

UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION:
THE STRETCH TOWARDS THE CARIBBEAN, 1860-1877

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of
Western Carolina University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for degree of Masters of Arts in American History.

By

Kyle Laurence Dreher

Thesis Director: Dr. Robert Hunt Ferguson
Assistant Professor
Department of History

Committee Members: Dr. Richard Starnes, Dr. Lily Balloffet,
Dr. Niall Michelsen

March 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Imperialism Question: U.S. Expansion during a Complex Period.....	13
Chapter Two: Emancipation and its Effects: The Unexpected Changes in Foreign Affairs.....	43
Chapter Three: Annexation Blocked: Conflicting Ideals of Emancipation and the Realignment of U.S. Diplomacy.....	67
Conclusion.....	91
Bibliography.....	101

ABSTRACT

UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION: THE STRETCH TOWARDS THE CARIBBEAN, 1860-1877

Kyle Laurence Dreher, M. A.

Western Carolina University (March 2017)

Director: Dr. Robert Hunt Ferguson

The U.S. Civil War as a domestic conflict, confined within the borders of the United States, has been exhaustively studied. Studies focusing on generals, specific battles, actions of militias, and politicians have all been the focus of historians of the Civil War. This thesis will explore U.S. foreign policy developments with the Dominican Republic during these periods. By studying foreign relations between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, this thesis will track the influence of emancipatory thought and imperialist impulses in U.S. foreign diplomacy. In order to delve into the foreign diplomacy of the U.S. during this period, the following question will be central to my analysis: how did imperialist ideology and emancipation fundamentally influence U.S. foreign affairs with Santo Domingo? This main question will allow me to address several secondary questions that further illuminate United States foreign relations with Santo Domingo during this period. How did the Civil War influence Santo Domingo and what caused the perceived need for U.S. intervention into the Caribbean? Why did the United States try to annex Santo Domingo during the Reconstruction period? Why did President Grant prefer a diplomatic route to acquiring the Dominican Republic rather than using military force? By answering these questions, this thesis will hope to prove that there is a connection between emancipatory thought and imperialism in

regards to U.S. diplomacy. Finally, the thesis will demonstrate that the events that transpired with the Dominican Republic show a distinct shift in U.S. diplomatic actions in this period.

INTRODUCTION

During his tenure as secretary of the Senate commission of inquiry to the island of Santo Domingo in 1871, Frederick Douglass was tasked with interviewing residents in regards to the possibility of U.S. annexation of the small Caribbean country. Douglass was directly appointed by President Grant to interview residents of Samaná Bay and explore the area, a locale inhabited predominantly by American expatriates. During his interviews, Douglass encountered a reverend who presided over the Methodist church in the area. Douglass, curious to understand if this resident had any pertinent information for his commission, approached the man and asked him a few questions. Rev. Jacob James, in response to a question on annexation, stated “the people generally are for it...When General Santana was in power we wanted it and hoped for it; but some objection to it would be raised then, because the United States was a slaveholding country.”¹ Rev. James continued, “but now the United States is a country of freedom. We all know that, and all want to join the United States.”² This interview, among many others, resonated with President Grant when he read the commission report.

President Grant, after consulting the report, wrote a general letter to the United States Senate to further encourage the cause of annexation. “My opinion remains unchanged,” proclaimed Grant, “indeed the report that the interests of our country and of San Domingo alike invite the annexation of that republic.”³ With his proclamation of acceptance, he passed along the report to the Senate, in his hope that annexation would swiftly come. To his dismay, this would not occur. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations did not receive this report as well as Grant, and quickly condemned it as a selfish attempt by the President to acquire new lands.

¹ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Report of the Commission on Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 42nd Cong., 1s sess., 1871, Ex. Doc. 9, 230.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 3

Foreign policy, throughout the history of the United States, has been a defining attribute of its national identity. Much of the actions of the United States abroad though have been driven by domestic interests and worries. During the years between 1861 and 1877, reasons for U.S. interests in Santo Domingo varied from economics, geo-political power issues, strategic naval bases, to the possibility of annexing the island nation as a U.S. state. Throughout this period, a tension grew between imperialistic tendencies and emancipationist thought within the U.S., and these tensions flowed into the United States' diplomatic relationship with Santo Domingo. Emancipation, which became one of the most important political moves for Abraham Lincoln during his tenure as president, reverberated throughout the Caribbean world.⁴ Ideas surrounding emancipatory thought were what drove key actions by the United States in the Caribbean

Providing a definition for the term emancipationist thought is a necessity, for it will be a term used throughout the entire thesis. The ideas and logic surrounding emancipation during the Civil War and Reconstruction offer insights into how the U.S. operated in an international realm. Therefore, the term emancipationist thought covers the ideologies of racial uplift that abolitionists subscribed to as well as the subsequent constitutional amendments that came in the wake of emancipation. Even though emancipationist thought opened avenues for increased access to democratic participation for many Americans, it also proved to have surprising—and sometimes unintended—negative effects on United States' foreign policy.

This period offers one of the most curious moments in U.S. foreign affairs with the nearly successful annexation of the Dominican Republic during the post-Civil War years. This imperialistic move by the United States seems out of place during a period in which the nation

⁴ Throughout this work, for reference, the terms “Santo Domingo” and “Dominican Republic” will be used interchangeably due to the many key figures and literature calling this nation by these specific names.

was busy trying to heal its wounds from a terribly costly war. The purpose of this thesis is to explore whether or not the emancipatory actions of the United States had an impeding effect on its imperialistic pushes into the Caribbean during and after the Civil War. Several ancillary questions will guide my analysis of how emancipation affected imperialism during this era. How much did emancipation effect U.S. imperialism during the period from 1861 through 1880? Why was the Dominican Republic such a contested issue facing the United States after the Civil War? If the United States as a nation was fundamentally changed during the Civil War and emancipation placed the nation amongst other abolitionist nations, then why did annexation of the Dominican Republic fail on multiple occasions? Emancipation and enfranchisement, of course, are only two issues of the vastly complex equation of foreign affairs. Issues of reconstruction and domestic problems such as racial violence that faced the United States after the Civil War warranted the immediate focus of the federal government. Although this does not help explain why many high level federal officials and politicians were enamored with gaining new territory. Questions such as the ones above will provide further framework for the investigation into the influence of emancipation and imperialism on U.S. relations with the Dominican Republic.

Much of the foreign affairs of the United States prior to the Civil War were focused on maintaining the ideals established by President James Monroe in 1823. The Monroe Doctrine stated that the Americas were closed to further colonization by European powers.⁵ With this being the predominant policy of the U.S. during the antebellum period, the Dominican Republic struggled with gaining its own independence from Spanish rule. It would not be until 1844, after many struggles and consistent fighting with both Spain and Haiti, that the Dominican Republic

⁵ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 13.

declared its independence. Throughout the period of 1844 through 1861, the United States did have some interaction with the Dominican government in regards to obtaining land for a naval base in the Samaná Bay. President Franklin Pierce in 1854 offered a treaty to Dominican President Pedro Santana to offer political recognition of the Dominican Republic as an international state and money for a tract of land in the Samaná Bay to be used as a U.S. naval base.⁶ This first intrusion into the Dominican Republic failed in Congress due to a stark anti-imperialist majority.

The year 1861 brought nothing but turmoil for both the United States and the Dominican Republic. With the secession of Southern states from the Union and the firing upon Fort Sumter, the U.S. Civil War became a reality. While the Civil War was just beginning, the Dominican Republic fell to recolonization by Spain. The recapture of the Dominican Republic by Spain during this period was criticized by newspapers as a direct violation of the Monroe Doctrine.⁷ The Monroe Doctrine dictated it was forbidden for any European powers to reclaim former colonies that had already succeeded in gaining their independence. Spain successfully reestablished the Dominican Republic as a protectorate in 1861 by a series of military occupations of major cities and by placing Spanish provincials into high ranking government offices.⁸ Due to Spanish cruelties and internal political rivalries, the Dominican Republic entered its own civil war between a pro-Spanish population and pro-independence populations. Once the Emancipation Proclamation was delivered in the U.S., the meanings of race and morality of both wars changed. Both the U.S. Civil War and the Dominican War of Restoration ended in 1865. Each war fundamentally altered the national identities of both their respective nations.

⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁷ “The Monroe Doctrine,” *Independent*, March 26, 1863.

⁸ Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires: Economic, Society, and Patterns of Political thought in The Hispanic Caribbean, 1840– 1878*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 162.

During the period after President Lincoln's assassination, the United States took on a much more expansionist outlook towards the Caribbean. President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William H. Seward looked to re-establish the United States as a strong nation amongst the European powers. Secretary Seward understood his desires to obtain more land for the United States, but in no way would he help place the United States into another war over land. Secretary Seward stated as early as 1846 after the Mexican-American War that, "I would not give one human life for all the continent that remains to be annexed."⁹ This was the exact stance he took while under President Johnson. As President Johnson looked towards the Caribbean as the next place for the United States to expand its influence, Secretary Seward's views on territorial acquisition transformed into policy. President Johnson would not succeed in obtaining the Samaná Bay from the Dominican Republic for the purpose of a naval station. With this failure, though, President Johnson still protested for the annexation of not only this bay but for the entire Dominican Republic. President Johnson's plans for annexation did not translate over to President Grant's administration, for President Grant had his own plans for annexation.

The largest and nearly successful push for annexation came during President Grant's administration. In 1869 President Grant, listening to President Johnson's call for annexation, looked towards the Dominican Republic for the purpose of incorporation into the union as a possible state. President Buenaventura Báez also communicated to President Grant's administration on multiple occasions that popular trend from within the Dominican Republic was for annexation. This call for annexation was so strong by Dominicans and by President Grant that Congress authorized a commission to travel to the island republic and investigate its capability of annexation. One of the commissioners sent was abolitionist Frederick Douglass,

⁹ Ernest N. Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 11.

who spoke with many former American colonists in the Samaná Bay area. Congress, to the regret of President Grant, voted against annexation and the imperialistic pushes by the United States into the Caribbean halted. For the rest of the Reconstruction period, the United States did not make any more moves towards annexation of the Dominican Republic.

These currents of emancipation and imperialism that flow through this period warrant further investigation and questioning. The project will expound upon the study of Eric T.L. Love's and Christopher Wilkins' conclusions regarding the complicated role emancipation played in U.S. diplomatic relationships. This project, however, will differ from previous studies by contending that annexation was acutely curtailed due to the conflict between emancipatory thought and racist ideologies. The intricacies of each position were expressly debated in the American Press, the United States Congress, and among public figures such as Frederick Douglass and Ulysses Grant. While the focus of the thesis will mainly center on American foreign policy, Santo Domingo's policies and diplomatic desires will also be an actor in this story. This thesis will additionally build upon the work of Merline Pitre, providing further study into Frederick Douglass' appeals for annexation. Also, this work will compliment Luis Martínez-Fernández's work by showing the Dominican Republic as an active actor in the foreign affairs of the Caribbean and the United States. Emancipation and imperialism often had opposing influences on U.S. diplomacy, and the foreign affairs with Santo Domingo provide a relevant case study that illuminates the tension present in U.S. foreign policy during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

The primary sources provide deep insights into the minds of the politicians and commissioners behind the annexation attempts of the Dominican Republic. The report of the commission of inquiry sent to the island of Santo Domingo provides vast amounts of raw

information about the nation, people, and resources. What makes this document the strongest in comparison to newspaper reports is the incorporation of numerous first hand testimonies of the Dominicans who were pro-annexation. If emancipation did not have any influence on the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs then why was Frederick Douglass, one of the more famous freedmen (who helped President Lincoln shape policies as well as challenged the system of slavery), sent to the Dominican Republic as a part of this commission? His testimonies and speeches about the Dominican Republic also speak of the effects of emancipation upon this island nation and the failed annexation. His undated speech entitled *Santo Domingo* criticized U.S. imperialism after the failure to annex the island and called Manifest Destiny nothing more than “Manifest National Piracy on behalf of the United States.”¹⁰ Other politicians within the United States on numerous occasions spoke out both for and against the expansion of the United States into the Caribbean, demonstrating the divided nature of the issue.

The diaries and papers of Secretary Seward, Secretary Hamilton Fish, Senator Charles Sumner, President Grant and the others further make the case for an investigation of emancipation’s influence on foreign policy. These documents provide some of the personal expectations and reasons for the expansion of the United States into the Caribbean. Some of those reasons range from commercial interests to projecting the United States as an international player. Newspapers and journal articles also provide multiple views, both for and against the annexation questions within the United States. These sources though, in one way or another, do point towards emancipation having a deterring influence on the decision-making process regarding foreign policy, specifically culminating with the failure to annex the Dominican Republic. This hampering influence is demonstrated by the conflicting definitions of

¹⁰ Frederick Douglass, “*Santo Domingo*”-Folder 1 of 5. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.28013/>, 3. (accessed August 17, 2016).

emancipation that senators invoked to further their arguments for or against annexation.

Annexation of the Dominican Republic was inherently undermined by arguments surrounding the extension of rights granted by the subsequent constitutional amendments that emancipation created.

The chapters that follow will explore a thematic examination of the events regarding foreign affairs of the United States with the Dominican Republic. Chapter one titled *The Imperialism Question: U.S. Expansion during a Complex Period* will explore United States expansion and policies during the period of the Civil War through Reconstruction. The Civil War drove the Union and Confederacy to not only fight a domestic war, but an international one as well. Many studies focus predominantly on the intricacies of the domestic war within the United States, while neglecting the international reach of the war. The Union pushed to counteract the Confederacy's quest for international recognition while trying to maintain the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine was clearly violated when Spain reclaimed the Dominican Republic, thus throwing the island nation into a state of war. Even with all of these forces going on, statesmen within the United States on both the Union and Confederate sides were planning for expansion outside the contiguous states.

With the ending of the Civil War brought Reconstruction and a need for the United States to repair itself both inside and out. The U.S. sought to heal the wounds of a formerly split nation. At the same time, advantageous politicians, businessmen and citizens sought to reestablish the United States as an international player. Reconstruction, from 1865 through 1877, brought the biggest push for territory outside of the United States. The Dominican Republic was the biggest target of U.S. imperialist expansion. President Johnson wanted to obtain a naval base and reestablish the Monroe Doctrine. President Grant wanted to annex the entire territory of the

Dominican Republic, with the slight hope that it would eventually lead to obtaining Haiti as well. All of these pushes eventually failed for multiple reasons.

Chapter two seeks to explore how emancipation fundamentally altered the United States as a nation and its approaches to foreign policy. Titled *Emancipation and its Effects: Changes to Foreign Policy*, this chapter will explore emancipation's effects outside of the United States. Once emancipation was announced in 1863, the stance of the United States against the institution of slavery became official. Many saw this as the United States aligning itself with the many other nations that had previously abolished it prior to the Civil War. Once both wars ended in 1865, the United States as previously mentioned gained a new expansionist fervor.

Emancipation, from the Dominican standpoint, meant that the United States was finally in tune with their own views. Politicians such as Secretary Seward and President Johnson were attuned to this. One of the key reasons for the rush to gain the Samaná Bay for the U.S. was the fact that there was a large population of former enslaved Americans who settled there during and prior to the Civil War. Those former Americans called for the Dominican Republic to not only relinquish this area of the island to the U.S. but possibly even allow the United States to annex the whole nation. During 1869 through 1872, the most vigorous pushes for annexation occurred with President Grant overseeing it. The commission that he helped organize found that the Dominican Republic was ready for annexation. Among the commissioners who traveled there was Frederick Douglass, who was specifically tasked with interviewing the former enslaved populations. What Douglass found was that emancipation resonated deeply with Dominicans who were pro-annexation to the United States, and this sentiment was reflected in their responses to his questions. As Rev. Jacob James explained to Frederick Douglass in his interview,

emancipation in the U.S. meant that slavery no longer existed, and the Dominican Republic could thus partake in the U.S. sense of freedom and democracy.

The last chapter of this work will make the connections between emancipation and imperialism. Titled *Annexation Blocked: Conflicting Ideals of Emancipation and the Realignment of U.S. Diplomacy*, the conflicting definitions of emancipation by multiple congressmen and how the debates over annexation further exacerbated issues regarding emancipation's legacy will be explored. No matter how gung-ho the Dominican Republic was for annexation, the United States ultimately had the final say in the decision. On numerous occasions, various politicians and newspapers condemned the push for annexation of the Dominican Republic. Numerous congressmen and influential writers condemned the annexation of the Dominican Republic on the issue of admitting a "Black nation" into the Union. While on the other hand, supporters stood by annexation with strong statements that followed the abolitionist logic that the island was inhabited by people worthy of the rights of any U.S. citizen. Senators such as Charles Sumner and various other abolitionists viewed predominantly Black nations that were already free to be enjoying the rights that the United States granted formerly enslaved African Americans post-emancipation. These senators' definitions of emancipation meant that the sovereignty of these nations must not be intruded upon by the imperialistic notions of U.S. expansion.

Frederick Douglass, in his many speeches and statements on the issue of annexation, placed emancipation as one of the main reasons why the U.S. should annex the Dominican Republic. Douglass saw the U.S. having the opportunity to be a strong abolitionist supporting nation in the international realm. He saw that the U.S. had the capacity to be a bastion of freedom that could be shared with other nations who were willing to partake in the United States'

expansionist fervor. Others saw the annexation of the Dominican Republic as a means to cope with the growing issues of racial violence sprouting from Reconstruction. President Grant in some cases referred to the Dominican Republic as a state that could serve as a relocation place for freedmen from the South, in order to quell the racial violence of the Ku Klux Klan. One way or another, emancipation had direct influence in the decision-making process of U.S. foreign policy. Imperialism was either directly, and in some cases indirectly, affected by emancipation/abolitionist thought.

