

**MISSTEP AND U-TURN:
THE INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC POLITICS ON
AMERICA'S CHILEAN POLICY DURING THE
WAR OF THE PACIFIC**

BY

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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Abstract

American diplomacy during the nineteenth century War of the Pacific has proved noteworthy for two reasons. The first is the amount of influence that the American domestic political situation exerted on the United States' policy towards Chile during the War. During a two year span (from 1880-1881) the United States had three different Presidents, all Republican. This combined with a split in the Republican party to create a number of difficult situations for American diplomats. The second reason why American diplomacy during the War of the Pacific proved noteworthy is the actions of President James Garfield's Secretary of State, James G. Blaine. Blaine embarked on a radically different course from those of his predecessor, William Evarts, and his successor, Frederick Frelinghuysen, and his efforts to influence the peace negotiations of the War would prove to have negative consequences for American-Chilean relations for years afterwards.

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Introduction

There is an old saying that goes: “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” In many ways, this saying embodies what is at the core of historians’ work: to explain the present through the past, and to warn about future perils through the examination of past mistakes. A study of America’s Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific provides both explanation and warning because contemporary South American politics continue to be influenced by the results of the War. In February 1997, the Chilean national soccer team traveled to La Paz, Bolivia, to play a qualifying game for the 1998 World Cup against its Bolivian counterpart. The Chilean players asked that the Chilean national anthem not be played because tensions between the two countries had flared to such an extent that they feared that the Bolivian crowd would boo during its performance!¹ The rise of tensions was due to Bolivian irridentism. Bolivians continued to reject the permanent loss of land adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, something that Chile had taken during the War of the Pacific. Later in 1997, this land question became an issue in the Bolivian presidential campaign.² Finally the bitterness between the two countries spilled over into the Organization of American States (OAS), where before its three day general assembly began in Windsor, Canada, on June 11th, 2000, Bolivia protested about its lack of coastline and Chile protested the OAS’s receipt of the Bolivian protest.³ The

¹El Llanquihue (Puerto Montt), February 8th, 1997.

²El Mercurio (Santiago), March 26th, 1997.

³Globe and Mail, June 2nd, 2000.

truly muddled affair demonstrated that the ramifications of the War of the Pacific will probably be felt for years to come.

During this conflict, the United States attempted to end the War, then mediate a peace, and finally soften the proposed peace treaty. The thesis argued in these pages is that the turbulent American domestic political scene that existed from 1876 until 1884 constantly undermined the efforts of the United States State Department in realizing these goals. Personalities mattered. This is a lesson that American diplomacy during the War of the Pacific imparts; personalities can not only hamper foreign relations, but completely derail them. Three different men — William Evarts (1877-1881), James G. Blaine (March-December, 1881), and Frederick Frelinghuysen (1881-1885) — served as the Secretaries of State of the United States of America during the War. Although Evarts and Frelinghuysen handled the many disruptions and complications that the War of the Pacific produced with skill and poise, Blaine's tenure reflected little of their competence and patience.

Various textbooks and histories of American foreign policy have given small sections of the history of America's Chilean policy, sometimes mentioned in a few sentences. However, with a few exceptions, the history of America's Chilean policy has never been the main focus of a book. This reflects the older school of thought concerning American foreign policy during the 1880s. This school of thought, as reflected in Dexter Perkin's The Evolution of American Foreign Policy,⁴ tends to consider the 1870s and

⁴Dexter Perkins, The Evolution of American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

1880s as eras when reactionism and isolationism dominated U. S. foreign policy. Since little (comparatively speaking) had occurred, little was written.

The other school of thought concerning American foreign policy during the 1870s and 1880s is relatively new. It contends that American foreign policy was not simply maintaining the status quo, but preparing the way for the new American expansion that took hold at the turn of the 20th century. Michael Hunt, a historian of this school, stated: "After four decades of national immobility the old vision of greatness and liberty regained its hold on policy in the 1880s."⁵ Adherents to this new school of thought are now re-examining the 1870s and 1880s in an effort to trace the origins of the turn of the century American expansion.

A recent book, James G. Blaine: Architect of Empire, by Edward P. Crapol, is reflective of these recent publications.⁶ Crapol attempts to argue that Blaine was in large part responsible for the American imperialism of the early 20th century by creating a long term strategy that Crapol insists Blaine had followed throughout his career. In his attempt, Crapol glosses over Blaine's failures, and Crapol commits numerous inconsistencies in his re-evaluation of Blaine's career. Perhaps the most damaging and illuminating statement about this book is that it relies almost exclusively on secondary sources to support its many arguments. For example, the chapter that covers Blaine's first term as Secretary of State (the period in which he dealt with the War of the Pacific) does

⁵Michael Hunt, Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 36.

⁶Edward Crapol, James G. Blaine: Architect of Empire (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2000).

not contain one reference to the State Department archives in Washington, D. C. While an interesting read, the book's shortcomings limit its scholarly usefulness.

Crapol's commentary on the War of the Pacific contains the same fundamental error that much of the recently published material that adheres to the new school of thought does. The error is the assumption that members of the older school must have been incorrect in most of their conclusions. They were not, at least not in the specific case of American diplomacy and the War of the Pacific. With the exception of Blaine, American policy during the War was reactive and primarily isolationist. Blaine deviated from this policy not out of a sense of future American expansion, but because of the influences of American domestic politics and his own personal aspirations.

In 1945, Octagon Books published the only English-language book to date that deals directly and primarily with American diplomacy and the War of the Pacific. Written by Herbert Millington, the aptly named American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific presented an excellent and accurate account of America's diplomatic relations with Chile during the War.⁷ Millington felt that Evarts' policy, although a "correct and traditional course", was nonetheless ineffective. Blaine's attempts might have succeeded if not for his ministers in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia, and it was left to Frederick Frelinghuysen to attempt to salvage something out of the political debacle.⁸

⁷Herbert Millington, American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific (New York: Octagon Books, 1975).

⁸Millington, pp. 140-142.

While an excellent source, Millington's book contains two major problems. In the last fifty years, new information has become available, most notably William Sater's Chile and the War of the Pacific, which relies heavily on Chilean sources and sheds new light on aspects of America's diplomacy. In addition to Sater, a number of articles have appeared which offer new interpretations of various aspects of the War, notably V.G. Kiernan's "Foreign Interests in the War of the Pacific", which contradicts Millington's interpretation of the threat of European intervention. Kiernan examined the papers of the British Foreign Office in much the same manner as Millington examined the American diplomatic correspondence and determined that Great Britain, at no time, contemplated any kind of intervention during the War of the Pacific.⁹

The other problem with Millington's book is the lack of information on American domestic politics. American domestic politics directly shaped and affected America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific. To neglect this aspect of the conflict is to leave out a critical factor in the shaping of America's Chilean policy.

David Pletcher's The Awkward Years: American Foreign Relations under Garfield and Arthur spends two chapters dealing with the War of the Pacific and addresses the lack of domestic politics that plagues Millington's publication.¹⁰ Pletcher argues that American foreign relations under Presidents James Garfield (1881) and Chester Arthur (1881-1885) "prepared the country in some measure for the imperialism and internationalism of

⁹V. G. Kiernan, "Foreign Interests in the War of the Pacific" The Hispanic American Review. XXXV, 1 (February 1955), pp. 14-36.

¹⁰David M Pletcher, The Awkward Years: American Foreign Relations under Garfield and Arthur (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1962).

Theodore Roosevelt.”¹¹ This view, as expressed by Pletcher and the aforementioned Edward Crapol, supports the idea that James G. Blaine had a vision of American foreign relations that he would have implemented had he been given the chance. However, during his tenure as Secretary of State under President Garfield, this was not the case.

The other problem with Pletcher’s book is straightforward and found in the title. Pletcher’s book deals with Presidents James Garfield and Chester Arthur; it makes little mention of President Rutherford Hayes and by extension, William Evarts. This neglect of Hayes prevented Pletcher from telling the full story of the America’s diplomacy during the War of the Pacific.

Other books relegate America’s Chilean policy to a few lines, as in Volume VII of Samuel Bemis’s The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy. Others do not mention it at all in some others.¹² In terms of articles, there has been nothing recently published. However, Russell Bastert’s “Diplomatic Reversal: Frelinghuysen’s Opposition to Blaine’s Pan-American Policy in 1882” provides some excellent information concerning the changes that occurred with the first few months of Frederick Frelinghuysen’s tenure as Secretary of State. The article details the efforts of Frelinghuysen to stop Trescot from acting on Blaine’s instructions and offers some reasons for the sudden change of policy.¹³

¹¹Pletcher. Introduction (xii).

¹²Samuel Flagg Bemis, The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy. Volume VII (New York: Pageant Book Company, 1976).

¹³Russell H. Bastert, “Diplomatic Reversal: Frelinghuysen’s Opposition to Blaine’s Pan-American Policy in 1882” Mississippi Valley Historical Review 42, (1956), pp. 653-671

Chilean sources have covered the War of the Pacific more extensively than English sources. However, Mario Barros Van Buren's Historia Diplomática de Chile 1541-1938 typifies the problem.¹⁴ While the book deals with America's Chilean policy, the author did not consult the actual State Department Archives in Washington. Any comprehensive history of American foreign relations must begin there.

Little published information dealing with the history of America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific exists. This is puzzling because it makes for a fascinating story. Like most good stories, the history of America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific needs background to place events in their proper context. In recognition of this fact, Chapter One deals with the origins and the combative phase of the War of the Pacific. Chapter Two deals with those turbulent years from 1876 until 1879, when American domestic politics were in chaos, and the split in the Republican party occurred.

Chapter Three details the policy of William Evarts towards the War, and likewise Chapters Four and Five detail the policies of James Blaine and Frederick Frelinghuysen respectively. Chapter Seven also deals with the end of the conflict, the final results of America's Chilean policy during the War and some its repercussions. However, before explaining the end, the beginning must be told. In this case the story begins over 70 years before the War started, in occupied Spain at the height of Napoleon's Europe.

¹⁴Mario Barros Van Buren, Historia Diplomática de Chile 1541-1938 (Santiago: Andrés Bello, 1958).

Chapter One

The War of the Pacific

The War originated from the French conquest of Spain during the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the 19th century. The weakness of the mother country brought revolutions throughout Spain's American empire, as different colonies sought and achieved their independence.¹⁵ When Chile and the rest of the former Spanish Empire in South America became independent, they did not form a united nation as had the former thirteen colonies in North America. Rather, they tried to maintain the very boundaries that had existed during the colonial era,¹⁶ boundaries that were in places vague and undefined. The exact boundary between Chile and Bolivia, which ran through the Atacama Desert, is exemplary. The borderland appeared worthless, few people lived there, and Spain was the undisputed sovereign power in the region. Hence, the location of the border hardly mattered. In the early 1830s, an event occurred which destroyed the peaceful ignorance of the boundary situation.

The event, which was to have such far reaching affects on Chile and her neighbors, was the discovery by the renowned traveler and scientist, Alexander von Humboldt, of the use of guano as a fertilizer for European fields. Guano, literally bird manure, is 35 times more effective then regular barnyard manure when used in this capacity. It is not difficult

¹⁵J. H. Parry, The Spanish Seaborne Empire (London, England: Huchinson, 1966), p. 349.

¹⁶Herbert Millington, American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific. (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p. 12.

to imagine the reasons why the demand for such a fertilizer would grow, and it did. In 1840, suppliers on the west coast of South America were shipping 8,600 tonnes annually to Europe; by 1860, that number had grown to 56,000.¹⁷

There were extensive guano deposits in the Atacama Desert, an area divided between Chile and Bolivia. The desert now became a valuable source of income, and both sides claimed the guano territory. Bolivia claimed the desert as far as the 25th parallel, south latitude, while Chile claimed the desert to 23rd degrees south latitude. The debate over the boundary grew so heated that both sides contemplated war.¹⁸

In 1864 Bolivia and Chile signed a treaty settling the boundary dispute. They divided the desert at the 24th parallel, south latitude, granting that citizens of both countries had the right to exploit guano in the desert, with the understanding that both countries should share the tax revenue.¹⁹ What should have been the end of the conflict instead became the first of several treaties to be repudiated by one side or the other.

Bolivia repudiated the treaty in 1866 when a rebellion overthrew the government; indeed the new revolutionary government repudiated most of Bolivia's treaties. Chile and Bolivia entered into negotiations to try to reach a new treaty agreement, and in 1873 they signed the Lindsay-Corral treaty (named for the two diplomats who negotiated the

¹⁷Millington, p. 15. Guano also had another use; nitrates could be extracted from guano and used to manufacture gunpowder, making guano even more valuable. However, countries like Great Britain had other sources of gunpowder, and it was as a fertilizer that guano's worth was measured.

¹⁸William Sater, Chile and the War of the Pacific (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 6.

¹⁹Sater, p. 6.

agreement.) Unfortunately the Bolivian parliament refused to approve the treaty, and once again, both countries appeared near the brink of war.²⁰ This situation did not improve when two years after the rebellion in Bolivia, a military force led by two former members of the Bolivian government left Valparaíso, where they had been living in exile, and attempted to create a new Bolivian regime. Their failure did not alleviate Bolivian anger towards Chile, which they accused of sponsoring the abortive attempt.²¹ At this low point in Chilean-Bolivian relations, Bolivia turned to Peru and negotiated a defensive alliance:

to mutually guarantee their independence, sovereignty, and the integrity of their respective territories, binding themselves by the terms of the present Treaty to defend themselves against all future aggression, whether proceeding from another or other independent States, or from a force, without a flag, owing obedience to no recognized power.²²

In addition to mutual defense, the two parties agreed to keep the treaty secret for as long as they were in common accord to do so.²³

Soon after negotiating her secret treaty with Peru, Bolivia completed another treaty with Chile in 1874. The most important point of this new settlement was a clause whereby the Bolivian government agreed not to raise taxes or levies on products that Chilean

²⁰Sater, p. 6.

²¹Millington, p. 19. It appears that Bolivian anger was justifiable. The instigators of the coup, General Quevedo and Foreign Minister Muñoz, succeeded in leaving Valparaíso. One is forced to wonder about the possibility of an armed force being mustered and launched on Chilean soil, without the knowledge of the Chilean government, a government, moreover, whose seat was located just 50 kilometers east of Valparaíso.

²²Clive Parry, ed, The Consolidated Treaty Series Volume 145, 1872-73, (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1977), p. 484.

²³Ronald Bruce St John, The Foreign Policy of Peru (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), p. 109.

companies exported from the Atacama region.²⁴ At this point, relations on both sides of the desert were deteriorating.

The final blow to friendly relations between Chile and Bolivia occurred February 1st, 1878. Bolivia, now under the rule of the adventurous dictator, Hilarión Daza, disregarded the treaty of 1874 and levied a new heavy tax on the Chilean Nitrate Company of Antofagasta. Daza apparently felt confident that Chile would not react because she was currently embroiled in another boundary dispute with Argentina. Furthermore, Bolivia indicated to Chile that the new tax would not actually be enforced.²⁵ On November 8th, 1878, the Chilean government sent a note to Bolivia indicating that if the new tax was not rescinded, Chile would occupy the land up to the 23rd parallel. Bolivia responded that the debate over the new tax was a matter for the courts. Events had reached a precarious stalemate.²⁶

In a matter of months, two events drove the neighbors into war: Argentina and Chile resolved their boundary dispute, and Bolivia decided to enforce the new tax. The Chilean government, with the possibility of a two front war gone, was no longer in a mood

²⁴Sater, p. 6.

²⁵Galdames, p. 325. There is some contention as to the actual impact of these new taxes. While Galdames, a Chilean historian, calls them "heavy", Millington states that at \$90,000 dollars the amount of money was not large. Considering that, in order to collect the money from the company, the Bolivia government was going to sell the company's holdings, one must consider that the money was substantial, and that Millington was underplaying the consequences of the tax.

²⁶Millington, p. 24.

to placate Daza, and the Chilean public and press, upset over the perceived prostration to Argentinean demands, demanded action.²⁷

When Bolivia indicated that either the new tax would be paid, or the Bolivian government would seize and sell the company's assets, Chile reacted. The company refused to pay the tax, and the Bolivian government stated on February 15th, 1879, that it would sell the company's assets at a public auction. On February 14th, Chilean troops landed at Antofagasta. Following the Chilean occupation of the Bolivian port of Antofagasta, Bolivia declared war on Chile, and Chile declared war on Bolivia and her "secret" ally Peru. When the War of the Pacific began, the outcome was not obvious.²⁸ Less than two years later Chile stood triumphantly as the undisputed victor of the War of the Pacific. In a number of hard fought campaigns Chile had destroyed the ability of Bolivia and Peru to resist. The question then becomes, what happened? How did Chile prevail against larger and more numerous foes?

The three most important reasons for Chile's victory were the state of Bolivia's army, the organization of the Peruvian army, and the naval Battle of Iquique.²⁹ These three factors negated the large material, and economic advantages that the allies (Peru and

²⁷Sater, pp. 6-10. The treaty that Chile and Argentina signed in 1878 was favorable to the Argentineans. The Chilean government had instructed its envoys to solve the dispute with all possible speed, and were willing to make the sacrifice to avoid the possibility of an Argentinean-Bolivia alliance.

²⁸Luis Galdames, A History of Chile (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 327.

²⁹According to Ronald St John, the Battle of Iquique, is also referred to as the Battle of Chipana or Loa.

