, the army rose up against the President. Supporting Bustamante was the aforementioned triumverate composed of Vélez, Quintanar, and Alamán. Prior to the declaration of this poder ejecutivo on behalf of Bustamante, Guerrero requested that Alamán go to Puebla and confer with the Vice President. He seemed to desire a compromise. Alamán agreed and went to that city; however, Guerrero apparently had second thoughts and sent a letter to Alamán. The conservative leader was informed that his services would not be needed after all. Guerrero then attempted to resist Bustamante's undertaking. He left the executive office under the control of Bocanegra and marched southward to confront the Vice President. The declaration by Vélez, Quintanar, and Alamán was issued in his absence from the capital, and this support for Bustamante undermined Guerrero. The President
fled to the south. On January 1, 1830, Bustamante assumed the office of the presidency by virtue of the support of the various conservative elements in Mexico—the clergy, the well-to-do, the army, and powerful individual leaders such as Alamán. 1

Bustamante's seizure of the Mexican presidency apparently did not concern the United States government. President Jackson seemed to have no extensive interest in affairs in Mexico beyond the acquisition of Texas. Poinsett's failure had left him undeterred, and he did not understand the ramifications of Alamán's actions in dealing with the Adams administration. Jackson was convinced that Texas could be attained, regardless of the opposition of such men as Alamán. He believed that Butler was an expert on the Texas situation, even though the only basis for such belief was Butler's own assurance of his ability and knowledge. Within a short time, Jackson would understand something of the problem which had confronted his predecessor. However, at the

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1 Zamacois, Historia de México, XI, 823-824; Alamán, Documentos diversos, III, 513; Valadés, Alamán, 239-240. Anthony Butler, who arrived in Mexico City in December 1829, reported these events to the State Department. It was his belief that the overthrow of Guerrero could have been prevented, but the President failed to take advantage of several opportunities to crush the rebellious forces. Instead, he "abandoned the army, retired to his Estate, and the whole power of Government is now in the hands of his Adversaries." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, December 31, 1829, V.
end of 1829 the American President was confident that Butler would be successful in his mission. And so the reappointment of Alamán by Bustamante as Minister for Foreign Affairs was not viewed in Washington as a bad omen.

The entrance of Bustamante into Mexico City on January 1 was a coup for the conservative-centralist elements. Until his actual assumption of power, the three-man poder ejecutivo maintained control for him. Alamán was the center of this interim body of administration, and he was considered by his peers to be the most influential man in the country.2 Upon his arrival in the capital, Bustamante undertook the formation of his government. In view of Alamán's reputation, there was no element of surprise to the announcement that he would become Minister for Foreign Affairs for the fourth time since the creation of the independent nation. This appointment was made on January 4, and Alamán again assumed a major role in the

2Valadés, Alamán, 240. Butler informed his government that "the persons now in power are considered as devoted to British interests, and hostile as well towards our people as to our Government, a hostility doubtless exasperated by the collisions that have taken place between our late minister and some of the leaders of that party in the course of the past two years." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, December 31, 1829, V. "Persons . . . in power" undoubtedly was a reference to Alamán.
government of Mexico. 3

When Alamán resumed control of Mexico's foreign and internal affairs, his situation had changed to a large extent as compared with his earlier tenures. In those previous ministries, to be sure, Alamán wielded power and was influential.

As Bustamante's Foreign Affairs Minister, however, in January 1830 he unquestionably was the most powerful man within the Mexican political spectrum. Bustamante deferred to Alamán, for he realized that the conservative leader was responsible for his success in gaining the presidency. Vélez and Quintanar were unknown quantities when the poder ejecutivo was formed. It is doubtful that they could have mustered enough support for Bustamante to overthrow Guerrero. But Alamán's presence on the triumverate attracted the backing of the majority of the conservatives. The result was that Bustamante gained enough momentum to oust Guerrero.

Bustamante was thus aware of the circumstances of his success, as well as of the importance of Alamán's presence in his government. Consequently, for all practical purposes Alamán

3Valadés, Alamán, 245; Zamacois, Historia de México, XI, 830-831. See Butler's letter of January 5, 1830, to Van Buren in National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, V, for the announcement of Alamán's appointment.
was presented a carte blanche for his activities. It goes without saying that he took full advantage of this windfall.

In this position of power he now occupied, Alamán undertook, as noted in earlier discussion, a reconstruction of the Mexican political edifice. In the words of an eminent Mexican observer, this was a period of hope. Bustamante was President of the Republic, but that position should have been occupied, in that writer's opinion, by Alamán: "Es claro que el presidente debió ser Alamán." He was eminently qualified for such office as attested by his earlier service to Mexico. Nevertheless, Bustamante's administration was honorable; indeed, he himself was a more cultured individual than usual when compared to other generals of the time. 4

But it was Alamán, not the President, who controlled Mexico's affairs for the next two years. This fact boded ill for the United States government, which did not change its strategy in dealing with an already suspicious Mexican government. Alamán was cognizant of this situation, and most of his political activity during the period of the Bustamante administration was undertaken with this in mind.

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4Vasconcelos, Breve historia de México, 316-317.
A contemporary observer in the United States wondered if Alamán actually desired to become involved in the affairs of government once again, for it was believed that only the supplication of Bustamante had persuaded him to forsake complete involvement in the industrialization effort underway in the country. When viewed in retrospect, however, it is doubtful that Alamán's decision required any serious contemplation. His vigor in carrying out various programs as de facto ruler of Mexico between 1830 and 1832 would seem to contradict any contention that he resumed government service reluctantly.

On the other hand, he was well aware of the difficult situation which confronted the new government, and he could afford to harbor reservations about the tasks ahead. The Mexican political situation in 1830 was ominous. Civil war had rent the nation asunder, and in and around the capital there was little public confidence in the national government. Guerrero after fleeing to the south had vowed to take up arms against the Bustamante regime. Santa Anna, of late the arbiter in political affairs and the hero of Vera Cruz who had defeated the Spaniards, remained uncommitted to any specific party or

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5 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 270.
The financial situation was grim, for the national treasury was almost empty. To make matters worse, the common people were unfairly taxed, although rarely did more than one-tenth of the revenues collected reach the national coffers. A man of lesser ability would not have relished dealing with such a panorama of disorder; however, Alamán possessed an abundance of self-confidence and was able. He showed no reluctance to attempt to cure Mexico's ills. ⁶

It was Alamán's desire to stabilize the Mexican economy and the political situation. He was determined to make Mexico strong, and he was ready to employ whatever means necessary to do this. Of one thing he was convinced. Mexico's future in foreign relations lay with Europe, not with the United States. He had witnessed enough of what he considered the duplicity of the United States government in his dealings with Poinsett to conclude that amicable interchange with that nation was unrealistic. His years in Europe imbued him with a European, particularly British, outlook, and he was not at all hesitant to bind his nation closely to Great Britain. This he had attempted to do in the years between 1823 and 1830.

⁶Ibid., 270-271, 273.
Although the United States could not be ignored, if that country was made to realize that its endeavors were in vain, it more than likely would become less persistent in its efforts to compromise, in Alamán's opinion, the Mexican government and nation. It was not out of context with his plans, therefore, that he contacted the British government in the early part of 1830 concerning the feasibility of establishing a monarchy in Mexico. If this were done, the country could develop an economic and industrial self-sufficiency while depending upon some European nation for diplomatic guidance and protection. Alamán let it be known among British officials that any European prince except a Spanish Bourbon could gain support in Mexico if a monarchy was established. 7

Alamán did not express such sentiments on this subject in his informal writings, which might have shed more light on his thoughts. 8 Whatever the case, it is obvious that his suggestion

7Rippy, Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain, 301.

8One of the major problems confronting this writer in his research on Alamán was the lack of private, personal correspondence to and from him a propos this topic. While in Mexico City I attempted to discover if there might be Alamán diaries or papers in the possession of his descendants or others. With the help of Miss Gloria Grajales, Manuscript Curator of the Biblioteca Nacional, several days were spent telephoning scholars and archivists, none of whom believed that such
did not generate enthusiasm among the British. No such plan was pursued further, although he continued to think along these lines and would later revive the monarchical idea during the war with the United States. For the present, he had to accept the Mexican situation of republican independence and had to work within that framework.

During this period of his control, Alamán inaugurated his plan to create an industrial nation which would compare with those of Europe. It was at this time that he created the Banco de Avío to promote manufacturing. Machinery was purchased from Europe, then loaned without cost to would-be manufacturers. The results of these actions were mentioned in a previous chapter.

papers are known to exist. Alamán seemed intent upon remaining politically unobtrusive throughout his long career. To be sure, there is an abundance of correspondence on many factors concerning economic matters, and even internal political matters, in the Colección Lafarguía of the Biblioteca Nacional and in the Latin American Collection of the University of Texas Library, Austin. However, on such questions as those concerning a European monarch or his feelings about the United States, he remained taciturn in his personal correspondence.

Manuscript holdings in the National Archives were examined extensively, and Alamán is mentioned often. Also, there is available much of his correspondence in the diplomatic despatches. The problem remains, however, that this correspondence is of a formal, impersonal, and quite proper nature, revealing little of the man himself.
Mexico nevertheless reached its most prosperous times during this short span, and it has been contended that such prosperity might have continued if Santa Anna had not interfered in 1832 by overturning the Bustamante government. Alamán's ability was unquestionable, but his methods left something to be desired.9

In his efforts to improve Mexico's economic and political affairs, Alamán kept in mind the underlying need for self-sufficiency. Paramount among the reasons for the need of Mexican strength, in his view, was the threat of United States interference in Mexican affairs. Since the departure of Poinsett in early January, Alamán discerned no change of diplomatic intent on the part of the United States. In fact, Poinsett's successor was a man even more repugnant to him. It was obvious to the Mexican minister that the United States government, rather than attempting to demonstrate a sincere good will toward his nation, was now revealing its true intentions. Mexican territory was to be absorbed into the territorial United States by any means possible.

Butler's personality and designs seemed to confirm

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9 Robinson, Mexico and Her Military Chieftains, 277-278.
Alamán's suspicions beyond doubt. He possessed no qualifications for the post to which he was appointed except that he was acquainted with Texas and was a personal friend of President Jackson. He was intemperate and undiplomatic. He had no understanding of official procedure and protocol. In the opinion of a leading authority on this subject, Butler was unquestionably "a national disgrace." He was sincere in his efforts, and he more than likely believed that his undertaking was for the good of his country. In fact, the failure of Butler's mission was more the fault of Jackson for appointing him. Nevertheless, Butler's presence in Mexico for six years did nothing to enhance Mexican-United States relations.

Jackson made the decision to send Butler to Mexico even before Poinsett announced his desire to resign. It was generally acknowledged by the summer of 1829 that Poinsett could achieve nothing as the United States minister in Mexico. President Jackson decided to recall him, and in October he so informed Butler. In a letter to his friend, the President noted the problems which Poinsett had faced during his residence in

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10Smith, War with Mexico, I, 62. With this conclusion most historians who have dealt with these questions agree. Several among those who have excoriated Butler are Valadés, John Spencer Bassett, Rippy, and Jesse S. Reeves.
Mexico. Because Poinsett was confronted with growing Mexican hostility, and because he had been treated "with great indecorum," Jackson had reached a decision: "we have determined to recall him. . . ." Butler was requested to convey the feelings of the President to Poinsett, and if the latter agreed to give up his mission, Butler was to replace him. Poinsett would be instructed to "hand you a commission of charge de affairs with full powers to conclude, with the Govt of Mexico, A Treaty of Commerce, and also one of Limits, according to the instructions to Mr Poinsett, by which you will be governed."¹¹

After informing Butler that he was to replace Poinsett, Jackson proceeded to give his friend instructions which he thought would bring about success in negotiations with the Mexican government. His advice, however, revealed that Jackson was as naïve in reference to the Mexican situation as was the man to whom he addressed himself. Jackson warned his appointee that

With the Minister of Foreign relations you must remember /sic/, you will be obliged /sic/ to negotiate, and in order to win and retain his good graces, that it will be necessary to study the character and the influence of the minority, which he is understood to direct. Let a listening ear, a silent tongue and a steadfast /sic/ heart,

¹¹Anthony Butler Papers, University of Texas Library, Austin, Jackson to Butler, October 10, 1829.
the three jewels of wisdom, guard every advance which you make on the subject of Texas. The acquisition of that territory is becoming every day an object of more importance to us. . . .12

Jackson evidently had learned nothing from Poinsett's experience in Mexico. Preoccupied with the acquisition of Texas, the President sincerely believed that a careful approach on the question of the disputed area would suffice. Butler was not a man to carry out such a mission, however, much less to convince the Mexican government of the sincerity of the American position. Had he done so intentionally, Jackson could not have appointed a more qualified envoy insofar as Alamán was concerned. In other words, Butler was incompetent. But such incompetence was not yet obvious, and Butler and Jackson continued to formulate a plan for the acquisition of Texas.

Later in that same month Jackson penned a confidential note to his newly-appointed minister concerning the significance of his upcoming mission. Again, the theme of the President's message was Texas: "... I confide much in you [sic] ability to conduct the negotiation for the purchase of Texas, which is very important to the harmony and peace of the two republics." In Jackson's opinion, Texas was

12Ibid.
important not only for its territorial expanse but also for its political implications. "Unless we obtain that territory we shall be in constant danger of the jealousy which the nature of its population is so well calculated to create." Jackson, it would seem, was concerned that this outlook among Texans would cause them to "... make an effort to set up a free government the moment they have the power, and we shall be charged with aiding this movement altho all our constitutional powers may be employed to prevent it."\(^{13}\)

This viewpoint on the part of the American President presented a new twist to the United States rationale for seizing Texas. Jackson reasoned that Texas should be under the constitutional control of the United States inasmuch as its population tended toward uprising. If Texas was part of Mexico and the people rebelled, the United States government would find itself on the horns of a dilemma. Because the majority of the Texas settlers were from the United States, there would exist a feeling that they should receive help from their kinsmen in the event of some move toward more freedom. At the same time, legally these people were citizens of Mexico, and official

\(^{13}\)ibid., Jackson to Butler, October 19, 1829.
United States support of this area could be construed by the Mexican government as unwarranted interference. To a degree, then, Jackson and Alamán viewed the Texas situation in the same light. The difference between them was in how each would go about attempting to settle the problem.

In Mexico the actions of the United States government were closely observed. Throughout November 1829, no move was made by either government concerning negotiations. President Jackson, Secretary of State Van Buren, and Butler continued to plan a policy for the purchase of Texas, though it remained more or less the same as that which Van Buren presented to Poinsett in August. Mexican affairs were disorganized in view of the impending clash between Guerrero and Bustamante. It was not until the end of December that contact between the two governments again occurred.

On Christmas Day, Poinsett met with Vélez, Quintanar, and Alamán at the Palacio Nacional. He had requested his passport two days before, and this meeting was a formal one for the purpose of acknowledging his resignation. Apparently the gathering was cordial, and for the first time Poinsett and Alamán, no longer adversaries, viewed one another almost with a feeling of admiration. It was noted by this interim Mexican
government that Poinsett was a wise man, though his outlooks were considered unhealthy for Mexican-United States relations. 14

Poinsett took his leave of the three Mexican officials, and as a private citizen made preparations for the return to the United States. Also, he spent the next week before his departure briefing his replacement on the situation in Mexico and between the two governments. Butler had arrived in the capital on December 23, the day Poinsett requested his passport.

Butler came to Mexico eager to undertake negotiations for the purchase of Texas. If the United States came into possession of that area, there was little doubt that he would make financial gains as a result of the speculation he foresaw. The struggle between Guerrero and Bustamante was underway, however, and Butler was forced to await the outcome in order to determine with whom he would deal. For the next six years he would pursue the question of Texas, without tact and with little ability. As one authority expressed it, during this time "Butler represented, or rather misrepresented, the United States." 15 He did not know the meaning of the word "subtle,"

14Valadés, Alamán, 270.

and in the minds of Mexican authorities he unwittingly confirmed
the charges which Alamán had leveled against the United States
government.

The coming of Butler to Mexico put the Texas situation into
perspective for the Bustamante government. Here was a spoils
politician who was sent to represent the Jackson administration,
a man who had no diplomatic experience or skill. His only
qualification for the post was the fact that he had speculated
in some Texas lands granted to Americans and considered
himself an authority on that area. Although there is little
doubt that Poinsett had cautioned his successor about the mood
of Mexican authorities on the subject of Texas and land acquisi-
tion, Butler blundered into such negotiations without any
reservations. 16

16 One United States historian contended that Butler was the
worst possible choice for the post in Mexico. Jesse S. Reeves,
on page 67 of his American Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk
(Baltimore, 1907), argued that "Butler lacked moral character
and fitness for any position of trust. No worse selection for a
diplomatic position could have been made. Poinsett, who had
been extremely cautious about making overtures for the cession
of Texas, . . . was recalled to make room for Butler, who was
charged with being a speculator in Texas lands, a gambler, a
drunkard, and a liar. . . . It is safe to say that Butler's
mission, discreditable and even disgraceful, had much to do
with the unsatisfactory course of our diplomatic relations with
Mexico which ended in war." There has been no rectification
of Butler's reputation since this assessment was made in the
early part of this century.
Moreover, it was at this point that the Mexican government was at last able to devote undivided attention to the Texas matter. During Victoria's administration and the uneasy period of Guerrero's presidency, other pressing questions prevented Mexican officials from devoting themselves to the problem of Texas as they would have liked. Alamán in his negotiations with Poinsett was aware of the seriousness of the matter; still, he carried out his duties within the framework of the Victoria administration.

In 1830, however, Alamán was in a more advantageous position. He was the leader of the Bustamante regime, and in this capacity he was able to call the Texas affair to the attention of the discriminating group of the Mexican public, that is, those people who controlled the political, economic, and religious affairs of the country. As a result of Alamán's activity, a period of easy indifference was replaced by one of attempted regulation and control, and the stage was set for conflict between Mexico and the United States. 17

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17 Rives, The United States and Mexico 1821-1848, I, 192. Butler indicated that the attitude of Bustamante's Cabinet ministers represented the outlooks of well-to-do elements aligned with the British. See National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, January 5, 1830, V.
In spite of Alamán's reservations, the Mexican government since the grants to Austin after independence had done nothing to check the flow of American settlers into Texas. Indeed, the Mexican government had actually granted various inducements—such as land bonuses and tax concessions—to these people if they settled in Texas. The rationale behind Mexican thinking in this matter does not seem reasonable, although it was believed that such a policy would establish a buffer area between Mexico and the United States. The American government did nothing either to prevent or to encourage American settlement in Mexican territory. 18

By 1830, the arrangement proved unworkable. Mexican officials were now in accord with Alamán's warnings of United States perfidy, and United States politicians generally had come to believe that the acquisition of Texas was necessary for national well-being. Then Butler arrived on the scene, and Alamán proceeded with his plans to thwart the United States government in its activities.