The policies, commission reports, newspaper articles, speeches, congressional debates, letters and journal entries all point in the direction that emancipation negatively influenced the formation of U.S. foreign policy and relations in the Dominican Republic. The conflict that occurred over the definitions of emancipation and annexation (particularly between Frederick Douglass and Charles Sumner) provides an avenue to explore how emancipatory thought negatively affected annexation. Conflicting definitions of emancipation interfered with diplomacy in regards to the Dominican Republic during the annexation attempts. Each time that annexation was blocked, there was intense debate in Congress over issues surrounding extension of rights that were directly created from emancipation (the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments). There were also racial issues that congressmen attached to annexation that were rooted in emancipatory thought (i.e. admitting a nation made up of a population of predominantly African descent). After the major annexation pushes of the Dominican Republic failed, the call for annexation dropped off completely as a result of the votes against annexation in Congress in addition to President Grant refocusing his efforts towards Reconstruction. This period of U.S. imperialism as an experiment shows that the early expansionist ideologies failed for many complicated reasons. The majority of those reasons of course came from the domestic issues

within the United States rather than outside forces. No matter how strong the voices were from within the Dominican Republic for annexation, it boiled down to the complications posed by emancipation domestically that caused its failure.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE IMPERIALISM QUESTION: U.S. EXPANSION DURING A COMPLEX PERIOD

Not long after Frederick Douglass returned from collecting information in San Domingo, he gave several public remarks pushing the case for annexation. “The patriotic and intelligent citizens of Santo Domingo,” declared Douglass, “in seeking to become part of a large, strong, and growing nation—only obey the proud organizing impulse of the age.”¹¹ Douglass further offered the logical rationalization of the pro-annexationist Dominicans to want to be part of the United States after the Civil War. According to Douglass, “they know it is better for their country to be part of a great whole, than the whole of a small part.”¹² In speaking on behalf of the Dominicans in favor of annexation, Douglass worked to portray them as worthy of American annexation during the Reconstruction era. Expansionist fervor displayed by Douglass appeared misplaced for this moment in history. The period of the Civil War and Reconstruction had many curious events take place that, which seem particularly enigmatic for the period.

The movements of the United States to expand outside its own boundaries comes across as incongruous in a period consumed by internal war and, eventually, attempts at national reconciliation. The incongruity in this event is not that it laid outside of the United States’ imperialist designs for the Caribbean, but rather incongruous for era and the context of emancipation. In the years before the Civil War, the U.S. looked to the Caribbean to expand influence and hopefully procure land in an attempt to advance national interests. If the United States was in the process of dealing with a breakdown within the federal government, the possibility of armed conflict between the states, then how could they possibly look outward to gain more territory? Why was the idea of gaining new territory even a possibility for the United

¹¹ Frederick Douglass, *Santo Domingo*, undated, 50.

¹² *Ibid.*

States? Even after fighting internally and competing internationally against foreign intervention, how could the United States still have interest to expand? Would not the focus be predominantly on repairing and rebuilding the nation as Reconstruction intended? How did the island nation of Santo Domingo play into this complex period? Throughout this chapter, the imperialistic moves by the United States through the period of 1861 through 1877 will be explored. By providing historical analysis of the actions the United States took to acquire the Dominican Republic, this chapter will set up the trajectory for the rest of this thesis in regards to how emancipatory thought (the ideas and constitutional amendments surrounding African American freedom) played an intricate role in hindering diplomatic decision making.

Before 1861 and the first shots of the Civil War, a brief definition of terminology is in order. The term *imperialism* will be used throughout this work on multiple occasions. Historian Timothy H. Parsons offers a definition for imperialism in his work on the British Empire. In *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*, Parsons writes that “the word ‘imperialism’ was first used...to describe the process by which a state either acquired formal jurisdiction over another people or gained substantial informal influence over their political, economic and social affairs.”¹³ For the purpose of this study, the use of imperialism or imperialistic tendencies will follow that definition. In addition to the definition of imperialism provided above, the idea of regional hegemony will also need to be explored. The idea of a hegemonic state is understood as a nation who aspires to be the leading country in that region, and impose its will upon other nations around it.¹⁴ By doing so, that nation creates a sphere of influence in the region that allows for a sense of security from any nation competing for leadership within the same region.

¹³ Timothy H. Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A World History Perspective* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 2.

¹⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 40.

Imperialism and hegemony come to a head in this period, as the United States reconciled its international reputation amongst other powerful nations and extended its influence into the Caribbean.

Congressmen and influential figures of the period preferred to use the word expansion under the guise of Manifest Destiny in order to justify territorial expansion, rather than the title of American Imperialism. Historian Daniel Walker Howe further elaborates on this point in his work *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. “‘Manifest destiny’ served as both a label and a justification for policies,” writes Howe, “that might otherwise have simply been called American expansionism or imperialism.”¹⁵ The United States’ public openly welcomed the idea of extending its influence across the continent if it was spreading freedom, liberty, and prosperity. This ideology was not tied to the North American continent singularly, for Manifest Destiny throughout the antebellum period and after the Civil War was interpreted internationally as well. The Civil War put a pause to the expansionist fervor of the 1840s and 50s, and this rush for land would not be reignited until wars’ end.

Years of domestic tension and political intransigence culminated on the 12th of April, 1861. The issues of states’ rights versus the federal government’s extension of power, the extension of slavery into new territories, the election of President Lincoln and the rise of the Republican Party, all came to a head with the firing upon the small federal garrison at Fort Sumter.¹⁶ Stephanie McCurry writes “the Upper South impasse—between Unionists and unreconciled secessionists, between United States and Confederate States—was finally

¹⁵ Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 703.

¹⁶ Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 32.

broken.”¹⁷ Once this occurred, the Union and Confederacy quickly drew their lines and began plans that would lead the nation on a track towards its bloodiest struggle. The Civil War was not merely a domestic war. The Civil War’s reach was far and wide, which drew the attention of many nations that had close ties to the United States before the war. For the Union and the Confederacy, in order to achieve victory over the other, both sides waged diplomatic battles to gain strategic support.

For the Union, President Lincoln faced a difficult scenario. In order to secure victory for the Union, and maintain legitimacy with other European powers such as Great Britain and France, President Lincoln and his Secretary of State William Henry Seward opted to initiate a blockade around the Confederacy. The Anaconda Plan, brainchild of General Winfield Scott, called for a naval blockade around the entirety of the coast of the South while encircling the Mississippi River.¹⁸ In addition to the implementation of the blockade, Lincoln and Seward had to combat the diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy by the British and French. These issues would become immediate problems for the Union, and the diplomats tasked with executing its success.

The struggle to keep recognition of the Confederacy from occurring would be the paramount issue the Union faced internationally. Early in 1861, Secretary Seward sent a message to the British and the French, warning them “that any form of interference in the American conflict meant war with the Union.”¹⁹ By providing this warning, the hope was that any interference from either of the European nations would be negated. This warning only worked

¹⁷ Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 68.

¹⁸ William H. Roberts, *Civil War Ironclads: The U.S. Navy and Industrial Mobilization* (Baltimore, MA: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002.), 10.

¹⁹ Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 23.

for a brief amount of time. By enacting a blockade of the South, the Union inadvertently created a dilemma with the British who were the target of Confederate diplomats to provide them with international recognition early on. According to an exchange between British Minister Richard B. Lyons and Secretary Seward, the blockade meant that the South was in fact a legitimate nation. Lyons would state in countering a point by Seward on southern independence that, “if they are not independent then the President’s proclamation of blockade is not binding. A blockade, according to the definition of the convention, applies only to two nations at war.”²⁰ Throughout the course of the war, the Union, on various occasions, would have to justify itself for its actions that were received negatively.

Since the founding of the Confederate States of America, it had been devoted to the idea of gaining international recognition. They believed that they would be able to leverage negotiations to help their cause with Europe from their production and necessity of cotton. King Cotton diplomacy was at the heart of President Jefferson Davis’ foreign affairs. According to his wife, Varina Davis, “foreign recognition was looked forward as an assured fact...the stringency of the English cotton market, and the suspension of the manufactories, to send up a ground-swell from the English operatives, that would compel recognition.”²¹ With this focus towards the British, the Confederacy also tailored unique diplomatic ties with other foreign nations in the hopes that recognition would come from one. The Confederacy’s policies with Spain would represent a complete change in course from that of the era before the Civil War. The issues of the filibusters prior to the Civil War were left behind.

The filibusters of the Antebellum period represented a group of American citizens who were exerting their own private force against Latin American nations, in the attempt to gain more

²⁰ Richard B. Lyons to Secretary Seward, quoted in Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 41.

²¹ V.H. Davis speaking about President Jefferson Davis, *Ibid.*, 13.

territory for the United States. As historian Robert E. May bluntly concludes, “U.S. filibusters engaged in criminal behavior.”²² The filibusters during the Antebellum period were groups of American men who were openly active in creating their own private militaries in the hopes of invading and overturning foreign governments. These were highly illegal acts and as May states, sovereign states “must stop persons from using their jurisdictions to mount expeditions against the territory of countries with which their own nations are at peace.”²³ Filibuster activity reached its height during the Antebellum period, in which there were numerous campaigns lead by individual groups of American citizens against Latin American nations, with the hope to gain new territory for the United States via a highly illegal practice.

What the filibusters represented to the South prior to the Civil War was the desire to obtain new lands outside of the United States in the hopes of circumventing the outcomes of the Compromise of 1850. In addition to this backlash to the Compromise of 1850, this encroachment into the Caribbean by the United States was the first real move of imperialism that the Caribbean faced during the prelude to the Civil War. With the admission of California into the Union as a free state, the southern population felt that the sectional balance of slavery was disrupted.²⁴ In order to repair this imbalance, Southern congressmen turned to Narciso Lopez, who led expeditions in 1850 and 1851 to Cuba in order to overthrow the Spanish rule. Lopez’s expeditions were meant to help secure the island of Cuba for southern planter elites looking for more land to extend their cotton empires in addition to extending the institution of slavery. The filibusters, as Luis Martínez-Fernández writes, were vehemently protested and denounced by the

²² Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 7.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires: Economic, Society, and Patterns of Political thought in The Hispanic Caribbean, 1840– 1878*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 23.

Whig party, specifically President Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore. President Taylor declared that there would be “harsh punishments” for those who participated in the underhanded movements against a friendly and sovereign nation.²⁵ The filibuster actions of the South during the 1850s were still in the minds of Spanish officials during the Civil War, which Confederate officials became extremely amiable towards. The rationale for this flip-flop in the treatment of Spain by Confederate officials was due to Spain’s maintenance of slavery as a nation and the Confederacy’s need for international recognition.

In regards to trying to obtain recognition from Spain, the Confederacy became extremely amenable towards Spanish ministers and representatives of the crown. On July 22, 1861, Confederate Secretary of State Robert Toombs wrote a diplomatic letter to the Confederate envoy Charles Helms in Cuba stating that “if you should discover that any apprehension exists in the minds of the people of a design on the part of this government to attempt the acquisition of that island [Cuba] in any manner, whether by purchase or otherwise, you will leave no efforts untried to remove such erroneous belief. It is the policy of the Government of the Confederate states that Cuba shall continue to be a colonial possession of Spain.”²⁶ It would not take long for Spain to capitalize on this demeanor, in which the Dominican Republic was retaken as a protectorate under Spain. To further push the issues of recognition in 1863, just two years after Spain reclaimed the Dominican Republic, Charles Helms wrote a confidential dispatch to the Spanish Minister of State Francisco Serrano stating that “now the interests of the South requires a slave power in Europe to cooperate with her in the protection of the peculiar institution of the Confederate States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo.”²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., 25.

²⁶ Robert Toombs to Charles Helms, Ibid., 159.

²⁷ Charles Helms to Francisco Serrano, Ibid., 159.

In order to garner support from Spain in a moment of crisis, the South was willing to put aside old territorial expansionist dreams for the hopes of gaining an ally in the Civil War. The Confederate States were in no position to claim new slave territories while they were fighting a war against the Union. This episode also demonstrates how the Confederacy showed blatant disregard for the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine stated that the Americas were closed to further colonization by European powers.²⁸ By allowing Spain to reclaim Santo Domingo as a territory of its own, the Confederacy singlehandedly disavowed the Monroe Doctrine and nullified it. The Union would not be able to uphold this doctrine during the period with its naval fleet busy with blockading the South and engaging the Confederacy in combat.

Another curious incident involving the Confederacy giving away the rights of the island nations of Santo Domingo to a colonial power occurred in France a year earlier. According to Howard Jones, in an 1862 meeting with Napoleon III of France, Confederate diplomat John Slidell sought “a closer relationship between the Confederacy and France.” In order to gain a closer relationship with France, as Jones eludes, “Slidell asserted that his government in Richmond would not object to French reoccupation of Santo Domingo.”²⁹ While offering certain land concessions to certain European countries, the Confederate States tried different means to garner international recognition. With Britain, the Confederate States offered to lower trade costs of cotton to gain recognition by Great Britain. Both land concessions in the general area of America and better trade opportunities were aimed towards Europe in the hope that the Confederacy would gain recognition from at least one European power.

²⁸ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 13.

²⁹ Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 259.

The Union did not respond to Spain's invasion of the Dominican Republic's sovereignty at all. A frantic letter that was sent from the U.S. consulate from the city of St. Domingo on the 22nd of March, 1861 depicts the worry and surprising nature in which the consular witnessed Spanish recapture. The consular wrote, "Sir, I have to inform you that on the 18th of this present month, the flag of this Dominican Republic has been hauled down, and that of Spain substituted in its place. This part of the Island formerly called the Dominican Republic is now a province of Spain and consequently under her dominion."³⁰ Seward would have difficulty in persuading Lincoln to take notice of the issue of Spain recapturing the Caribbean island. It would not be until February 2, 1864, that Lincoln would hear a Black minister from the island plea for help fighting the Spanish forces. In response to the plea, Lincoln stated to the elderly man in front of his cabinet that "I am not disposed to take any new trouble, just at this time, and shall neither go for Spain or the Negro in this matter, but shall take for the woods."³¹ This would leave the Dominican Republic to fend for itself in its struggle for reclaiming independence from Spain.

President Santana made quick work to paint Spain's retaking of the island in a positive manner. In an article from the *Daily National Intelligencer* published in April of 1861, Santana provided a positive picture of Spanish dominion. According to Santana, "she gives us the civil liberty which her people enjoy; she guaranties us natural liberty, and removes forever the possibility of losing it. In a word, she brings peace to this worn out soil, and with peace its consequent blessings."³² Presenting Spain as a peaceful and maternal nation was Santana's way of easing the Dominican populous. Public opinion was completely contrary to what Santana was

³⁰ Letter from U.S. Consul in Santo Domingo to Secretary Seward March 22, 1861, National Archives and Records Administration, Despatches From U.S. Consuls in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1837-1906.

³¹ Jay Monaghan, *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers: Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: Charter Books, 1945), 352.

³² "Transfer of St. Domingo to Spain," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington DC), April 13, 1861.

trying to provide. The Dominican Republic's population outside of Santana's inner circle lived in depraved conditions, which sparked the attention of United States' newspapers.

Newspaper correspondents gained word of the deplorable conditions in which the Spanish retaking of the island occurred and published the accounts in numerous articles. The *New York Times* published an article not long after the Spanish retaking of the island. According to a *NYT* article from July 11, 1861, titled *News from St. Domingo*, "from all this the public will see that the statements which have been made to the effect that it is the desire of the Dominicans themselves to have their country reincorporated with the Spanish monarchy, are utterly false. The people have been most cruelly betrayed by Santana."³³ Public opinion in the United States, according to the *New York Times* article, was completely negative. Union opinion of Spain's inherent violation of the Dominican Republic's sovereignty was indefensible. To understand the true extent in which the Dominican Republic's population reacted to the Spanish retaking of the island, the exploration of the Dominican War of Restoration is necessary.

The Dominican War of Restoration began in 1861, with small pockets of rebel insurrection in towns around the island. Factions of rebels existed prior to the onset of the war in secluded areas outside of the Dominican Republic. According to Martínez-Fernández, "opponents to Dominican annexation (by Spain), some whom in exile for many years in St. Thomas and Curacao, began to conspire against the Spanish government."³⁴ Baecista exiles in Curacao came together under José María Cabral to form the Revolutionary Party of Dominican Regeneration. Organized under this revolutionary political party, violence against Spain became normalized. Once their forces organized, they moved from the Haitian boarder towards the East, gaining small victories at a time and reclaiming towns under the Dominican independence

³³ "News from St. Domingo," *New York Times*, July 11, 1861.

³⁴ Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires*, 218.

movement. One key point that Martínez-Fernández makes in regards to the War of Restoration was that not only did it take part at the exact same time that the American Civil War was going on, but it took the shape of an antislavery, anti-European movement.³⁵ The importance of this was praised in the North of the United States because the Emancipation Proclamation had officially made the Civil War a war against the institution of slavery. Both the Dominican Republic's war to reestablish its independence and the Civil War were closely related in cause and relatable to both populations.

The height of fighting between Dominicans and Spaniards came in 1863. With rebellious forces coming close to ending Spain's reign on the island, they appointed General José Salcedo as president of their provisional government. According to G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, "The provisional government then attempted to come to terms with Spain, to the consternation of certain Dominican generals."³⁶ This attempt to reconcile with the Spanish government led to the assassination of General Salcedo. It would take only two more years for the Spanish government in Spain proper to realize it could not maintain its footing and control of the island. On May 3, 1865, "The Spanish Cortes annulled the annexation, and Queen Isabella ordered the withdrawal of Spanish troops. Dominicans thus realized their national independence for the third time."³⁷ The fighting ended and thus the time for repairing the island nation had come.

Similarly, the ending of the Civil War in 1865 brought with it a multitude of new opportunities as well as rehashing of older issues that had predated the war. The issues of European intrusion into the Caribbean left a sour taste in the mouths of the U.S. public. With

³⁵ Ibid., 219.