Bolivia) held over Chile, and allowed Chile to fight the campaigns that ended the fighting of the War of the Pacific just two years after it began.³⁰

At the beginning of the War of the Pacific, Bolivia maintained a standing army of close to 3,000 men. This number is deceiving. In actual fact the leader of Bolivia, President Hilarión Daza, kept his small honor guard of 400 men armed with Winchester rifles but scattered the rest of the army throughout the country and armed them with old muskets. Bolivia had little national solidarity at the time, and Daza took no chances that “some other colonel might proclaim himself President”. Thanks to Daza’s actions, Bolivia did not find herself in a favorable position to fight a war in 1879.³¹

Unlike Bolivia, the Peruvian government could call upon a large army. Unfortunately for the Peruvian government, its army suffered from many of the same afflictions as its ally’s. The Peruvian army, though larger and better equipped than the Bolivian, shared the latter’s poor training, and lacked modern equipment.³² Peru’s strength lay in her modern navy, specifically in her two iron clads, the *Huáscar* and *Independencia*. The ships were modern, built in England.³³

³⁰The wording of this sentence is important. Although the fighting had ended with the Chilean occupation of Lima (to be discussed a little later), the actual war did not end until the Treaty of Ancón, in 1884. American intervention played a large part in prolonging the War and it is the examination of their intervention that forms the bulk of this essay.

³¹William Jefferson Dennis, Tacna and Arica (New York: Archon Books, 1967), p. 72

³²St John, p. 109.

³³Dennis, p. 91.

The importance of a strong navy cannot be overstated. Both sides in the conflict realized that the War was essentially a maritime conflict. They realized that victory would be impossible without command of the sea.³⁴ Both the Chilean and the Peruvian navies attempted to destroy each other, and in doing so they precipitated the Battle of Iquique.

The Battle of Iquique is the third, and perhaps most important reason why Chile defeated Peru and Bolivia. It occurred just a few months following the declarations of war. Neither the allies nor Chile would begin a land campaign until they had control of the sea.³⁵ In order to draw out the Peruvian fleet, Admiral Juan Williams Rebolledo, the head of the Chilean navy, led a large naval force to Iquique in order to blockade the port. He thought that by depriving Peru of her principal nitrate port, he could force the Peruvian fleet to try to lift the blockade, allowing him to fight the battle on his terms.³⁶

Although his plan seemed sound, the Admiral had not taken into account the Chilean public. The Chilean people clamored for action, and the Admiral decided, without informing the Chilean government, to take his fleet and attack the Peruvian fleet at its base in Callao. This bold stroke failed because the Peruvian fleet sailed away before Williams arrived, intending to attack the Chileans at Iquique.³⁷

³⁴St John, p. 113.

³⁵Curtis A Wilgus, Argentinian, Brazil and Chile Since Independence (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 341.

³⁶Sater, p. 19.

³⁷Sater, p. 19.

The two fleets passed each other without making contact. Admiral Williams had left two old wooden vessels to maintain the blockade of Iquique, and now these two vessels, the *Esmeralda* and the *Covadonga*, faced the pride of the Peruvian navy, the *Huáscar* and the *Independencia*. Captain Arturo Prat, the Chilean commander in charge of the blockade, decided to resist. After an hour of struggle it was clear that the Chilean vessels were no match for the Peruvian ones, and Prat made a celebrated speech. "Boys, the contest is unequal. Our colors have never yielded to the enemy. I hope they will not have to do it on this occasion. While I live, that flag will flutter in its place; if I die my officers will know how to fulfill their duty."³⁸

Tired of the long battle, the *Huáscar* rammed the *Esmeralda*, and Prat along with one other man leapt from one ship to other. He intended that his whole crew should follow him, but with the noise, no one heard his command to "board!" Once on board the *Huáscar*, Prat refused to surrender, and a Peruvian shot him dead after he slew a Peruvian sailor. His ship quickly followed his fate, sinking to the bottom of the sea.³⁹

While the *Huáscar* engaged the *Esmeralda*, the *Independencia* tried to engage the *Covadonga*. The latter stood even less chance against her adversary than the *Esmeralda* had, and fled. The Peruvian ship pursued her and a long drawn out chase began. It lasted three hours, as the *Covadonga* fought a running battle, seeking the safety of shallow waters. Three times the *Independencia* attempted to ram her opponent, and three times the *Covadonga* avoided her. The third time the Peruvian vessel attempted to ram the

³⁸Galdames, p. 329.

³⁹Dennis, p. 91.

Covadonga found them near shallow reefs. As the *Independencia* closed in, the man at her wheel was struck dead by a shot from the *Covadonga*, and lacking direction at this crucial time the *Independencia* hit a reef, crushing her prow, and completely grounding herself. The battle was decisive. For the cost of one old wooden boat, Chile cut the power of the Peruvian navy approximately in half.⁴⁰

Thanks to these factors, the unprepared nature of Bolivia's army, the similar nature of Peru's army, and the Battle of Iquique, Chile fought five decisive campaigns that ended the ability of Peru and Bolivia to fight. The first campaign, the Chilean invasion of Antofagasta, actually preceded the war.

The campaign was a short and bloodless one for both sides. In order to prevent Daza from selling the assets of the Chilean nitrate company, Chilean troops landed at the port of Antofagasta on February 14th, 1879. A majority of the residents of Antofagasta was Chilean in origin.⁴¹ When the Chilean forces entered the town, "the entire population, filled with great enthusiasm, gathered to acclaim these men as liberators."⁴² The small Bolivian forces garrisoned there, and the few Bolivians in the area, could offer little in the way of resistance. The small Bolivian garrison retreated to Cobija and Tocopilla, while

⁴⁰Francis J Higginson, Naval Battles in the Century (Philadelphia: Linscott Publishing, 1903), P. 395.

⁴¹Wilgus, p. 339.

⁴²Galdames, p. 325.

Chilean forces occupied the area up to the 23rd parallel.⁴³ The opposing forces now waited, as both sides sought control of the seas before continuing any land campaign.

Part of the naval campaign has already been told, and the Battle of Iquique swung the balance of power on the ocean Chile's way. However, the Peruvian ironclad *Huáscar* continued the fight, and Chile could not control the sea ways with the *Huáscar* at large. Following the Battle of Iquique, the *Huáscar*, under the command of Captain (later Admiral) Miguel Grau, harried Chilean sealanes, performing "remarkable feats of seamanship".⁴⁴ Grau's actions, combined with the fact that many of Chilean vessels were in dry dock undergoing repairs, kept the issue of who controlled the seas open to contention for months following the Battle of Iquique. One Chilean sarcastically observed, "Lima ruled the waves."⁴⁵ The Chilean navy finally caught Grau and the *Huáscar* at Angamos Point, on October 8th, 1879. This clash of ironclads became known as the Battle of Angamos. The battle not only marked a turning point in the War of the Pacific but also marked the first struggle between ironclads designed after the battle between the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* during the American Civil War, and which incorporated the lessons learned from that contest.⁴⁶

⁴³Dennis, p. 73.

⁴⁴Frederick Pike, The United States and the Andean Republics: Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 129.

⁴⁵Sater, p. 20.

⁴⁶Dennis, p. 95.

The Chilean government, determined to put an end to the *Huáscar*, overhauled the *Cochrane* (one of two Chilean ironclads of similar make to the *Huáscar*) and gave her a complete cleaning. The ship could now travel one knot faster than the *Huáscar*, and this enabled the *Cochrane* to catch her at the aforementioned Angamos Point. Both the *Cochrane* and the *Blanco Encalada* (the other Chilean ironclad), which arrived late, now fired into the *Huáscar*. A cannon shot destroyed the Peruvian command tower, killing Admiral Grau and his second in command, Lieutenant Diego Ferré. This left a Lieutenant Garezón in command, and his options were limited. He decided to scuttle the ship. Fortunately for the Chilean navy, not all the sailors aboard the *Huáscar* shared Garezón's patriotic passion, and these men began waving white towels to signify their surrender. The Chilean ships sent boarding parties aboard the *Huáscar* and prevented the Captain from opening the sea valves and sinking the ship.⁴⁷ The capture of the *Huáscar* gave the Chilean navy command of the seas, and allowed Chilean forces to proceed with the land campaigns against the allies.

Having secured the sea lanes, Chilean forces proceeded with the land war. The Chilean government decided to take control of the Peruvian province of Tarapacá, the site of most of Peru's nitrate industry. The Chilean government hoped that by taking control of Tarapacá it could exert economic pressure on Peru, while it used the nitrate to help finance the Chilean war effort.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Higginson, pp. 398-400.

⁴⁸Sater, p. 21.

The Tarapacá campaign began with an amphibious assault on the Peruvian port of Pisagua. Despite natural obstacles Chilean forces, two artillery batteries and over 1,500 allied troops, took control of the town and proceed to move inland.⁴⁹ The capture of Pisagua threatened the port of Iquique, Peru's principle nitrate port, and the governments of Peru and Bolivia attempted to hold it against Chile. To this end, a Peruvian army numbering 12,000 men moved northward toward Pisagua, and a Bolivian force under President Daza proceeded south. The allies hoped to catch the Chilean forces in a pincer movement.⁵⁰

The Battle of San Francisco [or Dolores] followed the same kind of confused pattern as the naval Battle of Iquique. Chilean forces left Pisagua and moved towards Iquique. At the same time, the Bolivian forces, beset by hunger and exhaustion, reached Camarones before Daza lost his nerve, and without informing his Peruvian ally, turned around and went back to Arica. While Daza was retiring, the Peruvian forces, under the command of General Juan Bunendia, advanced north with the intention of meeting with their Bolivian allies. Instead, the Peruvian army literally ran into the Chilean one.⁵¹

A hard fought battle followed. Although both sides were roughly equal in size, the Chilean army won another victory thanks largely to its superior cavalry and to Krupp artillery manned by German officers who were veterans of the Franco-Prussian war.⁵² The

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Galdames, p. 326.

⁵¹Sater, p. 21.

⁵²Dennis, p. 97.

victory gave Chile effective control over all of Tarapacá, and securing the territory became a matter of “mopping up.” The Battle of San Francisco not only gave Chile control over the province, but it precipitated political revolutions in both Peru and Bolivia.⁵³

Following the defeat, on December 18th, 1879, Peruvian President Marino Ignacio Prado secretly sailed to Europe in search of loans to buy new ironclads. Unfortunately for Prado, an ambitious political opponent, Nicolás de Piérola, tried to take control of the Peruvian government. He succeeded. Four days after Prado sailed to Europe, Piérola engineered a coup, and became President of Peru.⁵⁴

For Bolivia, the Battle of San Francisco marked the end of most of her active involvement in the War of the Pacific. With a few exceptions, Bolivia became a passive spectator. The Bolivian government also suffered an internal rebellion as a result of the Battle. Civilians and military personal rose in rebellion against Daza, and drove him from the presidency. After much negotiation, the rebels chose General Narcisco Campero as Bolivia’s new leader. Although Campero agreed to continue the war against Chile, domestic reform had a higher priority.⁵⁵

With Bolivia effectively removed from the equation, Chilean forces now began to move north into Arica and Tacna, the two Peruvian nitrate provinces. Once again, the Chilean forces used control of the sea to their full advantage, landing a force north of the

⁵³Wilgus, p. 342.

⁵⁴St John, p. 114.

⁵⁵Herbert S Klein, Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 148.

heavily defended port of Arica, at the coastal town of Ilo. Instead of attacking south, the Chilean army, led by General Manuel Baquedano, moved north and crossed “long deserts cut by steep mountain ridges”. The movement took two months, but ended with the Chilean army insight of the city of Tacna. The allied army that defended the city, led by the newly appointed Bolivian dictator, Campero, had fortified itself in the hills. The Chilean forces attacked with a full frontal assault on the Peruvian defenses. The ensuing Battle of Tacna was one of the bloodiest of the war, with over 5000 casualties. The battle, although bloody (2000 of the casualties were Chilean), ended in a Chilean victory.⁵⁶

The campaign to capture the desert provinces of Tacna and Arica could not be considered complete until the Peruvian port of Arica fell to Chilean forces. The Peruvian government, realizing the importance of the port, re-enforced it, making it “Peru’s Gibraltar.”⁵⁷ Chile needed the port in order to control the desert provinces and began a two pronged attack; the navy blockaded the port, and the army surrounded it. Once again, Chilean forces attacked in a full frontal assault and took the heights that commanded the town at bayonet point.⁵⁸ The battle ended in another Chilean victory, and the end of 1880 saw Chile in complete control of the nitrate producing provinces of Chile and Peru.

At this point, a lull in the war occurred as the United States sponsored a conference in an effort to end the war. The Conference of Arica, detailed later, proved to be a complete failure, and the war resumed soon after.

⁵⁶Galdames, p. 332.

⁵⁷Sater, p. 29.

⁵⁸Wilgus, p. 342.

The Chilean public demanded that Lima be taken. Bloodlust ran high, as some of the press demanded that the Moneda (the Chilean equivalent to the White House) “exterminate the enemy the same as Great Britain and Argentina had annihilated the Zulus and the Indians.”⁵⁹ The government struggled to satisfy the public demands for invasion. During the last months of 1880, the Chilean armed forces prepared for the invasion, and as the new year came into being, the Chilean forces were posed outside Lima and prepared to invade the capital.⁶⁰

On January 13th, the Chilean forces attacked the Peruvian defense line and after a pitched battle defeated the Peruvian army. On the 14th, Baquedano sent a truce bearer to Pierola. The bearer was Don Isidoro Errázuriz, the War Minister’s secretary. Pierola rejected him on the grounds that he wished to speak to an accredited minister. At this point, Baquedano decided that he must press the attack.⁶¹

Later that same day, members of Lima’s diplomatic corps approached Baquedano and asked for a day to see whether they could arranged a truce. Baquendano agreed to a ceasefire until midnight, but said that he would continue to move his forces into position for the attack. The members of the diplomatic corps then approached Pierola, who also agreed to the cease fire. Unfortunately for all concerned, around 2:00 pm, Peruvian forces seeing Chilean move into position thought that they were under assault and fired upon them. Akin to a line of dominoes that is starting to fall, this one incident spread fire rapidly

⁵⁹Sater, p. 32.

⁶⁰Denis, pp. 126-127.

⁶¹Dennis, pp. 126-127.

across the line and the battle was joined. Amidst the wreckage of the truce, the Chilean army stood triumphant; the way to Lima was laid open.⁶² Once again the diplomatic corps approached Baquedano and asked that Lima be spared a full scale assault. Once again Baquedano agreed, and gave the corps time to surrender the city without great destruction or bloodshed.⁶³ The fighting was over, but the War would not end for another two years.⁶⁴

⁶²Dennis, p. 129.

⁶³Osborn to Blaine, March 23rd, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

⁶⁴Dennis, pp. 128-129.

Chapter Two

Discord at Home: American Domestic Politics, 1876-79

While Chile, Peru and Bolivia underwent crisis after crisis during the latter half of the 1870s, culminating in the War of the Pacific, the United States experienced problems of her own, problems of a domestic nature. An examination of America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific must detail the four years before the start of hostilities. It must look at the flashpoint, Cincinnati, June 14th, 1876, the site of the Republican Convention. The convention was to be the focal point of high drama, petty politics, and compromises. It was to bear witness to a deep split in the Republican party, a split that would have serious effects on all aspects of American politics and policy. Most importantly, American domestic politics following the Cincinnati Republican convention of 1876 would have a direct and profoundly negative effect on America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific. The Republican convention, the disputed presidential election of 1876, the nomination of William Evarts to the post of Secretary of State, the Hayes-Conkling New York customs house conflict, and the political impotence of President Rutherford Hayes all had an adverse influence on America's attempts to deal with Chile during the War of the Pacific.

The years before 1876 were years of relative stability in American politics. One highlight of the period known as Reconstruction was President Ulysses S. Grant winning and serving two terms (1869-77). President Grant's reputation is one of well meaning naïvete in the face of the corruption of his administration. Aside from the stability that

existed during his presidency, corruption existed, not just in the executive office but in almost all areas of government administration. Public feeling was beginning to sway against the self-appointed “guardians” of the union, the Republican party,⁶⁵ and the Democrats were hoping that the rampant corruption of their rivals had opened a window of opportunity to install the first Democratic President since James Buchanan (1857-61). The Republicans knew that the situation looked grim, and with purpose, they were determined to hold the Presidency. The stage was set for the Republican convention in Cincinnati.

Two presidential hopefuls, James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling, did fierce battle, punctuated by great feats of oration and subtle arrangements, with the result that the delegation chose a third man, with no real desire to become the Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes.

Roscoe Conkling was a Republican senator from New York, a former member of President Grant’s inner circle. Conkling effectively controlled the New York Republican machine. One contemporary commented that Conkling was “the supreme ruler in this state [New York]; the Governor did not count, the legislatures did not count; comptrollers and Secretaries of State and what-not, did not count. It was what Mr. Conkling said.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵Kenneth E Davison, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 19.

⁶⁶David Jordan, Roscoe Conkling of New York: Voice in the Senate (London, England: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 142.

Considering the importance that New York's 35 votes wielded during a Presidential election,⁶⁷ he was a man with a great deal of power.