When Butler was first approached by Jackson on the question of Texas, he made the suggestion that bribery would

be the most effective means of acquiring the area. Jackson did not agree with him. In spite of a variety of shortcomings in his character, Jackson was not a man who would condone this type of action in diplomatic negotiations and chided Butler for making such a suggestion. After he had chastised Butler, Jackson then informed his minister of his own feelings in the matter.

It would be Butler's principal mission to acquire Texas. Also, he was to attempt to bring about a new interpretation of the provisions of the Adams-Onís Treaty which might result in the gain of additional territory. For the purchase of Texas, Butler was to offer the Mexican government $5,000,000.

Butler subsequently departed for Mexico, met with Poinsett, and prepared to negotiate with the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs, as yet unappointed. By January 1830, Alamán had received his appointment to that post, and once again the issue of Texas was raised between the two governments.

19Binkley, Expansionist Movement, 14.

20Valadés, Alamán, 270. These arrangements were reported to the Mexican people in *El Sol*, a leading newspaper in Ciudad México, though Butler denied that such arrangements had transpired. "A few days before the departure of Mr. Poinsett from this Capital, the American Colonel Butler arrived here, commissioned, it is said, by the Government of Washington, to negotiate with ours for the cession of the Province of Texas, for the sum of five millions of dollars." *El Sol* (Ciudad México), January 9, 1830.
In September 1829, the short-lived Guerrero government had taken a significant step concerning the problem of Texas. Until that time, Negro slavery was permitted in Mexico, although it was not widespread. Throughout most of the Republic, Indians were kept in a state of servitude by virtue of the system of debt peonage. Such was not the case in Texas, however, and Negro slaves were brought in from the southwestern region of the United States. As more and more Americans from the southern states arrived in the province of Texas, Negro slavery was encouraged.

Then Guerrero, at the urging of Tornel, made the decision to issue a decree of emancipation. This ordinance was forthcoming on September 15, 1829. There were various reasons for this action by the Mexican President. He apparently believed that such a move would shore up his declining popularity, would make him well-known abroad, especially in abolitionist-minded Great Britain, and would prevent a continuing influx of American settlers into Texas. Tornel acted to bring this decree about for the purpose, according to one scholar, of convincing Guerrero that in doing so he could bring about an end to the innuendo that he and Poinsset were in league with one another. The emancipation order had no
particular impact in Mexico as a whole, but it created a furor north of the Rio Bravo del Norte. So intense was the opposition of Texas settlers and provincial officials to this decree that on December 2 a new order was issued which exempted the Department of Texas from the emancipation ruling. This reprieve from more Mexican control over their affairs was not enjoyed for long by the Texas settlers, for Guerrero was soon replaced by Bustamante. In turn, Alamán as Minister for Foreign Affairs had new plans for Texas, plans which would make the emancipation effort seem innocuous.

In Mexico City, as Alamán devised his strategy concerning Texas, Butler waited impatiently to begin talks with the Mexican minister. Since his arrival in that city, nothing had transpired between the representatives of the two governments. As Butler waited to begin his duties, he assessed the political situation and conveyed his observations to Washington. Anticipating his dealings with Alamán, he noted that if he could not "disarm and destroy" the prejudices against the United States, "I foresee that my labours here will be arduous and the progress slow. . . ."

Butler believed, however, that the key to his success was Alamán. In his opinion, if he was vigilant and cautious, "I will not fail. . . ." He observed that "the Secretary of State is a British Agent and receiving a large annual salary from the Mining Company--this is an appeal to the master passion of a Mexican--his cupidity. . . ." But Butler was optimistic. "If I gain him or neutralize him it must be by discovering and addressing myself to some other passion of nearly equal power. . . ." Then, by "keeping it awake by judicious application," Butler believed that he could "discover where that passion resides." Alamán might be cold and distant at first, "but if I can place myself at ease with him, the labour will not be difficult."22

Nevertheless, Butler was uneasy, for Alamán did not formally acknowledge his credentials until the end of the month of January. Consequently, President Jackson sought to reassure him. February passed without incident, or so the inane Butler thought. It was during this month that Alamán drew up his project for Texas. But this was not yet known,

22National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, January 5, 1830, V.
and so Butler had no idea what the Mexican government intended.

In March, he received a despatch from Washington:

That the revolutionary spirit should be still disturbing the repose of Mexico and is likely to paralyze for a considerable time, if not change altogether, her Republican Government, is a source of the most painful regret, . . .

No contingency can authorise /sic/ your interference with her concerns. Let them take what form they may in setting up and pulling down rulers, friendly or unfriendly, to the principles of free government, yours is the part of neutrality which should dictate at all times a respect for the existing powers and a distinct avoidance of whatever can commit your character, either in your public or private relations, to the exclusive interests of a party. . . . 23

Jackson was determined that Butler should not become embroiled in Mexican affairs as had Poinsett. The suspense of waiting, to which Butler was now subjected, might lead him to undertake such involvement. Thus, in no uncertain terms Butler was told to refrain from such activity.

Due to growing dissatisfaction among Texas settlers, Butler's purpose in Mexico was to be the acquisition of that

23Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, March 23, 1830. Butler, however, had indicated earlier that it would be difficult for him to remain aloof of political factionism. "The party at present in power unite in their support most of the wealthy and the whole of the aristocratic part of the community." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, March 9, 1830, V.
province, little else. As Jackson pointed out, "another great inducement for a new territorial arrangement, as the basis of a lasting peace between the two republics, arises from the influence which the population of Texas is fast acquiring. . . ." The Texas settlers, it seemed, were uneasy about the intentions of the Mexican government toward them. Because of their uneasiness, and because they derived "their ideas of government from the United States, their collisions may from this cause weaken the confidence of that republic [Mexico] in [the United States]." It was Butler's task, therefore, to arrange for some type of agreement with the Mexican government in which Texas could be acquired and a new boundary established, "without unjustly exposing us to the charge of ambition or unfriendliness in the eyes of that republic." The outlook and mood of the Texans, in Jackson's opinion, provided "an argument for the cession almost irresistible."  

It was actually too late for Butler to make any effective suggestion to the Mexican government. Alamán learned soon after his appointment in January that the Jackson administration planned to submit another proposal for the purchase of Texas,  

24Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, March 23, 1830.
one which was similar to that made by President Adams. In view of the way in which he had carried on negotiations with Poinsett, Alamán must have considered this persistence on the part of the United States government a mark either of stupidity or of contempt for his nation. During Victoria's presidency, his ministry had come to an end soon after he and Poinsett had begun their negotiations, and he had turned his efforts elsewhere. However, Alamán was now able to carry out a more extensive campaign to checkmate the efforts of the American government to absorb Texas.

When examined from the Mexican point of view, the situation in Texas by February 1830 was dangerous. Between 1825 and 1827, American settlers flooded into Texas in spite of various ineffective restrictions, such as the requirement that all settlers adhere to the Catholic faith. By 1828, the population of that department numbered approximately 12,000. The emigration from the United States continued throughout 1829.

In February 1830, Alamán determined once and for all to check this flow of Americans and to institute such restrictions as to compel those who were already there to leave. On the eighth of the month, he read a report before a closed session
of the Mexican Congress concerning the determination of the United States to possess Texas. His paper was composed of two parts. The first considered the false policy with which that government was attempting to dupe the Mexican people; the second was a presentation of the means by which the Mexican nation must protect itself and its territory. 25 After a month of deliberation, the Mexican Congress passed this program drawn up by Alamán. It was to become known as the Law of Colonization of April 6 (la Ley de Colonización del 6 de abril) because of the date on which it became official policy. 26

According to Valadés, this law was the result of Alamán's clear vision of the future, that is, he had concluded that Butler would pursue the same path of negotiation as had Poinsett. The Ley de Colonización was not subtle, nor was it indirect. There was no question as to what it proposed or as to what its purpose was. The primary aim of Alamán's program as represented by the Law was the prevention of United States seizure of Texas, by purchase or any other means. In light of previous Mexican policy toward the region, this new provision was noticeably

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25 James, Mexico and the Americans, 56; Rives, The United States and Mexico 1821-1848, I, 193.

26 Fuentes Mares, Poinsett, 127.
restrictive.

There were many requirements and conditions under this law to which colonists or residents of Texas were subjected. For an unspecified length of time, no further colonization in the department would take place, for grants to United States applicants were suspended. Stringent customs duties were put into force along the Louisiana frontier for the purpose of discouraging trade between residents in Texas and in the southwestern region of the United States. Alamán also specified that the Texas area was to be populated predominantly by Mexican elements, and it was further proposed that convicts would be allowed to go to Texas with the understanding that they settle there at the end of their sentence term. In order to see that these provisions were carried out, Alamán arranged to have Mexican troops located throughout the Texas area under the command of General Mier y Terán. Anyone other than a Mexican citizen who wanted to enter Texas had to apply for a passport, which probably would not be granted. Any independent settlers in the area not on regular grants from the Mexican government would be ejected. Slavery, it might be added, was
not allowed in spite of the exemption ruling of December 1829. 27

It was clear that this law was intended not only to discourage further migration into Texas but also to intimidate those settlers already there and to pressure them into leaving the area. Alamán fully intended that force be employed if necessary to carry out the provisions of the law. Although such procedure might result in the possibility of confrontation with the United States government, Alamán believed it was worth the risk. In his opinion, if action of this nature was not undertaken, it would only be a matter of time before the United States absorbed Texas, and possibly additional Mexican territory.

In giving his reasons for action to the Mexican Congress, Alamán said that

The United States of the North have been going on successively acquiring, without awak­
ening public attention, all the territories adjoining them. Thus we find that, in less
than fifty years, they have succeeded in making themselves masters of extensive colonies belonging to various European Powers, and of districts, still more extensive, formerly in the possession of Indian tribes which have disappeared from the face of the earth; proceeding in these transactions,

27 Valadés, Alamán, 270-271; Smith, Annexation of Texas, 9-10; Garrison, Westward Extension, 27-28; James, Mexico and the Americans, 56; Priestly, The Mexican Nation, 282; Rafael Aguayo Spencer, "Alamán estadista," Historia Mexi­
cana, III, no. 2 (1953), 287; Zorrilla, Historia de relaciones, I, 94.
not with the noisy pomp of conquest, but with such silence, such constancy and such uniformity, that they have always succeeded in accomplishing their views. Instead of armies, battles and invasions which raise such uproar and generally prove abortive, they use means, which considered separately, seem slow, in-effectual, and sometimes palpably absurd, but which united, and in the course of time, are certain and irresistible.28

Continuing, Alamán pointed out that

They commence by introducing themselves into the territory which they covet, upon pretense of commercial negotiations, or of the establishment of colonies, with, or without, the assent of the Government to which it belongs. These colonies grow, multiply, become the predominant party in the population; and as soon as a support is found in this manner they begin to set up rights which it is impossible to sustain in a serious discussion, and to bring forward ridiculous pretensions, founded upon historical facts which are admitted by nobody, such as Lasallie's /sic/ voyages now known to be a falsehood, but which serve as a support, at this time, for their claim to Texas.29

To prevent this proliferation of Americans in Texas, then, and to withstand American demands, it was necessary for Alamán to take decisive action. That was what he had done. Apparently, the Mexican government acquiesced in his effort without

28National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, V. For the Spanish text consult Documentos diversos, II, 524.

29Ibid.
question, and he was encouraged that at last the United States was checked in its scheme to seize Texas. His preoccupation with the thought of the danger afforded by the United States government to his country culminated in the Law of April 6, and he believed that the threat was ended. 30

30 The specific points of the law, in Alamán's own words, were
"Let the first of these measures be the promoting by all possible means, the increase of Mexican population in Texas, and with this view, let the men sentenced to the galleys be sent to Tampico and Soto la Marina, to be thence transported by sea to the points fortified and occupied by our troops, where under their protection they may engage in the cultivation of the lands.

"2nd To colonize the Department of Texas with individuals of other nations, whose interests, customs and language differ from those of North-Americans.

"3rd Encourage the coastline trade, the only one which can establish relations between Texas and the other sections of the Republic; and nationalize that Department which is now almost North-American.

"4th To suspend, with regard to Texas, the powers granted by the law of the 18th August 1824, to the Governments of States, and to make that Department dependent upon the General Government, in matters of colonization.

"5th To Commission a person of information and prudence to visit the colonized territories, --who, after having collected information respecting the contracts entered into by the under-takers, whether their conditions have been fulfilled, --the number of families in each settlement, --of slaves in each colony, --the extent of country they occupy, --the location of the colonists--and those who have been introduced without proper authority, --may proceed, with the approbation of Government, to take the necessary measures to secure that part of the Republic." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, V; Documentos diversos, II, 523ff.
Such was the state of affairs when Butler and Alamán began a series of informal and formal meetings which lasted throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 1830 and which were barren in terms of achievement. Alamán expressed hostility for the United States, and he indicated that his colonization decree summed up the attitude of the Mexican government in reference to the Texas situation. Butler was not discouraged by Alamán's reluctance to discuss the question of Texas. In April, he informed his government that he believed his ability to work with Alamán would lead to the restoration of good relations between the two governments. He based this optimism on Alamán's indication that he would be willing to discuss a Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation. In May, Butler informed Van Buren that the Mexican government appeared ready to begin treaty negotiations. Indeed, these would have commenced earlier if Alamán had not been so severely criticized in the American press. But the United States minister believed that Alamán could be handled: "... notwithstanding the opinions expressed by that gentleman in his ... report to Congress I should not despair of inducing him to take a new view of the

31 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, April 15, 1830, V.
question, and possibly conduct him to a different conclusion than that presented in the Report."32 Throughout the summer, in his despatches to Van Buren he continued to express confidence in his ability to sway Alamán to his way of thinking. He referred to Alamán as "the right arm of the Government. . .," and was convinced that Alamán did not despise the United States, only Poinsett. He believed the Secretary was willing to negotiate with him.33

Butler was deluding himself. In the discussions which transpired between him and Alamán, he was led on by the astute Mexican minister. Although Butler asserted that he and Alamán were on the best of terms, and that "he cannot betray me, unless by the forfeiture of all those pledges, a destruction of all the professions which more than once he has made to me . . ." he did not recognize Alamán's method of procedure.34

In spite of the masked contempt with which Alamán received him, Butler persevered. He was undaunted by the action of the

32Ibid., May 19, 1830.
33Ibid., Summer 1830, passim.
34Ibid., Butler to Van Buren, June 29, 1830.
Mexican government in reference to Texas. Indeed, he attempted to convince that government that United States possession of Texas would rid Mexico of a burden. Jackson had asked him to secure Texas. Butler was determined to carry out his orders. Apparently convinced by his minister that circumstances favored the United States, Jackson was encouraged and looked forward to a settlement advantageous to his government. His optimism was unwarranted, however, for Butler's encouragement had no foundation.

One year after Butler's appointment to the post in Mexico, Jackson sent a note to him concerning the seeming lack of progress in the negotiation for Texas. "How gratifying would it be to me to include within the list of our good works in the foreign relations of the Union, a Treaty with Mexico adjusting the points in dispute in regard to our boundary, and establishing a proper commercial intercourse!" But Jackson was unaware of the true status of negotiations.

As noted above, throughout the summer Butler made no headway with Alamán. Indeed, the Mexican minister subjected him to the same treatment that had aggravated Poinsett. Alamán

35 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, October 6, 1830.
informed Butler that discussions or negotiations were unrealistic until the boundary question was settled. In light of the April decree, it was clear that the Mexican government was thinking in terms of an eastern boundary line, most likely the Mississippi River. In the first series of summer meetings, Alamán once more traced on a map the line he had shown Poinsett and informed Butler that his government still desired to clarify the questionable boundary. This would imply the appointment of a commission and the time-consuming survey procedures. Actually, Alamán doubted that any negotiations would transpire. He was content to await the outcome of the effects of the Colonization Law, which he believed would end the need for conferring further with an American representative.

There was one factor which he had not foreseen, however, and that was the possibility that the April law would be ineffective. By the fall of 1830 it was still too early to detect any effects of the law, though Alamán was aware that there had resulted no mass migrations from Texas in spite of the outcry against the Ley. Moreover, the United States government had given no indication that it was discouraged by the lack of progress in negotiations. Alamán obviously was unaware of Butler's

36 Bosch García, Historia de relaciones, 157.
optimism, which was in turn transferred to Washington. The American minister continued to insist that the discussions could be completed successfully, resulting in the purchase of Texas by the United States, and in a commercial treaty. His enthusiasm remained high.

Alamán was now bothered by the persistence of Butler. Furthermore, he had begun to reassess his strategy. The Jackson administration seemed impervious to his rebuffs. Possibly a change of tactics was in order. He reasoned that if some type of agreement was made with the United States, that government might be satisfied to the extent that it would cease its attempts to acquire Texas. Such a plan would have to revolve around the settlement of the boundary issue in Mexico's favor, however, and Alamán realized that he would have to proceed with caution. Nevertheless, he was confident that he could achieve such an arrangement by outmaneuvering Butler. He therefore indicated that his government was willing to re-examine the United States proposal for a commercial treaty and for a treaty of limits.

It appeared that the tide had turned in behalf of the United States government. Upon learning that the Mexicans would

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37Valadés, Alamán, 276.
reconsider the treaty proposals, Jackson at the beginning of
October sent a personal, private letter to Butler. This message
was dated one day after the formal note in which the American
President expressed his concern for the lack of negotiation
progress. Thus, the United States government must have
learned of the Mexican decision to re-consider discussions
in the early days of October. In this letter to Butler, Jackson
informed him that "I rejoice that you are progressing with a
commercial Treaty, and if President Bustamcnte /sic/,
practices that frankness which he has professed to me . . . ,
you cannot have much difficulty in the negotiation."38 The
situation was not as simple as both Alamán and Jackson believed.
Alamán counted on the United States government to terminate
its machinations to seize Texas and other territory once
commercial and limits treaties were negotiated. On the other
hand, Jackson and Butler inferred that the Mexican decision to
consider these arrangements was a capitulation. As a result,
negotiations became more complex and intricate rather than
simplified.

Alamán's decision to play along with the United States

38Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to
Butler, October 7, 1830.
proposals was not a wise one at this point. It indicated that he
failed to gauge the determination of the United States to have
Texas. He had concluded that Poinsett's failure and the
Colonization Law were sufficient to quell the United States
effort in Texas. Above all, he did not understand the importance
of Texas to the United States. If he had comprehended the in-
tensity of feeling in that country concerning this matter, he
might have given second thoughts to his new strategy. Even
so, Alamán's fixed opinions of the intentions of the United States
government toward his nation clouded his thinking insofar as
the possibility of successful relations was concerned. There
is little question that he desired significant relations and nego-
tiations between the United States and Mexico to fail. The only
consideration for him was the degree of responsibility Mexico
could assume for the failure of these. To this end he considered
Butler the perfect dupe to enable him to carry out his designs.