³⁶ Atkins and Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States*, 19-20.

³⁷ Ibid. 20.

Spain interjecting itself into the Dominican Republic in order to create an old world colonial state, the Monroe Doctrine had been violated. In essence, the Monroe Doctrine in the 1820s was the United States first true attempt at regional hegemony. By stating that no European nation could enter the Western Hemisphere searching to procure a holding of land to start a colony, the United States was beginning to flex its muscles as a power player in international politics. During the Civil War however, the exact opposite had occurred. According to Jay Monaghan, “three generations of Americans had expanded from the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific, acquiring territory after territory claimed by European powers, profiting continually from European wars and jealousies. The game of power politics was now to be played the other way. With America at war, Europe had intended to do what America had always done. She would profit by American turmoil.”³⁸ The idea that the United States was weak during the Civil War was exploited quickly by Spain, in their retaking of the Dominican Republic.

Newspapers and journals during the Civil War actively critiqued the issues that faced the Monroe Doctrine. An article published in *The Independent: Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies* on March 26, 1863 demonstrated the issue. In trying to explain the Monroe Doctrine, the article stated that “American territory is no longer open for the formation of new colonies by European powers. This virtually covers and ought to have prevented the recolonization of Santo Domingo by Spain.”³⁹ This was not a new point, but this ideology was still popular amongst the American populous. The next point that is more telling in the article is its combination of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny rhetoric. According to the article, the Monroe Doctrine protected against the “manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States, for any European power to interfere with any American

³⁸ Monaghan, *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*, 46-47.

³⁹ “The Monroe Doctrine,” *Independent*, March 26, 1863.

government for the purposes of oppressing it or controlling in any other manner their destiny.”⁴⁰ By tying the Monroe Doctrine to Manifest Destiny, the article places the duty of expansion and protection of the Caribbean, for instance, in the destiny of American citizens.

To further support the claim of tying the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny together, the newspaper article concludes with a curious statement. The article states that “we boldly appeal to the self-respect of the people of the United States, to the memory of the fathers and the hopes of the children of the Republic, against the degrading assumption. And we make the distinct issue, that the Monroe Doctrine is in full life, that it is vital to the honor of the United States, and that it must be maintained in its entirety at every hazard and against all the world—in arms, if need be.”⁴¹ Even though this is extremely inflammatory writing, seeking to gain a rise out of the American populous, it proves how important the Monroe Doctrine was to the general population. To this newspaper, and for its readers, the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny (the ability to go and make whatever they could out of the American land) was translated into the Monroe Doctrine. It was the duty and destiny for America to spread across the continent as well as the Caribbean, without any intrusion by European colonial powers.

The year 1865 brought a renewed burning desire for expansion as the United States aimed to reestablish its international power politics that it once practiced proudly. For Secretary William Seward as well as President Andrew Johnson, reinstating the Monroe Doctrine was paramount. Both Seward and Johnson wanted to rectify the European intrusion into the Caribbean and western hemisphere. Atkins and Wilson state that “Seward was primarily concerned with restoring the Monroe Doctrine after the damage it had suffered during the Civil War. To this end, he sought to acquire a Caribbean naval base to deter European expansion in the

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

region.”⁴² Under the direction of Secretary Seward, this would become the primary focus of President Johnson in the Caribbean. The means through which the United States would claim this naval base in the Caribbean would be left to Seward’s discretion. Here is where the influences of the filibusters of the 1850s returned, and prove to be a defining force not only in how the Dominican Republic was approached by the U.S., but also how the U.S. went about trying to obtain land there.

Cuba was not the only target of the filibusters during the 1850s. The filibusters were groups of individuals that would set out of the United States with a certain goal in mind. For Southern filibusters, they wanted to further the cause of slavery, while northern filibusters took on a more industrial outlook to enacting changes in other countries. Filibusters from the south had at one point in time discussed taking action against the Dominican Republic. There was one large problem of course that halted this idea in its tracks. According to Martínez-Fernández, “the activities of the North American filibusters were not directed against the Dominican Republic, however, mainly because slavery had been abolished there and because, in their view, it had an unacceptable majority of free Blacks and mulattoes.”⁴³ With the majority of filibuster actions during the period originating from the southern port city of New Orleans, and their ideals focused on the extension of the institution of slavery, the Dominican Republic was incompatible with supporting southern slave society. Thus, the Dominican Republic was open to different varieties of influence that made it a distinctly unique actor within the Caribbean. The way in which the United States also went about handling affairs with the Dominican Republic showed a unique twist within its own society.

⁴² Atkins and Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States*, 22.

⁴³ Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires*, 28.

Sectional differences in the United States during the 1850s permeated politics outside of the U.S. greatly. As Martínez-Fernández writes, “These differences were neatly paralleled in the origins of consular representatives deployed to the region. Whereas most U.S. consuls and consular agents in Cuba were southerners, many of them plantation owners, those serving in the Dominican Republic were predominantly Northeast-based speculators linked to commercial and shipping interests.”⁴⁴ Charles Helms, a southerner and slave owner, was the U.S. consular to Cuba in the years leading up to the Civil War. For the Dominican Republic, William Cazneau, a northern commercial businessman, would become the consul there for the war years and many more after. These overtones from the antebellum period and Civil War become crucial to understanding how the policies of expansion played out after the war concluded. The sectional issues only continued after the war, and expressed themselves through the multiple attempts to annex the Dominican Republic.

President Andrew Johnson began the movement towards expanding into the Caribbean in 1867. In his Third Annual Message to the United States public and Congress, Johnson made comments towards Caribbean expansion as if it was inevitable. Johnson stated that:

“In our recent civil war the rebels and their piratical and blockade running allies found facilities in the same ports for the work, which they too successfully accomplished, of injuring and devastating the commerce which we are now engaged in rebuilding. We labored especially under this disadvantage, that European steam vessels employed by our enemies found friendly shelter, protection, and supplies in West Indian ports, while our naval operations were necessarily carried on from our own distant shores. There was then a universal feeling of the want of an advanced naval outpost between the Atlantic coast and Europe.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁵ Andrew Johnson: "Third Annual Message," December 3, 1867. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29508>. (accessed October 12, 2016).

Due to the lack of a naval base in the West Indies, the United States was placed at a disadvantage during the Civil War. President Johnson's expectation was to correct the folly of not having naval bases in the Caribbean by expanding there post haste. He further stated that "with the possession of such a station by the United States, neither we nor any other American nation need longer apprehend injury or offense from any transatlantic enemy. I agree with our early statesmen that the West Indies will naturally gravitate to, and may be expected ultimately to be absorbed by, the continental States."⁴⁶ These statements were radically different from the experiences from the Caribbean in the 1850s. Rather than place a single base in the Caribbean and rent it from the Dominican Republic, Johnson sought to create an avenue to potential statehood for the nation while preserving American interests.

President Johnson was clearly attuned to the outward appearances of the United States after the Civil War. In this one address, President Johnson meant to transform the United States into a hegemonic political powerhouse internationally. To back up these claims of needing to expand the U.S. realm of influence, the outward military strength of the U.S. was easily recognized. The U.S. Navy, for example had undergone the largest modernization project in its history during the Civil War. Boasting the largest iron clad navy in the world, every European navy was deemed obsolete to the superior armor and firepower capabilities of the United States. To further secure the advancement of United States interests in the region, President Johnson realized that the necessity for a strategic base in the Caribbean was extremely important. This naval base was not only to maintain his vast navy, but also to enforce the Monroe Doctrine that up until then was disregarded by Spain, France and Great Britain. France, during the Civil War, had capitalized on the American conflict by intervening into Mexico to obtain new territory.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Great Britain was on the verge of violating the Monroe Doctrine during the Civil War, by vowing that it would intervene if necessary.

Formal diplomatic ties and negotiations for the Caribbean port did not begin until a year later in 1868. President Johnson stated in his annual message on December 9, 1868 that, "I am satisfied that the time has arrived when even so direct a proceeding as a proposition for an annexation of the two Republics of the island of St. Domingo would not only receive the consent of the people interested, but would also give satisfaction to all other foreign nations."⁴⁷ The intended target in which President Johnson was aimed to obtain was the area of the Samaná Bay in the Dominican Republic for the purpose of his naval base. Secretary Seward was in concert with this statement, for it was he that during a tour of the Caribbean in 1866 stated that "there are in the world a few isolated points whose possession enables the power that holds them to control trade, and to direct naval and military operations with especial advantage."⁴⁸ Seward would be more inclined to the benefits of trade from the annexation of Santo Domingo, but regardless he supported it. The planning and treaty drafting commenced rapidly with the government of the Dominican Republic.

During the winter of 1868, Secretary Seward's son, Frederick Seward, and Admiral David D. Porter sailed to the Dominican Republic in order to secure a treaty for the Samaná Bay. According to their instructions, they were to "seek sovereignty of Samaná Bay or a second option of a thirty-year lease in exchange for one million dollars in cash and one million dollars in

⁴⁷ Andrew Johnson: "Fourth Annual Message," December 9, 1868. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29509>. (accessed October 12, 2016).

⁴⁸ William Henry Seward to his father, January 1866. Cited in Ernest N. Paolino, *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 125.

arms.”⁴⁹ The first option would be the more acceptable of the two options. President Buenaventura Báez, now serving his third term as President over the island nation, received the second option better than the first. During this period, the Dominican Republic was in a state of unrest due to issues of legitimacy of Báez’s presidency. Báez wanted to accept the money and arms so that he could have had better weaponry to dismiss the supposed rebellion against his government.⁵⁰ In a *New York Times* article from 1869 titled “St. Domingo: Visit of English and French Capitalists—The Annexation Proposition,” it seemed the idea of taking the island was surprisingly popular within the U.S. The article stated “that portion of President Johnson’s message in which he treats of the annexation of Santo Domingo to the United States, has been received here with the liveliest satisfaction. It is regarded by all parties as the only peaceful solution of possible existing difficulties.”⁵¹ Thus the overall anticipation was a success.

To the dismay of both President Johnson and Seward, the proposed taking of Samaná Bay failed. According to Martínez-Fernández, the “reluctance of Congress to support the imperial pretensions of the administration was not simply a desire to sabotage its designs. This reticence had its roots in the antebellum views of influential northeastern abolitionists such as Sumner, William Cullen Bryant, John Bigelow, and Horace Greeley.”⁵² These men as well as many other congressmen shot down the treaty and the annexation of the Samaná Bay was forestalled for another time. What Martínez-Fernández posits about the northeastern abolitionists opens further intrigue into why the attempt failed. “The radical opposition viewed these Caribbean societies,” writes Martínez-Fernández, “as free black states in which the United States

⁴⁹ Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires*, 165.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ “St. Domingo: Visit of English and French Capitalists--the Annexation Proposition,” *New York Times*, February 2, 1869.

⁵² *Ibid.*

should not interfere.”⁵³ This opposition does not come as a surprise after the recent war years and the preexisting issues with Reconstruction. Competing ideals on expansion and U.S. imperialism were clear, and would not be settled with the failure of the Dominican annexation at this point. President Johnson would be impeached during 1868, but would remain in office for the duration of his term to 1869.

Ulysses S. Grant would take up the arduous job of President of the U.S. and continue to push for expansion into the Caribbean. General for the Union army during the Civil War, President Grant would quickly renew the interests in claiming the Dominican Republic for the United States. Such as before, his reasoning mimicked that of President Johnson before him. During his first year as president, he rapidly set to work on a treaty with the Dominican Republic. Helping his cause, the *New York Times* published an article on April 30, 1870 with the results of a vote from within the Dominican Republic. According to the article, “we learn from J.W. Currier the Dominican Consul-General at this port, that M. Fabens, the new Minister Plenipotentiary from Santo Domingo brings the recent election returns on the annexation question complete...the acts contain 15,119 signatures for annexation to 110 against. This is the largest that has been cast in the Republic for twenty-six years.”⁵⁴ With this amount of public support from within the Dominican Republic itself, the hope of Grant was that it would help persuade the Senate to adopt any treaty that would come up.

The physical treaty that was brought in front of the Senate was subjected to debate and scrutinized for needing amendments. The original stipulations of the treaty called for the United States to absorb the public debt of the island, which totaled roughly \$1.5 million. This amount would also provide enough money to institute a territorial government once the Dominican debts

⁵³ Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires*, 165.

⁵⁴ “The San Domingo Vote,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1870.

were settled. In addition to this, the Dominican Republic would be under the protection of the U.S. government indefinitely, and the appointment of territorial legislators would rapidly follow.

⁵⁵ President Grant wrote in a letter to the Senate on May 31, 1870 that “I feel an unusual anxiety for the ratification of this treaty because I believe it will rebound greatly to the glory of the two countries interested, to civilization, and to the extirpation of the institution of slavery.”⁵⁶

President Grant was personally invested in the success of this treaty. He would further make the case in this letter to persuade the Senate to adopt the treaty in full.

On top of citing the apparent success that both the Dominican Republic as well as the United States would gain from this treaty, President Grant worked to make an emotional plea to the Senate. In the same letter Grant wrote that “the people of St. Domingo are not capable of maintaining themselves in their present condition, and must look for outside support. They yearn for the protection of our free institutions and laws, our progress and civilization.”⁵⁷ By painting a stark figure of a weak nation beckoning to be part of the United States, Grant hoped to sway senators in favor of moving the ratification process forward. It also speaks volumes that Grant, in this letter, does not make it sound like the U.S. would be an aggressor consuming a weaker nation. By stating that the Dominican populous wanted to participate in American luxuries of government, it hid the imperialistic aspects of annexation.

The following month, the treaty drafted by the Dominican Republic for annexation on the terms laid out in President Grant’s letter came before the Senate. On June 30, 1870, the Senate called a vote for ratification of the treaty. With a vote of 28 to 28, the treaty of annexation failed

⁵⁵ John Y. Simon, ed., *November 1, 1869-October 31, 1870*, vol. 20 of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), 154.

⁵⁶ Letter from Grant to Senate, May 31, 1870. Cited in John Y. Simon, ed., *November 1, 1869-October 31, 1870*, vol. 20 of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 154.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

to get the sufficient two-thirds vote.⁵⁸ The treaty lay dead on the Senate floor and the annexation push in 1870 had come to an end. President Grant was extremely disappointed in this failure by the Senate to annex a willing nation in the Caribbean. President Grant wrote to President Báez of Santo Domingo that “it is with extreme regret that I inform you of the failure of the treaty for the annexation of San Domingo to the United States. I had hoped a different result. I believe now that if the subject was submitted to a popular vote of the people, it would carry by an overwhelming majority.”⁵⁹ With the failure of this treaty quickly behind him, Grant began paving a way for a renewed push toward obtaining the Dominican Republic.

In order to garner the support needed for a new treaty, President Grant ordered a commission to be sent to the island to establish proof that Dominicans wanted U.S. annexation. Grant appointed Frederick Douglass to the commission in an attempt to not only garner African American support of annexation, but to show the Black population of Dominicans that the U.S. was a land of equal opportunity and representation under the constitution. Douglass, as he sailed out on board the *U.S.S. Tennessee*, documented his travel to Santo Domingo. “By rare opportunity for which I need not here account,” wrote Douglass, “this voyage was made in an American war vessel bound on an errand of peace.”⁶⁰ After two days of sailing from Port-au-Prince, the ship was in sight of the city of Santo Domingo. “There it stood,” exclaimed Douglass, “the hoary sentinel of our western world; the crested surf rolling up in great billows and breaking at its feet, from the rocks above rose the old walls and fortress and the ‘House of Columbus,’ as

⁵⁸ The rejected treaty is listed on the U.S. Senate website cited here “U.S. Senate: Treaties,” <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm> (accessed October 13, 2016).

⁵⁹ Letter from President Grant to President Báez, July 7th, 1870. Cited in John Y. Simon, ed., *November 1, 1869-October 31, 1870*, vol. 20 of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 188.

⁶⁰ Frederick Douglass, *Around the Island of Santo Domingo*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1871), 1.

the ruins of the palace of Diego Columbus are called.”⁶¹ The immense beauty and history that the commission encountered as they sailed into the port was staggering for Douglass. Though the natural beauty would be deeply documented in their report, Douglass and the other commissioners took detailed notes on how this nation would be incorporated into the United States.

In accordance with a resolution passed on January 12, 1871, the organization of a commission requested by President Grant was executed in order to ascertain the viability of annexing the Dominican Republic. The Commission was comprised of senators as well as other dignitaries appointed by Grant. The President of the commission was Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, who chose commissioners Andrew D. White and Samuel G. Howe as his subsequent advisors.⁶² Special guests included diplomats such as Frederick Douglass, who was specifically chosen to speak to the Black population of U.S. expatriates who resided in the Samaná Bay area. From the 24th of January 1871 through 26th of March, 1871, the commission traveled around the island investigating all the aspects of life. It became quickly evident to the commissioners that the island was ripe for the taking by the United States. Wade wrote that “to the surprise of the commission, in almost all parts of the country, even the remotest, the people were found to be familiar with the question of annexation to the United States, and have discussed it among themselves with intelligence.”⁶³ Wade further wrote that “everywhere there was a general agreement in the declaration that their only hope of permanent peace and prosperity is

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Report of the Commission on Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 42nd Cong., 1s sess., 1871, Ex. Doc. 9, 36.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11.

annexation to and becoming part of the people of the United States.”⁶⁴ The Dominican people were ready for annexation, and showed prescient understanding of what it could mean for them.