Conkling's supporters played upon the importance of New York with such banners as "Roscoe Conkling's nomination assures the thirty-five electoral votes of New York"⁶⁸ and whispered about the importance of those votes in defeating Samuel Tilden, the Democratic candidate for President, also from New York. Though they did not lack effort, their efforts were not enough. The presidency was to pass Conkling by. He was too close to Grant and the corruption of that administration. If the Republicans wished to win the next Presidential election they needed someone who could distance himself from the past eight years of corrupt rule, someone free from accusations of impropriety. Although this eliminated him from the nomination, Conkling still controlled New York and its representatives, and inherited many of former President Grant's backers.⁶⁹ He still wielded a great deal of power at the convention, and he used that power in an effort to prevent his hated rival, James G. Blaine, a man who had once compared him to a turkey gobbler,⁷⁰ from aspiring to the Presidency.

⁶⁷In 1876, New York had 35 electoral votes out of a total of 369 total votes, making it the single largest voting bloc in the country. Considering the 1876 election decided by one vote the importance of New York cannot be overstated.

⁶⁸Jordan, p. 238.

⁶⁹Eugene H Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), p. 237.

⁷⁰Paul Leland Haworth, The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 1876 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 12.

James G Blaine would later play a far more direct role in America's foreign relations during the War of the Pacific, as Secretary of State in Garfield's administration, but at the Cincinnati convention, his aspirations were greater than appointed office. No, in 1876 the only office that Blaine sought was the one located in the White House, and before the convention began it looked more than possible that he might just sit in the Oval Office on March 4th. Of all the aspiring Presidential candidates at the Republican convention that summer, he was the agreed front runner.⁷¹ The "Plumed Knight" was both popular and a great orator; he was a reformer and had never been close to Grant or his corrupt administration (his tarnished reputation lay in the future). He was, however, the victim of one of the smoothest sabotage jobs in the history of American politics.

Some two months before the convention began, Blaine's "stock never stood higher"⁷² and the nomination must have seemed to assure him. Blaine, however, was not without a few skeletons of his own, and on February 28th, 1876, a friend of Blaine's wrote to him that it appeared that Blaine had repaid a loan from the Union Pacific Railroad Company with a number of worthless bonds. The story soon leaked out and was picked up by the newspapers, and Blaine had to answer his accusers.⁷³

⁷¹Haworth, p. 12.

⁷² David Saville Muzzey, James G. Blaine: A Political Idol of Other Days (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), p. 71.

⁷³Gail Hamilton, Biography of James G. Blaine (Norwich, Connecticut: Henry Bill, 1895), p. 335.

Blaine did answer his accusers, and with such style and force that his statement was “generally hailed as a conclusive answer to his political persecutors.”⁷⁴ Indeed, had this been the last word on the Union Pacific, James G. Blaine might very well have been the 19th President of the United States. Unfortunately for Blaine, in Chicago, a newspaper friend of Rutherford Hayes heard about the existence of certain letters that could prove Blaine’s guilt. These letters were in the possession of James Mulligan and so became known as the “Mulligan Letters”. Hayes’s newspaper friend leaked the story to the *New York Sun*, and nobody linked Hayes to the issue. Hayes played no role in this development. Indeed, it was not apparent that it was a friend of his who leaked the information. Blaine actually thought that Benjamin Bristow, another Republican candidate for the nomination, was responsible. Congress ordered an investigation, and James Mulligan came to Washington, bearing with him the incriminating letters.⁷⁵

Mulligan duly testified that Blaine had received moneys from the Union Pacific Railway, and then mentioned that he had in his possession certain letters written by Blaine. Blaine then proceeded to ask the committee for a recess on the grounds that he was feeling ill. That afternoon, Blaine went to visit Mulligan and asked for the letters to be returned, stating that they were private letters. Mulligan refused. Blaine then asked to see the letters, and Mulligan agreed on condition that Blaine give his word to return them. Blaine agreed and spent some time studying the letters before returning them.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Muzzey, p. 87.

⁷⁵Jordan, p. 235.

⁷⁶Muzzey, p. 91.

Mulligan proceeded to retire to the upstairs of the house where he was staying, and Blaine followed him there. According to Mulligan, Blaine begged for the letters back, and even tried to bribe Mulligan with a consulship. Mulligan replied in the negative. Blaine then asked to see the letters again, and Mulligan acquiesced. When asked to return the letters, Blaine replied, "No!"⁷⁷

The story according to Blaine was very different, although the results were the same. Blaine asked to receive the letters, based on the facts that they were supposed to have been destroyed, and that since they had not been, he had a definite right to them. They were, after all, his personal property. When asked to return them, Mulligan claimed he would not give them up to God himself. At this point Blaine simply took possession of the letters in front of two witnesses and refused to return them.⁷⁸

The morality of Blaine's claims to the letters, and the validity of his claim that they contained nothing of relevance to the Union Pacific investigation really became moot points. Blaine obviously had something to hide, and the Plumed Knight's armor lost some of its luster. Still, Blaine remained the front runner going into the convention, when his candidacy encountered another bump.

On Sunday, June 11th, three days before the convention was to start, Blaine collapsed while on his way to Church. His detractors quickly jumped to the attack, wondering if he would survive the week. Blaine, of course, survived, and attended the

⁷⁷Muzzey, p. 91.

⁷⁸Hamilton, p. 350.

convention, but his chances had taken another blow.⁷⁹ Thus, the convention opened with the two most powerful Republicans, Roscoe Conkling, and James Blaine, both having significant problems with their nominations.

Events seem to conspire against Blaine. Colonel Robert Ingersoll, a majestic figure, who, when he spoke, “carried his hearers to heights of delirious assent”,⁸⁰ handled his introduction to the convention. His speech in support of Blaine aroused such enthusiasm that had the voting started immediately, Blaine might well have won. However, the voting was delayed for a day when the lighting system failed (some Blaine supporters talked of sabotage), and after a day and a night, the passions drummed up by the speech wore off, and the other camps at the convention regrouped. Ingersoll’s oratorical triumph was diminished.⁸¹ The convention was to have no clear favorite.

The first few rounds of voting saw Blaine clearly in the lead, but never in a situation actually to have a majority, or seemed to be capable of achieving it. Conkling was not even close. The party favorites could not win the nomination, a compromise candidate was needed, and the men working the campaign of Rutherford Hayes projected him as the logical choice.⁸²

⁷⁹Haworth, p. 18.

⁸⁰Muzzey, p. 109.

⁸¹Jordan, p. 241.

⁸²Ari Hoogenboom, Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1995), p. 263. Harry Barnard in his book Rutherford B. Hayes and His America contends that Hayes was known as the logical chose before the convention met; however, this seems more like wishful thinking as Blaine had plenty of support and it was not even sure if Conkling would receive the nod from New York until

Indeed, Hayes was the most logical choice, even if he was not as enthusiastic as his supporters.⁴³ A former Governor of Ohio, he had never suffered a hint of scandal. Though he was hardly a radical reformer, he had come into conflict with neither Blaine or Conkling. As those voters who would not vote for Blaine began to vote for Hayes, the latter's bid seemed to gain momentum. One of the deciding factors would be New York, which under the direction of Conkling threw almost its entire support behind Hayes (Conkling, realizing the futility of his own campaign, had by this time withdrawn his name).⁴⁴ The seventh vote would prove the decisive one, with Hayes winning a majority of 384 votes to Blaine's 351. At 5:30 p.m. on June 16th, 1876, it became official; Rutherford Hayes had secured the Republican nomination for President. Unfortunately, the nomination of Hayes did little to heal the Republican party's deep split.

The Cincinnati convention ended not only with the nomination of Rutherford Hayes for President, but with the Republican party deeply divided. This divide would probably have had little effect on America's Chilean policy if the Democrats, who were favored to win the 1876 election, had done so. They did not, and a few words concerning the disputed election of 1876 are necessary in order to illustrate the state of American politics prior to the War of the Pacific.

after the Syracuse convention.

⁴³On April 26th, 1876, Hayes wrote in his diary, "I would be glad if now I could in some satisfactory way drop out of the candidacy. Harry T Williams (ed.), Hayes: The Diary of a President (New York: David McKay, 1964), p. 18.

⁴⁴Hoogenboom, p. 263.

Although Hayes's nomination did not heal the split in the party, the party was determined to win the presidential election of 1876. The Republicans suffered a harsh blow early, when Samuel Tilden, a former Governor of New York and the Democratic presidential candidate, carried that state and its 35 electoral votes.

Undaunted, the Republicans began waving the 'bloody shirt'⁴⁵ and their leading spokesman, Robert Ingersoll, spoke with great vigor and eloquence.

Every man that starved the Union soldiers and refused them in the extremity of death a crust was a Democrat. Every man that loved slavery better than liberty was a Democrat. The man that assassinated Abraham Lincoln was a Democrat... Every man that raised blood-hoods to pursue human beings was a Democrat. Every man that clutched from shrieking, shuddering, crouching mothers babes from their breasts and sold them into slavery was a Democrat.⁴⁶

The battle was joined and would prove to be close. Ultimately the Republicans became convinced that their cause seemed lost. On the night of November 7th, as the voting seemed to finish, Zachariah Chandler, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, went to bed, not bothering to wait for the election results. "Why stay up and listen to more bad news?" he wondered.⁴⁷ Hayes noted in his diary that the election had resulted in defeat for himself and his party.⁴⁸ Republican and Democratic newspapers both

⁴⁵Haworth, p. 40. The bloody shirt refers to the Civil War, and the Republicans by waving the 'bloody shirt' are identifying themselves as the party that kept the Union together and the democrats as the party which brought on the Civil War.

⁴⁶Robert G. Ingeroll, Robert G. Ingeroll's 44 Complete Lectures (Chicago: Regan Publishing, 1926), p. 230.

⁴⁷Jordan, p. 248.

⁴⁸Hayes, p. 47.

hailed a victory by Tilden.⁸⁹ Fortunately for Hayes, matters were not as clear as they seemed.

A conflict developed as both parties claimed to have won the electoral votes of South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. Neither side could or would concede any ground, and another Civil War loomed as a possibility.⁹⁰ Finally, after months of uncertainty, members of the House and Senate formed a committee composed of 7 Democrats, 7 Republicans, and Justice David Davis, considered to be the most nonpartisan member of the Supreme Court. Considering the rest would vote along party lines, the actual decision now lay with Davis.⁹¹

Unfortunately, state Democrats in Illinois sabotaged their federal counterparts who, by electing Davis to the Senate, therefore rendered him unable to serve on the committee. The remaining Supreme Court Justices all were Republican, as was Joseph Bradley, nominated to the committee to replace Davis. The committee proceeded to award all the disputed votes to Hayes, giving him 185 votes to Tilden's 184, and therefore the presidency.

It is a commonly accepted myth that Democrats, realizing they had lost and wishing to gain something from their defeat, threatened a filibuster that would delay the official decision until after March 4th, the day the President of the United States was to be

⁸⁹Haworth. P. 45

⁹⁰A Civil War was a possibility because each State still maintained a national guard whose commander in chief was the state governor. This was exactly the problem in 1861, and so the threat was not mere speculation, but rather very real.

⁹¹Hoogenboom, p. 285.

inaugurated. High level meetings began to take place between Republican and Democratic leaders, who eventually reached a compromise. The Democrats would accept the election results on condition that the last of the federal troops in the South were pulled out.

This was not the case. In fact, Hayes's people and Southern Democrats had arranged the compromise months earlier.⁹² The compromise of 1877, so named by C. Vann Woodward, an historian who has published a book solely devoted to it, involved the removal of federal troops, provided for Southern patronage appointments, a Southern member of cabinet and subsidies towards the building of the Texas and Pacific Railway. In return, Southern Democrats agreed to turn their backs on Tilden and accept Hayes as the President.⁹³ Thus, the Republicans retained control of the White House, and as is so often the case, when the threat to the party as a whole disappeared, the barely concealed split in the party reopened. Hayes, the compromise candidate narrowly nominated by his own party, and then through great controversy, narrowly won election as President. He now proceeded to attack Roscoe Conkling, and his powerful New York machine.

The attack involved two separate appointments by Hayes, the appointment of William M. Evarts to the office of Secretary of State, and the appointment of a special

⁹²C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1951), pp. 4-9.

⁹³There remains some debate on whether or not a compromise occurred in 1877, most notably an article in the June 1973 issue of the Journal of American History, written by Allan Peskin. However, this author supports the conclusions reached by C. Vann Woodward. In the same issue June 1973 issued mentioned above, Woodward wrote an excellent response to Peskin, titled "Yes, There Was a Compromise of 1877".

commission to look into the New York Customs House, run by Chester A. Arthur.

Arthur was a staunch Conkling man. In a few years, both these appointments and Arthur himself would have a profound effect on America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific.

The first appointment that began the confrontation between Conkling and Hayes was that of William Evarts as Secretary of State. Evarts came from a distinguished New England background, and achieved great renown as a lawyer before his appointment.⁹⁴ He was perhaps best known for his defense of Andrew Johnson at the latter's impeachment trial. He was also known as an avid reformer, and a New York Republican who was not part of Roscoe Conkling's political machine. His nomination to the highest post in the Cabinet was "a straight-arm blow" to Conkling and was, to a more limited extent, opposed by Blaine. Blaine disliked Evarts's independence and his desire to see an end to the "bayonet rule" in the South which Blaine saw as an attack on southern Republicans.⁹⁵

Some suggest that Conkling had aspirations to the post himself⁹⁶, but this is unlikely. Such a post would involve a great deal of travel and a close working relationship with the President, neither of which Conkling in any way would have enjoyed. Conkling's objections were not born out of muted jealousy but rather out of anger that the New Yorker selected to the Cabinet was Evarts, a man who was not only his opponent, but

⁹⁴Davison, p. 108.

⁹⁵Brainerd Dyer, The Public Career of William M. Evarts (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1933), p. 187.

⁹⁶Harry Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes and His America (New York: Russell & Russell, 1954), p. 415.

whose appointment to such a prestigious office served the purpose of establishing for Hayes, an anti-Conkling element in New York.⁹⁷

Powerful Republicans in the Senate opposed a number of Hayes's other appointments, and again, Conkling and Blaine found themselves on the same side as they, along with other influential Senators, sought to oppose the new cabinet by referring the choices to a committee. Hayes had gone against the party line when he had not consulted the party leaders as to his new cabinet, and they were striking back.⁹⁸

Fortunately for Hayes, public opinion was firmly on his side. John Jay, grandson of America's first chief justice and another enemy of Roscoe Conkling, led a rally of outraged businessmen on the steps of the Subtreasury Building, and protests from around the country were pouring in.⁹⁹ The *New York Times* reported that "the question in its broadest sense is whether the President is Mr. Hayes or Mr. James G. Blaine"¹⁰⁰ and then a day later announced triumphantly:

The opposition to the President's chosen Cabinet officers melted away very rapidly after yesterday morning, so that today, when the Senate met, there was no one who dared to take the responsibility of objecting to acting at once on all the nominations...The cause of this unexpected acquiescence in the nominations is found in the unanimously voice of the people as expressed through the newspapers, and by countless telegrams and letters urging immediate and unanimous confirmation...The popular demonstration

⁹⁷Jordan, p. 265.

⁹⁸Hoogenboom, p. 301.

⁹⁹Jordan, p. 266.

¹⁰⁰New York Times, March 10th, 1877.

aroused has been of the greatest value. It has shown that the people stand by what is right.¹⁰¹

Through the strength of public opinion Hayes had won a victory over Blaine, Conkling and the other party bosses. However, it was to prove to be a short celebration, for not long after he received approval for his Cabinet, Hayes proceeded to attack the corrupt New York Customs House, the heart of Conkling's New York machine.

Everyone knew that the New York Customs House was to "be run for the benefit of Roscoe Conkling",¹⁰² and everyone knew it to be corrupt and full of patronage. Hayes formed a committee under the direction of John Jay, the man who had led the businessmen in support of Hayes's cabinet and a Conkling enemy, to look into the affair. Jay's committee returned an unfavorable verdict. Hayes decided to make changes. The most important was the replacement of Chester B. Arthur as the head of the Customs House.

Arthur was clearly a Conkling man¹⁰³ and it came as no surprise that Conkling decided to oppose Hayes in this matter. Hayes asked for the resignation of Arthur and the naval officer of the port, A. B. Cornell. Both men refused to resign. Hayes then, under the recommendation of Evarts, submitted the names of Theodore Roosevelt (father of the Republican President) and L. Bradford Prince to the Senate to replace them.¹⁰⁴ Roosevelt's name was especially unacceptable to Conkling, as Roosevelt was a bitter

¹⁰¹New York Times, March 11th, 1877.

¹⁰²Jordan, p. 273.

¹⁰³Jordan, p. 274.

¹⁰⁴Dyer, p. 191.

enemy who, in 1876, had led a delegation of New Yorkers in the Cincinnati convention with the avowed purpose of blocking Conkling's nomination for President.¹⁰⁵ Once again, Hayes and Conkling were to face each other in the upper chamber.

Conkling had many advantages this time around. The New York legislature had elected him to a third consecutive term in the Senate, and the public was no longer in great opposition to the Senate, as it had been when Conkling had attempted to block Hayes' cabinet nominations. Conkling therefore received the nominations referred to the Commerce Committee of which he was the chair.¹⁰⁶ The Committee recommended that the Senate decline the nominations, and the Senate proceeded to debate the motion. During the debate, Conkling gave a speech that his nephew called one of his three greatest oratorical efforts.¹⁰⁷ The Senate rejected the nominations 31 to 25, with all but five Republican senators voting against their President's nominations. Conkling was triumphant.