Since he was aware of Butler's plans, Alamán attempted
to anticipate the procedures of the American minister. He knew
that by agreeing to give consideration to the ratification of the
treaties, he would cause Butler to be more vulnerable. Then
he could impose his own terms in the negotiation of the agree-
ments. As he had anticipated, Butler was eager to reach a
settlement. Thus, Alamán went on with his project to seal off his nation from any important contact with the United States.

Alamán indicated to Butler that he was willing to discuss the settlement of the commercial issue and the boundary question. This was in the late fall of 1830. Meetings between the two men continued until the spring of 1831, and Alamán continued to procrastinate in agreeing to a culmination of negotiations. He informed Butler that if treaty agreements came about, there would have to be changes in their provisions. The United States, he pointed out, would have to agree to prevent the penetration of its citizens into New Mexico. There could be no commercial road between Santa Fe and the Missouri border, though a perpetuation of trade along the Santa Fe Trail was agreed upon. He also insisted that slavery would not be allowed in any part of Mexico, nor could freed slaves be extradited from Mexico to the United States. Alamán then turned to the question of the boundary line. He argued that his government

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39In November, Butler informed his superior that "I have the pleasure of informing you that the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between the United Mexican States and the United States of America is at last concluded. The finishing hand was put to it this day. . . ." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, November 2, 1830, V.
was inclined to accept the boundary as provided by the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. Once again he asked the American minister to trace on a map this line of division. According to the Mexican government, only a treaty of limits similar to that proposed by Alamán in his dealings with Poinsett would be acceptable, that is, a settlement favorable to Mexico. 40

Butler seemed willing to agree to Alamán's terms. He apparently hoped to settle the boundary question so that he could treat the question of Texas separately. Alamán had not counted on such a development, for he believed that settlement of the limits issue in Mexico's favor would also settle the Texas issue as well. But the United States government was more interested in obtaining Texas than in determining a common boundary, which could be done after absorption of Texas, and Alamán in spite of his sagacity never seemed to understand this.

Indeed, in February 1831 Butler was informed by his President that he should continue to press the Mexican authorities concerning that vital region. Jackson insisted that

40 Valadés, Alamán, 277-278, 278-279. Valadés apparently was given full access to the Foreign Office Archives while composing his study of Alamán. This writer thus attempted to contact the distinguished but elderly gentleman on two occasions in hopes of arranging an interview. However, he was indisposed and was not receiving callers at either time.
I cannot but think that a thorough examination of the whole subject will satisfy Mexico, that her true policy recommends a cession of the province. Not yet placed in a situation by the harmony, intelligence and number of her citizens, to regard extent of territory, as we do, an important agent in the development and preservation of the Representative principle she must be sensible that it is in truth the vital source of her weakness, and particularly that portion including Texas, in which natural as well as artificial causes combine to exclude that community of interests and feelings which are the basis of civil power in all countries. 41

But if Jackson was determined to relieve Mexico of a burdensome area, Alamán was just as determined to keep Texas under Mexican control. Consequently, even though Butler was able to conclude two treaties in April, nothing was achieved as far as Texas was concerned. The treaty of commerce had as its main provision the perpetuation of trade along the Santa Fe Trail. The treaty of limits provided that the boundary line would stand as of 1828. 42

41 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, February 15, 1831. On the day before this note was written, Butler expressed to Van Buren his disappointment that Alamán had not used his influence to bring about ratification of the treaty. He was also concerned about several changes made in the text by the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs. National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, February 14, 1831, V.

This treaty of limits had actually done little to settle the boundary problem, however. The United States government still contended that the Transcontinental Treaty with Spain, upon which the 1828 boundary was based, was not equitable, for the United States had not received its just amount of territory. In other words, Texas was excluded. Even though there was at last tentative agreement on a boundary line, the American government remained dissatisfied, and the crux of the matter was Texas. Indeed, that area was beginning to take on a new significance for both Mexico and the United States.

In July 1831, Alamán received a message from a Colonel Mejía, who was in Texas. Mejía was concerned about the state of affairs in that department. It appeared that the Law of April 6 was not being obeyed by the majority of the North Americans who inhabited the area.⁴³ This was troublesome news for Alamán. The basis of his policy was the successful application and enforcement of his Texas decree. If the Ley del 6 de abril was not enforced, the Texas settlers might be encouraged to defy the Mexican authorities. In doing so, they

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⁴³Archivo Biblioteca Nacional, MSS 1741, Sujeto Tejas, 152.
might also look to the United States government for support. Such events could prove disastrous to his over-all policy.

Jackson was also aware of the limited effectiveness of the boundary treaty. He expressed such uneasiness in his correspondence with Butler. He felt "great anxiety" concerning the boundary arrangement and indicated that he considered it important to see to a permanent fixation of the border as soon as possible. Butler, therefore, again was urged to broach the subject to Alamán: "I cannot . . . refrain from again bringing it to your view, and urging that no pains be spared to accomplish this desirable object." Particularly troublesome to Jackson was the attitude expressed by the Mexican government. He had contended before that Texas was Mexico's *bête noire* and could be nothing but a problem. Mexico's recalcitrance in recognizing this fact could bring about problems of an even greater magnitude than those which existed at present. "The great exertions," he wrote, "which are now making to fill that country with emigrants from all countries and climes, by those who hold, or rather pretending to hold, grants for land in Texas, under the Mexican government, is conclusive to my mind that if the boundary . . . is not soon established, that portion of her territory (Texas)
must be lost to her for ever." He had learned, furthermore, that an American company was preparing to send "ten thousand emigrants" into Texas, and once these people settled in that area, "they will soon avail themselves of some pretext to throw off the Mexican authority and form an independent government of their own." If such an event occurred, the already shaky relationship between Mexico and the United States might collapse, to the extent that there would be an end to "the peace and tranquility of both countries that now so happily exist." 44

Jackson apparently was sincere in his desire to avoid a confrontation with Mexico which could involve armed conflict. He believed that Texas was a burden to Mexico and that it should belong to the United States by the nature of its location and population. If Butler achieved nothing else, he was expected somehow to bring about the transfer of Texas from Mexican ownership to American possession.

Butler was not idle during his sojourn in Mexico. He continued to assure Jackson that success was imminent, and the President seemed to believe him. But Butler's methods were far from acceptable in terms of diplomatic procedure.

44Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, August 24, 1831.
Poinsett had supposedly demonstrated intemperance during his residence in Mexico; however, Butler's activities made Poinsett's ministry a model of decorum. According to a leading authority, Butler became noted for his loafing, scheming, and threatening. He sincerely believed that he could outwit and trick Alamán. 45 Furthermore, during the time of Alamán's ministry Butler believed that the astute Mexican diplomat actually was on his side.

Between October 1831 and February 1832, Butler once more sounded out Alamán on the possibility that Mexico might relinquish its control of Texas. Although Butler did not realize it, Alamán was playing him along on this matter. As a result, Butler was led to believe that he was on the verge of success. In October, he reported in a ciphered despatch to Jackson that he had approached Alamán concerning the transfer of Texas to the United States. According to Butler, this activity was carried out with caution so Alamán would not suspect that the United States wanted to become the owner. But Alamán was certainly not that naïve, and he countered by informing Butler that the government of Mexico "held no part of the land as national

45 Smith, War with Mexico, I, 62.
domain, and could therefore exercise no power of transfer
over any part of the territory of the confederation. 11 The
individual states, Alamán pointed out, alone determined the
disposition of their domain. If the national government attempted
to sell or transfer the territory of a state, the Mexican con-
stitution would be violated. 46

This answer by Alamán seemed to confuse and fluster
Butler. He had not heard this argument before. Thus, he
assured Jackson that after reviewing the circumstances in-
volved, he would use another approach. Alamán, he believed,
was actually ready to negotiate: "... I feel some confidence
that if by any means his scruples in relation to want of power
over the subject on the part of general government can be van-
quished, we may in that event obtain." 47 Such was Butler's
naïveté.

By December 1831, there was no indication that Butler
had gained any advantage. Jackson was becoming impatient,
for rumblings were heard in Texas. He urged Butler to give
his close attention to the matter: "As you are aware of the

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46 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, October 6, 1831.

47 Ibid.
great importance of the cession of Texas to us in maintaining future peace and good neighborhood between the United States and Mexico I have only to add in relation to this subject generally that I hope you will urge it at as early a day as you can with propriety and a prospect of success."48 Jackson obviously was confused by the lack of progress in view of Butler's optimism. He did not realize the true state of negotiations, nor was he aware of Alamán's attitude. Butler had convinced him that Alamán was favorably inclined toward the American goal, even though Jackson should have known that such a position was incongruous with Alamán's earlier policy.

Alamán certainly had not changed his attitude toward the United States government and people; indeed, he opposed the diplomacy of the Americans with more determination than ever before. If Butler was unable to discern this opposition, it was because he did not wish to do so. In fact, it was at this point in his diplomatic career in Mexico that Butler referred to Alamán as "the man with black brains" due to his resistance to Butler's overtures.49 The American minister now decided that he would use a new method of dealing with the Mexican

48 Ibid., Jackson to Butler, December 9, 1831.

49 Valadés, Alamán, 279-280.
government, in particular Alamán. He decided to apply the adage that every man has his price. For the remainder of his tenure in Mexico, Butler attempted to convince Jackson that Mexican greed was the key to settlement of difficulties between the two nations. 50

In January 1832 a still-confident Butler reported to Jackson that he was convinced Texas soon would be under American control. In fact, he urged the President to attempt to prevent the ratification of the recent treaty of limits which was based upon the 1828 agreement. In his opinion, "by any subsequent Contract on that subject we cannot do worse." Indeed, "my opinion is most decidedly, that we can do better. Nay, open the question once more fairly and leave the whole ground to be acted upon, and I should not despair of inducing the present Administration to grant us all we desire. . . ." Then, with a brashness unequalled by ministers to Mexico before or since, Butler boasted that he would see to it that the Mexican government granted the United States not only Texas but territory "as far West as to a line that would divide between us the Grand prairie or desert. If they once decide on yielding us

the Territory as far as the Colorado, there would be little
difficulty in obtaining the residue. "51

This boldness on Butler's part was feigned, for Alamán
and the Mexican government were never subjected to such
aggressiveness as portrayed to Jackson. In the same letter,
in which he boasted of his accomplishments, Butler revealed
something of his true feelings:

... Let me add a few words for myself. You
are not ignorant of the disadvantage under which
I commenced in Mexico; You know the weight of
prejudice, suspicion, and bad feeling that pre-
vailed against the Govern't and people of the U.
States generally, and the odium engendered
against my predecessor; all of which was trans-
ferred to me in advance, and the first notice
taken by the Newspapers of my arrival in this
Capital, and even before I had obtained an
Audience for delivering my credentials, was
to attack my character, misrepresent the
objects of my mission, and identify me in the
hate they bore towards Mr. Poinsett. Add to
all my other difficulties that I was a stranger
to the language of the Country, without a
Secretary or any one in whom I dared place
confidence to act as the medium of communi-
cation between me and those with whom it
was proper to cultivate intercourse and thereby
dissipate the prejudices under which I was daily
suffering, and you may imagine a part of my
difficulties and understand how embarrassing
was my situation.52

51 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to
Jackson, January 2, 1832.

52 Ibid.
This passage indicates that Butler was far from being the successful negotiator he had implied. Alamán made his lot as uncomfortable and unrewarding as that of Poinsett.

In spite of Butler's plea for understanding, Jackson persisted in his efforts to prod the minister toward the acquisition of Texas. He informed Butler that every effort should be made to arrange a settlement. Haste was of the essence, for he revealed that "I have but little doubt... there will be an insurrection in Texas in less than six months, which may compromit the peace and harmony of the two Governments." He would, if such an outbreak occurred, do everything in his power to prevent participation by citizens of the United States. However, he pointed out that "we cannot prevent them from emigrating to that country..." Furthermore, it was Jackson's belief that "each soldier has the right to take his rifle with him, to defend himself against the Indians, and thousands will go, and it will be impossible to restrain them, altho we will prevent them from going in organized bands, or corps." What disturbed Jackson was the fact that despite the efforts of the United States government to prevent the influx of armed settlers into Texas, "Mexico may not believe... we are acting in good faith towards her and bad feelings may
If Texas belonged to the United States, Jackson must have reasoned, there would be no such danger of hostile feelings. Butler must make an arrangement with Alamán. To give further indication of United States good will, the American President ignored Butler's admonition in reference to the nonratification of the two treaties he had negotiated and promoted their acceptance. Both were ratified in 1832, though such action did little to change the Mexican attitude toward the United States government.

President Jackson's seeming obsession to acquire Texas created consternation in the State Department. This was true in large part because of Butler's continued presence in Mexico. In April 1831, Van Buren resigned as Secretary of State and was replaced by Edward Livingston, who remained in that office until 1833. It was during Livingston's tenure that Butler's activities became most embarrassing. Indeed, most of Butler's correspondence to the Secretary of State concerned

53 Ibid., Jackson to Butler, February 25, 1832.

54 Bemis, The Latin-American Policy of the United States, 76.

relatively unimportant matters insofar as diplomacy was concerned. The majority of his despatches to Livingston had to do with citizens' claims and with financial reports.

Upon receipt of Jackson's letter of February 25 concerning the state of affairs in Texas, Butler informed the President that he had finally arrived at the solution to the Texas dilemma. It seemed that the Mexican government had accumulated a large debt of $600,000 in the form of a loan from different capitalists in the country. Butler contended that this money soon would be dissipated, and the Mexican government would look elsewhere for funds. Since the government could not depend upon the capitalists again, Butler wrote Jackson that "I shall be ready to offer a supply to their necessities the moment they are found to be pressing." Continuing, he noted that "I intimated a few days since to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that 'if he became much pressed for money I thought ways and means could be devised for obtaining through the U. States a few millions, and about which we could converse whenever he felt a desire to do so." Butler then concluded with the observation that "my suggestion will not be forgotten."56

56Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, February 27, 1832.
This loan to Mexico was to be secured by a mortgage on Texas. Even Jackson, who was determined to get Texas, could not agree to such methods, and he did not take up Butler's proposal. 57 What Alamán's reaction was to this suggestion is not known, but there is little doubt that it did not surprise him. Butler's ways and character were familiar to him; thus, he had minimal trouble anticipating his moves. Butler was deceiving himself if he believed that an offer such as this would be given serious consideration by Alamán.

The apex of Butler's self-deception concerning Alamán was reached in the summer of 1832. The Bustamante government was under attack for its methods of controlling the country, and possibly Butler believed that Alamán, as the leading figure in the government, was more inclined to negotiate with the United States. In June, the American minister visited Alamán in his home and "found him in bed and completely disgusted with politics. . . ." According to Butler, Alamán expressed his determination to retire to his estate in Guanajuato as soon as he was able. This declaration seemed to disturb Butler: "I must find means to prevent this if possible; for more can be done with Mr.

A. and through him than with all Mexico besides." Butler was convinced that Alamán "must be the active Agent in the coming Negotiation and if possible I must have him alone as the pleni-potentia ry on the part of Mexico." Then Butler's self-deception waxed supreme: "I am confident we will not disagree eventually on this matter, for I think I hold the key to unlock his heart, and the means of enlightening his understanding in the way I desire it should be illuminated. . . . " In his opinion, he and Alamán were cordial and confidential; consequently, if he could bring about negotiations, he was certain that he would "bring home the Treaty in less than 3 months from the first protocol, pro- vided Mr. Alaman is the Negotiator. . . . " 58 It is possible that Butler was also practicing a bit of deception on Jackson. In view of the unpopularity of the Bustamante government, he may have anticipated Alamán's ouster from office. In that event, Butler then could claim that negotiations failed because Alamán did not participate in them.

Whether or not Butler had this idea in mind, Alamán con- tinued in his office. In July, formal meetings were held between the two men, at which time Texas was again discussed. The

58Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, June 21, 1832.
first conference was held on July 2 and the second eight days later. In spite of Butler's insistence that he and Alamán were intimate friends, such was simply not the case. Alamán refused to consider Butler's arguments that the boundary as fixed in 1828 was unacceptable to his government because numerous American citizens lived on the Mexican side, and that there was another Sabine River which complicated the matter. Alamán was openly hostile and remained adamant in his refusal to consider the sale of Texas to the United States.59

However, Butler's report to Jackson concerning these meetings was rampant with enthusiasm. In fact, it was misleading. As to Texas, Butler claimed that Alamán was "much better disposed on the question, than my most sanguine hopes allowed me /to/ anticipate. . . ." The American minister expressed confidence that the treaty for the transfer of Texas could be settled in ten days and that he could "lead the Secretary precisely by that path I wish him to follow. . . ."60 If anyone was following a path it was Butler, and Alamán prepared it well.

59 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Minutes of Discussions between Butler and Alamán, July 2, 1832; July 10, 1832, V.

60 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, July 18, 1832.
Without realizing it, Butler had allowed himself to be put off just as had Poinsett. In his two years of negotiations, he had accomplished absolutely nothing insofar as Texas was concerned.

Soon after the sessions between Alamán and Butler, the Bustamante government was confronted with Santa Anna's pronouncement against it. As noted in previous discussion, he had remained aloof from political affairs since 1828, waiting to see what developments would take place in the affairs of government. By the summer of 1832 he concluded that the conservative-centralists were unpopular, and so he brought about a liberal overthrow of Bustamante's regime. The struggle between liberals and conservatives lasted throughout the fall of 1832. By January 1833, Santa Anna achieved victory. Alamán fled the wrath of the liberal elements, led by Gómez Farías, whom Santa Anna designated the new President of Mexico.

If the United States ever had an opportunity to acquire Texas, it was probably during the brief administration of Gómez Farías, who struggled to undo much of the work of Alamán. But during the period of the conflict between the forces of the conservatives and the liberals in the fall of 1832, Butler continued to lament the fall of Alamán. It would almost seem that he had come to believe his own assessment of his "control" over the Mexican minister. In August, he wrote Jackson that "if Mr. Alaman could have
continued in Office three months longer we should have settled every thing.  

He even attempted to help Alamán and his family during their period of difficulty after the overthrow of the Bustamante administration, eliciting a response from Jackson: "You request me to give my approval, under my own hand, of the protection given to Mrs. Alamán and her property in her present unprotected state and absence from her husband. Surely the gallant Genl Santa Ana... cannot but approve your conduct. . ."  

In spite of such efforts, Butler nevertheless was faced with the fact that Alamán never intended to deal with him. Moreover, he should have realized that winds of change were in the air in reference to Texas.

As the civil war raged in Mexico throughout the autumn of 1832, unrest was noticeable in Texas. As was reported in a United States news publication, "there are strong indications that the American adventurers into the province of Texas, taking

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61 Ibid., August 12, 1832. Butler's outlook had changed little since the previous spring, when he had informed his government that Alamán was the most important politician in Mexico, with whom he desired to negotiate. In Butler's opinion, "he directs every thing--he supervises all. . ." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, Butler to Van Buren, April 8, 1831, V.