The commission would not only be looking towards the local people for information and resources to aid in their investigation. On February 2, 1871, the commission gained an audience with President Báez, in which they delivered a letter from President Grant explaining the purpose of the commission. Grant had declared that he had “appointed three distinguished citizens of the United States...opening to them the world of letters, as commissioners to visit the Republic of San Domingo, and to obtain the information called for by the resolution.”⁶⁵ Commissioners Wade, White, and Howe, upon delivering this message to President Báez, received a pleasant response and hopeful comments. President Báez responded to the commissioners stating that “I understand that your mission, ordered by the Congress of the United States, is one of absolute peace. This is the aspiration and object of this republic. One of the principal causes that have brought about the present negotiations is the strong desire of our people for the pacification of their country, the development of its resources, and a guarantee for the existence of liberty and prosperity of the citizens.”⁶⁶ President Báez provided the commission with the response that they were hoping for. Thus after this meeting, the commission began work on assessing the population and environment of the Dominican Republic in order to gain enough evidence to support American annexation.

In regards to the preservation of the Monroe Doctrine, General Franz Sigel commented on the military importance of Santo Domingo. According to General Sigel, “it would be almost an impossibility for European powers to send large transport fleets across the ocean, *in the face*

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 41.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

of our whole eastern coast, whence expeditions and cruisers could be started to attack them and to interrupt their communication with Europe or Canada.”⁶⁷ Sigel full well knew the importance of having this island as a deterrent of European intrusion. Sigel concluded this section by stating that “to compete on a grand scale with the United States in the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean Sea, no European power would have a sufficient base of resources in their West Indian possessions...foreign powers will very naturally shrink from military interference hereafter in American affairs.”⁶⁸ Sigel was completely sure that the annexation of the Dominican Republic would be a success. For if it was not a success, the European powers, as he pointed out, would not be in check or restricted by the United States into the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

Other commissioners who were appointed to the expedition were ordered to assess the land and mineral wealth of the nation. Wade stated that “the resources of the country are vast and various, and its products may be increased with scarcely any other limit that the labor expended upon them. There is evidence of mineral wealth in various parts of the island.”⁶⁹ Minerals such as iron, gold, copper, lignite, rock-salt, and petroleum were all in abundance in accordance to the geological report that was provided in the commission’s report to the Senate. The availability of resources such as these, which were not known to the U.S. prior to this investigation could be lucrative if the U.S. were to expand to the island. Mineral wealth was one more reason provided by the commission for the United States to annex the Dominican Republic.

President Grant, upon receiving the commission report and reviewing it, wrote a personal letter to the United States Senate. Grant’s letter was attached to the top of the document for other senators to consider before they investigated the report. Grant wrote “it will be observed that this

⁶⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15.

report more than sustains all that I have heretofore said in regard to the productiveness and healthfulness of the Republic of San Domingo, of the unanimity of the people for annexation to the United States, and their peaceable character.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, “in view of the facts which had been laid before me, and with an earnest desire to maintain the ‘Monroe Doctrine,’ I believed that I would be derelict in my duty if I did not take measures to ascertain the exact wish of the Government and inhabitants of the Republic of San Domingo in regard to annexation.”⁷¹ In order to press the need for annexation President Grant would once again bring up his personal commitment. By working to continuously justify the imperialistic motivations of obtaining the island, Grant harkened to the disparities of poor living and working conditions in which the native Dominicans would undergo if annexation did not occur.

Among the various pieces of information that the commission was sent to obtain, personal accounts from the native population of the Dominican Republic were the primary evidence for supporting annexation. In an interview conducted by Commissioner Wade of Edmund De Vare, he asked, “Do you know the feeling of the people in regard to Annexation?” De Vare promptly replied, “Yes, all the men who love tranquility and order desire it; all the people in the interior desire it.” Wade then asked the follow up question, “Do the black men of Santo Domingo desire annexation as much as white men?” De Vare’s response was “Yes, just the same.”⁷² Other interviews confirmed these answers. In an interview by Frederick Douglass of Mr. William M. Gabb, annexation was confirmed as a necessity. Gabb explained that “the feeling in favor of annexation to the United States seems to be unanimous. They say it is the only salvation for the country...there will be no more disturbances; that the vagabond chiefs and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁷¹ Ibid., 2.

⁷² Ibid., 214.

Haytians will be quiet, and they thank god for the chance to live again.”⁷³ These types of answers confirmed the necessity of annexation within the investigation conducted by the commission. For the Dominican residents, the United States was a beacon of hope for a safer, politically stable, and prosperous nation. In the event of successful annexation, all the notions of what the United States meant to them would become a reality.

In order to provide a more emotional plea to Congress, President Grant offered his own view of internal obstructions if annexation would not go through. According to Grant, “I felt that if I turned a deaf ear to this appeal I might, in the future, be justly charged with a flagrant neglect of the public interests and an utter disregard of the welfare of a down-trodden race praying for the blessings of a free and strong government, and for protection in the enjoyment of the fruits of their own industry.”⁷⁴ If U.S. imperialism was going to uplift the country, and the paternalistic nature of the U.S. was going to protect it, Grant would surely be first to take credit for it. If the commission report described the Dominican population as strong, healthy, able bodied people, then why did Grant keep referring to them as “under-trodden?” An answer for this could have been his need to create an emotional and political appeal for annexation within the Senate. There would be no purpose other than economic gains in annexation if the people of the Dominican Republic were fine and healthy. Thus, the issues of them being down-trodden would only help the emotional case for uplifting the island with annexation as well as providing a paternalistic and racial approach to diplomacy with a struggling nation.

Just as before with the previous attempts at annexation, opposition would quickly arise and shut down the attempt to take the island nation for the United States. Charles Sumner would once again be the oppositional force against annexation. A *New York Times* article on March 30,

⁷³ Ibid., 234.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2.

1871, made quick work of showing Sumner's ignorance in comparing American annexation to that of Spanish annexation during the Civil War. The article posits that Sumner said, "In the act of reannexation the Dominicans were spontaneous, free, and unanimous—that no Spanish emissaries were in the territory to influence its people; nor was there a Spanish bottom in its waters or a Spanish soldier on its land."⁷⁵ In his ignorance of what occurred in past relations of the island, Sumner made rash comments which were not only false, but helped strengthen rhetoric for annexation. According to the article, "it would be idle to presume the comparison between the results of the Spanish occupation of San Domingo, and what may reasonably be expected from its annexation to the United States. There is a difference between freedom and despotism, between the life-giving vigor of our young Republic, and the benumbing influences of the effete old Monarchy of Spain."⁷⁶ Articles such as this not only provide insight into the public opinion on the matter, but the issues in which each side raised in the annexation situation.

Yet again, the annexation attempt by the United States to obtain the Dominican failed. This time, the annexation push by President Grant and Secretary of State Hamilton Fish did not even make it to the floor of the Senate. No formal treaty was drafted and it did not garner enough positive attention to do so. Grant would not write a conciliatory letter to President Báez apologizing for the failure of any attempt at annexation of the nation. The issues that were going on in the nation during Reconstruction were vastly more important than the need to incorporate a new territory into the U.S. It would prove hard for the incorporation of a predominantly Black nation into the U.S. during the heightened racialized violence that occurred during the era. Talk of annexation would still come up from time to time in newspaper articles, even a passing ad

⁷⁵ "A Fragment of History," *New York Times*, March 30, 1871.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

welcoming American immigrants to the Dominican Republic as late as 1875.⁷⁷ But as for the formal push for annexation, that was a dead letter by the end of 1871.

The issue of race and imperialism provide a key insight into the issues that surrounded the annexation attempt. Historian Eric T. L. Love gives explanation to the relationship of race to expansionism during this period. “Race informed assumptions at every stage,” stated Love, “According to popular belief, tradition, and history, expansion assumed a predictable course: new, contiguous territories would be occupied, settled and improved by whites, most likely Protestant and northern European stock. In a period of time, the new territories would organize politically, and after achieving a prerequisite self-government, they would approach the United States voluntarily and request admission into the Union.”⁷⁸ Racialized ideology that permeated members of Congress helped curb expansion into the Dominican Republic. By placing white ideals of expansion at the heart of imperialism and racializing those who could promote civilization, U.S. senators blocked the annexation attempt. These racialized arguments will be further explored through the second and third chapters.

During the Civil War, the United States was put on unfamiliar ground in regards to international affairs and diplomacy. With the splitting of the nation into the Union and Confederacy, the challenge of upholding the Monroe Doctrine was far too complex for Union or Confederacy to institute effectively. For the Union and President Lincoln, it was absolutely paramount to prevent the Confederacy from gaining international recognition as a legitimate state. For the Confederacy, gaining international recognition was a primary diplomatic goal at all costs. The Confederacy would prove to use any means necessary to gain recognition from any European power. From Charles Helm’s request to Spain for help in the Caribbean and openly

⁷⁷ “Immigration to Santo Domingo,” *New York Times*, June 24, 1875.

⁷⁸ Eric T.L. Love, *Race over Empire*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 20-21.

welcoming the European power to retake its old colonial belonging, to John Slidell offering the Dominican Republic to France as a bargaining chip for recognition, the Confederacy challenged the idea of the Monroe Doctrine and U.S. supremacy in the Western Hemisphere. It can be equally said that by establishing a blockade, the Union ultimately helped the Confederacy by acknowledging it as a hostile actor internationally. In addition to doing this, the Union had no resources to keep European powers out of the Caribbean. Thus, imperialism on behalf of the United States during the Civil War was virtually nonexistent.

The filibusters of the 1850s would prove to be a formidable force in defining international interactions. With the filibuster actions towards Cuba, the southern planter elite ideology was at the forefront of political actions. For the Dominican Republic at this time, it would be free of any type of influence from the filibuster conundrums. Filibuster inaction towards the Dominican Republic was due to the nation's predominantly free Black population. This resulted in much more northern intervention into the Dominican Republic after the Civil War had concluded. After Spain relinquished its hold on the island, the Dominican Republic was open for U.S. expansion. President Johnson and Secretary Seward saw this as a defining moment for reestablishing the Monroe Doctrine. If the U.S. could take this defenseless island nation, place a naval base in it, and monitor the Caribbean, it would act as a corrective measure to many issues faced during the Civil War. In addition to this, this annexation would be a hegemonic move by the U.S., trying to establish dominance in a seemingly un-dominated region.

The failure of this first annexation attempt in 1869 did not fall on deaf ears. After the impeachment of President Johnson, President Grant took up the movement towards annexation and Caribbean intervention. With his first formal attempt at annexation in 1870, the treaty made it to the floor of the Senate. In exchange for paying the debts in full of the Dominican Republic,

and providing protection, the U.S. would gain it as a territory and be able to place a naval base in Samaná Bay. This treaty did not meet the expectations of senators and resulted in a 28-28 vote rejecting annexation. The same issues would arise in 1871, when President Grant and his commission to the island fell far shorter of its intended purpose. The 1871 annexation attempt was not even formalized into a treaty and did not receive a vote in Congress for the drafting of such. With this, the imperialistic push by the U.S. outward into the Caribbean came to a grinding halt. This failure would be used as an example of how not to conduct an annexation attempt in future Caribbean interactions.

The imperialistic pushes into the Caribbean show a deeper issue that was continuously intertwined with each attempt at annexation. The issue of emancipation and race prove to be inseparable in the annexation attempts of the Dominican Republic. If it was not direct diplomatic issues holding annexation back, it was a domestic struggle with race within the U.S. that drove the failure of annexation. Historian Frederick Merk poses a fitting question in his work: “is it not likely that racism, prior to the war with Spain, was a deterrent to imperialism rather than a stimulant of it?”⁷⁹ This question posed by Merk hits directly at the central issue with the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in the Caribbean during this period. As the annexation of the Dominican Republic ended in the early 1870s, a rise in racist ideology towards the region permeated congressmen who would be key in future expansionist schemes. In the next chapter, the issue of emancipation and its role in the diplomacy of the period will be explored and the events of this period will further contextualize the annexation debate.

⁷⁹ Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 247.

CHAPTER TWO: EMANCIPATION AND ITS EFFECTS: THE UNEXPECTED CHANGES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On the twenty-second day of September, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln delivered one of the most controversial proclamations that changed the ways the United States would fundamentally function. “On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three,” proclaimed Lincoln, “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”⁸⁰ Lincoln issued this proclamation with great eloquence, and further dictated that “the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.”⁸¹ In stating these governmental edicts, Lincoln set in motion the means by which the United States would conduct itself domestically and abroad.

The Emancipation Proclamation, first issued in 1862 and then officially recognized in 1863, would mark the beginning of a new era in U.S. diplomatic relations. By starting the process of rejecting slavery in its entirety, finalized by the 13th Amendment in 1865, the federal government would join other nations such as Great Britain in abolishing the institution. In doing so, the Union placed the Confederacy in an awkward position both domestically and abroad. The U.S. diplomats tasked with keeping the European powers out of the conflict gained one extra piece of leverage, allowing them to take the moral high ground against the failing cause of the Confederacy. In addition to undermining its cause, the Confederacy gained new anxieties of not

⁸⁰ Abraham Lincoln, “The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863,” National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation>, 1. (accessed December 1, 2016).

⁸¹ Ibid.

only seeing the institution of slavery crumbling underneath itself, but also the possibility of other Black nations gaining representation within the U.S. government. The idea of incorporating predominantly Black populations into the United States meant that the white supremacist cause of the South would be lost.

Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation set in motion the creation of new amendments to the U.S. constitution. The most prominent and pertinent to change how the United States conducted foreign diplomacy was the addition of the thirteenth amendment. Approved by Congress on February 1, 1865, section one of the article stated that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States subject to their jurisdiction."⁸² Once this amendment was ratified, the official abolition of slavery was complete within the United States. Diplomats abroad would therefore abide by the new additions to the Constitution, as well as any new territory that would be granted entrance into the Union. This action quickly garnered attention from the island nations in the Caribbean. How the U.S. treated these nations undeniably changed due to the addition of the new legislation.

The changes in U.S. diplomacy were almost immediate after the Emancipation Proclamation. United States diplomats around the world worked under a newly formed emancipatory agenda (continuing to further promote ideas of equality and freedom to undermine slavery) in which the federal government became attuned. For the relations between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, the exchanges in diplomatic correspondences ramped up rapidly after the issuance of the proclamation. Even further, the talks of annexation were hinted at once the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were ratified. U.S. congressmen and diplomats

⁸² Resolution 11, Movement to Amend the U.S. Constitution, *Statutes at Large*, 38th Congress, 2nd Session, Feb. 1, 1865, 567.

quickly recognized that if the U.S. wanted to expand its influence abroad, especially with the new rhetoric of emancipation in their back pocket, they could work quickly to form a new imperialistic identity for the U.S.

Emancipatory ideals within the United States fostered, at the beginning, a positive expansionist rhetoric abroad. The Dominican Republic, for example, was one of the nations who were ready to be a part of the United States, and the U.S. was receptive to this. But as time progressed, and the negotiations between the Dominican Republic and the U.S. degraded. Emancipationist thought, no matter how positive it truly was, did not have enough positive momentum on foreign policy. How did the United States handle emancipation abroad? What did European diplomats and leaders think about the U.S. issuing Emancipation? How did U.S. congressmen respond to the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic? And finally, why did emancipation quickly undermine the attempt by the U.S. to stretch its imperialist arms around the Dominican Republic and its population? Answers to these questions will illuminate how emancipationist thought affected U.S. imperialism in a turbulent time.

From the onset of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln realized that slavery resided at the center of the struggle between North and South. Once Lincoln was officially elected in 1861, his administration would also find that slavery would be the root of the struggle.⁸³ In his inaugural address on March 4, 1861, President Lincoln stated “one section of our country believes slavery is ‘right; and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is ‘wrong’ and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.”⁸⁴ Slavery, as Lincoln saw it, was the catalyst that

⁸³ Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 29.

⁸⁴ Abraham Lincoln: "Inaugural Address," March 4, 1861. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25818>. (accessed December 1, 2016).

caused the dispute between the states. Lincoln, speaking to the whole of the nation for maintaining the union, further stated that “physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this.”⁸⁵ Speaking as a devout unionist, Lincoln completely believed that the Union of states must be preserved, while noting that the institution of slavery was the Union’s immediate danger.

The sectional crisis between North and South quickly devolved into all-out war by April of 1861 with the firing upon Fort Sumter by the Confederate States of America. With the war effort in full swing by 1862, President Lincoln was faced with an issue of man power. One of the primary reasons for the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was for an influx of fresh troops in the Union military. Lincoln and his cabinet hoped that the issuance of the proclamation would not only act as a war measure, but as a means to influence foreign affairs. Lincoln “had adopted an antislavery posture in part to prevent outside interference in the war.”⁸⁶ The hope for a fresh influx of troops into the ranks of the Union military, as well as the approval of European powers for the proclamation were what drove Lincoln to issue the proclamation. One of the other hopes which Lincoln had was that the proclamation would undermine the Confederacy’s slave holding republic and break their war effort.

Lincoln and the Republican Party made it obvious to the rest of the world that slavery was the root of the Civil War. As a result, the Proclamation had far reaching effects and ramifications abroad in Europe that the Union did not calculate. Just prior to the issuance of the Proclamation, U.S. newspapers had grown suspicious and anxious of foreign intervention into

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 234.

the war. According to an article from the *Chicago Tribune*, “the New York *Dallies* which had correspondents in Europe, repeatedly announced that we might expect to hear of the recognition of the Southern Confederacy, and foreign intervention by the next steamer. The language of European officials seemed studiously frigid.”⁸⁷ This signaled a change in French and British diplomats who were previously planning on intervention in the sectional conflict. In combination to the stark picture of European affairs prior to the Proclamation, the article further expounded upon the reaction of Europeans after the Proclamation was issued. The article affirms “the immense gatherings of masses, over Great Britain, to endorse and applaud the Proclamation; the eloquent orations for the Union, delivered by the most popular orators of Europe; the scathing invectives against negro slavery, in the public journals—all go to prove that the President sounded a blast, to which popular heart of Europe beats in joyful response.”⁸⁸ British issues with the Proclamation were two fold. First popularity spanning Britain for the Proclamation was in direct opposition to the views of British diplomats and officials. Concurrently, British diplomats actively disregarded the popular opinion of their population and continued down a path towards recognition of the Confederacy.