Hayes was undaunted. He sent the nominations to the Senate for a second time, only to experience the same results.¹⁰⁸ Conkling was again triumphant. Hayes refused to admit defeat. During the summer of 1878 he fired Arthur and Cornell and then once again sent the nominations to the Senate. This time around the odds were in Hayes's favor. The Democrats had won a majority in the House of Representatives during the 1878

¹⁰⁵Jordan, p. 281.

¹⁰⁶Davison, p. 165.

¹⁰⁷Jordan, p. 285.

¹⁰⁸Davison, p. 165.

elections, and the Senate was no longer dominated by the Republicans. This would prove advantageous to Hayes since most Democrats would vote with Hayes, being happy to keep the party divided.¹⁰⁹ Conkling did not help his cause by quoting private correspondence during his speech against the nominations, an action which deeply offended influential Senate colleagues. As a final act, Hayes's Secretary of the Treasury, John Sherman, threatened to resign if the nominations were defeated. The final voting saw 15 Republicans vote with 25 Democrats to affirm the nominations and defeat Conkling, a majority of Republicans (25) once again voted against their President.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, Hayes was not dismayed by the lack of party support; his diary entry on February 4th, 1879 begins with "We are successful."¹¹¹

He was successful in pushing through his appointees, but he could not unite the Republican party. He was an executive in conflict with his own majority in the Senate, and with the House of Representatives controlled by the Democrats. This was the state of American politics on February 14th, when Chile invaded the Bolivian port of Antofagasta and began the War of the Pacific. A compromise candidate at the Cincinnati convention, a Presidency won in controversy, an executive at odds with the heads of his party and with both House and Senate, Hayes was not in a position of strength when the War began, and many of the conflicts that occurred between the divided Republicans were to have significant affects on American's policy towards Chile during the War of the Pacific.

¹⁰⁹Hoogenboom, p. 380.

¹¹⁰Jordan, p. 301.

¹¹¹Hayes, p. 185.

Chapter Three

A Promising Beginning: America's Chilean Policy under William Evarts

The influence of American domestic politics on U. S. foreign policy towards Chile during the War of the Pacific made itself felt immediately in the election of Rutherford Hayes who chose William Evarts to be his Secretary of State. Evarts benefitted from a lack of interest in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Indeed, there was no mention of it until Hayes' 1880 State of the Union Address. Evarts could do as he pleased, and what he did created little controversy in either the Senate or the House.

Despite the circular route that he took to become the Secretary of State, and despite the domestic problems that still plagued the Hayes administration, William Evarts would prove to be a highly capable director of America's foreign affairs. Although a commonly held belief is that American diplomacy during the War of the Pacific constituted "one of the most unfortunate chapters in American diplomatic history"¹¹², this should not taint Evarts' legacy. On the whole, the statement is valid. However, American diplomacy towards Chile during the period when Evarts served as American Secretary of State and Thomas A. Osborn served as the American minister to Chile can be described as exceptional diplomacy in a difficult situation. The manner in which these American diplomats handled the growing crisis on the Pacific coast of South America is virtually

¹¹²Herbert Millington, American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p. 9. Historians like William Sater, Frederick Pike, and Henry Clay Evans, have described American diplomacy using other words; however, the thrust of almost all of them is negative.

faultless, and can be divided into three main categories: the preservation of neutral rights, the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, and attempts at mediation.

What was the diplomatic record of the man who would be in charge of American foreign relations during the early phases of the War, William M. Evarts? Although the years between 1877 and 1881 were devoid of other major international incidents,¹¹³ Evarts' handling of the Mexican border dispute and his actions concerning the Chinese immigration question serve to illustrate the manner in which he allowed American foreign policy to follow the traditional course of reactionism and isolationism during this period. He followed the same policy in his diplomacy towards Chile during the War of the Pacific.

Traditional American diplomacy leading up to the War of the Pacific was primarily reactionist and isolationist. However, it should be noted that two major traditions dominated US foreign relations before 1879. One was an activist policy, with initiatives by US citizens. The other was a reactive policy, with the US playing the role of a bystander except when seriously provoked. There are examples of both.

The activist policy pre-dates independence, as American colonists took lands from the Indians. Despite the advice of the first president, George Washington, who in his farewell address urged Americans not to participate in European wars, in 1812 the Madison administration declared war on Great Britain, then at war against Napoleon. In 1819, the US Army invaded Spanish Florida, which the US government subsequently annexed. In 1823, President James Monroe indicated that the United States would regard

¹¹³**Samuel Flagg Bemis (ed.), *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy Volumes VII and VIII* (New York: Pageant Book Company, 1976), p. 228.**

as "unfriendly" the creation of new European colonies in the Americas. At the time, that was strong diplomatic language. In 1846, the US went to war against Mexico and seized half its territory. In the 1850s, Millard Fillmore's government sent a naval expedition to Japan and forced that country to terminate its 200-year-old self-imposed policy of isolation from the world. The governments of Fillmore's immediate successors, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, wanted to annex Cuba, a Spanish possession at the time.

Evidence for a more passive (except when provoked) policy is also voluminous. The primary reason for the US declaration of war in 1812 was British interference with American shipping. Successive US governments had tolerated such interference for almost two decades and had attempted to find a number of other solutions to the problem, even when that interference took place within sight of the US coastline. Nothing else had worked. The invasion of Florida was a direct result of Spain's inability to prevent Florida Indians from attacking settlers in Georgia, despite an obligation to do so under the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo. Despite the Monroe Doctrine, the US took no action when Great Britain seized the Falkland Islands in 1832. Congress refused to support the annexation of Cuba in the 1850s, and Cuba remained Spanish. When Spain reoccupied the Dominican Republic in 1861, France sent soldiers to Mexico in support of the Emperor Maximilian, and Spain went to war against Peru in 1866, US authorities protested but undertook no military action of their own.

It would appear, therefore, that--with some exceptions--the activist policy was strongest in regions or waters adjacent to what was already US territory or in issues which involved vital US interests. Elsewhere, again with some exceptions, the US usually played

the bystander or reactive role. This became an American tradition. In the case of US policy during the War of the Pacific, Secretaries of State William Evarts (1877-1881) and Frederick Freylinghuysen (1881-1885) followed the lead of most of their predecessors and played a minimalist role. After all, the War of the Pacific was taking place in a distant location, and interests vital to the United States were not at stake. They were wise to do so. James Blaine, by contrast, Secretary of State for nine months in 1881, chose an activist role, with negative consequences for his country over the next sixty-five years.

Evarts displayed his traditionist attitudes towards American foreign policy in his handling of the Mexican border dispute. In November, 1876, Porfirio Diaz succeeded in driving Mexican President Sebastian Lerdo from Mexico's capital, and establishing himself as de facto president. President Ulysses Grant and Secretary of State Hamilton Fish decided to withhold formal recognition of the Diaz government until the Diaz government met certain claims. This left the problem squarely in the hands of Evarts and Hayes as they took office in 1877. The problem of recognition became more complex when border raids increased along the Rio Grande, and led to the dispatch of American forces along the Mexican border. General E. O. C. Ord, received authorization to send American forces into Mexico in pursuit of raiders who crossed the border.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Brainerd Dyer, The Public Career of William M. Evarts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1933), pp. 192-5. Some historians, notably J. Fred Rippy in his history of American-Mexican relations titled The United States and Mexico, accuse Hayes and Evarts of issuing the order in the interests of distracting the American public from the domestic disturbances of the disputed election and the end of Reconstruction in the South. However, this does not fit the character of Evarts or Hayes. As Hayes biographer Harry Barnard points out in Rutherford B. Hayes and His America, Hayes knew that the last thing the American people wanted was a new conflict, or an adventuresome, heroic President. Furthermore, another Hayes biographer, Kenneth E. Davison, states in The

This order greatly alarmed the new Mexican government and precipitated a crisis in relations between the two nations. Before issuing the order, the Secretary of War had consulted with Evarts, and the doctrine of hot pursuit led directly to the State Department.¹¹⁵ When he supported the idea of American troops violating the rights of a neighboring country in the interests of saving American lives and property, Evarts reacted to outside pressure (the Mexican border raids). The doctrine of hot pursuit proved to a highly contentious one, and Evarts did not even enjoy the full support of his party in its implementation.¹¹⁶ Despite this, he continued to support it, and when he reversed it three years later and officially recognized the new Mexican government, much of the trouble on the border had ceased.¹¹⁷

The issue of Chinese immigration is the other major dispute that helps one to understand Evarts foreign policy. Immigrants from China had been settling in California for a number of years, but in the 1870s, the latent hostility towards the Chinese finally exploded, fanned by agitators who saw a potentially large platform in the people's anger:

It is really, therefore, those characteristics of the Chinaman which we most despise — his miserable little figure, his pinched and wretched

Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes that “Evarts strong policy actually was designed to protect Americans along the border.”

¹¹⁵Dyer, p. 197.

¹¹⁶Still angry over Hayes's selection of Cabinet members and the White House's southern policy, James G. Blaine spearheaded these attacks. Ari Hoogenboom, Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp. 335.

¹¹⁷Kenneth Davison, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 201.

way of living, his slavish and tireless industry, his indifference to high and costly pleasures which our civilization almost makes necessities, his capacity to live in swarms, in wretched dens where the white man would rot, if he did not suffocate — all these make a most formidable rival for survival of the fittest.

Is not the mongol a thistle in our field? Shall we pluck it up, as does the wise husbandman, or shall we withdraw the intelligence of artificial selection from the environment, and leave the battle to the chances of natural selection alone?¹¹⁸

A congressional investigation led to the passing of the “Fifteen Passenger Law” by Congress. The Bill prohibited ships from bringing in more than fifteen Chinese passengers to the United States.¹¹⁹

The Bill proved to be a problem. It did not, as the New York Times put it, give “due regard to any rights already accorded under existing treaties.”¹²⁰ If allowed to pass, it would violate the Burlingame Treaty that the United States had signed with China in 1868. The treaty dealt with a variety of different issues, but specifically stated in Article V: “The United States of America and the Emperor of China cordially recognize the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance.”¹²¹ This convinced President Hayes, after consulting with Evarts, to veto the bill. However, both men realized that public opinion demanded some type of action.¹²²

¹¹⁸The North American Review, volume 126 (1878), pp. 524-526.

¹¹⁹Foster Rhea Dulles, China and America: the Story of their Relations since 1784 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 85.

¹²⁰New York Times, February 28th, 1877.

¹²¹Clive Parry (ed), The Consolidated Treaty Series, Volume 137: 1868 (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Ocean Publications, 1976), p. 469.

¹²²Dryer, p. 221-2.

Evarts decided to send a special mission to China to negotiate a new treaty that would address these issues. The commission consisted of three men: James B. Angell; John T. Swift; and notably, in terms of future American diplomacy towards Chile during the War of the Pacific, W. H. Trescot, of South Carolina.

William Henry Trescot already had a long history of public service before being called upon by Hayes. A former writer, Secretary of the Legation at London, and Assistant Secretary of State during both of Grant's two terms, Trescot's expertise lay in the fields of diplomacy and international relations.¹²³ His addition to the commission charged with the delicate task of settling a major diplomatic problem quietly and with little controversy was a wise one, and it would not be the last time he would be called to assist his country in such a venture.

The commission traveled to China and met with Chinese officials. China would not agree to a complete ban on immigration as long as the United States continued to allow immigration from other countries to go unimpeded; historian Foster Rhea Dulles explained, "It would be an affront to national pride and racial dignity that no government could accept."¹²⁴ Finally, on November 18th, 1880, the United States and China concluded a treaty whereby the United States could regulate, limit or suspend the immigration of the

¹²³Gaillard Hunt, "William Trescot", Dictionary of American Biography, Volume VII Dumas Malone (ed.). (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1934), pp. 528-31.

¹²⁴Dulles, p. 86.

Chinese, but not absolutely prohibit it. Also, the treaty contained the stipulation that the United States could only so limit laborers and not other classes.¹²⁵

Congress ratified the treaty, and this effectively ended the question for the immediate future. In upholding the obligations of the United States, as detailed in the Burlingame Treaty, Evarts demonstrated the importance that international law held for him. When compared with the Mexican border dispute, it would appear that Evarts contradicted himself. He obeyed international law in one instance; another time he flaunted it. However, upon closer examination, his actions become clearer.

First and foremost, Evarts concerned himself with the protection of the United States. In the event of cross border raids that killed Americans and destroyed American property on American soil, he would respond. However, if these extreme consequences did not exist, then Evarts, who before his elevation to Secretary of State was considered the acknowledged leader of the American bar, would follow the rule of law and the policy of isolation that American foreign policy had followed from the days of Washington.

From this standpoint it is understandable that when War broke out among Peru, Bolivia and Chile, Evarts did not move with haste or vigor. American investment in the area totaled far less than Great Britain's.¹²⁶ In 1878, for example, Peruvian exports to the United States totaled \$2,078,300 compared with exports to Great Britain which totaled

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶V. G. Kiernan, "Foreign Interests in the War of the Pacific" The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXV, 1 (February 1955), p. 24.

\$26,161,825.¹²⁷ In addition to the lack of economic motives, the War did not arouse much public sentiment in the United States.¹²⁸ No groundswell of support materialized for either side of the conflict. The lack of public pressure allowed Evarts to continue the isolationist tradition of non-interference and freed him to pursue a reactive policy which would not commit the United States to any course or damage her relationship with any of the belligerents.

The information that Evarts received from Osborn, his minister in Santiago, further enforced this reactive policy towards Chile. On February 20th, 1879, just a few days following the Chilean invasion of Antofagasta, Osborn sent Evarts a dispatch in which he stated:

The course of the government meets with a hearty approval from all classes. The involvement was an exceedingly popular one. It is doubtful indeed, if the administration could have taken another course and sustained itself.¹²⁹

The War's popularity meant that any interference by the United States that could be construed as blocking Chilean advances would be exceedingly unpopular in Chile, and could force its government to react negatively to the United States.

¹²⁷Alexander G Secada. "Arms, Guano, and Shipping: The W. R. Grace Interests in Peru, 1865-1885" Business History Review, LIX, 1 (Winter 1985), p. 605.

Note: Numbers are in U.S. dollars at its value at the time

¹²⁸Millington. P. 30

¹²⁹Osborn to Evarts, February 20th, 1879. R59, M10, Roll 30. The numbers refer to the State Department filing system: record group R59, section M10, roll # 30. The State Department records are found at the National Archives II, located on the University of Maryland Campus.

With little American investment to protect, with no treaty obligations to enforce or force action, and with the knowledge that the Chilean public on the whole supported the War, Evarts and the United States government took little action with regard to Chile during the first few months of the War. On May 29th, fully three months after the War began, Evarts informed Osborn, "Whatever may have been the causes leading up to this War, its commencement and continuance cannot but be regretted by the United States."¹³⁰ The Chilean minister to the United States, Asta Buruaga, arrived on June 12th, and between that time and December 15th, the correspondence between Buruaga and Evarts contains all the excitement and diplomatic intrigue of a medical encyclopedia. Requests for the free admission of cigars and clothing dominate the exchanges, and it would prove difficult to tell by examining their dialogues that a war existed at all.¹³¹

This lack of activity proved to be a boon. The many new governments in South America opened new diplomatic posts. Successive presidential administrations filled the new American legations in South America, not with men of great experience or ability in foreign affairs, but rather by generals and politicians as rewards for service to their country.¹³²

Thomas Andrew Osborn's appointment as minister to Chile typified this process. A former lawyer, he had served as a state Senator in Kansas, and later he served two

¹³⁰Evarts to Osborn, May 29th, 1879. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹³¹The United States Department of State to Chilean Legation, and Chilean Legation to the United States Department of State, June 12th-December 15th, 1879

¹³²Henry Clay Evans, Chile and its Relations with the United States (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1927), p. 101.

terms as the Governor of Kansas (1871-75). In 1876, he unsuccessfully campaigned for a seat in the United States Senate and thereafter, Hayes appointed him minister to Chile.¹³³ Similarly, neither the U.S. minister to Peru, Isaac Christiancy, nor Judge S. Newton Pettis, the U.S. minister to Bolivia, was an experienced diplomat before his posting.¹³⁴ In light of this inexperience, the less need for the United States to feel obliged to interfere diplomatically in the War (for example, to forestall European intervention), the better.

It should be noted that inexperience does not necessarily equal incompetence, especially in relation to Osborn. In the case of his appointment, it might be said that Providence had smiled on the United States. Although a patronage appointment, Osborn's "extended travels, wide associations, and calm manner made him well suited to a diplomatic post."¹³⁵ In 1881, while the War of the Pacific continued, Osborn, and his namesake, the American Minister to Argentina, Thomas O. Osborn, successfully brokered a settlement to the Patagonia boundary dispute. This was no small feat considering that the boundary between Chile and Argentina was an area where diplomatic controversy and

¹³³Irvin Thomson, "Osborn, Thomas Andrew" Dictionary of American Biography, Volume VII. Dumas Malone (ed.) (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1934), pp. 70-1.

¹³⁴Albert Hyma, "Christiancy, Issac" Dictionary of American Biography Volume II. Dumas Malone (ed). (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1934), p. 96. In terms of Judge Pettis, there is very little record, so the assumption that Bolivia was his first ministry is just that, an assumption. However, the number of diplomatic errors that he makes (and which will be chronicled later), makes it difficult to believe that he had previous experience as a diplomat.