62 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Jackson to Butler, December 4, 1832.
advantage of the unsettled state of things in Mexico, and the civil war that prevails--have resolved upon a government of their own. . . ."63 United States citizens had begun to clamor for a redress of grievances against the Mexican government due to various penalties and restrictions imposed upon them under Mexican commercial regulations. The United States government took no action, however, and the discontent of the Texans increased. In January 1833, Butler indicated that he planned to take up the Texas question as soon as matters in the capital were settled. 64

Had he done so, it is possible that he might have secured Texas, in spite of his previous incompetence. The new Mexican government was formed in March, and Santa Anna was named president of the Republic. However, he claimed that he was ill, turned over the office to Gómez Farías, the Vice President, and returned to his hacienda in Vera Cruz state.

Gómez Farías was dedicated to the eradication of the conservative-centralist elements in Mexico. Supported by a friendly Congress, he initiated a program designed to bring about such

63Niles' Weekly Register, XLIII (September 8, 1832), 22.

64Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, January 2, 1833.
elimination. A series of anticlerical reforms was forthcoming throughout 1833: tithing was not to be compulsory; monks and nuns could retract their vows; the Mexican government would make ecclesiastical appointments; secular education was to be promoted; and the northern Indian missions were abolished and their wealth seized. Also, the size of the army was reduced, and the fueros, or privileges, of army officers were eliminated.

In April, the Gómez Farías government made an open gesture of friendship toward the United States. The new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bernardo González, informed the American Secretary of State that

The president of this republic has considered it one of his first duties to request your kind office in making known this happy event /the end of civil war/ to the government of the United States, being assured that the amicable relations which have heretofore subsisted between the two countries, the highest gratification will thus be afforded to it and to you. 65

Here was the opportunity to negotiate for Texas for which the American government had searched since 1825. Acknowledged to be anti-conservative, Gómez Farías' administration more than likely would have given serious consideration to the sale of Texas, which probably was indeed thought of as a burden by

65Niles' Weekly Register, XLIV (April 20, 1833), 118.
the liberal elements.

But the Jackson administration did not take advantage of the opportunity. Butler apparently made no effort to discuss the situation with this regime. Within a short time, furthermore, the circumstances of government in Mexico would change completely, as would the Mexican attitude toward Texas. It soon became clear that Gómez Farías' reforms were to have a short life. Too many people, particularly the powerful conservatives in the Church and the military, were stripped of their privileges.

By the fall of 1833, the liberal interlude was drawing to a close. Although there were many liberals in Mexico, it was evident that they were not the people with access to the springs of power and privilege. Those resources belonged to the conservative-centralists, composed of the well-to-do, the higher churchmen, and the military hierarchy. By September, Butler was discouraged by the situation there, and he reported to Jackson that "I am very sorry to be compelled to say, that our prospect of effecting an amicable arrangement with the present administration of the Mexican Government upon the subject of boundary is closed. . . ." 66 As the outcry of the conservatives—"religión

66 Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, September 26, 1833.
y fueros"—increased in intensity against the government, Butler became disgusted with Mexican affairs.

In a letter to Jackson devoid of his usual boasting, Butler was to the point. Whatever Jackson wished he would attempt to do, whether it meant negotiating or fighting. Actually, he expressed a preference for the latter: "I am frank and speak to you in all the confidence of an old and tried friend when I say that my preference is for [fighting]. We have abundant cause for quarrel and it would cost less by one half, aye two thirds to take, than to purchase the Territory."67

At the beginning of 1834, it was apparent that the fall of Gómez Farías was only a matter of time. Santa Anna, his one-time champion, was now courting the conservative elements. Butler argued that the United States government should act. He asserted that the Mexican regimes of the past had greatly overrated their consequence. They had operated from the premise that the United States "dare not occupy any part of Texas which they choose to claim, and that whatever may be said to the contrary we will permit them eventually to hold all which they now have in possession. . . ." Butler's solution to the problem?

"I repeat then, proceed at once to establish our boundary and

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67 Ibid., October 2, 1833.
take possession. It is the only mode by which you can hope to bring these people to understand their true condition. . . ."68

This was not the solution Jackson had in mind, however, and for the moment Butler was ignored.

In the meantime, political affairs in Mexico came to a climax. When the military garrison in Cuernavaca pronounced against the government in April, Santa Anna decided to act against Gómez Farías. Soon, other declarations in Santa Anna's favor followed, and the military and Church elements rejoiced. In particular the clerics of Mexico were pleased; they hailed Santa Anna as the saviour of the country. Gómez Farías fled to New Orleans as his liberal supporters scattered. After attacking the only provincial chief who had failed to support him, Santa Anna made his way from Zacatecas to the capital. He was welcomed by the people as solemn High Masses were said to celebrate the deliverance of the Republic.

Reaction in the United States to Santa Anna's seizure of power was not so favorable. It was reported in October, for example, that "the curse of heroism is upon Mexico. A large part of this once rich and prosperous and populous country, has been rendered nearly desolate by the rascal-doings of some

68Ibid., February 6, 1834.
hundred generals..." Of these military leaders, the reporter pointed out, "it now appears, that General Santa Anna, late one of the loudest bawlers for liberty and now president of the miserable republic, is in the exercise of power which a constitutional king would not venture upon." Indeed, beginning in April, Santa Anna ruled supreme in Mexico for eight months.

Butler viewed the turn of events with mixed emotions. He noted that negotiations for Texas had collapsed after Alamán's ouster and the fall of Bustamante. Since that time he complained that "I have had the worst sort of materials to work upon, and the greatest difficulties to encounter..." However, he hoped that the situation would turn for the better: "...we have now a new scene and very different performers." Butler was not yet aware of Santa Anna's outlook on the question of Texas, but he was pleased about one thing. Alamán no longer was in hiding. Attached to his letter to Jackson was a ciphered message in which he expressed his belief that he could take up negotiations with Alamán as was the case before the collapse of the Bustamante government. Butler informed Jackson that Alamán had "emerged from his hiding place with renewed and increased popularity and influence." This was certainly true. But the American minister continued to

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69Niles' Weekly Register, XLVII (October 11, 1834), 83.
delude himself by declaring that "our intimacy has been renewed and we have spoken much upon the old subject of Texas. He maintains the same opinions which he expressed in 1832, and will cooperate with me in procuring a cession of that territory to us."\(^7^0\) Alamán apparently continued to play Butler as the fool, and in the opinion of John Quincy Adams, writing in 1843, "Butler mystified with Alamán, and Alamán mystified with Butler." But of the two, "Alaman was the shrewdest knave. . . ."\(^7^1\) Furthermore, Alamán again was in a position to put his programs against the United States government into practice.

Eight months in the office of the presidency proved to be boring to Santa Anna, and in November 1834 he desired to turn over the day-to-day affairs of government to his Vice President, an obscure general named Barrágan. This is not to say that he also relinquished his control of the nation. In the past months, Santa Anna had exerted dictatorial powers. He was still de facto ruler of Mexico, but he did not wish to be bothered by the menial tasks necessary to govern the country efficiently. Besides, a conservative-dominated Congress was approved by him.

\(^7^0\) Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, November 21, 1834.

and met in December. This body indicated the need in Mexico for a reactionary government and let it be known that it intended to arrange for such. Although the conservatives, led by Alamán, supported Santa Anna, they also desired to limit the powers of the executive office. The result, as noted in a previous chapter, was the creation of the Poder Conservador, an executive body responsible to no group or person. Rather than haggle with the body of men who supported him, Santa Anna announced his decision to retire to Manga de Clavo. But he would be prepared to act in defense of the nation whenever necessary.

Butler witnessed these events, and he attributed the conservative strength to Alamán. After a meeting with Santa Anna in November, he concluded that Alamán was the power behind the throne in Mexico: "... Mr. Alamán will very soon be openly at the head of Genl. Santa Anna's Administration, as he is now privately his principal adviser. ..." But Alamán was not, as Butler inferred, prepared to act in concert with the United States government. In fact, because of his influence the Texas crisis was about to reach a climax, and the result would prove once and for all that Butler since 1829 had deceived both Jackson

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72Butler Papers, Univ. of Texas Library, Butler to Jackson, November 21, 1834.
and himself in reference to Alamán's desire to bring about a settlement favoring the United States.

The overthrow of the liberals and the reassertion of conservative strength in 1834 complicated an already tense situation in Texas. Alamán's Colonization Law had caused much unrest, to the extent that prior to Bustamante's overthrow in 1832, the Americans in Texas were rebellious-minded. Santa Anna's ouster of Bustamante and Alamán, however, encouraged and assured the Texas settlers, and they in turn expressed their support for Santa Anna and Gómez Farías, even to the extent of sending armed forces to aid in the autumn struggle of 1832.

When it became clear that the liberals had prevailed, the Texans requested a convention to ask the repeal of Alamán's Ley and to indicate their desire to be separated from Coahuila. Austin went to Mexico City to talk with Gómez Farías; however, the new Mexican President would not consent to the self-government of Texas, and although the Ley del 6 de abril was not to be enforced, it was not repealed. Austin then was imprisoned for eighteen months for advocating that the Texas settlers establish a state legislature regardless of the Mexican government's wishes. Meanwhile, American immigrants continued to pour into Texas.
Santa Anna's seizure of power under conservative auspices disturbed the Texans, who were beginning to question the Mexican system of law and government. When Santa Anna was persuaded by Alamán to reassert the Colonization Law of 1830, and complied by sending an army under General Cos for that purpose, the Texans despaired. Then, when the conservative Mexican Congress, influenced by Alamán's philosophy, decreed that the Constitution of 1824 was void and replaced it with a conservative document, the Texans determined to defend themselves and declared their support for the 1824 constitution.

The Texas insurrection was thus underway, largely because of Alamán's policies. His Colonization Law had proved anathema to the Texans and had exacerbated the tension between the territory and the Mexican government. Then there had followed the liberal interlude, during which time the Ley del 6 de abril was not enforced, and immigrants continued to come into Texas. Finally, Santa Anna's seizure of power in support of the conservatives enabled Alamán to bring about a renewed attempt to enforce the law, causing the outbreak of revolution. Certainly the events in Texas were not what Alamán intended, but that does not alter the fact that he was largely responsible for the Texas independence movement. Moreover, it was Alamán's influence which caused the Mexican government to pursue a policy of
non-recognition once Texas' sovereignty was a fait accompli, in turn placing Mexico and the United States on a collision course.

The Texan struggle for independence between October 1835 and April 1836 brought about a new phase of Mexican-United States hostility. No politician of importance in Mexico, whatever his ideology, had any doubt that the United States had worked to bring about the secession of Texas from Mexico, either by purchase or by revolution. And even though the Jackson administration exhibited a reluctance to become involved openly in the Texas struggle against Mexico, most politically-oriented Mexicans blamed the United States for the loss of Texas--not Alamán, not Santa Anna. There was no longer any question that Alamán's decade of warnings against the United States government and people were prophetic and that the Mexican people should have heeded them.

Furthermore, the presence of Butler in Mexico during a critical period of Mexican-United States negotiations undermined the position of the American government. His constant promising that he was about to secure Texas and his assurances that Alamán supported the United States effort lulled his government into a state of apathy. Although the Texas settlers took matters into their own hands, Butler's actions convinced the Mexican government that the United States was in some way implicated in the
independence movement.

Even during the initial months of the Texas-Mexican struggle, Butler nurtured his obsession to acquire Mexican territory. In November 1835 he revealed to Jackson that "the course pursued by the people of Texas has greatly exasperated Gen Santa Anna. . . ." It was rumored that the Mexican leader planned an expedition to suppress the Texans, "and this will have the effect of delaying my operations, for the President will probably do nothing on the subject until [sic] his temper subsides." 73 Butler was obnoxious to the Mexicans by this time, and in December Secretary of State Forsyth informed him that he was to return to the United States. Historians who have studied this period of Mexican-United States relations generally agree with one specialist that Butler "should have been recalled much earlier. He was conceited, boastful, and unprincipled, and a disgrace to the nation which he represented." 74

73 Ibid., Butler to Jackson, November 1835. No specific date is given.

74 McCormac in The American Secretaries of State, ed. Bemis, IV, 318. Those in agreement with McCormac are Rives, Manning, Valadés, and Justin Smith, among others. As early as 1833, Butler's competence was questioned by the American Consul in Mexico City, James Smith Wilcocks. In February, he charged that "Butler is unworthy of and a disgrace to the office he now holds, and ought to be recalled by his government." It was Wilcocks' contention that Butler was lewd and that he was
Butler was replaced by Powhatan Ellis, a fellow Mississippian who was instructed to undertake a new policy of negotiation with the Mexican government. Territorial purchase was not to be discussed. It was to be Ellis' task to attempt to assure the Mexican nation of his country's good will, though such reassurance seemed to be too late. 75

Mexican-United States relations had reached a new low. By the middle of 1836, Texan independence was a reality, and it chafed the Mexican government. Consequently, Mexican officials indicated no desire to treat with the United States representative on any subject of importance. The attitude of many Americans did not enhance the chance for improvement in relations. There was much unofficial support for the Texas independence movement in spite of official reticence. A contemporary witness of

notorious for molesting young Mexican girls of good families. In December, Wilcocks expressed hope that he would have the opportunity to present his views to President Jackson, whose ear Butler possessed, so he could "prove that Col Butler's conduct is disgraceful to his country and that he should not be suffered to represent it longer in this Republic." National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Reports, Mexico City, Wilcocks to McLane, February 15, 1833; December 24, 1833, II. It might be pointed out that Wilcocks was dismissed from his post in April 1834.

these events was Thomas Hart Benton, who remembered that news of the victory at San Jacinto caused great rejoicing in Washington. "The people were exalted--Congress not less so--and a feeling for the acknowledgement of Texian independence, if not universal, almost general."76

When the American Senate convened for the first time after San Jacinto, there was much talk concerning the recognition of the independence of Texas. Some senators, such as Calhoun of South Carolina, not only supported Texan independence but also called for immediate admission of that territory into the Union. Benton, however, contended that Texas was officially at war with Mexico. By incorporating Texas into the Union, the United States would in effect be taking up the Texas struggle. This could not be: "We had treaties of amity with Mexico [and] to join Texas in the war, was to be faithless to those treaties."77 Such reasoning, if it were known in Mexico, did not impress the Mexican government. The United States had brought about the Texas problem. What was to stop that government from further annoyances? Most Mexican officials in 1835-1836 would


77Ibid., 667, 668.
have agreed with the assessment of a later historian that in this span the American hunger for land-ownership had indeed become greed. 78

Ellis' situation in Mexico was not enviable. The actions of his predecessors had prejudiced the Mexican government against the United States, and Alamán formulated these prejudices into a policy. It was noted in December 1836 that Ellis had achieved nothing in the way of negotiations with Mexican officials. Consequently, he was reported to be giving consideration to the request of his passport. He complained to the Mexican authorities on numerous occasions but received no answer. The observer who reported this believed that Ellis "... will go home if these demands are not answered satisfactorily. I learn that many days have elapsed, and that no answer has been given..." Also, it was clear that "on the part of the priests and the present government here, there is no good feeling towards the U. States. North Americans live an uneasy life... not knowing what to expect from day to day..." 79 In spite of his discouragement, Ellis did not request his passport. He remained in Mexico until

78 E. C. Barker, "The United States and Mexico," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, I, (1914), 7.

79 New York Daily Express quoted in Niles' Weekly Register, LI (December 10, 1836), 225.
1842, attempting in some way to rectify the situation of re-
lations. However, he too discovered that Alamán had done his
work well.

Although the issue between Mexico and the United States no
longer concerned the latter's acquisition of Texas by means of
negotiation, that area nevertheless remained the issue of con-
tention between the two nations. The Mexican government abso-
lutely refused to acknowledge the independence of Texas in any
official manner and adhered to the proposition advanced by
Alamán and others that the area was a rebellious Mexican
province, nothing more. In reality, the Mexican officials
knew Texas was lost; however, there was now evident the fear
that the United States would grant recognition to Texas, or even
annex the area. The latter possibility was not likely at that
time, for the United States government was conscious of the
charge by Mexico that it had precipitated the Texas revolution.

But the Mexicans still were uncomfortable about the possi-
bility of United States recognition of Texas. To make matters
worse for the Mexican government, the Texans turned to both
Great Britain and France for support when it became clear that
the United States was reluctant to make any overt diplomatic
approach. Still, these European nations were far away. Texas
and the United States were contiguous. Moreover, Great
Britain's recognition could in the long run prove beneficial to Mexico, for the British opposed the westward expansion of the United States. The presence of an independent Texas nation, with British ties, more than likely would impede American expansion to the west.

The new Texas situation became the focal point of the Mexican government's foreign policy between 1837 and 1844. As noted previously, Santa Anna had returned in disgrace to Mexico after the fiasco at San Jacinto. For the moment he was content to retire to Manga de Clavo and to contemplate his future. Meanwhile, in December 1836 Alamán authored a new constitution quite restrictive in nature, and the conservative forces reigned supreme. While Alamán was then engrossed with his industrial program, Anastasio Bustamante returned from European exile to become president again. He served from 1837 to 1841 before being overthrown once more by Santa Anna, who by that time had regained his lost prestige and glory by virtue of the "Pastry War" with France.

It was during this second Bustamante presidency that the question of Texas came to be of paramount importance to Mexico, for it was the key to future relations with the United States. Following the precedent set by Alamán, the Mexican government expressed a determination not to lose Texas to the United States,
either by virtue of diplomatic relations or annexation. Even so, such determination had no weight of force behind it to prevent the loss of Texas. It was the attitude of the United States government that actually allowed the Mexicans to carry out their policy of non-recognition as long as they did. The American government, somewhat ideally, was itself determined to mend the diplomatic fence with Mexico. Thus ensued seven years of maneuvering which in the end would prove not only fruitless but also disastrous for Mexico.

Commencing in 1837, the Mexican government undertook a campaign of sorts to indicate how the country felt about United States intentions regarding Texas. There was nothing deferential about the Mexican effort. On the contrary, they were bellicose in their arguments. Even though Alamán was not an active participant in the government during the latter years of the 1830's, his hand is discernible in much of the formal policy of his country.

On March 21, 1837, the Foreign Affairs Minister, José María Ortiz Monasterio, addressed himself to the American

80 For the attitude of the Texan government during these years, consult George Pierce Garrison, ed., Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas (The American Historical Association Report, 1907-1908), II.
Secretary of State, and his remarks exhibited the theories pro-
pounded by Alamán in reference to suspicions of the motives of
the United States. "The Mexican Government," he wrote,
"regards that of the U. States too just to suppose that ignoble
views of aggrandizement could govern its motives." But such
did not seem to be the case. "Nevertheless, the measure com-
plained of is incontestable; it is announced in an official paper
of the U. States, the New Orleans Bee. . . ." As a result of
this discovery, Monasterio indicated that he had "... received
instructions from his excellency the president ad interim of the
republic to protest, as he does now protest in the most solemn
manner before all civilized nations, against the acknowledgement
of the independence of the pretended republic of Texas, made by
the United States of America . . . ," and he declared "that it
cannot in any manner or mode, either now or at any time to
come, weaken, diminish, or compromit, in the least, the
rights of the republic of Mexico on the territory of Texas, nor
the right which it possesses to employ all the means which are
or may be in its power to recover the said territory."81 Such
was Mexico's stand, based upon Alamán's theory that the United

81Niles' Weekly Register, LII (May 13, 1837), 168.
States was determined to secure Mexican territory and that Mexico in turn had to resist at all cost. The Mexican government would remain intransigent on this subject until the outbreak of war some nine years later.