What the Emancipation Proclamation did to British diplomats was unforeseen, as the British officials could not take any immediate action against the Union for emancipation. Lincoln and Seward hoped that the Proclamation would effectively halt any attempts by Britain to intervene in the Civil War. Seward was wise to have President Lincoln issue the Proclamation after the military victory at Antietam, but it was not enough of a decisive victory to keep Britain out of the war.⁸⁹ According to Howard Jones, the battle of Antietam and the Emancipation

⁸⁷ “The Emancipation Proclamation,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1863, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 234

Proclamation did not stop the British movement toward intervention; rather, they only slowed down a process that once again got under way.⁹⁰ Diplomats such as Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell were both key officials in the British parliament tasked with planning a course of action towards intervention. Palmerston preferred to wait a few days after the proclamation to make any decisions to intervene while Russel wanted to take immediate action. Jones further writes that “even as the mutual manslaughter at Antietam had heightened British interest in intervention, the lack of clear-cut victory had deeply divided the government over when to take action.”⁹¹ Each of the leading British officials had reasons for or against intervention, but this complication within their cabinet would create a delay in action.

For Lord Russell, intervention needed to happen as soon as possible. Lord Palmerston, another leading official in the British cabinet, was against immediate intervention with regards to causing further fissures with the Union. Chancellor Gladstone was in tune with Russell, hoping to intervene as soon as possible, “citing both humanitarian and economic reasons.”⁹² All three men had their quarrels with intervention, but the British prime minister had his own concerns. According to Jones, “the prime minister did not believe the Confederacy had earned nationhood status on the battlefield and feared that premature intervention would make his own government a virtual ally of the Confederacy and cause war with the Union.”⁹³ For this reason, as well as the popular reception of the Proclamation, the British government remained in a stalemate internally. The Proclamation did serve one of its purposes as a wartime measure. The Proclamation complicated the reasons for British intervention into the Civil War, as well as helped table the proposition of recognition.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 235.

⁹¹ Ibid., 235-36.

⁹² Ibid., 236.

⁹³ Ibid.

The Union had dodged a massive altercation with Great Britain once the Proclamation added a moral element to the war. Once Lincoln delivered the announcement that slaves were emancipated in the states in rebellion, the war took on a moralistic tendency. Civilians in the North were joyed to see that the abolitionist cause was finally official within the federal government. British citizens outside of their government applauded the Proclamation.⁹⁴ They were thrilled that the Union had finally adopted a moral cause towards abolishing slavery, as Britain did three decades before. For the British cabinet members, they disregarded the Proclamation as an inflammatory move by the Union to incite race rebellions within the South. The leaders of the confederacy would have to grapple with the issues surrounding emancipation rapidly, and address the possibility of abolition expanding further than the Confederacy.

For the Confederacy, the Emancipation Proclamation meant that slavery and the southern lifestyle was under direct assault by the federal government. President Jefferson Davis would have to make quick work to assure that the southern way of life (planter aristocracy) would persevere. Early on, the fears of slave insurrections within the Confederacy were clear, as the memory of the revolt in Haiti was still fresh in the memories of many Southern planters and congressmen.⁹⁵ In response to the idea of Republican aggression against the South, Governor Madison S. Perry of Florida said, “our fate will be that of the whites in Santo Domingo.”⁹⁶ This meant that the reality of slave insurrection was real, and that if Republican congressmen, as well as President Lincoln, were to make any motion towards emancipation, then a slave rebellion would become a reality. President Davis made it extremely clear that he detested the thought of emancipation and proceeded to voice his disdain in the Confederate Congress.

⁹⁴ “The Emancipation Proclamation,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1863, 2.

⁹⁵ Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 31.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

In a congressional hearing in the Confederacy, President Davis voiced his concern and dismay over the Emancipation Proclamation. In January of 1863, Davis stated in a speech that “President Lincoln has sought to convert the South into a San Domingo by appealing to the cupidity, lusts, ambition, and ferocity of the slave.”⁹⁷ Davis’ rhetoric was meant to undermine the legality of President Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. Davis also purposely invoked the images and figures such as Touissant L’Overture to describe Union officers leading slaves against the confederate government. Interesting enough, it was not only Confederate officials who employed the image of the Black leader to Union officers, but Union officers used the image as well. Stephanie McCurry writes that “Union officials invoked it to summon slaves to protect the Union government against planters in rebellion against its authority and sovereignty.”⁹⁸ The entirety of the war as well as the introduction of emancipation created a vector for slaves to express their new found support for the Union. President Lincoln and his officers had hoped to gain the support of slaves within Union-held areas after the Proclamation.

Once the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, the Confederate cause was at a loss to maintain legitimacy amongst its European hopeful allies. Jones writes that the “Confederacy’s failure to win a decisive battle left the Union not only to reject mediation, but also take the field against any nation interfering in American affairs.”⁹⁹ According to Secretary Seward, “the insurrectionists prefer common ruin, a complete chaos, to any composition whatever that could be made under any auspices...a conflict between universal freedom and universal slavery.”¹⁰⁰ The Confederacy was bent on maintaining a deplorable institution at the expense of human lives. While Union diplomats maintained this narrative across Europe, the Confederacy was

⁹⁷ Jefferson Davis to Senate and House representatives, cited in McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 258.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁹⁹ Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 233.

¹⁰⁰ Speech of Secretary Seward, cited in Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 246.

maintaining its position of King Cotton diplomacy. The continuous ideology that the cotton trade would be the reason for European recognition fell short of its goal. Great Britain was far more calculating than to rely completely on Southern cotton crops. With Britain's ability to gain cotton from India, the reliance on southern cotton was growing smaller and smaller. Once the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, the economic ties to the south began to fade. Great Britain had more ties to both the North and South through its selling of arms to both sides. According to Donald, Baker and Holt, "To the extent that economic elements determined British policy, in sum, the balance of these forces tilted toward the North. By 1863 cotton diplomacy had failed."¹⁰¹ Thus the Confederacy's attempts at recognition and aid ended. Emancipation had dealt an extreme blow to the Confederacy's diplomatic efforts abroad.

As the Civil War raged on, the Dominican Republic fell into its own issues regarding emancipatory standards and its reincorporation into Spain. Prior to 1861, the Dominican Republic was a free republic, in which the abolition of slavery happened a decade prior. With the arrival of Spain in early 1861, subjugation under the Spanish crown began. An article from the *New York Times* on March 30, 1861, proclaimed that "President Santana has sold the independence of San Domingo to Spain. We are aware of that his efforts to this end, heretofore and for some years past, have been fruitless; but now we have every reason to believe that Spain has not only consented to an entire annexation of that Republic, but that, at this moment, the Spanish flag is flying over it."¹⁰² This meant that every aspect of Spanish influence would become quickly apparent on the island, and the accepted abolition that already existed within the nation would be under attack.

¹⁰¹ David Herbert Donald, Jean H. Baker, and Michael F. Holt, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 319.

¹⁰² "Important from St. Domingo," *New York Times*, March 30, 1861, 30.

The Spaniards would not take the island without a struggle from the population of freedmen. According to the same newspaper article, “in the meanwhile the negroes, the true owners of the soil, are in a state of normal insurrection. They say, and with reason, that the Spanish government cannot exist upon the island without the institution of slavery, and that, if they themselves are not to be enslaved, the extermination of their race, as freemen, will be an inevitable result.”¹⁰³ In order to quell the violence and fanaticism of reinstating slavery upon the island, the Spanish colonial government set out to define the forced labor as apprenticeships rather than slavery. The *New York Times* article condemned this action stating, “the propagandism of slavery is engrafted upon the colonizing policy of Spain, and with all the force of a new birth—a regeneration as a power upon Earth—she is determined to enforce it.”¹⁰⁴ From the perspective of the northern newspapers, the idea of reinstating a dying institution seemed rather preposterous. If the United States was locked into a conflict that was centered on abolishing the dreadful institution, how was it legitimate for Spain to reestablish slavery in an already free society?

The answer to this lies in how Spain was allowed to reacquire the island territory. Since the Union and Confederacy were at war, their attention was tuned to domestic issues primarily. Without a proper navy that could block Spain from reacquiring the Dominican Republic, the Union left the island nation defenseless. President Santana, taking advantage of this, moved to allow for the annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain for the proper price. In another *New York Times* article titled “News from St. Domingo,” the deplorable conditions of how Santana allowed for the nation to be annexed were explained. According to the article, (Spain) “entered into an unholy and disgraceful compact with Santana to deprive the Dominicans of their

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

liberties.”¹⁰⁵ The liberties that Dominicans were being deprived of were those of freedom and self-governance that Spain demolished under their rule. The only way to return to a nation of freed Black men and women, would be to revolt against the Spanish Imperial forces and reinstitute a government suited to the people’s wishes and needs.

The United States recognized the annexation of the Dominican Republic as an immediate threat to its perceived power in the western hemisphere, as well as a direct violation of the Monroe Doctrine. The same *New York Times* article that deplored the actions of Spain reestablishing slavery upon the island, also provided an ultimatum for the Union to intervene. The article stated, “It becomes our government at once to take the most vigorous and decisive measures within its power to meet this emergency. If Spain seizes St. Domingo, and makes an organized attempt to reestablish her authority over Mexico, we may speedily look for the advent of fresh fleet from Europe—and the intervention of other powers in the affairs of this continent.”¹⁰⁶ One of the means to help reestablish the Dominican Republic as a free nation would come in the form of the Emancipation Proclamation. Upon its issuance, the entire institution of slavery came under moral fire by the Union. As the Confederacy let the Spanish take back the Dominican Republic, they were the only other nation who was in support of the Spanish invasion. Once the Proclamation was ordered, the legitimacy of Spain’s retaking of the island became highly scrutinized. As Walter LeFeber stated in his work *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, “emancipation had finally aligned the United States with all of Latin America.”¹⁰⁷ This signified a defining moment in both U.S. and Dominican relations, as Spain would no longer be able to hold onto the island as long as the U.S. stood against slavery.

¹⁰⁵ “News from St. Domingo,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1861, 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Important from St. Domingo,” *New York Times*, March 30, 1861.

¹⁰⁷ Walter LeFeber, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 2: The Search for Opportunity, 1865–1913*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 15.

It would not be long after the end of the Civil War that the United States quickly shifted its gaze upon trying to take the island under its dominion. By 1865, the United States began the process of readmitting the seceded states back into the Union, and the Dominican War of Restoration was coming to an end. Once the Spanish government had finally left the island in its entirety, then both the United States and the Dominican Republic would start negotiating terms of annexation. Secretary Seward was already thinking about annexing the island republic prior to President Johnson's interest. Though President Johnson did not outright see himself as a force for the extension of the emancipatory dreams of many that came out of the Civil War, emancipation did have an effect on his assessment of the Dominican Republic. Johnson showed that he was more particular about the annexation of the island nation rather than providing an opportunity for a Black population to partake in the new egalitarian laws set by the Proclamation.

In Johnson's annual speech on December 9, 1868, his aspiration to gain the Dominican Republic as a territory was expressed thoroughly. President Johnson stated, "I am satisfied that the time has arrived when even so direct a proceeding as a proposition for an annexation of the two Republics of the island of St. Domingo would not only receive the consent of the people interested, but would also give satisfaction to all other foreign nations."¹⁰⁸ To help further the cause of American interests in the Caribbean, maintaining a hold on the Dominican Republic became a necessity. Luis Martínez-Fernández writes that "the Reconstruction era brewed a new brand of U.S. expansionism that sought to establish naval bases in strategic locations to protect access to the Caribbean's markets and raw materials—in short, to protect the 'new empire.'"¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Johnson: "Fourth Annual Message," December 9, 1868. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29509>. (accessed December 1, 2016)

¹⁰⁹ Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires: Economic, Society, and Patterns of Political thought in The Hispanic Caribbean, 1840– 1878*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 153.

The necessity of gaining new naval bases in the Caribbean was paramount to developing a new American empire. Emancipation still played an active role in this rhetoric. According to Martínez-Fernández, “also of great consequence for the region was the transformation of the United States from a defender of slavery to an active abolitionist power.”¹¹⁰ The United States would adopt an active abolitionist undertone to its rhetoric of expansion and imperialism from this point on.

Newspapers praised this movement towards annexation of the Dominican Republic early on. In an 1869 *New York Times* article titled “St. Domingo: Visit of English and French Capitalists—The Annexation Proposition,” the extent in which people were joyed to see possible annexation was covered extensively. According to the article, “that portion of President Johnson’s message in which he treats of the annexation of Santo Domingo to the United States has been received here with the liveliest satisfaction. It is regarded by all parties as the only peaceful solution of possible existing difficulties. Special instructions have been sent to Mr. Fabens, Dominican Envoy, to press the matter at Washington. The annexation of Santo Domingo will give another California to the United States.”¹¹¹ Prior to the Civil War, California was accepted into the Union as a free state. By connecting the admission of California into the Union to the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic, the *New York Times* tried to persuade the American public that this territorial acquisition would be as fruitful (economically) and beneficial as California. In addition to this, this article could be also hinting at the idea of having Americans emigrate to the island to help settle the nation with the ideals of the white elite population of the United States in mind. Invoking the ideas of positive territorial expansions that

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ “St. Domingo: Visit of English and French Capitalists—The Annexation Proposition,” *New York Times*, February 2, 1869. 5.

proved to improve the United States, newspaper articles made an effort to prove that the Dominican Republic would be an economically and culturally sound expansion of the U.S. into the Caribbean.

Economic interests into the Dominican Republic by various Americans also influenced the push towards U.S. intervention. Prior to the more formal annexation attempts, U.S. entrepreneurs tried to establish a foothold in the island during the 1840s and 1850s. According to Martínez-Fernández, “General Duff Green and his son, special envoy Benjamin Green, set up the American-Dominican Mining Company.”¹¹² In addition to these two American businessmen, various other ventures were attempted in order to secure economic gains from the Dominican Republic. In 1860, a group of Baltimore mining entrepreneurs set up a fertilizer mining operation on the island and exported their goods back to the U.S.¹¹³ Various types of mineral mining opportunities as well as large agricultural operations would be some of the economic reasons for U.S. interest in annexing the Dominican Republic during the 1860s and 1870s. On top of these economic initiatives that the U.S. hoped to begin in the Caribbean, the federal government was also actively searching for an area of the Caribbean that could be used as a passage to the Pacific in order to establish larger trade routes abroad.

Opposition to this first attempt at annexation would come in various forms that ultimately ended the push. According to Martínez-Fernández, “the reluctance of Congress to support the imperial pretensions of the administration was not simply a desire to sabotage its designs.”¹¹⁴ Blocking the annexation attempt had deeper reasoning than political sabotage. “This reticence had its roots,” writes Martínez-Fernández, “in the antebellum views of influential northeastern

¹¹² Martínez-Fernández, *Torn Between Empires*, 94.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

abolitionists such as Sumner, William Cullen Bryant, John Bigelow, and Horace Greeley.”¹¹⁵

The views that the sovereignty of a predominantly Black nation should not be intruded upon by the United States government drove antiannexationists. Furthermore, the issues surrounding self-determination would perpetuate the narrative of antiannexationists. For it was not the duty of the United States to violate the self-determination of freedmen in their quest for self-governance. These arguments lay at the heart of the original opposition. The established ideas of how emancipation should be followed was clear to the men opposing annexation.

Issues of race entwined into the policies of many congressmen during this first annexation attempt. The political agendas of northern and southern Democrats put immense pressure on the annexation. Martínez-Fernández further complicates the backlash against annexation by stating, “racist northern and southern Democrats also opposed the efforts: they sought to keep ‘turbulent, indolent, unstable and uneducated Spanish Americans’ out of the nation.”¹¹⁶ The pervasion of this attempt reflected the complicated legacy that Emancipation had already established. The United States vowed to uphold the rights that the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments granted freedmen. These rights, in the views of many of these politicians, did not extend to the Dominican Republic. Thus, since the island was not part of the U.S., no matter how bad the necessity was to obtain the nation from the U.S. perspective or from the Dominican perspective, those rights did not extend to the Black population of the island.

Thus, with the ending of the debates on the first annexation attempt in 1868, the imperialist push was stopped in its tracks. Congress did not see fit to extend the rights of the U.S. government to a nation of predominantly African and Spanish descended populations. The Johnson administration would not make any further attempts at annexation, for the issues of

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Reconstruction proved to be much more pressing. Secretary of State Seward would also relinquish the necessity of obtaining the naval bases in the Caribbean for the remainder of his term. Once President Grant took office in 1869, a renewed interest into the Caribbean became apparent. The new President and his cabinet would make it a cornerstone of his administration to continue the attempts at annexation that President Johnson had initiated.

President Grant would further make the plea that without the help of the United States, the Dominican Republic would not be able to sustain itself. Furthermore, the emancipationist ideologies of the U.S. would then spread to the rest of the Caribbean if the annexation attempt would be successful. On May 31, 1870, in a letter to Congress lobbying for support of the annexation of the island, President Grant wrote that “San Domingo, with a stable government, under which her immense resources can be developed, will give remunerative wages to tens of thousands of laborers not now on the island.”¹¹⁷ To further his point about the aspect of labor uplifting the nation, Grant tied labor to emancipationist ideology. According to Grant, “this labor will take advantage of every available means of transportation to abandon the adjacent islands and seek the blessings of freedom and its sequence—each inhabitant receiving the reward of his own labor. Porto Rico and Cuba will have to abolish slavery, as a measure of self-preservation to retain their laborers.”¹¹⁸ By tying together abolition in other nations surrounding the island, the U.S. would become an emancipatory force within the region if the annexation of the Dominican Republic could succeed.