¹³⁵Harold Peterson, Argentina and the United State: 1810-1960 (New York: University Publishers, 1964), p. 241.

the threat of conflict seemed ever present.¹³⁶ Although Osborn proved himself an excellent diplomat in his years as minister to Chile, the same did not apply to Judge Pettis or Isaac Christiancy, and it is their mistakes which would cumulate in the Arica Conference of 1880.

However, in the first few months of 1879, the Arica Conference had not even been conceived, and Evarts proceeded to watch events unfold, interfering only when he felt U.S. interests to be at stake. The nature of the conflict dictated the form of intervention that Evarts took. Neither side could take decisive action without first gaining control of the sea. The maritime conflict that developed led to many instances of blockades and the boarding of ships. Since under international neutrality laws, American and other neutral ships were to be exempt from seizure, flying a neutral flag proved to be a form of insurance. This led an American, who lived in Chile, H. L. Stevens, to buy a number of Chilean merchant ships. The transaction, arranged at the U.S. Consulate in Valparaiso, proved suspicious. Rear Admiral C.P.R. Rodgers, the Commander of the American fleet at Valparaiso, summarized the problem explicitly. In reference to the American who had bought the vessels, Rodgers said: "I am told that he is not a man of fortune, nor has he hitherto been thought able to buy a costly line of steamships." Rodgers also stated the problem: "I may at any moment be called upon to protect by force of arms ships carrying the flag of our country on these seas"¹³⁷

¹³⁶Peterson, pp. 241-6.

¹³⁷C. P. R. Rodgers to Thomas Osborn, March 13th, 1879. RG, M10, Roll 30.

The problem grew worse when one of the ships, the *U.S.S. Italia*, arrived in the Peruvian port of Callao. Once there, the American consul in Callao, Robert T. Clayton, demanded that the ship remove the American flag. The ship acquiesced, and returned to Valparaíso flying the Chilean flag. This, of course, raised the question of which consul was correct, the consul in Valparaíso, or the one in Callao.¹³⁸

Osborn ordered that the consul at Valparaíso clear only ships registered in the United States to fly the American flag until he received further word from Evarts. When asking for instructions, however, Osborn mentioned that some clarification was needed. If consular regulations allowed Americans to purchase vessels, then they must have the right to sail under the protection of the American flag.¹³⁹

Evarts agreed with Osborn's position and furthermore stated that the question would be referred to the President for final clarification. While historian Herbert Millington feels that Evarts agreed with Clayton [the consul at Callao], stating that the element of good faith that Evarts stressed in his reply to Osborn supported Clayton's position, Evarts also stated that there was no law that specified that ships, owned wholly by an American citizen, could fly the American flag, and this would seem to strengthen Osborn's position.¹⁴⁰ Clarification did not come during the War of the Pacific, as the delay in messages reaching Valparaíso from Washington, and vice versa (which could last

¹³⁸Osborn to Evarts. March 31st, 1879. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Millington's opinion is found on P. 39, of American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific. The dispatch which contains the controversial references is, Evarts to Osborn. June 9th, 1879. R59, M77, Roll 36.

up to two months at times) combined with the Chilean victory in the naval war and Chile's subsequent invasion of Peru, removed any urgency in resolving the matter.

During this period of relatively little diplomatic activity between the United States and Chile, other nations attempted to mediate a peace settlement. Since the War disrupted neutral commerce and threatened the peace and stability of the South Pacific Coast, the countries which would gain the most from a peace settlement (aside from the belligerents) were the countries of Western Europe, primarily Great Britain, and the countries of South America.

The possibility of European intervention during the early stages of the War was remote. Germany worked against any united European intervention.¹⁴¹ In both France and Great Britain, competing interest groups prevented either foreign office from coming to a consensus.¹⁴² Furthermore, Great Britain fought two separate wars during this period. In South Africa the Zulu War began with the British invasion of Zululand in January 1879. On January 22nd, the Zulus defeated and massacred the main British force at Isandhwana. Although Great Britain won the War by the summer of 1879, peace in the area proved to be elusive, and it continued to absorb British interest.¹⁴³

Great Britain was involved in Afghanistan, where she strove to prevent Russian expansion and influence from reaching India. To this end, Great Britain invaded

¹⁴¹Mario Barros Van Buren, Historia Diplomática de Chile (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1970), p. 397.

¹⁴²Kiernan, p. 15.

¹⁴³C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 631.

Afghanistan on November 21st, 1878. Once again, Great Britain stood victorious, and once again, peace was elusive, as rebels killed the British representative in Afghanistan, prompting another invasion in the spring of 1880.¹⁴⁴ With these and her many other foreign entanglements and commitments it is easy to understand how little Great Britain desired to involve herself in problems that were not necessary for imperial concerns.

Finally, the pressure from British merchants contributed to the lack of British involvement. As the War continued and Chile enjoyed virtually complete success, a strong opinion grew in British mercantile circles that a Chilean victory would be to their advantage. They felt that Chile “was the most efficient and energetic of the Pacific coast republics.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, Great Britain’s foreign policy would, in many ways, mirror that of the United States. She would do little more than watch and raise the occasional complaint about the treatment of neutrals. Although Great Britain twice offered her offices to mediate the conflict, she had no desire to intervene, and both times one of the parties objected to mediation.¹⁴⁶ Without British involvement, other European countries would find intervention exceedingly difficult.

Evarts’ responses to the offers of mediation were noncommittal. When the British ambassador asked him directly whether the United States wished to join a joint British-German offer of mediation, Evarts replied:

¹⁴⁴Paul Knaplund, The British Empire 1815-1939 (New York: Harper & Brother, 1941), p. 491.

¹⁴⁵Kiernan, p. 17.

¹⁴⁶Millington, pp. 52-55.

this government does not look with favor upon any premature effort nor any effort in combination with other neutral powers which would carry the impression of dictation or coercion in disparagement of belligerent rights¹⁴⁷

The Monroe Doctrine and the policy of non-intervention both influenced his reply. Evarts had followed the policy of non-intervention at the beginning of the War and little had occurred to change his mind, while the British policy of imperialism (they were involved in two wars, as mentioned above, and would occupy Egypt in 1882)¹⁴⁸ probably made him leery of allowing the British any excuse to intervene.

American concerns about British imperialism would prevent any co-operation between the two nations. Such concerns were unnecessary. As previously mentioned, Great Britain had a number of reasons to avoid entanglement, and the Foreign Office, never, at any time, contemplated any type of intervention.¹⁴⁹ Ironically a joint attempt of mediation by the United States and Great Britain would probably have succeeded.

There was another group of nations, the South American neighbours of the belligerents, who would have benefitted from peace. Brazil offered her offices to mediate soon after the conflict began, but had them refused.¹⁵⁰ In the summer of 1879, General José María Urbina, former President of Ecuador, attempted to mediate a peace, and traveled to the various belligerents in an effort to broker an understanding. His attempt

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸The British occupied Egypt primarily to protect the Suez Canal, the "lifeline" to British India. Once again she moved aggressively, but only to protect her Empire.

¹⁴⁹Kiernan, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰Millington, p. 54.

ended in failure when Bolivia and Peru would agree to talks only upon a return to the status quo, something to which Chile would not agree.¹⁵¹

Around the same time, Colombia began her own attempt to mediate a peace. Colombia entrusted her mission to a senior diplomat, Dr. Pablo Arosemena, and informed the United States of her attempt. Evarts informed Osborn that if he was to meet Arosemena, he was to “express to him the warm interest taken by the United States in this tentative step, and the friendly solicitude of this government as to the result”. In the same letter he also made clear the position of the United States concerning this effort when he stated that the United States abstained from “any direct endorsement or co-operation”.¹⁵²

Once again the stumbling bloc of negotiations proved to be the return of territory, specifically the reoccupation by Bolivia of territory conquered by the Chileans. Chile had already rejected this as a possibility when Urbina had proposed it, and she rejected it again. Arosemena returned to Colombia in October without having formally offered the good offices of his country.¹⁵³ Unfortunately for the United States, this was a lesson the State Department did not grasp, and which would lead to the one major blunder of Evarts’s diplomacy towards Chile, the Arica Conference.

A major problem for America’s diplomacy during the War proved to be the belief of her Ministers in Peru and Bolivia that the War could be ended by mediation. Osborn consistently repeated in his dispatches to Evarts that public opinion in Chile fully

¹⁵¹Osborn to Evarts, July 24th, 1879. RG59, M10, Roll 30.

¹⁵²Evarts to Osborn, August 8th, 1879. RG59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁵³Millington, p. 57.

supported the War, and that the government had little choice but to pursue the War to its fullest ability or lose power. Furthermore, the only possibility that existed for peace was the annexation of the provinces of Tacna and Arica by Chile,¹⁵⁴ something that neither Bolivia or Peru was willing to consider at the time. Finally, the next Chilean presidential elections were to be held in 1881, and the government could not afford to alienate the public. Osborn realized this, but his colleagues did not.

In August 1879, Judge Pettis, the American minister in Bolivia, took it upon himself to attempt to end the War. He traveled to Santiago and met Osborn and the Chilean Foreign Minister. Once again the status quo proved a stumbling bloc, and although Pettis remained optimistic, he returned to Bolivia empty handed.¹⁵⁵

Evarts' response to Pettis' unauthorized mission is illuminating. Evarts informed Osborn that although the United States did not officially sponsor the mission, and that the offices of the United States were not to be offered, had the mission succeed it would "have been most gratifying to this country".¹⁵⁶ This demonstrates that Evarts took an interest in ending the War, and this fact is important if the events that were to draw America into the Arica conference are to be properly understood.

The Arica conference had its origins in the Chilean naval victory. With victory on the seas, the blockade of Peruvian ports began in earnest, as well as the bombardment of

¹⁵⁴Osborn to Evarts, April 23rd, 1879: August 16th, 1879: October 7th, 1879: October 28th, 1879: March 5th, 1880: May 20th, 1880: August 4th, 1880: September 2nd, 1880. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

¹⁵⁵Osborn to Evarts, August 9th, 1879. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

¹⁵⁶Evarts to Osborn, October 7th, 1879. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

Peruvian coastal towns by the Chilean fleet. While the protests by the various Foreign Ministers of European countries and by the United States all dealt with the damage to neutral property, none was abnormally insistent, or strongly worded. For example, Evarts' letter to Osborn concerning the alleged destruction of American property and the theft of an American launch:

You will bring these facts to the early attention of the Chilean government and so represent the matter as may distinctly show, without however, any appearance of captious opposition to the legitimate process and the needs of war, that the United States expects the equitable rights of her citizens under treaty and the law of nations, to be respected to the full, as befits the relations between two such friendly powers"¹⁵⁷

However, as the War continued, and neutral trade and property suffered more and more damage, Evarts came to be concerned about the possibility of European intervention. As already noted, such intervention was unlikely, but the Secretary of State could not have known that, and he ordered his ministers to offer the good offices of the United States if the pressure from Europe "should assume a coercive nature"¹⁵⁸

On July 29th, Evarts, aware of steps being taken by European powers, sent telegrams to the U.S. ministers in Bolivia, Peru, and Chile, which instructed them to urge mediation upon the belligerents.¹⁵⁹ The instructions from Evarts generated two important events. First, Osborn sent a dispatch in which he explained again that Chile would demand Tarapacá as part of any peace. He pointed out that the Chilean presidential elections were

¹⁵⁷Evarts to Osborn, February 19th, 1880. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁵⁸Evarts to Osborn, March 9th, 1880. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁵⁹William Jefferson Dennis, Tacna and Arica (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1931 [1967]), p. 110.

approaching, and that the Chilean party that currently controlled the Moneda would follow public opinion instead of leading it. Finally he stated that the Chilean public demanded Tacna and Arica.¹⁶⁰

The other major event generated by Evarts' telegram concerned Issac Christancy, the American minister in Peru. He decided to visit Santiago in order to facilitate peace negotiations by meeting with Osborn and Chilean officials. This was his first mistake. His arrival touched off a storm of protest by the Chilean public. Some viewed the peace talks as "a plot hatched by Peruvian Masons, working through the Chilean radical party" and one Chilean journalist stated that only the wealthy wanted peace, the people wanted war.¹⁶¹ Osborn, angry over his colleague's unexpected visit, wrote to Evarts: "[Christancy] undoubtably hoped to further the prospects of peace, but I am not sure that his arrival has not had the opposite effect." He informed Evarts that the Chilean people did not want peace and that "On to Lima!" was the popular cry.¹⁶²

During his time in Santiago, Christancy met Osborn and Chilean President Anibal Pinto (1876-1881). Pinto stressed that Chile would not, under any circumstances, relinquish Tarapacá. When Christancy left Santiago, Osborn must have assumed that the message would be delivered that Chile would not relinquish Tarapacá. Unfortunately for everyone concerned, and for reasons known only to himself, when Christancy met the Peruvian Foreign Minister, he made no mention of this. In fact, when he communicated to

¹⁶⁰Osborn to Evarts, August 4th, 1880. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

¹⁶¹Sater, p. 201.

¹⁶²Osborn to Evarts, September 2nd, 1880. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

Charles Adams, the new American minister to Bolivia, he stated that the opening of the negotiations would not depend on any conditions.¹⁶³ Christiancy knew that the likelihood that Peru and Bolivia would accept mediation with the stipulation that Tarapacá would be ceded to Chile was remote. It seemed that Christiancy hoped that by not mentioning the Chilean demand, and thus having brought everyone to the bargaining table, a peace could be worked out. He was mistaken.

Evarts now believed that the groundwork had been created for a peace conference mediated by the United States and ordered his ambassadors to offer the good offices of the United States once again.¹⁶⁴ This time, each of the belligerents believed that American diplomacy had convinced the other to abandon its respective claims. The stage had been set, and the War's participants proceeded to Arica where the prospect of peace remained, unbeknownst to all, more remote than ever.

Even though Evarts had decided to proceed with the matter, and even though he believed that Peru and Bolivia had been informed concerning the Chilean demand that Tarapacá be ceded as a precursor to peace, Osborn remained unconvinced as to the peace conference's chances of success. In early October, he sent a dispatch to Evarts in which he stated that the Chilean government continued to be attacked over the matter of Christiancy's visit and that it was "prudent to proceed no further in this matter of mediation"¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³Millington, p. 72.

¹⁶⁴Telegram. Evarts to Osborn, July 29th, 1880. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁶⁵Osborn to Evarts, October 8th, 1880. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

Fate seemed to work against American efforts. On the same day that Osborn sent the dispatch to Evarts, he fulfilled Evarts' instructions, and formally delivered the American offer of mediation to the Chilean government, which was accepted. The conference was scheduled for the end of October. Evarts received Osborn's dispatch concerning the state of the Chilean government a week after the conference had closed, far too late to be of any use.¹⁶⁶

As the conference approached, new obstacles appeared. The Chilean government refused to call an armistice while the conference proceeded, but the Peruvian government insisted upon one. Matters were further complicated when the Chilean navy continued to bombard the Peruvian coast. Finally Peru acquiesced, and agreed to come to the conference without an armistice in effect. Christiancy once again acted on his own initiative and tried to communicate directly to the commander of the Chilean Navy, Admiral Patricio Lynch. He asked him to stop his attacks, but Lynch rebuffed him.¹⁶⁷

The conference followed a predictable route. On October 22nd, 1880, representatives from Peru, Chile and Bolivia met on board the *U.S.S. Lackawanna*. Chile demanded the annexation of Tarapacá, but Peru and Bolivia refused to consider the idea. Neither side would move. At this point, Mariano Baptiste, the Bolivian minister at the Conference, suggested that the other issues dividing the two sides be handed over to the United States for arbitration.¹⁶⁸ Osborn then informed the minister that the United States

¹⁶⁶Evarts to Osborn, November 11th, 1880. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁶⁷Millington, p. 72-3.

¹⁶⁸Osborn to Evarts, February 24th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

does not seek the position of arbiter in this question. A strict compliance with the duties inherent in that position would involve much trouble and great labor, and while I could not doubt that my government would accept the position if properly requested to do so, it was never the less proper that it be understood that her representatives did not court that distinction¹⁶⁹

Osborn realized that the only point that really mattered was the cession of Tarapacá, which neither side would consider, and so wished to avoid entangling the United States in a peace process that would accomplish nothing.¹⁷⁰ It is important to remember that the peace process did not stop the War, because the Chilean government did not agree to a armistice. If the United States had agreed to mediate the other issues, Washington would have accomplished nothing, for while the mediation occurred, Chile would have continued the War and invaded Lima. Imagine the scenario whereby the United States attempted to mediate a peace that could not be mediated and did not manage even to halt the War that she was mediating. Osborn managed to prevent a major embarrassment for the United States, and to create the hope, at least in part, of preserving some American influence in the region.

The blame for the failure for the conference can be laid almost directly at the feet of Christiancy. As Melquiades Valderrama, the Chilean Foreign Minister, pointed out to Evarts, Chile had gone to the conference with the idea that Tarapacá would be ceded. He also indicated that when he had visited Santiago, Christiancy had “declared in the most unmistakable and positive manner that he was persuaded that the government of Peru

¹⁶⁹Evarts to Osborn, December 27th, 1880. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁷⁰Osborn to Evarts, February 24th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

would agree to the cession.”¹⁷¹ It would be difficult to believe that Evarts would have insisted on the conference if he had known the extent of the impasse preventing peace.