At this time, Alamán expressed dejection at the state of affairs in his country. He could not help but feel a responsibility for Mexico's predicament, for his Ley had proved to be the fuse which detonated the Texas explosion. More than likely this knowledge caused him to turn vigorously to his industrial schemes. However, he remained adamant in his contention that he had followed the best course for Mexico in dealing with the United States government. And Mexican public officials continued to consult him for advice.

In April 1837, Alamán revealed his feelings to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone. In his words, because of the recent events regarding Texas, "la miseria pública pues es suma ... ." He recounted how the Mexican army sent to Texas had faltered, which led to national humiliation. Also, political affairs were in a state of confusion, and he indicated that General Bustamante soon would be asked to assume the office of president again. Added to the internal woes of the country, he wrote, was the fact that the United States had acknowledged the independence of Texas. Such action on that country's part would complicate
Mexico's foreign policy, especially in regard to England and France. This news would give the Duke an "idea del triste estado en que esto se encuentra." Alamán did not despair of the situation, however, for he still believed Mexico could develop industrial self-sufficiency with British support. Then political stability would follow, and the United States would face a reconstituted Mexico.

As was indicated before, this revival of Mexico's economic and political affairs did not come to pass as Alamán hoped. For the next three years the Mexican situation changed little; hence, the Texas problem was not alleviated by the appearance of a stronger Mexico. Attempts to negotiate some type of settlement were initiated between the Mexican and United States governments, but these were futile from the start. There was no indication that Mexico's bellicosity had declined, as was reported in 1837: "The Mexican government has issued an order declaring a blockade of all the ports of Texas.

82Documentos diversos, Alamán to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone, April 3, 1837, IV, 374-375. Throughout most of Alamán's correspondence there is little mention of the state of affairs between Mexico and the United States. When discussion of this relationship appears, it is in an unusual context; for example, this passage is found in one of his regular reports to the Duke concerning the latter's holdings in Mexico, of which Alamán was administrator.
there was evidence that all was not well within Mexico, for
"there are extensive symptoms of internal disorder and pending
revolution in Mexico. . . ." Furthermore, Santa Anna was re­
ported to be regaining his former popularity in the country. He
was said to be "... at his plantation, waiting the turn of
affairs. The tide of public feeling is said to be turning in his
favor."83

The fact that Santa Anna, whose defeat and capture at San
Jacinto had humiliated Mexico, was once more gaining popular
support indicated Mexico's search for redemption was gathering
momentum. If Santa Anna was to be the instrument to lead this
national effort, then Alamán had supplied the nation with its
motive for saving face--hatred for and fear of the United States.
And it was agreed that Texas was the justification for this outlook.

The Mexican attitude toward the United States government's
involvement in the Texan affair was for the most part expressed
by Tornel in 1837, whose words reflected Alamán's thinking.
According to Tornel,

For more than fifty years, that is, from the
very period of their political infancy, the pre­
vailing thought in the United States of America
has been the acquisition of the greater part of the

83Niles' Weekly Register, LII (April 15, 1837), 97.
territory that formerly belonged to Spain, particularly that part which to-day belongs to the Mexican nation. Democrats and Federalists, all their political parties, whatever their old or new designations, have been in perfect accord upon one point, their desire to extend the limits of the republic to the north, to the south, and to the west, using for the purpose all the means at their command, guided by cunning, deceit, and bad faith. 84

However determined the United States, Mexico was even more so, Tornel declared. The loss of a considerable portion of Mexican territory was not to occur, for such an event could only lead to the humiliation of the nation. "She stands ready to buy peace at any cost," he asserted, "except that of her honor." The problem could be solved easily. "Let the motive for the many complaints against the United States be removed, and our well-founded fears that force alone is responsible for the injustices offered will disappear." 85 But such Mexican determination to maintain a position of indignant self-righteousness was becoming bothersome to many in the United States. It was suggested by an American in Mexico City that "negociation [sic]

84 José María Tornel y Mendivil, "Relations Between Texas, the United States of America, and the Mexican Republic," The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution by the Chief Mexican Participants, ed. Carlos E. Castañeda (Dallas, 1928), 287.

85 Ibid., 378.
is a futile and absurd way of bringing the Mexicans to a sense of justice—experience has amply proved it to be so. Nothing but the strong arm of power will effect that object. 86

In spite of the hostility between Mexicans and Americans, which had increased noticeably by 1839, there seemed to be the possibility of a settlement of the problem in the spring of 1840. President Bustamante apparently desired to end the conflict with the United States over Texas' independence. In April, President Mirabeau Lamar of the Republic of Texas was invited to Mexico City, accompanied by his assistant, James Treat. In the capital, he met with the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the question of Mexican acknowledgement of Texan independence was discussed. The subject then was put before a Council of State in June. Alamán was a member of this body as counselor to Bustamante, and he presented to its members a "Dictamen sobre la independencia de Tejas," which he had composed on May 29. In this statement, he reiterated his opinion that Texas could not be considered an independent state. Texas was still a rebellious province. It was folly even to consider this request for recognition of independence by the Texans. Alamán then advised that the case be put before the National Congress for

86Niles' Weekly Register, LVI (June 1, 1839), 214.
discussion, since it was the duty of that group to decide whether or not recognition of an independent Texas should be granted. Alamán's move was well-calculated, for the Mexican Congress was predominantly conservative in its membership. Consequently, in keeping with Alamán's views, the legislature rejected the idea of recognizing Texas as an independent nation. 87

Again Alamán played a pivotal role in determining the direction which Mexican-United States relations would take. Had Mexican recognition of Texas been forthcoming, it is possible that a new diplomatic outlook between Mexico and the United States might have developed. But as it was, hostilities were exacerbated, and the probability of a peaceful settlement of the disputes between the two countries diminished.

Throughout the rest of 1840, the situation did not improve. Indeed, there was a feeling of futility evident in the United States. It was reported in the autumn that the progress of negotiations was nil. A joint commission was meeting in an attempt to adjust claims of United States citizens against the Mexican government, but there was as yet no glimmering of an agreement. One news source indicated that "we are mortified by

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87 Zorrilla, Historia de las relaciones, I, 132. For the "Dictamen..." see Alamán, Documentos diversos, II, 545.
this information, because, having been decided and earnest advocates for an amicable adjudication and arbitration of these claims, in preference to a resort to arms for redress of the alleged grievances of our citizens... we looked with confidence to a prompt and just action upon the subject." But the claims dispute was only a continuation of the already-complex problem. The Mexican government denied that American citizens had suffered mistreatment at its insistence. At the same time, the United States government expressed a determination to see that its citizens were compensated for losses due to Mexican malfeasance. Thus continued the controversy.

In January 1841, President Bustamante, who now had begun to sense that Santa Anna had political ambitions once again, attempted to enhance his own position. He announced to the Congress that the "attempted" insurrection in the north had failed. In his words, "the revolution of the north which so seriously affected the national sensibilities, from the melancholy impression that misguided Mexicans were fighting against their country, has ended in the most satisfactory manner." The loyalty of Mexicans in the Texas region was lauded, and he hoped that these people could maintain themselves against the

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88Niles' Weekly Register, LIX (October 17, 1840), 97.
Texans. If such a situation should arise, Bustamante promised that "this fortunate event will, provided I receive the assistance I am justified in expecting from your powerful cooperation, facilitate the recovery of the Department of Texas." 89

This effort on Bustamante's part to imply that Texas soon would be returned to Mexican control was not successful in arousing the country. By the middle of 1841, opposition to his government climaxed, and there soon followed that series of pronouncements alluded to in an earlier chapter. From this confusion emerged Santa Anna, now one-legged and a hero as a result of the "Pastry War." He assumed control of the government as absolute dictator, was at the height of his power throughout 1842, then retired to Manga de Clavo when he became bored with managing the country. Vice President Nicolás Bravo attempted to rule in his stead, but in 1843 a Junta of Notables, of which Alamán was a member, drew up a new constitution making the executive office virtually a legal dictatorship. For the seventh time Santa Anna was asked to become leader of the nation, and there followed another year of his mismanagement. By 1844 the political bosses were tired of him, and he was

89Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, XXX, 1347.
overthrown. But he soon would return to lead Mexico against the United States in the Mexican War.

During this period between the fall of Bustamante in 1841 and the fall of Santa Anna in 1844, there occurred the inevitable collapse of Mexican-United States relations. There seemed to be little chance that any grounds for understanding would be found. Antagonisms between Texans and Mexicans had grown in intensity, and clashes between them occurred with more frequency. Often citizens of the United States, not of Texas, were involved in these altercations, and any efforts on the part of the Mexican government to punish them were resented by the American authorities. Claims of United States citizens against the Mexican government for losses due to revolutionary disturbances and military confiscations had not received just consideration in Mexican law courts, and negotiations between the two governments produced no results. The situation of relations was indeed serious.

Ellis, the American minister to Mexico until 1842, attempted to deal with these problems, but it was difficult. The Mexican government charged that the United States condoned the belligerent activities of its citizens in Texas; however, Ellis pointed out that even though his government could prohibit the shipment of arms to Texas, it could not prevent its citizens from going
there and doing whatever they wished. One event which particularly angered the Mexican government was the attempt of Texans and Americans to seize the Mexican town of Mier on the Rio Bravo del Norte. A large group of the siegers was captured, and seventeen were summarily executed. The rest were imprisoned in Mexico City. The actions of the Mexicans angered the United States government, which contended that they had acted too hastily. 90

In January 1842, Secretary of State Daniel Webster turned his attention to these fruits of Alamán's Texas policy. He sent instructions to his minister in Mexico City to the effect that

You will avail yourself of the opportunity of making to that government this communication, to suggest that, while this government is disposed to maintain with strict fidelity amicable relations with the Mexican republic, and will not attempt to screen from merited punishment any of our citizens who may be guilty of an infraction of the laws intended to preserve those relations, yet that summary, sanguinary, or undue punishment of either Texans or citizens of the United States in Mexico inevitably tends to excite and foment in this country an acerbity of feeling against Mexico which will be much more apt to defeat the supposed objects of those punishments than if the offenders were to have a fair

90 Bill, Rehearsal for Conflict, 77, 53.
Ellis had no time to deal with the problem, however, for he resigned and was replaced by Waddy Thompson. According to a recent authority, Thompson was much happier in his post than any of his predecessors. He was a man who always saw the best side of everyone. Even though he favored Texan independence and supported annexation, he asserted that he was never treated discourteously while in Mexico.\footnote{Daniel Webster, \textit{Writings and Speeches} (18 vols.; Boston, 1903), Webster to Ellis, January 3, 1842, XII, 98. See also National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico.}

Regardless of his congenial outlook, Thompson was forced to grapple with a problem of complexity and serious possibilities. He received a note from Webster soon after his arrival in Mexico City. It concerned the status of those American citizens who were captured with the Texan expedition to Santa Fe which attempted to besiege Mier. Webster contended that he doubted these men were involved in any attempt to invade Mexico, which was the charge lodged against them. What particularly concerned him, Webster averred, was the attitude of the Mexican government that these men were guilty by virtue of

\footnote{Bill, \textit{Rehearsal for Conflict}, 78.}
their association with the "enemy," that is, Texans. In any case, the law which they had violated did not warrant the punishment they had received. Instead, they should have been returned to the territory of the United States. It was Thompson's duty, then, to bring succor to the imprisoned Americans. He thus turned to the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs, José Bocanegra.

Although the matter which concerned the two ministers was serious, Thompson expressed a liking for Bocanegra. One is prone to wonder what course relations might have taken if Thompson had been the first American minister to deal with Alamán. Be that as it may, Thompson referred to the Mexican Secretary as "an eminent and virtuous judge" and indicated that although "I found him always faithful to his own country, and tenacious of her interests, . . . he was uniformly courteous and fair. . . ." What Bocanegra thought of Thompson is not known; however, he did not hesitate to castigate the United States government for the misery it had brought to Mexico in conjunction with the Texas question. It can be assumed, furthermore, that Bocanegra was an acquaintance of Alamán. As the

93Webster, Writings and Speeches, Webster to Thompson, April 5, 1842, XII, 101, 105, 106.

94Thompson, Recollections, 82.
contemporaries Robinson and Mme. De la Barca revealed, Alamán during this time was prominent, though discreetly so, in government. It can even be speculated that he advised Bocanegra on the tack which should be taken in dealing with the United States.

Writing to Webster in May 1842, Bocanegra suggested that diplomatic relations between their governments would have been impossible since 1835 "... if the Mexican government had not given so many evidences of its forbearance, and had not made so many and so great sacrifices..." In fact, he implied that war itself had been avoided because of the Mexican effort. In other words, Bocanegra's implication was that the effort to keep relations intact between Mexico and the United States was one-sided on the part of his government. He suggested that the northern government had not practiced diligence in working for a settlement of mutual problems. It was especially lax in the control of its citizenry. Since 1835, he noted, "the Mexican republic has received nothing but severe injuries and inflictions from the citizens of the United States." Then, in a statement pregnant with insinuation, he got to the crux of the matter:

95 Webster, Writings and Speeches, Bocanegra to Webster, May 12, 1842, XII, 116-117.
"The Mexican government speaks only of the citizens of the United States, as it still flatters itself with the belief that it is not the government of that country which has promoted the insurrection in Texas, which has favored the usurpation of its territory, and has supplied the rebels with ammunition, arms, vessels, money, and recruits. . . ." 96 It was as if Alamán himself were speaking.

Continuing his note, Bocanegra suggested, however, that if the American government was not directly involved in the efforts against Mexico, it knew of and apparently condoned many of them. In the opinion of his government, "the insurgent colonists of that integral part of the territory of the Mexican republic would have been unable to maintain their prolonged rebellion without the aid and the efficient sympathies of citizens of the United States. . . ." Many illegal actions and atrocities on the part of American citizens, charged Bocanegra, had occurred with the knowledge of the United States government, composed of ". . . authorities to whom are intrusted the fulfillment of the law." 97 If Alamán was not advising Bocanegra, his ideas had indeed been well-cultivated among those Mexicans

96 Ibid., 117.

97 Ibid.
who served in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Bocanegra's tone struck a sensitive diplomatic nerve in Washington. By this time, United States officials were evincing an irritability toward the government to the south. The question of Texas' future was becoming a more important issue in United States political circles. Mexico's continued protestations were becoming bothersome and repetitious, and the impugning of United States honor grated on many Americans. Webster's reply to Bocanegra did not mask these feelings of exasperation.

As to the inference that Mexico alone had practiced forbearance and made sacrifices to ensure continuation of diplomatic contact, Webster informed his Mexican counterpart that such was "a charge which the government of the United States utterly denies and repels." Moreover, "it is wholly ignorant of any sacrifices made by Mexico in order to preserve peace..." After reviewing events since 1835, Webster even contended that it was "the conduct of the government of the United States which has been marked, in an especial manner, by moderation and forbearance." When all was said and done, Webster concluded, the problem centered around Mexico's chagrin at the existence of an independent Texas, which the Mexican government still
Webster's assessment of the Mexican attitude toward relations with the United States was correct. In following Alamán's principle that Texas could not be allowed to fall under the aegis of the United States, the Mexican government was taking a stand in reference to Texan independence which by 1843-1844 was unrealistic. If that government could have supported its threats and demands with a show of strength, its actions might have been relevant. But this was not the case. The Mexicans could not maintain internal stability, much less their control over the province of Texas. Helplessness, according to one authority, was the hallmark of Mexican diplomacy between 1837 and 1844.  

There were those in the United States who were eager to take advantage of Mexico's impotence by annexing Texas. Benton reported such a proposal in the winter of 1842-1843, on the pretext that the annexation of Texas was necessary to offset Great Britain's designs in that area. Benton, who opposed antagonizing the Mexican government through the annexation of Texas, recounted that this proposal "... was a clap of thunder in a clear

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98 Ibid., Webster to Bocanegra (via Thompson), July 8, 1842, 120, 124.

sky." He argued that there was no evidence to indicate British intentions as such. Even though he admitted that annexation might be carried out under successful circumstances, Benton noted that "a premature and ill-judged attempt, upon groundless pretexts, could only clog and delay it."100

Benton's was a voice in the wilderness, however, for Mexico's weakness gave impetus to the movement for annexation in the United States. In addition to Mexico's helplessness, there was another factor, according to former President John Quincy Adams, which promoted the desire for Texas annexation--"the inflexible perseverance of rapacity of our South and West, under the spur of slavery, to plunder and dismember her."101

Although the slave conspiracy theory is not generally accepted among current historians in reference to annexation, the Mexican government in 1843 was receptive to such ideas. Thus, the suggestion that the southern United States was promoting the annexation of Texas was not taken lightly in Mexico City. Nor was the contention that eventually the United States people would support a movement for the absorption of the

100 Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, II, 581

entire Mexican nation discounted. Indicative of the Mexican fears was a memorandum issued in May 1843 which referred to the secret machinations of the United States to seize control of Texas. It was suggested that the Mexican government should take up this matter with a sense of extreme urgency. In March 1844, there was the suggestion that many powerful politicians in the United States might oppose annexation, despite the tendencies of the government, and a Spanish translation of Webster's views on annexation was made known, for he supposedly expressed opposition to the possibility of such action.

Mexican fears that the United States was seriously contemplating annexation were given substance in 1844, in spite of known opposition in certain areas of that country. Benton related that President John Tyler, who desired the annexation of Texas even though he was a Whig, indicated in his annual message that he hoped the United States could "... take Texas under the protection of the Union, and ... make her cause our own." In Benton's opinion, Tyler's actions smacked of intrigue,

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102Archivo Biblioteca Nacional, MSS 1741, Sujeto Tejas, 122.

103Ibid., 264. "Soy, ciertamente, de la misma opinión que Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. John Quincy Adams y otros hombres ilustres, y creo que la constitución jamás juzgo que llegase el caso de que se hubiesen de agregon a la unión nuevos estados formados de Territorias de naciones estrangeras ... ."
and he suggested that these were "... in flagrant violation of the principles and usages of the government." 104

The Texas issue permeated the campaign for the United States presidency in 1844, and James Knox Polk was nominated by the Democratic Party and subsequently elected president in part because he supported annexation. Tyler, however, was eager to achieve this goal before going out of office, and in December 1844 he addressed a joint session of Congress on the subject. He argued, fallaciously, that Mexico had negotiated willingly and in good faith for the sale of Texas to the United States before the outbreak of revolution in 1835. Actually, in his opinion Mexican resistance to annexation since 1835 had no relevance, for Texas had maintained its independence for nine years and could act as it saw fit. 105 Finally, the event feared so long by Mexico, and about which Alamán had warned, came to pass. A joint resolution of the American Congress was issued February 28, 1845, and annexation procedures were initiated. The Texan Congress then met in June to discuss the

104 Benton, Thirty Years' View, II, 599-600.

proposition, and a convention met in July for the same pur-
pose. Both groups unanimously called for annexation rather
than independence. In December 1845, Texas became the
twenty-eighth state of the Union.