Grant, knowing that he would need to garner the support of many congressmen, tied the annexation meaning to other issues that Congress was struggling to fix. According to Grant, “the acquisition of San Domingo is an adherence to the ‘Monroe Doctrine;’ it is a measure of national

¹¹⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Letter to the Senate of the United States*, Washington, D.C. May 31, 1870.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

protection; it is asserting our just claim to a controlling influence over the great commercial traffic soon to flow from east to west by the way of the Isthmus of Darien...it is to make slavery insupportable in Cuba and Porto Rico at once and ultimately so in Brazil.”¹¹⁹ Grant made an impassioned plea to Congress to accept the annexation of the Dominican Republic. The issues of morality and prosperity became intertwined with the U.S. foreign policy initiative in the Dominican Republic. This wedding of emancipationist thought to imperialism did not go unheard in Congress nor in the Dominican Republic.

After the return of the Commission that President Grant organized in cooperation with the Senate, the views of the island’s inhabitants about annexation became clear. Their testimonies on what annexation meant provides insight into the widespread effects of emancipation. Many interviewees cited that the laws and rights after emancipation in the U.S. was what they hoped to enjoy themselves. In an interview conducted by Commissioner Wade of Collector Benito Garcia, the reasoning for accepting annexation followed the idea of rights guaranteed by the adoption of post emancipation laws. In response to a question posed by Wade, asking why Garcia liked the United States, Garcia stated, “because it is a republic like our own; because everybody is equal before the law; we all understand that perfectly well—that in the United States, there is equality before the law.”¹²⁰ This interview and others like it demonstrate that the rights and protections of the laws that emancipation created appealed to those who wished to take part in them. Given the opportunity, as Garcia posits, the Dominicans would happily be annexed by the United States so long as they would be guaranteed these rights.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Report of the Commission on Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 42nd Cong., 1s sess., 1871, Ex. Doc. 9, 212.

The interview of Rev. Jacob James of Santo Domingo's Samaná Bay area also provides a glimpse into how emancipation changed the outlooks of annexation. As Frederick Douglass interviewed Rev. James, the answers were the exact response that Douglass had hoped for. According to Rev. James, "the people are generally for it...When General Santana was in power we wanted it and hoped for it; but some objection to it would be raised then, because the United States was a slaveholding country, but now the United States is a country of freedom. We all know that, and all want to join the United States."¹²¹ In another interview from the same area, Douglass spoke to a Thomas A.M. Bascome. Douglass asked, "Are there some opposed to it (annexation)?" Bascome responded "Yes...vagabonds; persons of no character...some of the merchants have been telling them that when the country is annexed they will be made slaves."¹²² Perplexed by the response, Douglass asked the follow up question: "They fear that they will be reduced to slavery?" Bascome responded, "Yes sir, but now a great many of them begin to find out that is not so."¹²³ These two interviews provide insight into how emancipatory actions by the United States gave hope for the population of the Dominican Republic for annexation.

These interviews helped to provide the image of a nation ready to join the United States and to enjoy its laws. Within the Senate, a variety of senators and congressmen from every part of the nation took part in the debates in support of the annexation. One particular senator made it extremely apparent that annexation would be a benefit to the U.S. as well as a demonstration of the success of emancipatory laws outside of the country. According to Republican senator William Stewart of Nevada, the U.S. would be a model to be replicated. "Who shall say our laws and our institutions will not greatly benefit any of the surrounding peoples? What they want is

¹²¹ Ibid., 230.

¹²² Ibid., 248.

¹²³ Ibid.

stability in their institutions; what they want is to be liberated from oppression of anarchy...But give San Domingo our laws and her colored people will be free; they will be protected. If she comes in as a territory, Congress will provide law for the protection of her people, and so far as they are concerned, they will be very differently situated from what they are now, or from what they would be under Spain.”¹²⁴ It is apparent that the spreading of American rights and freedoms was essential to expansionists who were interested in the Dominican Republic. Expansionists believed in Stewart’s claims and echoed that annexation would furnish Dominicans with the rights protected by U.S. institutions.

Senator Stewart took a stand for the annexation of the Dominican Republic as a means to show the absolute end of slavery and despotism. According to Senator Stewart, “it was perfectly natural that the people of San Domingo should have resisted the efforts of Spain to annex them. It was perfectly natural that that should have been a ‘dance of blood.’ Spain wanted them for slavery, not for freedom. Spain wanted them as instruments of despotism, not for free education or to be freemen. They did resist that attempt; and I glory in that resistance.”¹²⁵ Stewart ties this ideology of resisting slavery by associating it with the possibility of territorial expansion into Cuba and the rest of the West Indies. Stewart further stated that “if we should acquire San Domingo and it should turn out to be a good acquisition—it is a small thing, and we have not yet tested these West India islands—Cuba will follow, all the other islands there will follow, and we shall have the whole of the West India islands. It seems to me that that is inevitable destiny, sooner or later.”¹²⁶ Senator Stewart’s comments prove that there was an avid emancipatory overlay on his rationalizing expansion into the Dominican Republic.

¹²⁴ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd session, 428.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to Senator Stewart's speech, newspaper articles printed on the subject annexing the Dominican Republic showed a positive ideal on the possible annexation. This feeling was more prevalent in 1871 after the return of the commission. In the news article titled *Santo Domingo—The Case Stated* by Henry B. Blackwell (a prominent journalist in the Washington, D.C. area), "by annexing Santo Domingo we strike a death-blow to the accursed spirit of caste. In Dominica caste is unknown—Before we had been there a week we forgot all about color and ceased to notice the accident of complexion. The contemptible outrage inflicted upon Frederick Douglass on the Potomac would not only be impossible there, but would almost be inconceivable."¹²⁷ The issues of slavery and caste, according to Blackwell, that were well known within other Caribbean nations would be single handedly disavowed eternally by the United States annexing the island. Blackwell further posited that "we have five million colored and Black fellow citizens to whom the climate of the West Indies is admirably adapted, and who will find in Santo Domingo a refuge from the tyranny of the Ku Klux of the South. When this outlet for colored labor is provided, Southern planters will discover the capital can no longer oppress labor with impunity, and will be compelled to protect the freedmen in order to retain them as laborers."¹²⁸ Blackwell was convinced, as many other Americans were, that the annexation of the Dominican Republic was going to be a success, and alleviate the racial issues facing both North and South.

Blackwell's article further provided advocacy by connecting the annexation push to the many other issues that faced the United States as a whole. According to Blackwell, "the key to reconstruction is the annexation of Santo Domingo—We advocate the annexation of Santo

¹²⁷ Henry B. Blackwell, "Santo Domingo—The Case Stated," *New National Era*, Washington D.C., April 27, 1871.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

Domingo because we believe in ‘manifest destiny;’ because we are in favor of diversifying our industry, and reducing the cost of necessaries of life; because we wish to break up the slave-holding monopolies of Cuba and Brazil; because we have faith in republican institutions and want to see them extended.”¹²⁹ This rhetoric resonated with much of the American public, as well as many of the African American populations across the United States. In the article tracking the progress of the Southern State Conference of Colored Men, the delegates sent to this conference dictated that “the colored citizens of the South, in convention assembled, regretting those differences that have arisen between good men upon this subject, and utterly repudiating the use of any fraudulent means by which it may be accomplished, as an abstract question we favor the annexation of St. Domingo.”¹³⁰ The general acceptance and advocacy by both white and African Americans shows that the overall view of annexation was favorable in 1871. Senators were also in line with this ideal and tried to translate the ideas of annexation into legislation that would be acceptable.

Other senators would quickly respond to Blackwell’s article as well as Senator Stewart’s impassioned speech with praise and acceptance. Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts chimed in with his perspective that aligned with the Senator from Nevada. “I believe sir, that every race God has made is capable of improvement, of civilization, of elevation, of Christianity,” stated Wilson, “whether they dwell in the temperate or tropical regions of the earth. I believe Christian civilizations will not be limited to lines of latitude, but will make the tour of the globe, lifting up all races and conditions of men.”¹³¹ Wilson’s speech confirmed the necessity of the U.S.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ “The Colored Convention,” *New National Era*, October 26, 1871.

¹³¹ Ibid., 430.

government to pass the resolution of annexation of the Dominican Republic in order to end a despotic period of that nation's history.

The movement of annexation within Congress was not only limited to the white Republican legislators from both the North and the West. Black, southern Republicans enjoyed the speeches of Wilson and Stewart, and reveled in the fact that emancipatory thought was driving this expansionist attempt into the Caribbean. According to Eric Foner, "southern Republicans, including such Black leaders as Sen. Hiram Revels and Congressman Joseph Rainey, shared in the expansionist spirit."¹³² In the Senate, some specimens from the Dominican Republic were brought in to help prove the productivity of the nation. According to an article in the *New York Herald* on March 26, 1870, "it was an unusual scene—Hiram Revels and Garrett Davis licking salt together."¹³³ The strange and atypically intimate exchange by Revels, a Black Mississippian, and Davis, a white Kentuckian, demonstrated the excitement annexation had generated. These displays from the island were invoked to further garner support. Black congressmen such as Revels would listen deeply to the council of Frederick Douglass, a freedman and a designated commissioner who helped draft the report for Congress. Douglass, upon returning from the Dominican Republic, slightly upset and appalled at the state of the nation, wrote that annexation would help uplift the island and "transplant within her tropical borders the glorious institutions of the United States."¹³⁴ These senators and dignitaries were the predominant enforcers of the annexation of the Dominican Republic. Their testimonies and support though, could not over-power those who were against it.

¹³² Eric Foner, *Reconstruction 1863-1877: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York, NY: Harperperennial, 2014), 495.

¹³³ Executive Session of the Senate—Discussion of the St. Domingo Treaty, *New York Herald*, March 26, 1870.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Cross-racial interactions between Senator Revels and Senator Davis were much more frequent during this period than most people would perceive. Historian Mark M. Smith offers an insight into these types of interactions and why they occurred frequently throughout the period of Reconstruction. According to Smith, “examples of sensory intimacy and the plasticity of races were apparent immediately after the war. It was possible to see ‘whites and blacks marching together, and in frequent instances, arm-in-arm.’”¹³⁵ Interactions such as Revels and Davis licking a salt stone together shows that the racial line was not as rigid during Reconstruction, and that Blacks could transgress that line on various occasions. Even in an era when Black codes began sweeping the southern states, the lines of Jim Crow segregation had not yet been hardened. Racial interactions during Reconstruction were much more fluid.

Though the positive legislation to come out of the Emancipation Proclamation pointed the American public in the direction of racial inclusiveness, the optimistic ideals would fall short when stacked up against annexation. Applying the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments abroad did not translate well into international politics. President Johnson and Grant attempted to do so, but failed. The politicians and dignitaries behind annexation could not lobby enough support to follow through with Dominican incorporation to the U.S.

Ultimately, the annexation attempt failed in the Senate, and further attempts did not gain any traction. The anti-annexationists had won the long fight against admitting the Dominican Republic as a territory. The movement against annexation deeply saddened President Grant and was taken as a humiliating defeat of his administration. The expansion of abolition and emancipatory thought was halted. This final attempt at annexation was the best hope for annexationists to not only gain a foothold in the Caribbean, but expand the range of abolition.

¹³⁵ Mark M. Smith, *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 51.

Their dreams would not be achieved for decades after this episode. Other Caribbean nations would succumb to U.S. intervention by other avenues, but none were akin to this episode of expansion. The motives of those who were against annexation are not only complex, but important to comprehend why annexation at this time was not going to be the most lucrative avenue of territorial expansion.

CHAPTER THREE:
ANNEXATION BLOCKED: CONFLICTING IDEALS OF EMANCIPATION AND THE
REALIGNMENT OF U.S. DIPLOMACY

In an impassioned speech, Frederick Douglass stated in 1871 that “it may indeed, be important to know what Santo Domingo can do for us—but it is vastly more important to know what we can do and ought to do for Santo Domingo.”¹³⁶ Douglass spoke these words in order to garner more support for the annexation resolution that was at the time being debated within the Senate. The resolution that Douglass supported was under extreme scrutiny by many congressmen and the stakes were high for Douglass, Grant and many other Republicans that the legislation be passed. Congressmen such as Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz led the opposition against annexation, and helped to complicate the matter. The issues surrounding emancipation would inevitably halt the imperialistic push by President Grant and many other expansionists seeking to gain the Dominican Republic.

The commission approved by Congress in 1870 to go to the Dominican Republic returned the next year with favorable results. What the commissioners found was a population ready to be incorporated into American society. From their calculations and testimonies, they deemed the Dominican Republic as completely acceptable to annexation by the United States, and proved that there was enough public support by Dominicans to do so. Widely reported by U.S. newspapers, people were extremely pleased with the proposition of annexing a new nation into the United States. The vast majority saw not only economic purposes for annexing the nation, but also a moral obligation. Many senators and prominent figures saw that it was their duty to extend the rights of the United States to a nation that was willing to receive them and become active members of American society. Senators promoting annexation saw it as morally

¹³⁶ Frederick Douglass, *Santo Domingo*, undated, 4.

correct to incorporate a weaker nation of predominantly African descent in order to uplift them from squalor and degradation, under the guise of racial benevolence. This endeavor would prove to be too troublesome and overbearing for Congress to complete.

The ultimate failure of the annexation of the Dominican Republic provides an intimate look inside the tensions that emancipatory thought created within Congress. Many congressmen sided with Senator Sumner, who pursued the route of opposition. Some public newspapers echoed the idea that it would be far too difficult to extend the same rights that African Americans recently gained from emancipation and the subsequent amendments to those in the Dominican Republic. Why did abolitionist congressmen such as Charles Sumner and others completely disagree with extending statehood to the Dominican Republic? What drove men such as Frederick Douglass and his congressional allies to support the annexation to the extent that they did? What drove the resolution of annexation to ultimately fail? How did the issues surrounding emancipation complicate the imperialistic motives of the United States? What did this event ultimately prove to expansionists who were bent on obtaining new land for the United States? The conflicting definitions of emancipation and the extension of the rights secured by it caused a divide in Congress, in which senators could not reconcile their own issues in order to advance the agenda of annexation.

During this turbulent period of debate on the annexation resolution, Frederick Douglass took an unyielding stance in favor of annexation. As a commissioner that went to the island, Douglass was bent on proving that the nation and its inhabitants were ready for annexation. More importantly, Douglass wanted to prove that the population there wanted it whole heartedly. In one of his lectures on the subject of annexation, Douglass stated that “a large majority of the people of Santo Domingo are in favor of the annexation of their country to the United States. For

himself, the speaker said he thought the measure would be a good thing for Santo Domingo, and not a bad thing for the United States...If England wanted Jamaica, 4,000 miles away, and could defend it, why should this country not want San Domingo, and why could she not more easily defend it when she was only three days away?"¹³⁷ Employing the idea of England being able to take and defend the island of Jamaica and protect it was a key part of Douglass' plea in his lecture. The fact that a European nation could hold a protectorate four thousand miles away and the United States could not hold a nation as close as three days travel away. This would not be the only issue Douglass would raise.

Further into his lecture, Douglass provides another point of contradiction in regards to people who opposed the idea of annexation. The idea of a "colored nationality" referred to by many opponents of annexation proved troublesome to Douglass' stance. Douglass stated that "the objection that an African nationality would be extinguished was alluded to. The objection was in the words 'colored nationality.' If the inhabitants were white, there would be no objection to the annexation of Santo Domingo."¹³⁸ Bringing the topic of race into the equation alludes to a fraught struggle by congressmen and public officials to cope with the idea of accepting a large Black population into the Union. Even further, Douglass' point of contention if the island was dominated by a white population that it would not have an issue being annexed, shows an incontrovertible problem with accepting the island and its population.

Douglass' pleas for accepting the annexation of the Dominican Republic stretched far and wide. Harkening back to the rhetoric of Secretary Yates' points on the expansion of the United States across the North American continent, Douglass also made a much similar point in an article in the *New National Era*. In his article, Douglass writes, "why should Santo Domingo, if

¹³⁷ "Santo Domingo: Frederick Douglass' Lecture Last Evening," *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1871.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*.

she wishes to do otherwise, be left alone to work out her own destiny?...Why should a people who have annexed Texas, Louisiana, California and Alaska, and who are for annexing Mexico and Canada in good times, raise the question of destiny against Santo Domingo? What reason is there for leaving her to work out her destiny which is not equally applied to the people and territories already annexed by the United States.”¹³⁹ These types of questions were continuously brought up by Douglass and other congressmen to push against the oppositional forces.

Douglass’ advocacy for the annexation of the Dominican Republic posed an issue with the nation of Haiti in this affair. Other senators such as Charles Sumner believed that the annexation of the Dominican Republic would lead to absorbing the Republic of Haiti as well. In Sumner’s view, annexation would pose a threat to Haitian sovereignty and peace. For Douglass, the idea of annexation did not pose any negative consequences for Haiti or its rights on the island. According to Douglass:

“...But the question comes, in what way does the annexation of Santo Domingo affect unfavorably the rights and interests of Haiti? ...How far are the United States bound to respect the rights and interests of Haiti against those of Santo Domingo? ... All of these questions seem to answer themselves... The United States found Santo Domingo, thus free—having its own government and its own authority—with foreign power claiming or enforcing no authority over...Finding Santo Domingo of age and her hand disengaged, Uncle Sam (as was his right) made proposals and they have been widely accepted. Being sure he was right, he has gone ahead and to any one who would stop him, he has simply said, ‘Stand out of my way or you may get hurt.’ This is the whole case. I am not learned in international law and it may be that Uncle Sam had not employed the mildest diplomatic language for its purpose, but the purpose itself stands to reason.”¹⁴⁰

In the view of Douglass, this would not weaken nor harm Haiti’s rights, but in time would have strengthened them. According to Merline Pitre in her article *Frederick Douglass and the Annexation of Santo Domingo*, “Douglass had disregarded the boundary dispute that Haiti and

¹³⁹ *New National Era*, Washington D.C., April 27, 1871.