Many explanations were advanced for the conference’s failure (Christiancy actually blamed Osborn¹⁷²) but, as matters stood, the conference had little chance of success. Evarts received a transcript from the conference, and sent Osborn a dispatch asking for an explanation for his refusal of the duties of arbitration. It is interesting to note that Christiancy had written the transcript.¹⁷³ Osborn replied to Evarts that he had thought the offer to arbitrate to be, in light of the difficulties that have been mentioned above, “hollow” and “insincere”.¹⁷⁴ Evarts, it appeared, accepted the matter as concluded and the United States Department of State did not pursue the matter.

With the failure of the conference, the Chilean government proceeded with its planned invasion of Lima. The conquest of Lima coincided with a change in the White House. Both events had consequences.

Unlike his successor, Evarts could operate in a vacuum regarding the War of the Pacific. The War attracted little attention in U. S. newspapers. Few Americans appear to have known about the War or to have given it much thought. Moreover, as Rutherford Hayes was not likely to seek a second term, his Secretary of State did not have to worry

¹⁷¹Notes from the Chilean Legation in the United States to the Department of State, Asta Buruaga to Evarts, November 22nd, 1880.

¹⁷²Millington. P. 77

¹⁷³Christiancy to Evarts, November 11th, 1880. RG 59, T52, Roll 34.

¹⁷⁴Osborn to Evarts, February 24th, 1880. RG 59, M10, Roll 30.

about the acceptability of his policies to the American electorate. He could do what he thought was appropriate, consistent with his actions elsewhere.

Chapter Four
Collision Course:
America's Chilean Policy Under James G. Blaine

The democratic process may be the best the world has yet discovered, but it is far from perfect. Less than qualified people, whose opinions are stronger than their knowledge base, can rise to positions of power. One such person was James G. Blaine, Secretary of State for nine months in 1881. Evarts had treated the War of the Pacific as a foreign matter, of little concern to Americans, and in doing so, had created little controversy in either the United States or Chile.

During his brief tenure in office and immediately following, Blaine created and found himself embroiled in controversy, the consequences of which would haunt American-Chilean relations well into the next century. Nor did he operate with the noblest of intentions. Even when there might have been reasonable grounds for doing as he did, he acted for more trivial reasons. One can use the precedent of the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and the resulting threat to peace in Europe as a precedent against territorial aggrandizement in South America. Conceivably Chilean annexation of the guano lands could (and did) lead to Bolivian and Peruvian irridentism. Blaine had reason for concern. However, the precedent of Alsace-Lorraine did not seem a major consideration for him. Rather irrational Anglophobia and concern for his own presidential aspirations dictated his actions.

With the fall of Lima, the combative phase of the War of the Pacific ended. Peru and Bolivia had lost the War, and all that remained was the peace settlement.

Unfortunately for all concerned, the negotiations of the peace settlement would last longer than the actual fighting, and would illustrate American foreign policy at its worst. An attempt to change American foreign policy from reactive to pro-active, from isolationist to interventionist, would have serious repercussions. In fact, it is possible to state that American attempts to affect the peace settlement not only prolonged the War but made the final peace much harsher on Peru and Bolivia, contrary to America's intentions, and cost America considerable prestige in all three countries.

This of course begs the questions of why and how? Specifically, why did America's policy towards Chile change and how did it end up having such negative consequences? During the War itself, America's Secretary of State, William Evarts, and the Minister to Chile, Thomas Osborn, followed a cautious, reactive policy, never directly interfering and never placing any kind of coercive pressure on the belligerents. What went wrong?

The answer to that question is found in the domestic politics of the United States, specifically in Chicago, where on June 2nd, 1880, the national Republican convention took place. Four years earlier, the Republicans had nominated Rutherford Hayes, and he appointed Evarts his Secretary of State. However, Hayes had stated in 1876 that he would run for only one term. He kept his word and few Republicans would have wanted him to run again even if he had not made that pledge.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵Justus D Doenecke, The Presidencies of James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur (Laurence: University Press of Kansas, 1981), p. 17.

The convention which opened in Chicago found the Republican party split along the same lines as the Cincinnati convention of four years earlier.¹⁷⁶ The “stalwarts” under Roscoe Conkling and the “half-breeds” under James G. Blaine were the two factions fighting for control. Conkling and most “stalwarts” supported a third term for President Grant. Although Grant did not actively campaign for himself, neither did he remove himself from the race:

If by the unsolicited votes of his countrymen he is again called to the Presidency, there ought to not to be even one citizen base enough to suggest that he is animated by any purpose inconsistent with the constitutional requirements of office.¹⁷⁷

In other words, he would accept the nomination if offered. With the other fraction of the party, the “half-breeds” supported the nomination of James G. Blaine. Rutherford Hayes himself supported the nomination of John Sherman, and managing Sherman’s affairs was James Garfield.

Garfield, a Senator from Ohio had been born to an impoverished widow, and had made his own way in the world. He had been elected as the youngest member of the Ohio state legislature in 1859, and when the Civil War broke out, he helped to organize the Forty-second Ohio infantry. His star continued to rise during the War as he was promoted from lieutenant colonel to major general by the War’s end. Following the War he ascended through the Republican party ranks. Although Garfield played little part in the

¹⁷⁶See Chapter Two, “Discord at Home: American Domestic Politics 1876-79.”

¹⁷⁷North American Review, volume 130, 1880, p. 385.

Cincinnati convention of 1876, he did serve on the electoral commission that decided Hayes' victory, loyally casting his vote for Hayes.¹⁷⁸

Conkling and Blaine dominated the Cincinnati convention. Four years later, at the Chicago convention, circumstances were different and Garfield's political strength was now greater. First the major Republican players, Conkling and Blaine, had lost some of their luster. Hayes already defeated Conkling over the New York Customs House issue,¹⁷⁹ and Conkling could not keep even the New York delegation fully under his control (a resolution to support Grant passed by 33 votes 216 to 183).¹⁸⁰ Finally Blaine's thirst for the presidency had greatly diminished. While he did not prevent his backers from putting forth his name as a candidate, he entered the race, it appeared, more from a sense of duty, a need to prevent the nomination from falling into the hands of Conkling and the "stalwarts", than from any real desire to capture the Presidency.¹⁸¹

The convention opened much as expected, as the two sides clashed in heated debates. The "half-breeds" quickly gained the upper hand, but did not have the strength to win the nomination for Blaine.¹⁸² In the meantime, Garfield quickly gained a reputation as

¹⁷⁸Donenecke, p. 22.

¹⁷⁹For more information refer back to, "Chapter Two: Discord at Home".

¹⁸⁰Wayne Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), P. 65.

¹⁸¹David Muzzey, James G. Blaine: A Political Idol of Other Days (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), p. 167.

¹⁸²Doenecke, p. 20.

a peacemaker, “the only man who could pour oil on the foaming waves”¹⁸³ A rousing speech that Garfield gave in support of Sherman and party unity cemented his reputation:

Gentlemen of the convention, your present temper may not mark the healthy pulse of our people. When your enthusiasm has passed, when the emotions of this hour have subsided, we shall feel that calm level of public opinion below the storm from which the thoughts of a mighty people must be measured, and by which their final action will be determined.

Not here in this brilliant circle, where 15,000 men and women are assembled, is the destiny of the Republican party to be decreed. Not here, where I see the enthusiastic faces of 756 delegates, waiting to cast their votes into the urn, determine the choice of the republic; but by the 4,000,000 Republican firesides.¹⁸⁴

This reputation would prove invaluable to Garfield in a very short period of time.

The convention’s first ballot set the tone for the many ballots that would follow.

Grant led with 304 votes, 75 votes shy of the majority, Blaine was hard at his heels with 284 votes, and Sherman was a distant third. The numbers for Grant were deceiving because of the 304 votes, 176 were from southern states that would likely vote Democrat in the Presidential elections.¹⁸⁵ This played against his gaining momentum in the next ballot as the front runner. Instead, a long drawn out deadlock ensued.

The convention was often in chaos. After 28 fruitless ballots in which none of the members fluctuated much, it became apparent that something had to be done; something new had to be added to the equation. That something would prove to be James Garfield. More and more candidates began to swing their votes in his direction. On the 35th ballot

¹⁸³Russell Conwell, The Life, Speeches and Public Service of James A. Garfield (Portland, Maine: George Stinson, and Company, 1881), p. 329.

¹⁸⁴Conwell, p. 328.

¹⁸⁵Allan Peskin, Garfield (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1978), p. 47.

he had 50 votes; it signaled the beginning of a landslide. On the 36th ballot, Garfield had received 399 votes and the nomination. Once again the Republicans had been forced to choose a compromise candidate.¹⁸⁶

While a compromise candidate, people still considered Garfield a “half-breed”, albeit a far less objectionable member of that faction than Blaine. According to tradition, the losing fraction would choose the vice-presidential candidate. In this case, the nomination went to Chester Arthur, formally of the head of the New York customs house.¹⁸⁷

Arthur was not the first choice. The half-breeds, attempting to heal the divisions in the party, had gone through two previous candidates, both of whom refused the honor. Roscoe Conkling, their old nemesis, proved to be behind the rejections. His anger still burned over the rejection of Grant, and he had stated: “I hope no friend of mine will accept it [the vice-presidential nomination]”¹⁸⁸ Thus it was ironic that the offer should be made to Chester Arthur, long thought of as a “Conkling Man”. Arthur accepted the nomination in clear defiance of Conkling. Eye witnesses recorded the fateful meeting between the two right before Arthur accepted. Conkling told Arthur to drop the offer as if it were a “red hot shoe from the forge”.

¹⁸⁶Morgan, p. 93.

¹⁸⁷Peskin, p. 480.

¹⁸⁸Morgan, p. 94.

Arthur said in reply, "The office of Vice President is a greater honor than I ever dreamed of attaining. A barren nomination would be a great honor. In a calmer moment you will look at this differently."

Conkling furiously told Arthur, "If you wish my favor and respect you will contemptuously decline it." Arthur would not be moved. "Senator Conkling, I shall accept the nomination and shall carry with me the majority of the delegation", and he did.¹⁸⁹ Arthur accepted, and his ratification by the convention set the stage for the 1880 Presidential election.

The 1880 Presidential election, unlike the 1876 Presidential election, does not require close scrutiny here. Garfield and the Republicans managed a close victory, winning a majority of the electoral college but losing the popular vote. The split in the party between the Half-breeds and the Stalwarts healed just long enough for Republicans to achieve victory. Among the compromises that Garfield made to the Stalwarts in order to help heal the breach were the promise of consultation with Stalwarts over important issues and rewards for the faithful. This represented a return to the spoils system that Hayes had tried to reform. This convinced a young Republican in the New York machine to believe that a Republican victory would lead to a patronage appointment for him. Charles Julius Guiteau's disappointment over his lack of appointment would later have fatal consequences for Garfield.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹David Jordan, Roscoe Conkling of New York (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1971), p. 343.

¹⁹⁰Peskin, p. 587-590.

However, in 1880 the Republicans stood triumphant and Garfield began to consider the appointment of his cabinet, including the new Secretary of State. Evarts had done an excellent job, but such a powerful post was a reward for political service, not a civil service post. A new Secretary would be appointed, and his policies would redefine American foreign policy towards Chile.

For this important post, Garfield had settled on Blaine as early as November 27th, 1880, when he offered it to Blaine during a breakfast meeting between the two men.¹⁹¹ The opposition to Blaine's ascension from Conkling and the Stalwarts was fierce, but expected, and Garfield carried the nomination through. Once installed in office, Blaine stated that he would conduct a "spirited" foreign policy which would "raise American prestige among nations" and which would increase his own prestige among the Republicans and the American public.¹⁹² Even before he had officially become the Secretary of State, there were indications which pointed to a radical change in American foreign policy. Evarts' cautious, traditional policy was about to be turned on its head.

Blaine's tenure as Secretary of State began on a negative note in terms of his relationship with Chile. Just a few weeks after he settled into office, sailors from the *U.S.S. Lackawanna* were arrested by Chilean forces under Patricio Lynch. When the captain of the *Lackawanna* tried to intervene on his sailor's behalf, Lynch rebuffed him.

¹⁹¹Muzzey, p. 178.

¹⁹²David M Pletcher, The Awkward Years: American Foreign Relations under Garfield and Arthur (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1962), p. 14.

Blaine soon learned of the incident and called it a situation that has “produced a most painful impression in the mind of the government [of the United States]”¹⁹³

Osborn quickly went to work to have the situation rectified, and telegraphed Blaine on May 14th. “The government expresses profound regret at Gills-Lynch affair. The claim matter was subsequently arranged in Lima to the satisfaction of Minister Christiancy and Admiral Stevens and a protocol to that effect signed.”¹⁹⁴ Osborn demonstrated the importance he attached to the affair by his use of a telegram. As noted earlier, only the most important messages that had to be sent immediately were sent by telegram; all other despatches were sent by ship. Although it is possible only to speculate as to why Osborn attached such importance to the issue, he likely wished to prevent further tension between the United States and Chile. He need not have bothered, for Blaine’s future policy toward Chile would make the Arica Conference look like a stunning success by comparison.

Blaine was convinced that the War of the Pacific was in actuality a proxy war being fought by the British against Peru. “It is a perfect mistake to speak of this as a Chilean war on Peru. It is an English war on Peru, with Chili as the instrument.”¹⁹⁵ Although he never had any evidence of this, and in fact the British foreign office found it

¹⁹³Blaine to Osborn, March 21st, 1881. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

¹⁹⁴Osborn to Blaine, May 14th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

¹⁹⁵Pletcher, p. 42.

difficult to even come to a consensus on the issue of the War of the Pacific,¹⁹⁶ Blaine felt that American interests would be best served by blocking Chilean attempts to annex Peru's nitrate lands (primarily Tarapacá), and set about to do so.

Shortly after he took office and following the Gilles-Lynch affair, Blaine decided to replace Osborn and Christiancy. Unfortunately, the replacements he chose not only were ineffectual, but their actions further complicated an already muddled peace process. At the request of President Garfield, Blaine sent former Union General Hugh J. Kilpatrick to Chile to replace Osborn, whom Blaine sent to Brazil. For Peru he recalled Christiancy, and replaced him with another former Union General, Stephen J. Hurlburt.¹⁹⁷ Blaine had lost faith in both Osborn and Christiancy and hoped that Hurlburt and Kilpatrick would prove more capable of handling the peace process and preventing any territorial annexation of Peru. Both men had previous experience as diplomats in South America; Hurlburt had been minister to Colombia from 1869 to 1872, and Kilpatrick had been minister to Chile from 1866 to 1870.¹⁹⁸

On the basis of past experience the appointments seemed logical; however, a closer look at both men revealed a multitude of problems. Hugh Kilpatrick had married into a Chilean family (his wife was the niece of the Archbishop of Santiago) and could hardly be counted on to be completely impartial. Even more doubtful was the appointment of

¹⁹⁶See V. G. Kiernan's "Foreign Interest in the War of the Pacific" The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXV, 1 (February 1955), pp. 14-36.

¹⁹⁷Pletcher, p. 45.

¹⁹⁸Millington, p. 85.

Stephen Hurlburt who was a known alcoholic and allegedly corrupt, but who probably owed his appointment to the fact that he had served as Blaine's campaign manager.¹⁹⁹

A bad situation became worse when Bright's disease struck Kilpatrick almost immediately upon his arrival in Santiago rendering him unable properly to perform his duties.²⁰⁰ He could not call upon the various Chilean diplomats because of his confinement to his bed, nor at times could he even write. He depended on his wife and her friends to handle the diplomatic correspondence. His wife wrote his despatches and he signed his name to them; this meant that in all likelihood the Chilean government probably knew everything he sent and received (this is the implication of at least one historian).²⁰¹ To add to Blaine's problems with regard to the War of the Pacific, the Chilean presidential elections took place in May of 1881, and the Chilean people elected a new President, Domingo Santa María. During a great part of the War of the Pacific, in the years immediately preceding his elevation to President, Santa María held the posts of head of the foreign ministry and head of the interior. The public considered him an energetic and experienced statesman and he knew both the state of public opinion in Chile, and intimate details of the diplomacy of the War.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹William Sater, Chile and the United States (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990), p. 39.

²⁰⁰Kilpatrick to Blaine, December 2nd, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁰¹Pletcher, p. 45.

²⁰²Luis Galdames, A History of Chile. (translated by Issac Joslin Cox) (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 336.

Kilpatrick's mission began on a positive note, as he reported back to Blaine that many dignitaries were on hand for his arrival and "the most distinguished attention was shown me."²⁰³ This show of Chilean support and respect did little to sway Blaine, who placed the blame for the peace impasse squarely on the Chilean government.²⁰⁴ As unbelievable as it may appear, this marked the high water mark of American-Chilean relations during Blaine's tenure as Secretary of State.

The problems began with the arrival of Hurlbert in Peru. Once again the American minister to Peru would exceed his instructions and act in such a manner as to befuddle historians and, one would assume, his superiors in Washington.

Unfortunately for American diplomacy during the end of the War of the Pacific, Hurlbert assumed the leadership role upon his arrival in Peru. Under Secretary Evarts, Thomas Osborn, the American Minister to Chile, had assumed this role. For example Osborn chaired the abortive Arica conference. However, Hurlbert was closer to Blaine than Kilpatrick, and accredited to Peru, a country that enjoyed the sympathy of the Secretary of State.²⁰⁵ Of course this meant that Hurlbert's actions had a far greater effect on American prestige than otherwise.