Mexico protested these procedures with vigor, but with
little else. In March 1845, after President Polk congratulated
the Congress for its action and had all but welcomed Texas
into the Union, General Juan N. Almonte, Mexican minister
to Washington, issued a formal protest to Secretary of State
Calhoun. The purpose of his note, Almonte pointed out, was
to express "the profound regret with which he has seen that the
general Congress of the Union has passed a law giving its con-
sent, and admitting . . . into the American confederacy the
province of Texas." Furthermore, he considered this act,
which he had prayed would not occur, "an act of aggression the
most unjust which can be found recorded in the annals of modern
history, namely, that of despoiling a friendly nation . . . of a
considerable portion of her territory."106

106 Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign
State Papers, Almonte to Calhoun, March 6, 1845, XXXIII,
246-247. See also National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59,
Notes from the Mexican Legation in Washington. For Polk's
statements, see Richardson, Messages and Papers, IV, 379.
the newly-appointed Secretary of State, answered Almonte's protest rather tersely four days later. Following Polk's instructions, he pointed out to the Mexican minister that since the admission of Texas into the United States had received legislative and executive sanction, the question was "irrevocably decided, so far as the United States are concerned." 107

Since the beginning of this controversy, Mexico had threatened war if the United States annexed Texas. 108 A threat as such was hollow in view of the unstable Mexican political situation. There actually was little that the government of Mexico could do. But there soon followed the dispute between the Mexican government and the Polk administration which led to war. Those events have received extensive examination and will not be discussed here. 109

107 Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, Buchanan to Almonte, March 10, 1845, XXXIII, 247.


109 For commentary on the disputed territory, the border clash, and the steps leading to war, the following works are valuable: Smith, War with Mexico; Bemis, The Latin-American Policy of the United States, Chapter VI; Reeves, American Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk. For the American rationale in going to war, see this writer's "The Young Republic's Self-Image During the Administration of James Knox Polk" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of History, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 1966), Chapters III and IV.
Suffice it to say that the United States and Mexican governments shared the blame for the causes of the war which erupted in 1846. Generally, the war was popular in the United States, but there were those who doubted Polk's claim that the country went to war in self-defense. Representative Abraham Lincoln of Illinois implied that Polk's reasoning for involvement in the war was fallacious and demanded to know the exact spot upon which American blood had been shed.\(^{110}\) Albert Gallatin believed that the course followed by his government in annexing Texas was an affront to Mexico. He contended that Mexico was probably reconciled to the fact of Texas' independence and was prepared to recognize that independence provided the United States did not consider annexation. American action, therefore, "... was remarkable and offensive." He rejected the suggestion that the United States was a superior nation compared to Mexico, and he denied that absorption of that nation would enlighten its people.

as so many Americans declared. 111

The Mexican War, which was an outgrowth of Alamán's Texas policy, proved disastrous for Mexico. The people were humiliated. Santa Anna's return from exile to lead the troops did not bring about victory. There was the possibility for a time that the United States might absorb the entire nation. Mexico was prostrate. Under these circumstances, it would have seemed likely that those Mexicans who were aware of the background of their situation would reject the theories of Alamán, who was in large part responsible for the state of affairs. But this was not the case.

During the war years, Alamán remained a prominent spokesman for his nation. Furthermore, he concluded that the Mexican nation had suffered under the auspices of federalism and republicanism long enough. He blamed the country's state of affairs not on his Texas policy and its ramifications but on the concept of republican government and the meddling of the United States. He believed it was time for Mexico to turn to the system of monarchy, and it was during the years of the Mexican

111 Gallatin, Peace with Mexico (New York, 1847), 7, 8, 28; Writings, ed. Henry Adams (3 vols.; Philadelphia, 1879), III, 562, 563, 585. A retrospective contemporary criticism of the war was Abiel Abbott Livermore's The War with Mexico Re-viewed (Boston, 1850).
War that he embarked upon his scheme to establish a European prince on a Mexican throne. This effort marked Alamán's final years, and came in the twilight of his career.
The concept of a monarchical system of government was not a new one for Alamán. However, prior to 1845 he had worked within the framework of a republican form of government. This was done because above all else he desired his nation to become strong and self-sufficient, and it seemed those Mexicans in control of political power had selected the system of federalism as their choice. By 1845, though, he was convinced the republican and democratic ways were not suitable for Mexico, and it was at this time that he actively began to promote the idea of a monarchy for Mexico.

Alamán had little doubt that Mexico and the United States were on the brink of war. For this situation he blamed the several United States governments with which Mexico had dealt since 1823. At the same time, he also believed that federalism was the reason for the Mexican political weakness which had enabled the American government to take advantage of his own. His solution to the problem would be the creation
of a strong centralized government with a European prince as ruler. Mexico would remain autonomous, yet without question the nation of that prince would support Mexico to enable the new monarch to maintain his power and prestige.

Alamán was not the only Mexican public official to express a predilection for the monarchical system. Since the brief spectacle of Iturbide's empire, monarchy remained a force in Mexican political life. To be sure, the federalist constitution of 1824 in theory had embarked Mexico along a democratic path. Yet, between 1824 and 1845, democracy had not dominated Mexican political thinking, and numerous officials who espoused monarchy had held posts in the government. Of these men, the most able and industrious was Alamán. Moreover, Santa Anna's series of dictatorships and periods of indirect manipulation weakened the contention that Mexico had functioned as a democratic Republic, although Santa Anna often contended that he favored a republican form of government.

Thus, by 1845 a growing sentiment for a more stringent system of government had emerged among well-to-do conservative and moderate elements in Mexico City. Uneasiness at the

state of affairs between Mexico and the United States gave strength to this feeling. It was obvious that the United States government intended to carry out its plan to absorb Texas, and Mexican officials believed that this action was merely a ruse for the annexation of additional territory. Consequently, in order to counter any American moves, an Alamán-led group in Mexico City proposed the establishment of a monarchy with a European prince as ruler. For Alamán, this activity was the continuation of his pursuit of one of his major goals, but by 1845 he was pursuing such a course with greater vigor.

During Guerrero's short presidency, he had contacted the Spanish ruler, Ferdinand VII, about the feasibility of an attempt at restoration, but no encouragement was forthcoming from Spain. When he was Minister for Foreign Affairs under Bustamante in 1830-1832, Alamán had broached the subject of monarchy to the British minister Pakenham; again, he received no encouragement. In 1838, it was reported by the American Consul in Mexico City, John Black, that the conservative elements led by Alamán were attempting to bring about a monarchical government.² All of these efforts had

²Creel, People Next Door, 60; Smith, War with Mexico, I, 90. For the despatches in 1838, see National Archives, Department of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, III-VI.
failed, however, because there was no sense of emergency or impending danger at the particular time. But such a feeling was evident in 1845. Talk of monarchy was no longer dismissed as out of the question.

In the words of a Mexican authority, the Mexican Republic by the middle of 1845 was on the edge of a precipice. The country was in the throes of both economic and political misery. Leading Mexican politicians had ceased to look to public negotiations as the means to settle the foreign problems with the United States. It was under these circumstances that a new political party was created, though many of those wealthy citizens, clerics, and military officers who comprised its membership had played prominent parts in political affairs since 1821. The active leader of this new party was Father Najera, a Carmelite priest, but the spiritual and philosophical strength of the Partido Conservador came from Alamán.³ Immediately after its creation, the Conservative Party began to promote its basic goals. It urged resistance of the United States government's attempt to seize Mexican territory, and it attempted to lay the foundation for the establishment of a monarchy in the country.

³Valadés, Alamán, 414-415.
Between June and December 1845, the American consul, Black, observed the political affairs in Mexico closely and with interest. On June 10, he informed Secretary of State Buchanan that "on Saturday [sic] the 7th Instant, at about half past three oclock [sic] in the afternoon, a revolution broke out in the National Palace in this city. . . ." According to Black, the leader of the insurrection was "General Rangel, an officer of Santa Anna's party. . . ." In his account, Black pointed out that only one member of the cabinet had escaped capture. President Herrera and the others were in jail at the time of his writing. 4

In addition to this report of another overthrow of the Mexican executive, Black indicated that the Congress of that nation had become extremely conservative and bellicose in nature. On June 9, in fact, a decree of the Congress had appeared, and this declaration was quite clear in meaning. This decree, wrote Black,

states that--'The National Congress of the Mexican Republic, considering:
That the chambers of the United States of the North by a decree which its Executive has sanctioned, have resolved to incorporate the territory of Texas to the American Union,

4 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Buchanan, June 10, 1845, VIII, entry 337.
That this mode of appropriating foreign territory, over which other nations have rights, introduces a monstrous novelty, dangerous to the peace of the world, and sovereignty of nations.¹

Furthermore, Black noted, "the decree often indulging in harsh terms against the United States . . ." concluded with two significant observations. The first was that the United States was determined to seize Texas illegally. This being the case, the second observation was that the Mexican government would marshal all the forces of the army and raise additional troops "... under the name of Defenders of the Independence and of the laws."² Nine days later, he wrote again concerning the animosity of the Mexican interim government. He offered that "... from the proceedings of the Government on this subject of annexation, it would appear and is generally believed here, that a declaration of war against the United States is inevitable. . . ."³

Despite such bellicosity on behalf of the Mexican government, Black believed that the Mexican officials actually wished to settle the affair of Texas without a confrontation in view of the nation's political instability. Throughout October, November, November.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., entry 341.
and December, Black met frequently with the Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs, Manuel de la Peña y Peña, and he wrote that the Mexican minister seemed willing to reach a peaceful settlement of the problems between Mexico and the United States. This willingness was expressed even though there had occurred a suspension of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Then the United States government made the faux pas of sending John Slidell as Minister Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary, and as indicated by Black, the Mexican government was in a quandary. Because official relations were suspended, the Mexicans could not receive Slidell as Minister Plenipotentiary despite their desire to negotiate unofficially. As a result, the opportunity, probably the last, for negotiations was lost; and, as the consul indicated, the conservative and reactionary elements soon gained the upper hand in Mexican political affairs. 7

In the middle of December, the Conservative Party elements made their move. When General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga initiated an uprising against the government in San Luis Potosí, the Partido Conservador threw its support to him. Black reported the news of this uprising on December 20,

7Ibid., October-December 1845, passim.
indicating that it occurred six days before. He had learned,
furthermore, that "Paredes is marching his forces on the cap-
ital. . . ."8 According to Alamán's biographer, it was at this
point that the Conservative Party became dominant in Mexico.
In January 1846, its official newspaper, El Tiempo, heralded
Paredes' revolt, and there was an immediate call for a monarchy
in Mexico. The chief editor of El Tiempo, writing anonymously,
was Alamán.9

8Ibid., December 20, 1845, entry 356.

9Valadés, Alamán, 416. While researching in the
Hemeroteca Nacional in Mexico City, which is the national
newspaper repository, this writer made a discovery heretofore
unnoticed by Mexican officials. That El Tiempo would prove
invaluable was unquestionable, and it was my plan to read every
issue between 1846 and 1853 in toto. It soon became evident
after an examination of the index file that there was an irregu-
larity, for the issues of the newspaper were complete except
for the years 1846-1849. The paper was first published in
1846 and was continued until the 1870's. When this irregularity
was pointed out to a staff member during an explanation of the
nature of my dissertation, he obviously was embarrassed and
immediately took me to see the director of the Hemeroteca,
Dr. Gustavo Perez Trejo. After a short discussion of my topic,
Dr. Perez Trejo allowed me to enter the restricted stack area,
and I was able to search through the newspaper shelves. It was
the contention of several assistants that the issues for 1846-
1849 were extant but that they had not been indexed due to some
oversight. This proved not to be the case. After a morning in
the shelf area, I suggested my theory that anti-monarchists
and enemies of the Partido Conservador later destroyed the
issues of El Tiempo deposited in the Hemeroteca Nacional,
and this suggestion met with agreement.
Black had no doubts that the Conservatives and Paredes had particular plans for Mexico. As he informed his superiors, it was generally agreed in Mexico City that Paredes' overthrow of the government "is only to prepare the way for a foreign Prince, . . . and the success of Paredes, will no doubt be a triumph to certain European powers, who are doing their best to defeat & to prevent the march of principles." 10

After Paredes' arrival in the capital, Black noted that the purpose of the Paredes revolution was obvious and was talked about freely among the people of the city. He observed that the Conservatives and Paredes were preparing "the way for the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico, and I have been informed, . . . that a plan for that object, has been under way for this some time past," and that "agents have been sent to Europe to solicit a foreign Prince, . . . that England [.] France, and Spain have countenanced this plan and are looked up to, to place and sustain a foreign Prince to rule over Mexico. . . ." 11 The Conservative Party was now openly

10National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Buchanan, December 20, 1845, VIII, entry 356.

11Ibid., Black to Buchanan, December 30, 1845, no entry given.
proclaiming the need for a monarchy. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that although he held no official position in the government, Alamán was serving as Paredes' chief adviser. No one questioned that Alamán once again was pre-eminent in Mexico's political and diplomatic affairs.

In January 1846, Alamán in El Tiempo proposed a new order for Mexico based on his conservative beliefs. In proclaiming the revolution of Paredes, he contended that the nation needed the protection of a strong, centralized government. The best form of government, he wrote, was a monarchy. Supporting Alamán in this undertaking were the majority of the clergy, the military leaders, and the well-to-do. Paredes was wholly dependent upon the Conservative Party for support. He apparently was convinced by Alamán that Mexico would soon have the support of one or several European nations, support which would prevent further United States aggrandizement. Paredes thus did not hesitate to threaten the American government in a rather reckless manner. Through editorials in El Tiempo, Alamán proposed that a new constitutional convention assemble, which would establish a monarchy and rejuvenate the Mexican nation. This convocatoria, in the words of a leading Mexican

12Rives, The United States and Mexico 1821-1848, II, 221.
thinker, was "an extraordinary document" which would create a constitutional oligarchy, and eliminate the mass of people from participation in government. This proposal, it is said, caused a profound sensation among the Mexican people. 13

In reference to the monarchy itself, Alamán also proposed through the editorial pages of El Tiempo that the monarchical candidate be the infante Don Enrique, the brother-in-law of Isabella II, Queen of Spain. 14 His editorials found an interested reader in Black, and in February the American consul expressed his misgivings to Washington. In a despatch to the Secretary of State, he indicated that "there is . . . no doubt in my mind, but that this revolution of Paredes was made for the purpose of preparing the way for the establishment of a Monarchy in Mexico, and placing a foreign Prince on the throne. . . ." Black was convinced that some foreign power had agreed to help Mexico in this undertaking, "for it is to me very evident that the editors of the paper called 'El Tiempo' the principal of whom are considered to be Alaman and [Sanchez de] Tagle, would never come

13 Valadés, Alamán, 418-419; Alfonso Toro, La iglesia y el estado en México: Estudio sobre los conflictos entre el clero católico y los gobiernos mexicanos desde la independencia hasta nuestros días (México, D. F., 1927), 143; Smith, War with Mexico, I, 214-215; Sierra, Evolución política, 237-238; Zamacois, Historia de México, XII, 419-420, 420-421, 428.

out so plain and bold in favor of Monarchy if they only looked to Mexican protection to bear them out in their bold efforts to establish the same. . . . "15 Black also noted in this despatch that he had conversed on several occasions with leading federalists. These men "complain bitterly of European management in the political affairs of Mexico. . . ." Moreover, Black relayed that these federalists had expressed a desire to enter into an alliance with the United States government, "to counteract this baleful influence and management, which was as prejudicial to the United States as to Mexico. . . ."16 There was no doubt that Alamán depended upon a European-supported monarchy, so onerous to the United States government. As he had noted, "a monarchy with a dynasty of new origin, unites all of the evils of a republic with all the inconveniences of a monarchy."17

The possibility that a European power would supply a ruler for Mexico and then give the nation protection concerned the Polk administration. The United States and Great Britain

15National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Buchanan, February 27, 1846, IX, entry 362.

16Ibid.

17Alamán, Semblanzas e ideario, 162.
already were at odds with one another concerning the territories of Oregon and California. Although there is little question that President Polk had decided upon the necessity of war with Mexico to secure California, he did not relish the thought of Mexico gaining the support of a European ally. Thus, the constant clamor for a monarch of European origin to rule Mexico upset the United States government in the first months of 1846.

Buchanan expressed this concern when he wrote to Slidell in March. Although he still was not allowed to confer with Mexican authorities, Slidell remained in Mexico City. He was receiving information from Black, who maintained his official status despite the severance of diplomatic relations, and was reporting back to the State Department.

Buchanan wrote, in reply to Slidell's reports, that "we have received information from different quarters, in corroboration of your statement, that there may be a design on the part of several European Powers to establish a monarchy in Mexico." He continued by acknowledging that "it is supposed that the clergy would generally favor such a project and that a considerable party already exists among the people which would give it their countenance and support." The official reaction of the United States government? "Should Great Britain and France attempt to place a Spanish or any other European Prince
upon the throne of Mexico, this would be resisted by all the power of the United States. "18 Steeling itself for conflict, the Polk administration had nothing to lose in threatening resistance to a monarchical undertaking in Mexico.

Polk recorded in his diary on April 9 that Slidell had asked for his passports to return to the United States. In a conversation with Thomas Hart Benton, the President discussed relations with the Mexican government and "the steps proper to be taken. . . ." Significantly, Polk noted that the possibility the major European powers would try to force Mexico to accept a foreign ruler gave the United States cause to act.19 With the rejection of Slidell, whose mission was Polk's one slight attempt to pacify an indignant Mexican government concerning their disputes, the President made the decision to go to war. Moreover, it is possible that he used the threat of a European monarch in Mexico as the excuse for an otherwise unjustifiable course of action. Hostilities erupted at the end of that month.

The war with the United States had an unexpected effect

18Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence . . . Inter-American Affairs, Buchanan to Slidell, March 12, 1846, VIII, Doc. 3255, 191, 192.

upon the efforts of the Conservative Party to create a monarchical state in Mexico. Prior to the conflict, between the time of Paredes' coup and the outbreak of war, Alamán and his followers had no other affairs with which to concern themselves. Most of their time was spent in preparation for a monarchy. The key to their efforts was the support of Paredes and his troops. The liberals and the federalists were unable to contest the Conservative efforts as long as Paredes remained in favor of a monarchy. However, when the war began, Paredes turned his interest toward a quick and glorious military victory. In the meantime, as Paredes' attention was diverted to military affairs, opposition to Alamán's monarchical schemes grew more pronounced, and a series of outbreaks against the Conservative Party occurred in various parts of the country.