¹⁴⁰ *New National Era*, Washington D.C., May 4, 1871.

Santo Domingo had been engaged in for twenty-six years. To him, this island was a sovereign state and as such, entitled to whatever she desired.”¹⁴¹ His dismissal of the boundary issue of Haiti would not play as large of an impact either for or against the annexation attempt.

Douglass proved to be an extremely influential voice in the lobbying for the annexation of Santo Domingo. His avid public lectures and newspaper articles offered words of endearment to the nation that was in the process of being integrated with the United States. With his vocal support of annexation, Douglass joined other senators and congressmen who believed the U.S. was in the right by pursuing annexation. Douglass also believed that by annexing the Dominican Republic, the U.S. would be acting as a good neighbor and help to uplift a struggling nation. His reasons for supporting the annexation attempt though were not well received by many senators and congressmen.

With Douglass’ enthusiastic support and lobbying for the annexation of the Dominican Republic came the backlash from other congressmen and public officials. Since this was a territorial acquisition treaty, the only debates to take place resided strictly in the Senate. Senator Charles Sumner, Chair of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, would prove to be leading congressmen against annexation. Sumner believed that annexing the Dominican Republic would be an infringement on the freedom and sovereignty of the entire population of the nation. He also believed that President Grant’s intentions of gaining the nation were corrupt and underhanded. In Sumner’s “Vineyard” speech to the Senate on December 20, 1870, he stated:

“the island of San Domingo, situated in tropical waters and occupied by another race, never can become a permanent possession of the United States. You may seize it by force of arms or by diplomacy, where a naval squadron does more than the minister; but the enforced jurisdiction cannot endure. Already by a higher statute is that island set apart to the colored race. It is theirs by right of possession; by their sweat and blood mingling with the soil...Kindness, beneficence, assistance, aid, help, protection, all that

¹⁴¹ Merline Pitre, “Frederick Douglass and the Annexation of Santo Domingo,” *The Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (October 1977), 395.

is implied in good neighborhood, these we must give, freely, bountifully; but their independence is as precious to them as is to us, and it is placed under the safeguard of natural laws which we cannot violate with impunity.”¹⁴²

Sumner’s reaction against the annexation attempt shows a deep seated issue with the means by which the nation would become part of the United States. Believing that Black Dominicans were independent and sovereign in their own right on the island, Sumner could not see or allow for the United States to annex them. Sumner’s ideology as an abolitionist dictated that he could not violate the freedom of a Black population who were already living without restriction or oppression.

Charles Sumner was born in Boston in 1811, and was raised amongst a deeply abolitionist society and family. He gained his education from Harvard Law school and became a Senator in the U.S. Congress in 1851. He would become extremely well known with his 1852 speech titled “The Crimes against Kansas,” which critically critiqued the South and the entire institution of slavery, along with southern senators (specifically Andrew Pickens Butler) who continuously supported the abominable institution.¹⁴³ A few days after this speech, Senator Preston Smith Brooks (nephew of Senator Butler) openly caned Sumner in the Senate chamber and nearly beat him to death.¹⁴⁴ Charles Sumner would be absent from the Senate for three years after this altercation, but it did not stop him from maintaining his abolitionist mindset. Arguably, this event helped to further his resolve for emancipation. Sumner believed in securing the freedom for enslaved and repressed African Americans, providing them with the right to vote and allowing them to become a functioning part of society.

¹⁴² *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd session, 231.

¹⁴³ Dennis Hidalgo, “Charles Sumner and the Annexation of the Dominican Republic,” *Itinerario* 21, no. 2 (July 1997), 63.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Sumner's biggest issue with annexation was the problem posed by violating the independence of another nation of already freedmen. According to Sumner, "I protest against this resolution as another stage in a drama of blood. I protest against it in the name of Justice; outraged by violence; in the name of Humanity insulted; in the name of the weak trodden down; in the name of Peace imperiled, and in the name of the African race, whose first effort at Independence is rudely assailed."¹⁴⁵ The possibility of violating the independence and sovereignty alone was a real issue with which Sumner could not come to terms. Rather than seeing the nation as struggling, poor, and needing protection, Sumner viewed it as its own independent and flourishing nation of free Blacks who did not seek to be a part of the nation. At this point, competing notions of emancipation arose between Charles Sumner and Frederick Douglass, who were allies on many issues regarding racial equality. Sumner saw it as an intolerable act to annex and repress Black Dominicans who were already free in their own nation, and subject them to the racial tension plaguing the United States. Frederick Douglass saw annexation as a moment to uplift citizens of African descent who were willing to be part of the United States and secure them the rights that emancipation produced. This fracture shows the differing ideologies that began to manifest themselves during this debate on annexation.

Sumner's backlash continued even further after the commission report was filed and read before the Senate. Even though the commission brought back evidence that the island was prime for annexation, Sumner was not convinced. In addition to the negative response from Sumner to the commission report, he was also very displeased with the ways in which President Grant was conducting business relating to annexation. Dennis Hidalgo writes that "although Sumner was an accomplished politician, he liked to challenge and to disagree. He also had strong and inflexible

¹⁴⁵ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd session, 231.

moral principles that had distinguished him from the start of his political career. Besides, he did not like the idea of expansion other than toward the north.”¹⁴⁶ In addition to his own political stubbornness, “the clash of personalities and the differences of methods dealing with the issues at hand brought a bitter rivalry for power in both.”¹⁴⁷ Sumner would lead the pack against the annexation of the Dominican Republic, but he would not be the only one to go against it.

Like Sumner, Senator Allen G. Thurman of Ohio took a stand against the annexation of the Dominican Republic. His issues were similar to Sumner’s, but were more motivated by his assumptions about the racial inferiority of Dominicans. According to Thurman, Santo Domingo had “been a land of throes and convulsion ever since it has been an independent country, with no civil order, no regular government, none of the education that attends a man in the United States from the time he can speak and understand until he is laid away in his grave; nothing of that kind but rather a volcano of human passions and a river of human blood. That kind of people are the population there; and the question is whether here, this day, you are willing to take one hundred and twenty thousand of such people and make them the members of a State in this Republic?”¹⁴⁸ By placing a negative connotation on the population of the Dominican Republic, Senator Thurman effectively deemed the Black population there as unworthy to be part of the United States. By calling them uneducated and unable to maintain a stable form of government further provided enough evidence for Thurman to protest against annexation.

Senator Carl Schurz from Missouri also joined Senator Sumner in the opposition of annexation. In his impassioned speech to Congress, Senator Schurz stated that “our country extends at present to a region which is already in some degree infected by the moral miasma of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴⁸ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd session, 249.

the tropics...In fact, the very acquisition of that territory would put us on the high road to military rule. And here I do not hesitate to express my profoundest conviction; incorporate the tropics, with their population, with their natural influences, in our political system, and you introduce a poison into it which may become fatal to the very life of this Republic.”¹⁴⁹ By incorporating a new nation into the Union, the very stability would be in question according to Senator Schurz. Schurz further stated that “the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. Sumner] has expressed the idea that the tropics should belong to the colored race. Yes, let the tropics belong to them; let them cultivate that soil in freedom; let them be happy there.”¹⁵⁰ Thus the issue of keeping the Black Dominican population out of the United States was a priority for Senator Schurz as well as Senator Sumner. These comments alone show that the issues that came out of emancipation complicated the views certain senators had on annexation. Senators who were pro-emancipation and abolitionists could not fathom annexing a population of African descent and infringing upon their sovereign rights to govern themselves. Nor could they justify subjecting them to the issues that emancipation caused within the United States such racialized discrimination.

Senator Justin Smith Morrill was also akin to the idea of not extending the rights of statehood or provisional territory to the Dominican Republic. In his speech to the Senate in 1871, Morrill was much more attuned to the racial issues pervading the South during Reconstruction, and could see the racial lines that would be drawn by incorporating the Dominican Republic as a state. According to Morrill, “it is also to be apprehended that the late masters of the emancipated race in the southern states will make few sacrifices for the enlightenment of that race or do anything which will elevate the colored people above dependence...The result is that the master

¹⁴⁹ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd session, App., 33.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

race, embittered by defeat in the recent conflict, studies political revenge for the future, and the freedmen is to be kept in such poverty and ignorance as to make him of little value to himself and of still less to his country.”¹⁵¹ These issues that plagued the South during Reconstruction could easily be foreseen by Morrill as extending into the Dominican Republic if it were to be annexed. Rather than continue the atrocities and hardships that were already taking place, his opinion was to not annex the nation in fears of extending the racialized issues that came from emancipation.

The opposition by senators Sumner, Thurman, Schurz, and Morrill show a contempt for the annexation of the Dominican Republic. From the perspectives of Sumner, Schurz and Thurman, the issue of annexing the nation would create a moral contradiction. That moral contradiction would be to impede on the independence and freedom of the already free Black population of the Dominican Republic and subject them to U.S. tyranny. While for Senator Morrill, the expansion of white supremacist ideology and politics provided enough reason for blocking annexation. Through the views of these senators, blocking annexation was paramount, and each of their reasons tied emancipatory thought to negative outcomes for the Dominican population. Whether it was the lack of solid proof that the issues regarding emancipation domestically would not spill over to the Dominican Republic, or infringing upon the natural rights of the island population to govern themselves, these senators would not stand idly by and allow for annexation to move forward.

Oppositions against annexation would not only come from within the U.S. Senate, but from within the Dominican Republic as well. Many of the Dominican supporters of General Cabral did not favor annexation to the United States, nor were they in favor of President Báez’s

¹⁵¹ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 42nd Congress, 1st session, 525.

attempt “sell” their nation to the United States. In an effort to sway U.S. senators to support the opposition of annexation, many Dominicans helped draft and send a letter to the Senate detailing the reasons why annexation would be unsuitable for both the U.S. and the Dominican Republic. In their letter titled *A Brief Refutal of the Report of the St. Domingo Commissioners, Addressed to the People of the United States*, many Dominican citizens expressed their anguish and contempt with the commissioners’ report of the island as a whole. According to the letter, “the report of the American commissioners sent to the Dominican Republic to study men and things only shows an odious partiality, as it was expected by all intelligent people.—All that dishonesty could suggest, in order to color the investigation, was made subservient to the selfish views of Báez, supported by his accomplice, President Grant.”¹⁵² With their observance that the commissioners and the report were guided by selfish intensions, the many Dominicans who helped to write this letter stated their case as to why this report was inaccurate at best and outright false at worst.

In response to the comments that the commission’s report made on the political state and history of the nation, the many Dominicans who drafted this letter condemned what the commissioners reported. They stated that “nor is the source of the Republic’s misfortunes to be found in the ambition and lawlessness of military chiefs...an honest and intelligent government that, being guided by Dominican sentiments, did not think of doing wrong, but right, and would try to secure the peace, and maintain the independence of the country, would certainly find in each of those men a slave to law, a sentry of order, a soldier of freedom.”¹⁵³ These rash comments depict the corruption that plagued the government of President Báez, and further

¹⁵² Various Dominicans, *A Brief Refutal of the Report of the St. Domingo Commissioners; Addressed to the People of the United States*. Dominican Republic, 1871, 1.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

helped the opposition's cause to block annexation. The letter does not stop here in response to the commission's stark depiction of Dominican politics.

The letter continued with a deep rebuttal against the commission's lackadaisical reporting of the political conditions of the Dominican Republic. According to the letter:

“the disease that afflicts the Republic must be traced further back. It comes from the anti-national ideas fostered by the school of Santana, and not maintained by Báez. It has its source in the eagerness to make a sudden fortune, even at the sacrifice of the future of the country, which has been shown by some Dominican politicians long since; witness the abortive plan of a protectorate in 1843; the reincorporation Spain realized in 1861, and the annexation to North America, which is now in the condition of a chrysalis. It comes, finally, from the social disorder carefully worked by the tyranny of Santana's government, which is anxiously carried to perfection by the tyranny of the government of Báez, the most proficient of all his disciples.”¹⁵⁴

What these Dominicans sought to do was to make a plea to the senators and American public reading it to understand the corruption of the governments of Santana and Báez. The primary goals of annexation by Báez, according to this letter, was to not only fill his own coffers, but to maintain his corrupt government that was involved in the callous oppression of his own people.

The letter further continued to refute the commissioners' report of the island and made one much more influential statement against the report. According to the letter, “the Commissioners' assertion, that the public sentiment, which they suppose favorable to annexation, is specially due to the presence in that country of the North American colonists imported during the Haytian administration, has not only no foundation in fact, but were it certain...that there does not exist, among the Dominicans, that spontaneousness which they have so eagerly undertaken to exaggerate.”¹⁵⁵ The population who authored this letter took great offense to the exaggerated claims that the Dominican Republic wanted annexation wholeheartedly. To further support their claim, their letter dictated:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 19.

“But the social and political condition of those colonists, most of them ignorant and wretched, is not the best calculated to arouse favorable conceptions with respect to their private interests. Nor is it true, as we have already shown, that Dominican people is disposed to beg a foreign aid, in consequence of a sad experience of their inability to maintain the independence that has cost them so many sacrifices.”¹⁵⁶

By providing enough support to contradict the commissioners’ report to the Senate, these Dominicans hoped to sway the United States away from annexation. Their letter resonated with many in the Senate, who were already skeptical of the annexation attempt. Senator Sumner made haste to use this letter as proof in the Senate that the annexation of the Dominican Republic would be detrimental to both U.S. diplomacy as well as the sovereignty of the Dominican people.

Sumner was the first senator to jump on the chance to use letters such as this as evidence to the Senate that the Dominican Republic was unfit for annexation into the U.S. One of these letters that made it into the possession of Charles Sumner was a petition against annexation, signed by Tomas Bobadilla, late president of the central junta of the government of the Dominican Republic, and various other dignitaries. As Sumner read the letter to the Senate on March 14, 1871, he stated that the letter proclaimed “the majority of the country rejects all foreign domination, as proved by its history from the time of its discovery to the present day. If that government, regardless of reason of a free country, and of the right, justice, and respect which are due by a nation to another, was to attack the independence of the Dominicans in accepting an annexation, which is the work of a few, but is not, and never shall be, the will of the majority.”¹⁵⁷ These reasons were vastly important to Sumner; who by his morals and ideals on the freedom and independence of Black men, believed that those freedoms would be completely destroyed by annexation.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 42nd Congress, 1st session, 86.

Sumner was deeply moved by the letters of petition from the Dominicans who were exiled by President Báez. The fact that Báez had exiled many of the political figures that did not agree with him was evidence enough for Sumner to provide their testimony. According to Sumner, “I would say that, considering the gravity of the subject, the eminence of these petitioners, their deep stake in the question, and having received this petition from them, I thought I should not do my duty to the Senate, I should not do my duty to the country, of course I should fail in duty to them if I did not give the Senate an opportunity of knowing their protest.”¹⁵⁸ Sumner knew of the importance that these petitions carried for his opposition of the annexation. Just one year earlier in his speech against annexation, Sumner stated, “the United States would face extreme violence in the Dominican Republic as a result of annexation because most Dominicans had no desire for it; and annexation would unjustly impair the predominance of the colored race in the West Indies.”¹⁵⁹ The letter sent to the Senate in 1871 was further proof for Sumner to rally senators against annexation.

Both Senator Sumner and the various Dominicans who authored the letter to the Senate provided stark opposition to annexation. The anti-annexationist Dominicans provide an intriguing insight into the trustworthiness of the report that the commission of inquiry submitted to the Senate. If there was such an inherent backlash to the annexation attempt, why would the commission report exclude those Dominican voices? The apparent answer, as the letter posits, was that the commission of inquiry’s report was not representative of the entire Dominican nation, and the commission itself was compromised. Senators such as Sumner and Schurz pointed out the inherent corrupt organization that went into selecting the commission’s members,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁹ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 26.

who were various politicians with close ties to industries that would have directly benefitted from annexing the Dominican Republic against its populations will. In addition to this, Sumner and Schurz further pointed out that the corrupt background of President Báez's government. For instance, in between 1844 and 1849, Báez lobbied French diplomats to annex the nation as a protectorate of France to gain military support in fighting against the Haitian government.¹⁶⁰ The same issue was reoccurring in the American annexation attempt, as Báez was attempting to gain access to money and armament through allowing the U.S. to annex the nation. In essence, Sumner and the various Dominicans (who more than likely remained anonymous due to political pressure) tried to point out the corrupt nature of both Báez and the commission organized by Grant.

In response to negative comments from Charles Sumner on the topic of annexation in 1870, Senator Richard Yates denounced Sumner's unwillingness to allow the idea of annexation. According to Senator Yates, the United States annexed multiple other territories such as Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana. Senator Yates stated "all this has been the history of the Government of the United States, of our progress, of our march to empire, of the extension of our free institutions, and of civil liberties."¹⁶¹ Yates echoed the same rhetoric that Senator Stewart employed, and Yates further put pressure on Sumner. Yates dictated that in response to Sumner, "the Senator would extend the boon of liberty to five million slaves in our own country, 'assimilation downward;' but when an opportunity presents itself to extend the same boon to the people of Dominica, he refuses to do it."¹⁶² Senator Yates was displeased with Senator Sumner's lack of compassion towards other populations of African Americans who wanted to take part in

¹⁶⁰ Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires*, 144.

¹⁶¹ *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 42nd Congress, 1st session, 429.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

the United States' liberties. By pointing out Sumner's hypocrisy, Yates hoped to garner further support for the possibility of annexation.