²⁰³Kilpatrick to Blaine, August 2nd, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁰⁴In his letter of instruction to Kilpatrick and Hurlbert, Blaine comments on the Arica conference, saying that "Chile was prepared to dictate and not discuss". He later mentions that territorial changes "should never be the result of mere force", and never places blame for the diplomatic morass on Peru or Bolivia.

²⁰⁵Millington, p. 86.

Hurlburt arrived in Peru and immediately set about to try and insure its territorial integrity. He told Peruvian President Francisco Calderón that the United States would not allow Chile to annex any part of Peru. He then went a step further and gave the Commander of the Chilean forces occupying Peru, Admiral Patricio Lynch, the same message. Lynch quickly communicated this news to members of the Chilean government in Santiago, who in turn were incensed at the American action.²⁰⁶

When Kilpatrick learned of his colleague's actions he immediately refuted them to the Chilean government and sent a despatch to Blaine. Kilpatrick explained that the Chilean government of Santa Maria had already promised to explore every possibility before territorial annexation and that Hurlburt's actions were "compromising his [Kilpatrick's] position". Kilpatrick graciously wrote that he thought Hurlburt must have been misunderstood or misrepresented.²⁰⁷ This was the last significant contribution that Kilpatrick would make to the State Department. He remained ill and inactive until his death early in the next year.²⁰⁸

When Blaine received Kilpatrick's despatch, he angrily informed him, "Your letter is not approved by the Department." Furthermore "no explanation was due or could have been expected from, of the language or conduct of your colleague in Peru."²⁰⁹ Blaine's

²⁰⁶Sater, p. 40.

²⁰⁷Kilpatrick to Blaine, August 15th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁰⁸Kilpatrick to Blaine, August 30th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁰⁹Blaine to Kilpatrick, November 22nd, 1881. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

tacit approval of Hurlburt's action further alienated the Chilean government and encouraged Calderón to resist Chilean demands for peace.

Calderón, who previously had enjoyed Chile's support, now turned on his former benefactors and refused to cede Tarapacá to Chile. Unfortunately for Calderón, he had overestimated the benefits of American support. Realizing that Calderón was no longer useful in creating a peace, Lynch arrested him, and confiscated his treasury.²¹⁰

Both Blaine and Hurlburt were angered at Calderón's removal, and Kilpatrick, still bedridden, could not provide any answers except to tell Blaine that everything had been fine until Hurlburt arrived.²¹¹ The situation continued to worsen as Peru now had a number of would-be rulers but no one in a position to control the entire country. Furthermore, Hurlburt began to become involved in Peruvian domestic politics and alienated the Chileans. Finally, Blaine realized that he could no longer trust Hurlburt, and with Kilpatrick at death's door, that America had no effective representation on the South Pacific coast. He therefore arranged to have a special envoy, William Trescott, sent to represent American interests and prevent the dismemberment of Peru.²¹² Trescott's instructions left little doubt as to Blaine's desires and put the United States and Chile on a collision course which redefined American-Chilean relations.

On the surface, Trescott's appointment as special minister to the belligerents of the War of the Pacific seemed like an obvious and intelligent decision. Trescott was a proven

²¹⁰Sater, p. 42.

²¹¹Kilpatrick to Blaine, December 2nd, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²¹²Sater, p. 43.

diplomat, with an excellent record. However, the appointment of a special envoy owed more to American domestic politics than to the trouble in South America, for domestic turmoil once again signaled a drastic change in American foreign policy. What connection could Trescot's appointment to a troubled area of the world have with American domestic politics? The answer lay in the demented mind of a Republican from New York, Charles Julius Guiteau.

Charles Guiteau had become involved in politics in 1870, when he wrote a speech in support of Horace Greeley, the Democratic candidate for President in the 1882 elections. Guiteau expected to be rewarded by Greeley when the latter won the Presidency; ironically, his first choice would have been Minister to Chile.²¹³ Guiteau lost both his wife and business in the early 1870s, had attacked his sister with an axe, and narrowly escaped being institutionalized by slipping over the state line to Chicago from Indiana. In 1880, he devoted his life to politics, switched allegiance to the Republican party and wrote a speech in support of Garfield during the Presidential elections. Although he never actually delivered the speech, he became convinced that it was responsible for Garfield's victory, and fully expected to be given a patronage post. He resided in Washington for months, waiting, becoming more and more desperate and pitiful. Finally, he decided that if Garfield were somehow removed and Arthur placed in power, his problems would vanish. To this end, he began to plan to murder President Garfield.²¹⁴

²¹³Allan Peskin, Garfield (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1978), p. 586.

²¹⁴Peskin, p. 582-94.

On July 2nd, at 9:20 a.m., Guiteau caught up with Garfield at the Potomac train station and fatally shot the President. Although Garfield lingered on, it became apparent that he was dying, and that when he died, Chester A. Arthur would become the President of the United States.²¹⁵ September 19th, 1881, Garfield passed away.

Most people, both friend and foe, expected Arthur to revert back to the spoils system that had existed under Grant, but Arthur surprised many when at his first cabinet meeting he asked that all Cabinet members hold their posts until at least December. Although Blaine offered to resign on October 13th, Arthur repeated his request, and Blaine agreed to remain until the New Year.²¹⁶ Although many suspected it, it was not personal animosity between the Stalwart Arthur and the Half-breed Blaine that forced Blaine from office. The two were on friendly terms, especially since Blaine had defended Arthur in the Senate. In addition to that defense, Arthur concerned himself with party unity, and Blaine probably could have remained Secretary of State if he wished it. However, Blaine, already looking ahead to the 1884 elections, wished to distance himself from the current administration in order to help his future campaign.²¹⁷

Arthur's greatest policy mistake with regard to the foreign relations of his administration lay in his handling of Blaine. Anxious to avoid party in-fighting, and not

²¹⁵Justus D Doenecke, The Presidencies of James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur (Laurence: University Press of Kansas, 1981), p. 53.

²¹⁶Pletcher, p. 60.

²¹⁷Doenecke, p. 127.

wishing to antagonize Blaine, Arthur gave him a free hand in the State Department until his resignation in December 1881.²¹⁸ Blaine would take full advantage of this time.

As Blaine became more and more concerned about party politics and the election of 1884, his foreign policy began to reflect this new priority. After Garfield had been shot, Blaine turned his attention to domestic matters in Washington, and neglected the War of the Pacific and the actions of the American diplomats there, and that explained the lack of State Department response to Hurlbut's many indiscretions. As his departure grew closer, Blaine attempted to tie up the loose ends in the Department and redirect its foreign policy.²¹⁹

At this point it is possible only to speculate as to Blaine's motives. However, Blaine probably hoped to achieve that one great success as Secretary of State which would give both his prestige and his Presidential chances a boost, and for this reason Blaine embarked on such a ambitious course in the last weeks of his tenure. If Blaine had truly been concerned about the condition of the State Department, it stands to reason that he would have tried to correct certain problems earlier. The problem of timing damns the Trescot mission. Kilpatrick had been at death's door for months, yet Blaine did nothing. Hurlbut had been violating his orders for almost the same length of time, yet Blaine did nothing. Then, with but weeks till he was replaced, Blaine undertook the most ambitious mission of his tenure of Secretary of State when it is obvious that the completion of the

²¹⁸Doenecke, p. 127.

²¹⁹Pletcher, p. 59.

mission would occur when he was no longer Secretary of State. Blaine's motives were highly suspect.

In his letter of instruction to Trescot, Blaine said that if the removal of Peruvian President García Calderón was in response to the U.S. support of that government, then:

You will say to the Chilean government that the President considers such a proceeding as an intentional and unwarranted offence, and that you will communicate such an avowal to the government of the United States, with the assurance that it will be regarded by the government as an act of such unfriendly import as to require the immediate suspension of all diplomatic intercourse.²²⁰

Although Blaine told Trescot that he did not anticipate that this would occur, the language and potential diplomatic crisis that could result from such language was immense.

Blaine also informed Trescot that Walker Blaine, the Third Assistant Secretary of State who accompanied Trescot on his mission, was to take over the Chilean embassy until a new minister could arrive.²²¹ Finally, Blaine planned a conference of American states (both North and South) and entrusted the delivery of the Bolivian, Peruvian, and Chilean invitations to Trescot.²²² Due to the length of time it took to travel to Chile from Washington, Blaine would not even be in office by the time Trescot arrived in Santiago, Chile. Essentially, after he planned the conference of American States, and conceived and launched the Trescot mission, Blaine left office, leaving the entire mess in the hands of his

²²⁰Blaine to Trescot, December 1st, 1881. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

²²¹Blaine to Trescot, December 9th, 1881. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

²²²Trescot to Blaine, December 12th, 1881. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

successor, the man whom Arthur had asked to become the new Secretary of State, Frederick Frelinghuysen.

In brief, Blaine attempted to deprive the Chileans of the victory and in so doing he antagonized them. He went out of his way to combat non-existent British imperialism in the guano area. At the same time, he did little that actually proved useful to Bolivia and Peru. Nor did he win the confidence of the Stalwart wing of the Republican party. Shortly after a Stalwart moved into the White House, Blaine left office.

Chapter Five
Policy Changes and Illusive Peace:
America's Chilean Policy under Frederick Frelinghuysen

The vagaries of American politics led to the departure of Blaine and the elevation of Frederick Frelinghuysen. Like Evarts, Frelinghuysen chose to be non-confrontational. He reversed Blaine's policies in a manner that might have been impossible if the Republican party had been a united group. The media did notice the reversal of Blaine's policies, but were divided. Congress called for full publication of all correspondence dealing with the War of the Pacific and controversy raged. Frelinghuysen remained steadfast in his policy reversal, aware that following Blaine's term as Secretary of State his task was damage control.

Frelinghuysen had a long history in politics. A stalwart, he had served in the Senate representing New Jersey, and was part of the of the electoral commission that awarded Rutherford Hayes the 1876 election. When Arthur first offered him the post of Secretary of State, Frelinghuysen hesitated because of ill health, but once assured that the bulk of the policy decisions would rest of shoulders of the Assistant Secretary, career diplomat John Chandler Bancroft Davis, he agreed to accept it.²²³

Davis had served as assistant Secretary of State under Hamilton Fish, and later served on the American mission that arranged a settlement of the *Alabama* claims.²²⁴

²²³Doenecke, p. 128.

²²⁴Claude M Fuess, "Davis, John Chandler Bancroft" Dictionary of American Biography, Volume III, (New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1958), pp. 134-5.

Hamilton still had a great deal of influence over Davis, and was always suspicious of Blaine, so Davis waited anxiously for Blaine's term to expire and find out what kind of department he and Frelinghuysen would inherit.²²⁵

On December 20th, Frelinghuysen became Secretary of State, and promptly went on vacation. Davis, more concerned and more energetic than Frelinghuysen, immediately began examining Blaine's policies. What he learned greatly concerned him.²²⁶

Davis was not the only person concerned. As more and more of Blaine's foreign policy came to light, his enemies attacked him. One of these stated: "The more we learn of Mr. Blaine's performance during his occupation of the State Department, the less we see for regretting that his tenure of office was brief."²²⁷ Davis himself felt, "We were on the highway to war for the benefit of as nasty a set of people as ever gathered about a Washington Department."²²⁸ Frelinghuysen decided to act, and immediately began to repudiate Blaine's policies.

At about the same time as Frelinghuysen's decision to act, the entire affair was slowly becoming public. On December 11th, 1881, in an effort to prevent speculation in the press that the Hurlbut-Kilpatrick conflict was a result of contradictory statements from

²²⁵Pletcher, p. 79.

²²⁶William Sater, Chile and the United States: Empires in Conflict (Athens, Georgia University of Georgia Press, 1990), p. 44.

²²⁷H. Wayne Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968), p. 154.

²²⁸Herbert Millington. American Diplomacy and the War of the Pacific (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p. 120.

the State Department, Blaine released to the press the instructions he had sent to both men.²²⁹

The release of the instructions created many critics of Blaine's policies towards Chile. A few days later, Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont, a Republican senator and the Chair of the Senate Judiciary committee, called for the submission to the Senate of all diplomatic correspondence relating to the War of the Pacific.²³⁰ Edmunds was interested in the extension of American interests in Latin America, but had little love for Blaine.²³¹

As the Senate mulled over the documents, and the public read the instructions, more information was revealed concerning the Peruvian company, one of the many companies that claimed to have a share of the lucrative guano fields of Peru. Although it had no real connection to Blaine, the hint of scandal hit the newspapers, and Blaine revealed more correspondence in an effort to clear himself.²³²

As the public enjoyed the news, Frelinghuysen acted. Prompted by Davis, the two men met with Senator Edmunds. The three decided that all the documents dealing with

²²⁹Pletcher, p. 79.

²³⁰Congressional Record. Volume 13, Part 1 (47th Congress, 1st Session, December 5th 1881, to February 9th, 1882). P. 78

²³¹Russell Bastert, "Diplomatic Reversal: Frelinghuysen's Opposition to Blaine's Pan-American Policy in 1882" Mississippi Valley Historical Review (1955), p. 656. For information on Senator Edmunds, see pp. 24-7 of the Dictionary of American Biography "Edmunds, George Franklin" by William A Robinson. It is interesting to note that in the 1884 election Edmunds refused to campaign on Blaine's behalf.

²³²Bastert, p. 657.

the War of the Pacific should be turned over to Congress.²³³ Congress promptly published all the papers, which included Blaine's instructions to Trescot, and the latest despatch from Frelinghuysen to Trescot disavowing those instructions. While the State Department erupted with the scandal, and the papers published all the correspondence, Trescot continued on his way to Santiago, blissfully unaware that his own instructions had been reversed.

Frelinghuysen attempted to communicate the new instructions to Trescot via telegram. He sent two telegrams, one via Panama and the other directly to Santiago in an effort to prevent Trescot from fulfilling Blaine's instructions. The telegrams were short and to the point. In the first telegram, Frelinghuysen told Trescot to "exert pacific influence. Avoid any issue leading to your withdrawal from Chile."²³⁴ The next day, the Secretary of State sent another telegram to Panama, requesting that the consul there mail a letter to Santiago, which he hoped would arrive before Trescot. In this letter Frelinghuysen was even more direct:

President seeks to extend friendly offices impartially to both republics. Exert pacific influence. Avoid issues leading to offence. The Calderón affair and its surroundings can be attended to here.²³⁵

A few days later, Frelinghuysen sent Trescot a long despatch which explained his new role, and for a time it seemed that the sharp reversal of policy would be completed with minimal problems. Trescot received Frelinghuysen's telegrams upon his arrival in

²³³Pletcher, p. 79.

²³⁴Frelinghuysen to Trescot, January 3rd, 1882. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

²³⁵Frelinghuysen to Trescot, January 4th, 1882. RG 59, M77, Roll 36.

Santiago, and with his diplomatic experience, easily incorporated their instructions.²³⁶ Furthermore, Trescot realized upon his arrival that the “impression was that I was the bearer of a positive and imperious demand from the United States that Chile make an immediate peace upon such terms as my government deemed just and proper.” Trescot set out to clear up this misunderstanding during a reception held in his honor, and positive steps towards peace finally seemed to be occurring.²³⁷ Frelinghuysen’s attempt to return American foreign policy to its tradition roots of reactionism and non-interference seemed to have succeeded with minimal problems.

Then, everything collapsed in an incredibly short period of time. Once again, Hurlbut was at the heart of the problem. On January 26th, 1881, a bundle of American newspapers arrived in Santiago, revealing that the State Department had begun to publish the correspondence concerning the War of the Pacific. Aware of this, but not of how much correspondence had been revealed, Trescot learned that Hurlbut, without any authority, had given the invitation to Blaine’s American Conference to Peru. The next day Trescot presented Chile’s invitation to the Chilean foreign minister in an effort to prevent any offence.²³⁸

Unfortunately for Trescot, his instructions from Frelinghuysen withdrawing the invitations had not yet arrived, but had already been published by a Congress eager to fan the flames of controversy. The Chilean legation in Washington had read the about the

²³⁶Trescot to Frelinghuysen, January 13th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²³⁷Trescot to Frelinghuysen, January 13th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²³⁸Pletcher, p. 91.

withdrawal in the American newspapers and communicated it by telegram via Paris to Santiago. Thus Trescot was set up for a humiliating encounter with the Chilean foreign Minister, José Manuel Balmaceda.

As Trescot himself described it, Balmaceda told him, "It would, perhaps, be better not to deliver the invitations, as I have received telegraphic information that the government of the United States has abandoned this proposed conference." Trescot was understandably shocked and asked to withdraw and confirm Balmaceda's claims.²³⁹ Trescot did so, and then waited to receive his new instructions. They arrived only two days later. The timing of Hurlbut's indiscretion proved to be damaging. A few days later, and Trescot would have known of the change of policy and would not have tipped his hand to Balmaceda. "Throughout, the Secretary [Balmaceda] has assumed to be in possession of fuller and more accurate knowledge of the wishes and intentions of my government than I have received,"²⁴⁰ Trescot complained to Frelinghuysen, but there was no reason for it. Balmaceda could only have inferred Trescot's ignorance of his new instructions from the fact that Trescot had presented the invitation; otherwise Trescot could have carried out his new instructions without the Chilean government knowing about the temporary communication break down between the Secretary of State and his special envoy.