Black, who continued his duties as consul after the declaration of war, took pains to follow the developments in Mexico in relation to the proposed monarchy of the Partido Conservador. Toward the end of June, he informed his superiors that there was talk of Paredes' intention to lead his troops to the frontier to engage the American forces. But he had also heard rumors that Paredes planned instead to march his army of 6,000 to 8,000 men to Guadalajara, where a serious anti-Conservative uprising was underway. It was Black's observation that as yet
Paredes had not "lost sight of his favorite project of monarchy. . . ." Nevertheless, the task had become more difficult in view of the circumstances, though "the monarchical party are still labouring hard to bring it about, though secretly."

Indeed, Alamán apparently was employing one of his favorite themes in his efforts to salvage the monarchical effort, that is, the danger and consequences of United States interference in Mexican affairs. Black closed his despatch by noting that "Alaman in a speech made in Congress a few days since gave it as his opinion that the revolutionaries of Guadalajara were sustained by American gold."  

The American consul was convinced that the movement in favor of a monarchy was widely accepted and supported by Paredes' government. But in September and October there appeared in a Mexico City newspaper two letters written by José María Torne1 concerning the actual extent of the monarchical support. Torne1 declared without hesitation that Alamán, as editor of El Tiempo, was the director of the monarchical movement. On the other hand, Torne1 rejected the widely-accepted contention that the Paredes government intended to

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20 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Buchanan, June 27, 1846, IX, entry 378.
accept the thinking of Alamán on the question of establishment of a monarchy. He also declared that no preparations for a monarchy had taken place either within or without the country, and that insinuations to the contrary were due to the work of the editor of El Tiempo. Although this assertion does not seem logical in view of Paredes' activity between December 1845 and the summer of 1846, Tornel as Secretary of War and a conservative-inclined politician should have known the policies of that government.

A Mexican scholar who studied this movement for monarchy has postulated that if Tornel's information was correct, then Alamán's motives take on a new significance. He was promoting his course of action for the future welfare of the nation. Since independence, Mexico had floundered in a political quagmire. Now, threatened by an invading North American army, Mexico faced political extermination. Alamán had therefore promoted a monarchy to create instead a strong conservative movement which would weld the nation together. Under Paredes, who was unquestionably a conservative, Alamán hoped to bring order out

21 El Monitor Republicano (Ciudad México), September 27, 1846; October 8, 1846.
of chaos. 22

It is possible that Alamán had this objective in mind, but there can be little doubt that he adhered to the concept of monarchy as the most efficient system of government. More than likely he at first believed that the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico in 1846 was quite feasible; however, after the commencement of war with the United States, Alamán realized that the monarchical system could be inaugurated only with difficulty. Since he was a realist, he probably made the decision to work for a strong centralized government, utilizing Paredes and his army for this purpose.

But without warning disaster struck. Paredes was in despair because the longed-for military successes he had anticipated proved elusive. He turned to drink for consolation, and in August 1846, Gómez Farías and his puros liberals brought about Paredes' ouster. With the hated federalists once more in control of the government, Alamán and his Conservatives were forced to cease their clamorings for a monarch, at least for the time being.

22See José Flores D.'s Juan Nepomuceno de Peredo y su misión secreta en Europa (1846-1848), Vol. XIX, 'serie 2, en Archivo historico diplomático mexicano, 169. For a contemporary favorable analysis of the monarchical movement, see Luis Manuel Rivero's Proyecto de monarquía en Méjico (Madrid, 1846).
Alamán once more withdrew from active participation in political affairs. He did not believe that the liberals could remain in power for long, and he was right. Gómez Farías decided to invite the country's best general, Santa Anna, to return from exile. While Santa Anna fought the war, Gómez Farías and his followers would return Mexico to republican ways. But Santa Anna had plans of his own, and the rest is well-known.

As was to be expected, the puros liberals initiated a suppression of the leading Conservatives after Gómez Farías' seizure of the presidency. A contemporary observer revealed that Paredes and his compatriots were imprisoned to await their fate at Santa Anna's hands. Also, it was rumored that Alamán was in hiding at the residence of the Spanish minister, and there were open threats of an attack on that house to seize the Conservative leader.23 Such an assault did not occur, however, and as was the case in 1832, Alamán was able soon thereafter to resume a normal life. He turned his energies to a new task, the completion of his Historia de Méjico, and continued to oversee the estates of the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone. Nonetheless, he remained attuned to the political situation, awaiting any

23José Fernando Ramirez, Mexico During the War with the United States, ed. Walter V. Scholes, tr. Elliott B. Scherr (University of Missouri Studies, XXIII; Columbia, 1950), 68.
opportunity to reassert the doctrines of conservatism.

On September 14, 1846, Santa Anna returned to Mexico City from exile in Cuba. He managed to convince President Polk that his return to Mexico would ensure peace. Consequently, the American President arranged for Santa Anna to pass through a United States naval blockade of the Mexican Gulf Coast. Consul Black reported Santa Anna's return to Buchanan, with the observation that he "entered this city with considerable parade got up by some of his particular friends and partizans. . . ." However, Black indicated that "he was not received with that general burst of applause [sic] which formerly attended him in his popular revolutionary movements. . . ."24

Between September 1846 and January 1847, Santa Anna busied himself in raising an army of approximately 25,000 men. Throughout most of 1847, he faced serious military reverses, though he maintained that he achieved a victory at Buena Vista in February, a claim which made him popular once again.

Due to his supposed victory at Buena Vista, Santa Anna was able to oust Gómez Farías in March 1847. A moderate liberal was put into office, and Santa Anna prepared to meet an American

24 National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Buchanan, September 17, 1846, IX, entry 390.
army under General Winfield Scott, which was marching inland from Vera Cruz. A Mexican rout at Cerro Gordo in April caused much criticism of Santa Anna; moreover, his negotiations with Polk had come to light. Once again the Conservative Party began to heap criticism upon the liberal federalists, both puros and moderados. But most Mexican politicians agreed that Santa Anna was the only competent military leader available; thus, he was allowed to assume the presidency of Mexico in the summer of 1847.

During August and September, as General Scott's army moved toward the capital, the Mexican forces fought well. At last Mexicans were aware of the serious situation confronting them, and a semblance of unity was discernible. Nevertheless, in the middle of September American troops pushed into Mexico City. Some resistance occurred, but the municipal government was able to halt the street fighting the day after the American entry, and it was decreed that the enemy forces were not to be provoked. There is no official American consular account of these events, for in April 1847, Black was ordered to leave Mexico and to return to the United States.25 This he did, though he was reappointed to the post in August 1848.

25Ibid., April 25, 1847, no entry given.
As the Mexican army attempted to halt the American drive from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, Alamán surveyed the scene with concern. In spite of his dislike for the United States, he never believed Mexico should challenge that nation in a military engagement. Indeed, much of his strategy in working for a monarchy was based on the need to offset the United States efforts against Mexico. In his opinion, a European-backed monarchy would have sufficiently challenged the Polk administration. But war had come, and as the Mexican army suffered setback after setback, Alamán feared for the future of that kind of nation and government he desired to see established.

He kept the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone informed about affairs in Mexico relating to the latter's holdings. In this correspondence, however, he also expressed his feelings about the general political situation in the country. At the end of May 1847, he informed the Duke that American troops had just entered Puebla, which was captured without a contest. Mexico City was now threatened, and anarchy was rampant. Alamán lamented that "todo es desorden ... entre los que mandan sin que haya quien los obedezca." Moreover, he feared that it was impossible for the nation to continue to exist during these times.

26 Valadés, Alamán, 431.
without being completely destroyed. 27

By August, Alamán considered affairs to be critical: "sin embargo de este estado tan critico ... ." The enemy forces were closer to the capital now, and everything was confusion. Actually, Alamán pointed out, the situation was not so much due to the American invasion as to the internal anarchy, which was the fault of the government and of the military commanders. 28

It was at this time that Alamán removed his family from the capital and took them to Tlalnepantla, where he continued his literary efforts. In his memoirs, Guillermo Prieto recalled that he and his family were given shelter during August by Alamán. Prieto recounted his impressions of Alamán and left a valuable personal recollection in reference to him.

Prieto remembered that he was at first reluctant to accept Alamán's hospitality, for he had long disagreed with the Conservative leader's philosophy. In fact, he thought of Alamán as a horrid man, cruel and bloodthirsty, in league with Satan himself. Prieto soon learned, however, that his was a misconception in reference to Alamán's character. He recalled

27 Alamán, Documentos diversos, Alamán to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone, May 28, 1847, IV, 446.

that Alamán, a handsome man of normal build with a Roman nose and a ruddy complexion, often asked him to walk in the garden, at which time many things were discussed. Prieto discovered that Alamán was not the Satanic individual he had envisioned. Indeed, he was highly intelligent and well-read. He exhibited a penetrating knowledge of Latin and Spanish literature, and he had a profound understanding of French and Spanish history. Nevertheless, it was Prieto's belief that Alamán was a man firmly convinced his political views were correct. He contended that independence for Mexico had come too soon, and that the manner in which it was brought about was wrong. Prieto revealed that Alamán referred to the affair at Dolores as "una insurrección de criminales ... ." He despised the principles of the French Revolution, and he longed for the order of the colonial period.

Although Prieto expressed disagreement with his ideas, Alamán did not seem offended, and the two men developed a respect for one another in spite of their differing viewpoints. Actually, Prieto considered it a great honor to have known Alamán, whom he considered a virtuous, orderly, and decent individual. This sojourn in the month of August 1847 changed his thinking about one of the least understood figures in Mexican
history.29

After a month in Tlalnepantla, Alamán and his family returned to Mexico City, which now was in the hands of the Americans. Alamán sensed that the end of hostilities was near; however, as he indicated to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone in August, he did not believe that the Americans had any definite plans for Mexico after the cessation of hostilities.30 Despite the fall of Mexico City, Santa Anna expressed a determination to continue fighting, and he had the support of the puros liberals. Throughout the winter of 1847-1848, Mexican forces resorted to guerrilla warfare, which proved effective against United States detachments. However, after Santa Anna failed to recapture Puebla, the moderados liberals decided that the country must seek peace, and the General was forced to give up the presidency to Peña y Peña, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Negotiations with the United States were then initiated, which led to the Treaty of Guadalupe-
Hidalgo in February 1848. Santa Anna went into self-imposed exile in Jamaica.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo proved severe for Mexico, for by its terms over one-half of the national territory was lost. Writing in his Historia de Méjico, Alamán devoted only a short passage to the causes of the Mexican War and to the war itself. He referred to these events by pointing out that Mexico had gone to war to resist usurpation. The war he called "una guerra desgraciada . . . ," and he pointed out that the treaty resulted in the loss not only of Texas, but also of Upper California and New Mexico as well. Moreover, large portions of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas were lost. 31

Writing to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone in March 1848, Alamán expressed pleasure that the war had ended, despite the loss of substantial amounts of territory. In May, he informed him that it seemed likely the last American troops would be withdrawn from Mexican soil within a short time; this pleased him. However, internal affairs in the country were marked by unrest. Various states had taken on liberal outlooks and had elected liberal governments. Indeed, because of the unrest

31 Alamán, Historia de Méjico, V, 875-876.
and confusion, there was the threat of civil war. 32

The Mexican War and the settlement of that conflict had reverberations throughout Mexico. These two events proved to be a watershed in the history of the nation in the nineteenth century. Change was in the air, and although change had proved to be the rule rather than the exception, this new feeling had a deeper nature. As one specialist in this period has suggested, the years from 1846 to 1853 were extremely important for Mexico. Unlike the decades prior to the Mexican War, this was a period of noticeable intellectual activity. This was a time which witnessed the appearance of numerous newspapers and periodicals which evinced intelligent and even "profound" opinions. It was during this span that Alamán's Historia de México was composed. Pamphlets of some note were common. The reason for this intellectual activity, according to this authority, was the realization by leading Mexicans that the problems of the country no longer could be ignored. 33

32 Alamán, Documentos diversos, Alamán to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone, March 13, 1848; May 13, 1848, IV, 467, 471.

33 Charles A. Hale, "The War with the United States and the Crisis in Mexican Thought," The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Cultural History, XIV, no. 2 (1957), 154.
With vigor the Conservative Party indicated that its membership would not ignore the problems of the nation. A disastrous war and a one-sided treaty embarrassed the Mexican nation. Mexican conservatives took advantage of this feeling to revive their attack on the alleged failures of republican institutions. It was the fault of the liberals, asserted the Conservative Party leadership, that Mexico had suffered such humiliation at the hands of the United States government. Although there was some room to question such charges, the Conservatives remained self-righteous in their contention that they would have saved Mexico from humiliation.

Thus, the Conservative Party received new strength and support after the Mexican War. Because the liberal elements, both extreme and moderate, had conducted the campaign against the United States, the conservatives charged that they had betrayed the nation. Political agitation was exacerbated, and during the administrations of Peña y Peña, Herrera, and Arista between 1847 and 1853, the Conservative Party leadership once again insisted that the only sane political course was monarchy.

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34 Ibid., 164.

35 Toro, La iglesia y el estado en México, 196.
Before there could be a monarchy, however, there must be a strong and sensible dictatorship which would prepare the people. A new periodical, El Universal, appeared, and its pro-monarchical proclivities were even more pronounced than those of El Tiempo. There was some question as to whether or not Alamán had anything to do with El Universal, but it is likely that he did not. By 1849, he had reconsidered the immediate prospects for monarchy and had changed his outlook somewhat.

As the outstanding personality within the Conservative Party, Alamán eagerly returned to the political arena. He desired to formulate a new outlook for Mexico, to leave a heritage for Mexicans of the future. And so the idea alamanista was reworked. For the time being, Alamán did not think in terms of monarchy; rather, he promoted the idea of national unity under the aegis of conservative leadership. The key to this unity, in his opinion, was the Ayuntamiento, or municipal government. Alamán hoped to reorganize the Mexican nation into something resembling the colonial system. The municipal governments would control the affairs of the nation. This effort,

36Ibid.

37Valadés, Alamán, 449-450.
as one critic has observed, was actually the fundamental error committed by Alamán and his party. Whatever the case, this plan was in keeping with his desire for order, and he believed the need for such order was pressing after the war. It is understandable that a man suspicious of democracy would attempt to recreate a conservative system for which he had such admiration.

Writing to an unidentified friend in 1847, Alamán pointed out that he called for a monarchy in 1846 due to the threat of United States intimidation. A stable government supported by a friendly European power would have prevented the aggrandizement of the northern government. His main purpose in 1846 was to save the nation from destruction. In 1849, however, with the United States threat ended for the moment, Alamán could give his undivided attention to the creation of an orderly system. To this end, he secured election to the Ayuntamiento of Mexico City in that year. Subsequently elected president of the city government, he began to work for a reorganization of this body to ensure that the most respectable, thus conservative, men of the

38 Sierra, Evolución política, 255.

39 Alamán, Semblanzas e ideario, xxxiii.
city would have membership on the municipal council.  

Much to his surprise and consternation, his activities created a furor in Mexico City. He discovered that the liberal elements had more strength than he anticipated. When American forces withdrew from the capital, Herrera was left in control of the presidency. It was the new President's desire to introduce law and progress through republicanism. In spite of the opposition of the Conservative Party, Herrera was supported in his effort. This support, in one authority's opinion, came about because the Mexican people in and around the capital had lost their penchant for revolution and disruption. Consequently, as long as the liberals had the support of that segment of the people, the Conservative Party could not carry out Alamán's designs for Mexico, that is, a colonial-type system of government.  

Alamán had not anticipated such support for the liberal cause. He was not prepared, therefore, for the adverse reaction of many citizens of the capital to his reorganization of the city government. In December 1849, there appeared in a major Mexico City newspaper an article entitled "¡Muera D. Lucas Alamán!!" which condemned Alamán's role in Mexican

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40 Alamán, Obras, I, xlviii.

41 Perkins, Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867, 319.
affairs for the past twenty-five years. After a declaration for
the need of democracy in Mexico, the un-named reporter casti-
gated Alamán in no uncertain terms. It was pointed out that he
had brought about the death of a national hero, Guerrero, when
he commanded the first government of Bustamante. He had
attempted to subject Mexico to a system of government akin to
the monarchies of Europe. He was now attempting once again
to subvert the Mexican republican system through his centralizing
reorganization of the Ayuntamiento of Mexico City. The writer
concluded that Mexico must rid itself of such influence. 42
Although the implied threat against Alamán was not carried out,
he voluntarily resigned his position as president of the city
council to prevent further criticism of his work. He was a
patient man, and he could await more favorable circumstances.
Moreover, he did not lose any of his esteem among his followers,
and indeed, the impending publication of his Historia de Méjico
added at this time to his already noticeable prestige. 43

Still, it appeared that the liberal elements had achieved
that degree of political stability which Mexico had lacked for so

42 El Monitor Republicano (Ciudad México), December 4, 1849.

43 Alamán, Disertaciones, I, xxii-xxii; Obras, I, xlix.
long. In 1851, President Herrera turned over the office to his duly-elected successor, General Mariano Arista. But this apparent stability was not actually the case, for the conservative elements remained influential. Besides, the Partido Conservador members did not intend to allow the liberal factions to become the dominant political force in the country. Thus, in subtle ways the liberal efforts to continue order and to develop prosperity were undermined.

It was the desire of the federalistas to develop closer ties with the United States government. In spite of the recent hostilities and the harsh peace settlement, there were those Mexicans who were willing to look to a future of cooperation and good will. Needless to say, people who expressed such views, even among liberals, did not constitute a majority of the politicians. Nevertheless, realists could not argue with the fact that the United States would likely become a major factor in future Mexican diplomacy unless deliberate steps were taken to prevent such an occurrence.

In 1850, it became obvious that the Conservative Party had such plans in mind. It appeared that the United States would receive the right to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, for some preliminary discussion indicated Mexican willingness to allow the United States government to purchase
land in this area, or to lease it. However, the Mexican members of the commission appointed to look into the matter proved recalcitrant. The reason for this reluctance was due to Alamán's influence, for he convinced his committee colleagues that an oceanic canal, or even a road, which would connect the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean would offer the United States an opportunity to exert control over Mexican affairs. He indicated that he was glad the negotiations would not succeed in a letter to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone late that year.\(^{44}\) Although negotiations continued until 1852, the arrangement for an American-built canal in Tehuantepec was never agreed upon by the two countries, largely because of Alamán, who served as the chief Mexican negotiator.

By 1853, the seeming calm of the Arista presidency was shattered. In the state of Jalisco, a conservative-led revolution against the government erupted. As one scholar has indicated in a study of these years, Alamán and his younger friend and pupil, Antonio Haro y Tamariz, were deeply involved in the inauguration of this revolt in January. They represented the Conservative Party and a segment of the moderate property-

\(^{44}\) Alamán, *Documentos diversos*, Alamán to the Duke de Terranova y Monteleone, December 5, 1850, IV, 552.
owners. The military was represented in the uprising by Generals Sierra y Rosso, Tornel, and Lombardini. It soon became obvious that this movement had the support of a large portion of the people, and the Arista government collapsed. In February, the Conservative Party, led by Alamán, was returned to prominence.45

Alamán now initiated what would be his last political program, one which detracted from his reputation as an astute politician. The Partido Conservador leaders decided to invite Santa Anna from exile to rule as dictator. Alamán apparently had concluded that the time was at last ripe for the commencement of those steps which ultimately would lead to a monarchy. For the time being, he would accept a military dictatorship headed by Santa Anna. Eventually, he hoped negotiations would result in the implementation of a monarchy under a European prince.

There was no doubt that the Conservative Party intended to control the affairs of the country. Despite Santa Anna's undependable record in recent years, Alamán and his

subordinates seemed convinced that they could control the
dictator-apparent. Indeed, there is little question that Alamán
planned to utilize Santa Anna as a figurehead, nothing more. In
March 1853, therefore, the Conservative leader addressed him-
self to Santa Anna in a notable letter, in which he outlined his
proposed program in detail.  

Santa Anna would become the dictator of Mexico, with
Alamán as his Minister for Foreign Affairs. Also contained
in the letter of March 23 were specific principles of government
under which Santa Anna's dictatorship would function. The Roman
Catholic faith was to predominate in Mexico, one of Alamán's
basic tenets. The government would be centralistic to ensure
effectiveness, and it would have available the military strength
necessary to enforce its will. A reorganization of the govern-
ment structure would bring an end to the representative federal
system. As provided by Alamán, state lines were to be abol-
ished. This move would strengthen the concept of centralism
and would make the possibility of a return to federalism un-
likely. Also provided for by Alamán was a strong army which
could deal effectively with bandits and Indians. Finally, Santa

46Ibid.
Anna and his chief advisers--in other words Alamán--would organize the central government and see to its functioning without the intervention of the legislative branch. The Conservative leader left no doubt that the new government would end republicanism and would represent the outlooks of the propertied classes and the clerics, those who knew what was best for the country.47

According to Santa Anna's leading biographer, Alamán's letter was "manly" and in no way flattered the one-time dictator. Furthermore, the Conservative mentor sincerely believed that the system he had proposed was needed and that he could impose his will on Santa Anna.48

On April 20, 1853, Santa Anna assumed the presidency for the eleventh time in his career. He did this under the provisions of the Plan de Hospicio, which in essence was the formal presentation of Alamán's letter of March 23. Santa Anna came into office unopposed, even though it was acknowledged that he was representing the Partido Conservador. However, he received

47Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, Church and State in Mexico 1822-1857 (Durham, N. C., 1926), 220; Toro's La iglesia y el estado en México has the entire letter, 209-210; Cue Canovas, Historia política de Mexico, 417.

48Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, Santa Anna: The Story of an Enigma Who Once Was Mexico (Norman, Oklahoma, 1936), 282.
the support of the liberal elements because it was recalled that in the past he had promoted federalism. Thus, the liberals apparently hoped that he might demonstrate such a tendency again. Such was not the case. Following the advice of Alamán, Santa Anna implemented the Conservative program. In theory, all power was vested in the hands of the executive branch of government, but Santa Anna appointed an exclusively Conservative advisory body to help him rule. In addition to Alamán, Teodosio Lares, Haro y Tamariz, and Tornel composed the new cabinet. An army of approximately 90,000 men was recruited to suppress any disgruntled liberals. 49

The day Santa Anna took office, Alamán issued a statement from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs concerning the tasks which faced the nation. He informed the people that they must progress to a higher plane, that they must develop respect for lawful authority, for religion, and for morality. He called upon the nation to develop close ties with those powers which expressed friendship for Mexico. The internal security and the external frontiers of the country would be guarded. Above all, Alamán

49 Magner, Men of Mexico, 344-345; Toro, La iglesia y el estado en México, 223.
demanded of the people a return to order. 50

Alamán's reference to the protection of the nation's external frontiers was particularly significant. Since the end of the Mexican War, in spite of mutual declarations of good will, relations between Mexico and the United States had raised problems. Indian raids into Mexico from the United States had increased, and the American government did little to stop them. Moreover, various filibustering activities against Mexico had increased, and again the United States authorities proved slow to act. In turn, the Mexican government ignored numerous claims of American citizens against it, causing the growth of ill-will among Americans in the southwestern part of the United States. Finally, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo left various territorial questions unanswered. These problems were paramount when Santa Anna came into the presidency in 1853. 51

The possibility of another serious clash presented problems for the weakened Mexican nation. Therefore, the Conservative-

50 Un siglo de relaciones internacionales de México (a través de los mensajes presidenciales), con un prólogo por Genaro Estrado, XXXIX en Archivo histórico diplomático mexicano.

led government of Santa Anna set out on a path of diplomacy which bore the unmistakable marks of Alamán's thinking. The Minister for Foreign Affairs approached the French government with an interesting proposition. He suggested that France make an effort to interest Spain and Great Britain in a combined undertaking to protect Mexico from possible encroachments by the United States government. In doing this, the three European powers would offset United States gains in the hemisphere. Alamán also took this opportunity to express to these governments his opinion of the need for an hereditary monarch in Mexico. However, none of the powers showed any interest in pursuing this matter at the time, and it was dropped, probably because of the fact that there was little question the United States would resist such an undertaking.52 Some eight years later, when the United States was embroiled in a civil war, Emperor Napoleon III of France would put into operation just such a plan as that proposed by Alamán.

Black, the American consul in Mexico who had received reappointment to his post in August 1848, was well aware of

52 Alamán, Documentos diversos, Alamán, Confidential Decree, May 2, 1853, I, 505-507; Johnson, Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLI, no. 4, 293; Perkins, Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867, 321.
these activities on Alamán's part. To begin with, Black was not at all impressed with the Conservative seizure of power, and he did not agree with Alamán's contention that his brand of order was what Mexico needed. In Black's opinion, "the affairs of this country I do not think have experienced any favorable result by reason of the late change in their domestic political relations."

As he saw it, the government of the Partido Conservador was not progressive; rather, because of obvious weaknesses and unpopularity, it "... must necessarily have recourse to brute force..." in order to maintain power.53

In reference to the effort of the Mexican government to secure the support of France, Spain, and Great Britain, Black had misgivings. He indicated that there was talk in the capital concerning the policies and projects of the government. He had received word that Santa Anna "has made alliances with England, France, and Spain, in order to check the growth of the United States, and draw its attention from the Island of Cuba..."

Black expressed his view that Santa Anna was attempting to gain revenge against the United States. As to the possibility of success or failure, Black was of the opinion that "in regard

to his expectations of assistance from other powers, I am inclined to believe and hope they must be visionary." He closed his despatch by noting that time would be the judge.\footnote{Ibid.}

Without warning, the immediate plans of the Conservatives received a mortal blow when Alamán died unexpectedly on June 2, 1853. Up to the time of his death, he had worked diligently and tirelessly to bring about the fruition of his program. He had completed his magisterial five-volume \textit{Historia de México} some weeks before, and then had turned all his efforts to his duties as Minister for Foreign Affairs. His death at age sixty-one, however, robbed the Conservative Party of its most able political thinker and tactician. Without his leadership, the \textit{Partido Conservador} floundered and was unable to carry out his program. Pleurisy ended not only Alamán's life but also ended the reconstruction of the Mexican nation as he envisioned it—a nation of order, centralization, and eventually monarchy.

There were many Mexicans who disagreed with Alamán, even disliked or hated him, but almost all those people involved in political affairs respected him, if grudgingly. It was recorded that the public mourning in Mexico City was great when the
populace learned of his death in the early morning. Indeed, his death was considered "una calamidad para el país."55

The United States government was informed of his death by Black. He wrote that since his last communication on May 30, "one of the main pillars of the then existing Mexican Cabinet, Don Lucas Alaman, Minister of Foreign Relations has been removed by death" due to a lung inflammation. Black viewed the late Minister as an able man, and noted that

Mr. Alaman had long been known as a prominent man and politician in this country, and as a leader of the monarchal (or as is here called the Conservative) party he was considered as a man of great instruction and capacity and noted for a firmness and uniformity in his politics, and never has been known to forsake the party under whose banner, he first enrolled himself, and though his political creed and ideas were not of this century, -- he has been distinguished for his literary acquirements, and as an historian -- though frequently carried too far by party Spirit.

Black further offered the opinion that the Conservative Party and the Santa Anna government would find it "very difficult if not impossible" to find a replacement of his ability. Thus, Black suggested that Alamán's death would have a profound effect in Mexico: "his death may have a tendency to change the order of things, -- and compel the Government to adopt a

55 Alamán, Obras, I, lvii-lviii.
new and entirely different 'programma' for the course to be
pursued in future, more in unison with the present State of
Civilization. "56

An article in a Mexico City newspaper announcing Alamán's
death corroborated much of Black's thinking. It was noted that
Alamán, the outstanding member of the Conservative Party,
had been a bulwark in the political development of the country.
He was a man distinguished by his constant defense of his
political principles. Although often maligned, he had time and
again been proved correct. An outstanding literary figure, he
was also the able leader of his party. The article concluded
with the statement that "su muerte en estas circunstancia deja
un vacío en el partido conservador, y en el gabinete, que será
difícil reemplazar ... ."57

With Alamán gone, Santa Anna no longer felt restrained, for
the Minister for Foreign Affairs was the only man who had been
capable of controlling him. He forgot about the importation of
a foreign prince and instead took the title "His Most Supreme

56National Archives, Dept. of State MSS, RG 59, Consular
Despatches, Mexico City, Black to Marcy, June 4, 1853, X,
entry 22.

57El Siglo Diez y Nueve (Ciudad México), June 3, 1853.
Highness. " By 1854, he had alienated those military and Conservative Party elements which had expressed loyalty to him in conjunction with Alamán's program. Furthermore, the sale of the Mesilla Valley to the United States, negotiated by the American commissioner James Gadsden, proved to be the final blow. The liberal elements were able to rise against him, and the Revolution of Ayutla resulted in his final overthrow. The Age of Santa Anna, and in many respects of Alamán, had come to an end.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to assess the political and diplomatic career of Alamán in terms of success or failure. There is little doubt that he was a capable politician, or that he was one of the better thinkers in his country during the first half of the nineteenth century. He expressed a desire to improve the lot of the nation and to make Mexico a stronger country. He was honorable, industrious, and determined. Under these circumstances, then, it would seem that Alamán should have made great contributions to his nation's progress. Yet this does not appear to be the case.

Between 1821 and 1853, Mexico experienced difficult times. With the culmination of the independence struggle in 1821, Mexicans looked to the future with hope. However, the situation in the country soon became confusing. Individual politicians indicated that they were more interested in personal gain than in national security. The Mexican people suddenly were confronted with a leadership void. Still, one man seemed capable of effective leadership, and his competence was indeed recognized by his peers. But Alamán's goals for Mexico did not correspond to the
prevailing political mood of the times, nor did the nation appear to be capable of embarking upon the course he envisioned.

Although he dominated political affairs in 1830-1832, and was consistently active in important official undertakings between 1821 and 1853, Alamán was unable to bring about any significant amelioration of his nation's social, economic, and political conditions.

This is not to say that Alamán's influence and eminence were not as strong as was indicated throughout this treatise. Indeed, as an individual, he was given noticeable deference, and he certainly was respected. But as revealed by his attitude toward Mexican-United States relations, Alamán did not reflect the wishes and the preferences of the average Mexican citizen. He represented the well-to-do conservative classes of the nation. These were people who had little to gain and much to lose if Mexico implemented a workable democratic system of government. To Alamán, the United States government, and nation as well, presented a threat to this group. Thus, he worked to prevent the initiation of close ties between the two countries, contending that his actions were undertaken for the future well-being of the Mexican nation.

Alamán, as noted previously, had certain justifiable fears concerning the intentions of the United States government toward
his country. The actions of Poinsett and Butler between 1825 and 1834 left no doubt that their nation was determined to absorb the province of Texas, and conceivably other Mexican territory. Indeed, Alamán's fears and warnings were borne out by the results of the Mexican War. Many Mexicans, in fact, were convinced that Alamán should have been heeded as he inveighed against the dangers afforded by the United States.

On the surface, Alamán's political and diplomatic efforts against the United States appear to have been undertaken due to a patriotic desire to protect his nation. Perhaps in part they were. But he also had other motives in mind, particularly in reference to Mexico's political future. He wished to protect his country from the United States, to be sure, but not for the purpose of guaranteeing the survival of the Republic. Rather, he hoped to offset the United States diplomatic efforts in order to safe-guard the goal he had for the country--centralism, or even a monarchy.

The efforts of the United States government between 1825 and 1835 facilitated Alamán's program. Had a feeling of cooperation and good will prevailed between Mexico and the United States, it is conceivable that the two nations might have reached an amicable solution to their problems. This is assuming that the United States would have demonstrated more
willingness to respect the rights and wishes of the Mexican people. As it was, Poinsett and Butler immediately antagonized the Mexican government and, in doing so, played into the hands of Alamán.

It was his desire to establish a strong, centralized government in Mexico, and to make the nation industrially self-sufficient. Moreover, if necessary, he was willing to implement a monarchy. But the Latin American nations only recently had struggled to throw off the yoke of colonial control, which was the epitome of centralization and monarchy. If Alamán had attempted to create a Mexican nation marked by centralism, this might very well have engendered resistance from one or several of the other Latin American countries. However, by working toward his goal while claiming that he was attempting to thwart the imperialistic designs of the United States, he disguised his true motives.

In all of this activity, Alamán was loyal to his principles and beliefs, and he never pretended that he desired anything but a strongly centralized government for Mexico. His forte was in his ability to call attention to United States threats, thus arousing emotional support and justifying the need for order. Certainly he had support in his work. But how many people supported Alamán because of his program per se, and
how many supported his suggestions out of fear of the United States?

If Alamán's success is judged on the basis of his ability to maintain among Mexicans a fear of the United States between 1825 and 1844, then he was successful. Moreover, the United States, as indicated above, did little to contradict Alamán's preachments. On the other hand, if Alamán is judged on the basis of what he did to improve the conditions of his countrymen during the three decades of his political activity, he did not succeed.

Throughout all of this, the key to Alamán's outlook was the role of the United States government and people. He needed a strawman to knock down, and the United States proved to be that for him. By presenting the United States to the Mexican people as a threat to their freedom and sovereignty, he was able to induce important segments of the populace to support his conservative-centralist doctrines. Thus, it is understandable that he never indicated any willingness whatsoever to treat with the American agents in an unbiased frame of mind. But Alamán was not practicing deception, for he believed in what he was doing. To him, federalism was indeed a dangerous system, and the United States was his proof of this. The order of monarchical Europe was Alamán's goal, though his nation
did not have the over-all stability to enable him to implement his system.

It should also be remembered that in spite of his eminence and influence, Alamán was never all-powerful in Mexico. It is true that those elements which he represented--the wealthy upperclass, the Church hierarchy, and the military hierarchy--were in the most advantageous social and economic, thus political, situation. Nevertheless, throughout his career, Alamán was never free from liberal excoriation. For his system to have succeeded, he needed the support of the masses, or at least their neutrality. As long as the liberals were able to sustain themselves, however, they could prevent Alamán's success. He was aware of this fact; thus, he utilized the national fear of the United States threat to promote his system, equating the Mexican liberals with Americans of the same political persuasion. And it cannot be denied that Alamán was able to convince many of his countrymen that there was indeed an imminent threat poised in the north. The loss of Texas and the humiliation accruing from the Mexican War, in fact, bore this out.

Thus it was that for thirty years he was able to play a major role in the diplomatic affairs of his nation. Because he was an honorable man, he was in turn able to persuade many of his
fellow citizens that his course of action was the right one for Mexico. He put national honor above all else, and to him honor was synonymous with control and order. He was sincerely convinced that his system should be implemented, and he saw in the United States both a threat to the system and an opportunity to bring his work to fruition by using that nation. In reality, however, by opposing close ties with the United States, he was in effect trying to deny the present in favor of the past. Indeed, Alamán, whose thinking was akin to that prevalent in the seventeenth century, was attempting to superimpose the past on the present. That he never was able to distinguish between things of the past and things of the present was his ultimate failure.
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The scholar who undertakes a study of a significant early nineteenth-century Mexican public figure will likely encounter numerous frustrations in terms of manuscript source materials available. The archives of Mexico City, as this writer discovered, are impressively stocked; however, they presently are not yet well organized. Materials are not sufficiently cataloged, and many hours often are spent in search of a manuscript in the Archivo Nacional, which when found, if at all, may or may not be useful. Moreover, the bulk of the source material in the Archivo Nacional relates to the colonial period. The staff is always efficient and willing to help to whatever extent possible, it might be added. The situation in the Archivo de la Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico is better; however, in conjunction with this particular topic, manuscript sources proved to be rare. A study on Alamán's economic and industrial policies, on the other hand, could easily be researched from the Lafragua Collection of the Biblioteca Nacional alone.

One of the main problems of research, previously alluded to in the body of the paper, has to do with the fact that the Archivo de Relaciones Exteriores is not open to all scholars. Without doubt this archival holding would prove to be a veritable goldmine of Alamán's diplomatic manuscripts and documents. Many of his official papers are found in his collected works, but I am convinced that there are many more in this archives.

Examination of the Department of State manuscript holdings in the National Archives in Washington, D. C., resulted in the discovery of many of Alamán's diplomatic letters. But there is no record of any of his personal correspondence in the National Archives or in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

By far the most valuable materials utilized in this study, in addition to the diplomatic despatches of the National Archives, are Alamán's own works, which have been for the most part collected and printed. A portion of these materials is also available in manuscript form in the University of Texas Library at Austin. Much source material for this topic was in fact found
in printed form and has proved quite applicable in the context of this treatise. This is particularly true of Alamán's writings and the variety of government documents. It is believed by this writer that most secondary materials referring in some way to Alamán have been examined. Following is a list of sources and works examined and/or utilized. It should be noted that the Diplomatic Despatches, Mexico, and the Consular Despatches, Mexico City, are parts of the Diplomatic Despatches, Latin America, and the Consular Despatches, respectively.

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Quinton Curtis Lamar was born in McComb, Mississippi, on April 2, 1942. He attended elementary and secondary school in that city, graduating from Gibson High School in 1960. He attended Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, from 1960 to 1964, and received the Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude in history. After teaching Latin and social studies in Jackson from January 1964 to June 1965, he entered the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to begin graduate work. In June 1966, he received the Master of Arts degree in American history. In September 1966, he began his doctoral study at Louisiana State University as an NDEA-IV Fellow. He is married to the former Miss Dana Townes of McComb and is the father of two daughters. Currently on the history faculty at Delta State College in Cleveland, Mississippi, he is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Latin American history in January, 1971.
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Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: The Role of Lucas Alaman in Mexican-United States Relations 1824-1853

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Dean of the Graduate School

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Date of Examination:
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