Trescot rallied gamely to the new situation. Finally informed by telegram that he was to give "counsel and aid to Chile in any negotiations which that country might desire

²³⁹Trescot to Frelinghuysen, February 3rd, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁴⁰Trescot to Frelinghuysen, February 24th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

to make", Trescot met with Balmaceda in an effort to accelerate the peace process.²⁴¹ He no sooner began to make progress, than events in the United States once again undermined his efforts.

At one of their meetings, Trescot and Balmaceda set down on paper, tentatively, what Chile desired from Peru for peace. It amounted to a \$20,000,000 indemnity payable in ten years, the occupation of Arica for that same length of time, becoming permanent if the indemnity was not paid, and the cession of Tarapacá.²⁴² Trescot sent this information by telegram to Frelinghuysen, who bound by House and Senate resolutions, promptly turned it over to Congress, which promptly published it.²⁴³

Events had trapped Frelinghuysen into making all the correspondence public as the debate over Blaine's Latin American policy intensified. At the time that Trescot sent his telegram, Blaine himself took the witness stand, adding more fuel to the fire. The debate raged through June of that year, further handicapping any attempts to achieve results in the peace process. Papers took opposite views, some supporting Blaine's actions, others condemning them.²⁴⁴ The Middlesburg Record applauded Blaine:

²⁴¹Trescot to Frelinghuysen, February 3rd, 1882 --- Frelinghuysen to Trescot. February 4th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁴²Trescot to Frelinghuysen, January 23rd, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.

²⁴³Bastert, p. 661.

²⁴⁴Pletcher, p. 81.

Mr. Blaine desired to see the autonomy of Peru preserved, because he felt it was in America's best interests to have it so. He was guided by motives of statesmanship and patriotism, and not by low and mercenary ones.²⁴⁵

The New York Times disagreed:

We thus see what a magnificent future the scheme of a protectorate of Peru would have opened up for us. It must be admitted that the conquest of a whole continent would have cost us a good deal of money and not a few lives and that ensuing War with united Europe would have involved further expense and trouble....immense fortunes that able contractors and astute politicians would make out of a series of prolonged wars...Nevertheless, all Americans anxious for excitement and Army contracts or ready to become Governors and subordinate officers of South American States will regret the timidity which had led Mr. Frelinghuysen to reverse the fearless policy of Mr. Blaine and to prefer the safer policy of minding our own business.²⁴⁶

The publication of Trescot's telegram, and with it the Chilean peace demands, had the effect of turning what had been tentative ideas open to some negotiation, into a firm unchangeable ultimatum. A disgusted Trescot telegraphed home, "No use in remaining here." and then further stated in a despatch sent the same day, "I trust that these instructions will also convey my recall."²⁴⁷ They did not, and a disappointed, not to mention virtually powerless, Trescot was forced to stay and report on the situation for another few months.²⁴⁸

In early March, Hurlbut had died, leaving the legations to Peru, Bolivia and Chile without ministers (Phelps had already been recalled) . Frelinghuysen decided to send new

²⁴⁵**Middleburg Record, May 4th, 1882**

²⁴⁶**New York Times, February 1st, 1882**

²⁴⁷**Trescot to Frelinghuysen, February 24th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 31.**

²⁴⁸**Frelinghuysen to Trescot, March 1st, 1882. RG 59, M77, Roll 37.**

ministers to fill the void as well as to try to restart negotiations and restore some of America's tarnished luster. This time the State Department did not send patronage appointments, but rather sent experienced diplomats who had served in South America before. Dr. Cornelius Logan went to Chile, James R. Partridge to Peru, and George Maney to Bolivia.²⁴⁹

Logan had previously served as minister to both Guatemala and Chile. Partridge had served as minister to Honduras, San Salvador, Venezuela and Brazil, although it is telling that he had never served at any one post for longer than a year, with the exception of San Salvador (three years). Finally Maney had served as minister to Colombia.²⁵⁰

As these new diplomats arrived at their posts, Trescot and Walker finally received their release and returned home.²⁵¹ To fill the leadership role that Trescot's return had left open, Frelinghuysen, realizing that Chile, not Peru, would control the outcome of the peace process, put Logan in charge.²⁵² Logan's instructions were to help negotiate a peace, but with the understanding that Chile was entitled to territorial cession. Logan was to attempt to persuade Chile to pay for the land she would annex from Peru, and to work closely with Partridge. Perhaps fearing another round of infighting amongst his ministers,

²⁴⁹Sater, p. 47.

²⁵⁰Millington, p. 129.

²⁵¹Frelinghuysen to Trescot, March 16th, 1882. RG 59, M77, Roll 37.

²⁵²Pletcher, p. 95.

Frelinghuysen informed Logan, "It is absolutely necessary that you and Mr. Partridge have a complete understanding with one another, and that you act in entire harmony."²⁵³

Frelinghuysen's instructions to Partridge and Maney were similar in composition. Partridge's instructions included bluntly telling Peru that she could no longer count on the support of the United States if she refused reasonable peace demands from Chile, while Maney's instructions were to assist Logan and Partridge with whatever they required.²⁵⁴

Soon after his arrival in Santiago, Logan met with Calderón to discuss various peace proposals. Logan finally made no fewer than seven peace proposals, of which Calderón rejected all but the last, which he would accept with certain provisions that the Chilean government would not accept.²⁵⁵ Frustrated, Logan ceased negotiating with Calderón, and not fully trusting Partridge, attempted to negotiate directly with Calderón's Vice-President, Admiral Lizardo Montero.

Logan sent an unofficial letter to Montero in which he bluntly told the Vice-President; "Further resistance on the part of the allies would seem to be entirely useless ." Logan further pointed out that it had cost the United States \$15,000,000 to buy California, New Mexico, and Texas from Mexico, and for a third less, Peru would be giving up a far smaller and less valuable track of land.²⁵⁶

²⁵³Frelinghuysen to Logan, June 26th, 1882. RG 59, M77, Roll 37.

²⁵⁴Millington, p. 130.

²⁵⁵Logan to Frelinghuysen, October 26th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 32.

²⁵⁶Logan to Frelinghuysen, December 13th, 1882. RG 59, M10, Roll 32.

Montero replied by letter that “the most natural and expeditious course in my view would be the discussion of the bases for peace with Señor Calderón, a prisoner in Santiago, and if he finds them acceptable, he can be restored to his country, when he would resume immediately the exercise of supreme power.”²⁵⁷ Essentially Logan was back where he started, trying to negotiate with Calderón. Except now, Partridge began to play a significant part in the negotiations.

Logan had begun to suspect that Partridge worked at cross-purposes with him. For this reason he bypassed Partridge and sent the letter directly to Montero. Unfortunately, the letter was leaked by a member of Logan’s staff and printed in total by the Panama Star and Herald. Its contents produced a storm of protests in Peru, and exasperated Partridge.²⁵⁸

Partridge sent off a secret letter to Calderón which advised him to ignore Logan and deal directly with the President of Chile.²⁵⁹ One is forced to wonder what it was about Peru that led successive American Ministers to stretch their instructions and support that country against their fellow Minister in Chile. Perhaps the drinking water contained some Peruvian version of Montezuma’s revenge which addled the mind. For whatever reason, Partridge now followed the path that both Christiarcy and Hurlbut had gone taken, and began to support the Peruvian government.

²⁵⁷Logan to Frelinghuysen, January 20th, 1883. RG 59, M10, Roll 32.

²⁵⁸Pletcher, p. 97.

²⁵⁹Millington, p. 132.

The latter's hopes for American intervention received a hard blow in the form of President Arthur's 1882 annual address to congress. Arthur reviewed the War and stated:

The power of Peru no longer extends over its whole territory, and in the event of our interference to dictate peace would need to be supplemented by the armies and navies of the United States. Such an interference would almost inevitably lead to the establishment of a protectorate, a result utterly at odds with our past policy, injurious to our interests and full of embarrassments for the future.²⁶⁰

A clear message had been sent.

The drama was not finished. American diplomacy was to suffer one more embarrassment before the War was finally to close. On January 16th, 1883, in an effort to save Peru from dismemberment, Partridge called a meeting of all foreign diplomats at his home. The representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy met and signed a resolution called the Tallenay Memorandum. The Tallenay Memorandum called for a cession of hostilities, declared that Peru should be saved from annihilation, destruction of neutral property should be checked, and if necessary, joint intervention should be undertaken.²⁶¹

Not only was this in violation of his instructions and of the stated U.S. policy in terms of the War of the Pacific, but the memorandum suggested a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Frelinghuysen immediately relieved and recalled Partridge. This move further drove home the amount of U.S. support Peru could expect.²⁶²

²⁶⁰Logan to Frelinghuysen, March 23rd, 1883. RG 59, M10, Roll 33.

²⁶¹Millington, p. 134.

²⁶²At the same time Maney, the American Minister to Bolivia was recalled due to financial mis-conduct. Sater, p. 48.

Not long thereafter, Logan discovered that Calderón had been double dealing. He had maintained a secret correspondence with Partridge, while Montero had offered to cede Arica and Tacna to Bolivia. Most tainting though was the discovery of the reason that Calderón had continued to insist on Chile assuming the debts of Peruvian companies if she acquired Tarapacá: Calderón was President of a nitrate company that had large holdings in Tarapacá. From this moment on, the peace process continued virtually free of American influence or interference.²⁶³

In fact, peace would finally be achieved through the actions of a completely new player in Peru's diplomatic scene. Miguel Iglesias was a career soldier whom the Chilean forces captured and later released after the Battle of Lima. A provincial leader, he convened a small congress which authorized him to seek a peace with Chile in the name of Peru. Calderón's public refusal to make peace drove public opinion towards Iglesias. The Chilean government ordered Admiral Lynch, still the head of Chilean forces in Peru, to support Iglesias. Iglesias and Santa María struck a tentative agreement, and all that remained was to unify Peru under the former's leadership. In July 1883, the Chilean army destroyed the last of the guerrillas at Huamachuco, leaving Iglesias with effective control over the whole of Peru. On October 20th, 1883, Chile and Peru, signed the Treaty of Ancón. A few months later, in April 1884, Bolivia formalized her peace ending the War of the Pacific.

Frelinghuysen's repudiation of Blaine's policies created an immense amount of controversy, but with opinion split equally in both support of and opposition to Blaine's

²⁶³Pletcher, p. 98.

policies, Frelinghuysen enjoyed a certain freedom of action. His return of American foreign relations to the traditional policy of non-interference and reactionism prevented America's relationship with Chile from deteriorating further. However, the damage was irreparable, and a return to the status quo ante was impossible. The worst of both worlds prevailed. Chile kept the territory she had seized and Chileans remembered that the U. S. government had once tried to stop them from doing so. There would be consequences for generations.

Conclusion

The peace treaty that the Chilean government signed with Peru had virtually no input from the United States, providing the greatest indication of the lack success of America's policy towards Chile during the War of the Pacific. During the War, the United States attempted to mediate the conflict, end the conflict, and finally soften the peace terms. In all three attempts, the United States failed. The failure of America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific can be traced back to the domestic politics of the United States, and it is this fact that is so often overlooked by historians who examine the War of the Pacific.

The chaos of American domestic politics during the late 1870s allowed William Evarts to become Secretary of State in 1877. Despite the unusual route that he took to head the Department of State, Evarts proved to be an excellent Secretary of State. He handled the initial crisis of the War of the Pacific with intelligence and patience, following the precedents set before him by his predecessors. He did not aggravate a situation in which there was no serious challenge to the Monroe Doctrine. He kept the European powers from interfering in the conflict, and offered to mediate the conflict if the belligerents desired such a mediation.

The sole failure of Evarts' policy, the Arica Conference, was the fault of bad timing and the bad judgment of the American Minister to Peru, neither of which Evarts could reasonably have prevented. Evarts realized early that the United States, with limited resources in, and little actual trade with the South Pacific coast of South America, could

interfere only minimally. For comparison, there were more than 4000 British subjects in Chile in 1875 and fewer than 1000 Americans.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, Evarts realized that because of the War's popularity in Chile, any interference by the United States would greatly alienate both the Chilean government and the Chilean people. With this knowledge Evarts capably maneuvered America's foreign relations with Chile and kept out of the public spotlight. Unfortunately for the United States, Evarts' successor, James G. Blaine, displayed none of the caution or knowledge of the situation that Evarts had.

The split in the Republican party that existed during the latter half of the 1870s and the first half of the 1880s, permitted Blaine's rise and contributed to his fall. Unlike Evarts, Blaine allowed himself to be motivated by the split, and made some of his most important and far reaching decisions concerning America's Chilean policy with his eyes on Washington D. C., not Santiago, Chile. Blaine designed his foreign policy as much for the political influence it would grant him in the 1884 American presidential elections (in which he hoped to be the Republican candidate) than as for the best interests of the State Department. For this reason he deviated American foreign policy from the tradition course of isolationism and reactionism.

Blaine's choices for the various ministries affected by the War demonstrated his lack of concern. The appointments of Hurlburt and Kilpatrick demonstrated that the positions were filled as if they were the unimportant patronage appointments that they had been previous to the War. If Blaine had had a grand vision of American foreign policy,

²⁶⁴Harold Blakemore, British Nitrates and Chilean Politics, 1886-1896: Balmaceda and North (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 11.

then appointments would have been filled by men of great ability. The actions of these Ministers would greatly complicate the situation. Yet Blaine did nothing, concerned as he was by the health of President Garfield, who had been shot and lay at death's door.

Blaine's lack of supervision of America's Chilean policy ended after the death of Garfield made clear to him that he would leave the State Department. Once again domestic politics interfered with the State Department, making the replacement of Blaine all but inevitable. Then Blaine, with less than a month until he was to be replaced by Frederick Frelinghuysen, initiated a radically change in American foreign policy. In a proactive move he decided to send a special envoy to Chile in hopes of forcing her to accept a peace settlement that was less damaging to Peru, which Chile had soundly defeated. Blaine hoped to force Chile to accept less favorable terms by threatening to cut diplomatic ties with the Chilean government and alluding to the possibility of pressure from a conference of the Americas that he had attempted to arrange. When Frelinghuysen learned of this new policy change, he immediately set out to repudiate it, limit its damage and return U. S. foreign policy to its traditional course.

Unfortunately for William Trescot, the special envoy appointed by Blaine to travel to Chile, the whole affair became public, as first Blaine and then the United States Congress published the diplomatic correspondence between Chile and the United States; American domestic politics once again played their part in determining America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific.

In a replay of the abortive Arica Conference, bad timing and the actions of America's Minister to Peru combined to lead Trescot into a humiliating diplomatic

exchange with the Chilean Foreign Minister, greatly reducing America's prestige and influence. Trescot returned to the United States having valiantly attempted to assist the course of peace, only to find his efforts constantly hampered by domestic politics.

After Trescot left, America's new Minister to Chile, Cornelius Logan, attempted to regain some of the influence lost and press for a better peace, but to no avail. Peace would finally come in the form of the Treaty of Ancón, a treaty that American diplomacy did far more to hamper than to actually see through. The treaty did little to normalize relations between the belligerents, and tensions continued through the 20th century.

Fears abounded during the rest of the 19th century that the Chilean navy could control the Pacific coast of America. Although not openly hostile to each other, the strained relations between Chile and the United States, and the latter's fear of the modern Chilean navy were at least one reason for the construction of the modern U. S. navy.²⁶⁵ In 1889, at the congress of American states, the lack of Chilean co-operation was a direct result of the War of the Pacific. In 1891, latent hostility to the United States over the War of the Pacific was at least partially responsible for a mob attack on American sailors who had been on shore leave in Valparaíso. Blaine, serving as Secretary of State for a different President, Benjamin Harrison, once again delivered an ultimatum that nearly led to War.²⁶⁶

During the World Wars, Chile's reluctance to side with the United States was

²⁶⁵William Sater, Chile and the United States (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990), P. 53.

²⁶⁶Mark Shulma, Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893 (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1995), p. 90.

influenced by lingering feelings from the War of the Pacific,²⁶⁷ and the issue of Bolivia's access to the Pacific ocean continues to haunt the Organization of American States. America's Chilean policy would end up have a high price tag for the results that it garnered.

To this day, events and personalities of the War continue to enjoy heroic status. Statues of Captain Artero Prat abound, and the *Huáscar* is a historical monument. Chileans continue to make pilgrimages to the *Huáscar* and in 1947, when Chile established a naval base in Antarctica to re-enforce her claim to sovereignty on that continent, it named the base after Prat.²⁶⁸

America's Chilean policy during the War of the Pacific was constantly at the mercy of American domestic politics, and the blame for its failure can be left there, and the extraordinary circumstances which surrounded America's domestic political scene during the 1870s and 1880s. For the United States, the War of the Pacific began with a whisper, ended with a whisper, but with much roaring in between.

²⁶⁷See Ricardo Coyoundjian. "En torno a la neutralidad de Chile durante la Primera Guerra Mundial" in Walter Sanchez and Teresa Pereira (eds.) Cientocincuenta Años de Política Exterior Chilena. Editorial Universitaria: Santiago, Chile, 1977. P. 180-205 and MAGIC Summary, No. 386, April 16th, 1943, Box 4. Record Group 457, College Park, Maryland.

²⁶⁸El Mercurio, February 16th, 1997.

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Appendix A

Chile Before and After the War of the Pacific