Backlash against the decisions of Sumner and fellow senators who did not agree with the annexation of the Dominican Republic continued after Senator Yates' comments. After his speech to the Senate denouncing annexation attempts, an article in the *New York Times* quickly called out the inaccuracies of senator Sumner's position. The article titled "A Fragment of History," published on March 30, 1871, stated that "Mr. Sumner, in his recent speech in the Senate on San Domingo affairs, holds up the conduct of Spain, in her attempt to repossess herself of her ancient colony in 1861, as a bright example. He states that 'in the act of annexation the Dominicans were spontaneous, free, and unanimous—that no Spanish emissaries were in the territory to influence its people; nor was there a Spanish bottom in its waters or a Spanish soldier on its land.'"¹⁶³ How could Sumner compare U.S. annexation to the Spanish occupation if he did not truly understand how it occurred? Sumner's lack of insight on the matter of the Spanish annexation of the island in 1861 proved troublesome to those who were for annexation.

The same article continued to provide a stark response to Sumner's comments in regards to comparing the annexation of the Dominican Republic by the U.S. to that of Spain's failed attempt. The article stated "it would be idle to pursue the comparison between the results of the Spanish occupation of San Domingo, and what may reasonably be expected from its annexation to the United States. There is a difference between freedom and despotism, between the life-giving vigor of our young republic, and the benumbing influences of the effete old Monarchy of Spain. As Mr. Sumner has cited the conduct of Spain in her occupation of San Domingo as an exemplary example, it is as well that he should be set right on the facts of the case."¹⁶⁴ Articles

¹⁶³ "A Fragment of History," *New York Times*, March 30, 1871.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

such as these represented people who were still adamantly for annexation. The fact that one of the biggest proponents of abolition was leading the opposition against annexation proved troubling to many, but upset Frederick Douglass in particular.

Douglass maintained his stance on the subject of annexation of the Dominican Republic throughout the debates. He defended the commission's report that he took part in creating as well as denounced the petitions from the Dominican exiles as an attempt to overthrow the sitting President in their nation. In response to Senator Sumner's stance on blocking annexation, Douglass responded "if Mr. Sumner after that (reading the commission report), shall persist in his present policy, I shall consider his opposition fractious, and regard him as the worst foe the colored race has seen on this continent."¹⁶⁵ Douglass felt betrayed by Sumner's position on the topic of annexation. The assumption that Douglass was under was that Sumner, as a Republican, would maintain the party's stance on emancipatory thought and abolition by extending the rights of the United States to the African American populations of Santo Domingo. Unfortunately, to Douglass' dismay, Sumner did not uphold his loyalty to the Republican party on this subject.

What also troubled Douglass was the fact that the speeches by both senators Sumner and Schurz were highly regarded by many Democrats in both houses of Congress. In the same *New York Times* article that Douglass proclaimed Sumner a foe of Black people, it stated "there is a large demand from Democratic members of both Senate and House for copies of Senator Sumner's speech to send to Connecticut. A very large edition will be printed, and its circulation will be chiefly through Democratic sources."¹⁶⁶ The reception of both senators Sumner and Schurz speeches created a dilemma in regards to the success of the Republican party in the coming election of 1872. Both of the senator's speeches aligned heavily with the Democrats

¹⁶⁵ "End of the Debate on Mr. Sumner's Resolutions at last," *New York Times*, March 30, 1871.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

platform and stance on the subject of annexation. As Douglass made apparent in newspapers, he attached the success of annexation to the success of the Republicans in the 1872 election.¹⁶⁷ The annexation attempt's failure though did not have as drastic effect on the outcomes of the presidential election, as President Grant won an overwhelming majority and gained a second term in office.

Debates over annexation mirrored the fracturing of the Republican party during the early 1870s. What sprouted out of the debates over annexation was a new breed of Republicans that found commonalities politically and ideologically with southern Democrats. According to David W. Blight, "Liberal Republicanism emerged out of alliances of reform Democrats and Republicans in at least three upper South states."¹⁶⁸ Led by Senator Schurz, these Republicans were far more concerned with the economic aspects of reconstruction as well as the reconciliation of the South. Blight further posits that Schurz's "call for 'fraternal feeling' between the sections and races seemed hollow at best to blacks while Klan violence continued unabated."¹⁶⁹ The blending of Democratic and Republican ideologies solidified under the Liberal Republicans under Schurz. This offshoot group of Republicans were less interested with maintaining their stance on abolition and emancipation so long as the issues pertaining to Reconstruction in the South persisted. The Dominican annexation debates mirror this early stage of the split within the Republican party. Liberal Republicans could not reconcile issues surrounding race within the nation, and this further translated to disavowing the annexation attempt by Radical Republicans and President Grant.

¹⁶⁷ Pitre, "Frederick Douglass and the Annexation of Santo Domingo," 398.

¹⁶⁸ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 124.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

To further explain the issues that many Liberal Republicans had been trying to reconcile the issues stemming from Reconstruction, many tried to place an imperative on enforcing certain separations between whites and blacks. According to Eric Foner, “violence and corruption (in relation to Carpetbaggers and Republican politicians) in the South, reformers became convinced, arose from the fact that Reconstruction had not won the allegiance of the ‘part of the community that embodies the intelligence and the capital.’”¹⁷⁰ This implied that African Americans were not the “intelligence and the capital” that the federal government should put their effort into regarding the reconstructing of the South. Liberal Republicans did not want to see Blacks uplifted, but rather were for reinstating the status quo of placing conservative white politicians and businessmen back into power. Liberal Republicans were fine with how far Reconstruction and Black enfranchisement had gone up to 1872, and did not foresee the need to further help Black populations in the sense of full egalitarianism.

The final attempt in 1871 to create a resolution to annex the Dominican Republic ended when there was not enough support in favor of annexation in Congress. President Grant failed to obtain the numbers in favor of annexation to actually have a resolution be drafted and read in front of the Senate. The attempt did not make it out of debates in 1871, but the idea of annexation remained in the minds of many Americans and newspapers who were still considering the idea as viable. Newspaper articles after 1871 continued to write about the racialized issues that surrounded annexation. Articles continued to condemn the notion as impeding a predominantly African descent nation’s rights to self-govern, impeding the freedom of native Africans there, and generally a lack of respect for the sovereignty of another nation.

¹⁷⁰ Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2005), 179.

Newspapers far after the debates of annexation concluded continued to show contempt towards the idea of annexation and provided statements that showed dissatisfaction even though the resolution was ended. According to the article on December 28, 1872 titled “Extending the Area” in the *Chicago Tribune*, “after the war, a number of colored persons living in Louisiana moved with their families to San Domingo, in hopes of finding there that perfect social and political equality which is vainly sought under coercive laws at home. These families, after a short residence, returned. They represented the Africans in San Domingo as more ignorant and degraded than the worst-treated slaves of this country had ever been.”¹⁷¹ The article immediately portrayed the Dominican Africans as degraded and ill-fit to be part of the U.S. as compared to the former slaves in the U.S. The article further stated that “these negroes are not like our own. They do not speak our language, have no acquaintance with our laws, customs or habits; not a man in the country except the Chiefs, probably, has the remotest knowledge as to where the United States are to be found on a map, or even what a map is.”¹⁷² These types of statements further prove that there was an issue with overt racism towards the Black population of the island by Americans. There could not be the extension of annexation if the African population on the island could not prove to exist cohesively with U.S. public.

To help shed light on the consistent efforts of President Grant and others to annex the Dominican Republic, political scientist John J. Mearsheimer offers important insights that can be applied to this event. In his work, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer tracks the political ideology and theories that relate to why certain nations did certain things politically on the global scale during the Cold War. Mearsheimer states that there are predominantly two different theories that apply to the U.S. when dealing with international political struggles: the

¹⁷¹ “Extending the Area,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 28, 1872.

¹⁷² Ibid.

theory of realism vs. the theory of liberalism. According to Mearsheimer, “liberalism offers a more hopeful perspective on world politics, and Americans naturally find it more attractive than the gloomy specter drawn by realism.”¹⁷³ The United States, if it were acting as a Great Power during this period (which it was) preferred to follow a more liberal route with diplomacy than a realist one. Realism, as Mearsheimer explains, follows the path of direct conflict in order for a nation to secure itself in the international system. This of course was not the case in this period and it showed how the U.S. moralized the annexation attempt to prove it would be necessary.

Mearsheimer further elaborates on the ideology surrounding liberal thinkers in global politics. “Americans,” as Mearshimer writes, “are also prone to believe that morality should play an important role in politics. As the prominent sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset writes, ‘Americans are utopian moralists who press hard to institutionalize virtue, to destroy evil people, and eliminate wicked institutions and practices.’”¹⁷⁴ Liberalism is then clearly present in the efforts of Frederick Douglass and the senators who claimed that annexation would bring a people up from depravity in the Caribbean as well as bring slavery one step closer to death in Cuba. Mearsheimer further states that “Americans tend to like this perspective, because it identifies the United States as a benevolent force in world politics and portrays its real and potential rivals as misguided or malevolent troublemakers.”¹⁷⁵ These ideas on modern liberal international thinking harken back to this period. The U.S., in the eyes of President Grant and others, was an emancipatory force who could guarantee the rights of man to those who wished for them. Acting morally and intuitively, the U.S. could secure the Dominican Republic and rationalize it as doing

¹⁷³ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 24.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 25.

good in the global political system of the western hemisphere. This of course did not sit well with those who did not agree with extending the United States into the Caribbean.

For Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz, there could be no rationalizing the extending of the United States as a territory into the Caribbean. Both Sumner and Schurz shared the belief that the United States was not acting as a good, honorable neighbor in the transactions over annexation. They believed that if annexation were to occur, then the Black residents of the island would become oppressed and entwined into the issues plaguing the American South. They also did not see the U.S. intervention into the Caribbean as a morally guided venture, but rather a selfish and disorderly one. Historian Eric T. L. Love provides validation to their logic in a racialized manner. According to Love, “Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz wanted Alaska but opposed taking the Dominican Republic on racial grounds.”¹⁷⁶ There was also a concurrent issue of “whiteness” that dictated both Sumner and Schurz’s opinions on the matter of territorial expansion into the Caribbean. Love writes “these were hot and tropical places, points beyond which it was believed that members of the white race could not occupy, settle, develop or transplant their institutions without suffering some moral or physical calamity.”¹⁷⁷ This ideology is exhibited in Schurz’s speech on the moral miasma of the tropics. Inevitably, they both blocked annexation ferociously, and provided their reasons to Congress for why it should fail in a racialized manner.

The failure of annexation was placed on the back of Charles Sumner, who had thoroughly perturbed President Grant. Grant became so furious with Sumner’s lack of support that he fired the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain (who was a close friend of Sumner), and gained enough

¹⁷⁶ Eric T.L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865– 1900*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 13.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

help to oust Sumner from the position of Chair of the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations. Sumner would remain active in politics up until his death in 1874. His legacy remained as inspiration to moderate Republicans that did not fit into the radical side of their party.

The failure meant the end of a deep diplomatic tie between the United States and the Dominican Republic. President Grant did not send any letters of apology or well wishes to President Báez after its failure. Báez remained in office until his forced departure only a few years after the annexation attempt failed. The United States turned inward and focused on continuing Reconstruction in the South and working towards a better Union of states rather than expanding into foreign territory outside of its borders.

The annexation attempts from 1869 through 1871 offer an intricate insight into the issues between emancipatory agendas and imperialism within the United States. On one hand, the U.S. had many dignitaries such as Frederick Douglass and President Grant who were in favor of granting annexation to the Dominican Republic. Their goals were to provide the rights and laws of the United States to a population of predominantly African Americans who were found ready to be part of a free nation. Their aims were to uplift a struggling nation and offer equal rights and protections to the Dominicans that the Constitution furnished. Republicans also hoped that this annexation attempt would help provide them with success in the upcoming election and accelerate a progressive Republican agenda.

Emancipatory thoughts such as furnishing a Black population in another nation with equal rights under the U.S. constitution and offering them a route to becoming a U.S. territory proved to be problematic. In this instance, the imperialistic push to gain the Dominican Republic as a territory was curbed by those who did not see it wise to extend those rights to the populations of African Americans on the island. Citing the issues that resided in the South with

regards to freedmen, Senators could not fathom seeing the rights secured by emancipation be squandered in the Dominican Republic. Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz, the leading opponents of annexation, were the greatest proponents of abolition during the Civil War, but could not maintain that through the annexation attempt of Santo Domingo.

American imperialism at this point in time was curtailed by rights granted under emancipation. President Grant could not gain enough support at one time to annex the Dominican Republic as a new territory under the United States. Emancipation provided five million slaves freedom from the horrid institution of slavery but in turn created too many questions about the meanings of emancipation that could not be reconciled at the time. The struggles that the country had with establishing and maintaining the rights of those freedmen in the South proved to be enough reason for annexation to be blocked. Even though the commission report provided a highly detailed report depicting a Black population ready to become one with the United States' values and rights, there still was enough backlash against the report that blocked annexation. The issues from Reconstruction spilled over into the debates on annexation, and inevitably ended the attempt.

CONCLUSION

President Grant spent much time after the failed annexation attempt ruminating on opportunities that were lost. In an interview with the former President, Grant explained that the annexation was not only meant to introduce a new nation into the Union, but rather serve a purpose that was far more American-centric. In a *Chicago Tribune* article in 1878, Grant recounts the meaning of annexation of the Dominican Republic to the U.S. “I think now, looking over the whole subject,” remarked Grant, “that it would have been a great gain to the United States to have annexed St. Domingo...It would have given a new home for blacks, who were, and as I hear, are still oppressed in the South. If two or three hundred thousand blacks were to emigrate to St. Domingo under our Republic the Southern people would learn the crime of Ku-Kluxism, because they would see how necessary the black is to their own prosperity.”¹⁷⁸ Grant continued to press the notion that the Dominican Republic would have served as an outlet for African Americans, who were still persecuted by white supremacists, to relocate and prosper. This ideology would not last, as politicians who still served in Congress moved forward with new racial ideologies in regards to the Caribbean that were learned from the failed annexation attempt.

Annexation attempts of Santo Domingo by the United States during the beginning of the 1860s through the late 1870s marked a transition period in foreign relations with the Caribbean. After annexation’s failure, the United States did not conduct diplomatic affairs with Caribbean nations in any similar way. What formed out of this moment was a national policy of intervention into the affairs of Caribbean nations, rather than a divorce from the Latin nations. No longer did the United States during the 1870s through the 1890s practice the same type of

¹⁷⁸ “Gen. Grant...” *Chicago Tribune*, 1878, 5.

peaceful diplomacy that it did when handling the possibility of annexing the Dominican Republic. U.S. imperialism effectively transformed into a completely new form of interventionist politics by the 1890s and subsequently morphed further after the Spanish American War in 1898. This moment in American diplomatic history shows the transformation in the meanings of emancipation as well as the complexities that were faced in trying to implement egalitarian policies in a global realm.

For politicians and political dignitaries such as Frederick Douglass and Charles Sumner, annexation opened new discussion on the extension of emancipatory policies into the realm of foreign affairs. During the debates on annexation, Douglass and Sumner (long-term colleagues and fellow abolitionists) suffered somewhat of a falling-out with each other over the issue of annexation. Each had differing opinions on how emancipatory policies and thought translated into national politics and foreign affairs. In Douglass' opinion, annexation took form as a moral necessity of the United States, as an emancipatory force and protector of people of African descent abroad, to embrace annexation of the Dominican Republic. In writing on the conflict between Sumner and himself, Douglass stated,

“to Mr. Sumner, annexation was a measure of extinguishing a colored nation and to do so by means of selfish motives. To me it meant the alliance of a weak and defenseless people having none of the attributes of a nation, torn by internal feuds and unable to maintain order at home or command respect abroad, to a government which would give it peace, stability, and civilization, and make it helpful to both countries.”¹⁷⁹

Douglass was not impressed with the rhetoric employed by Sumner in his opposition to annexation. Rather, Douglass wished that Sumner had only taken to heart the other side of the argument surrounding Dominican annexation.

¹⁷⁹ Frederick Douglass writing on his issues with Charles Sumner, cited in Merline Pitre, “Frederick Douglass and the Annexation of Santo Domingo,” *The Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (October 1977), 398.

Frederick Douglass nonetheless continued to be a supporter of Sumner through the rest of his political career. Douglass stayed by Sumner's deathbed in 1874 and promised to help fight for his civil rights bill that was still active in the U.S. Congress. After Sumner's death, Douglass continued to be in service of the U.S. State Department as the posterchild of U.S. Pan-Americanism. The ideology of Pan-Americanism was rooted in the events that took place during the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic. Historian Millery Polyné explains that Pan-Americanism was a movement "that promoted a policy of non-intervention and egalitarian commercial and political cooperation with the U.S."¹⁸⁰ This ideology, tested in the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic, persisted through 1889. As Douglass was appointed as the U.S. Minister to Haiti in 1889, he would continue this ideology in handling U.S. diplomatic negotiations with Haiti to obtain a naval coaling station in the republic. Though Douglass was privy to information from the State Department to use in his diplomatic talks with the Haitian government, politicians and military leaders in Washington proved to be far more aggressive than Douglass had perceived.

The United States acted haphazardly in its diplomacy with the Haitian government by placing two naval squadrons in the Haiti's harbor. Polyné writes that Anténor Firmin (Haiti's Minister of Foreign Relations) stated "the continued presence of two U.S. naval squadrons in Haiti's harbor made the most unfortunate impression on the entire country."¹⁸¹ This type of perceived aggression was not seen in the attempts to annex the Dominican Republic, and would continue to prove troublesome to Douglass whilst trying to negotiate for the lease of a coal station. Douglass quickly realized that the intentions of the United States to promote U.S.-

¹⁸⁰ Millery Polyné, "Expansion Now! Haiti, 'Santo Domingo,' and Frederick Douglass at the Intersection of U.S. and Caribbean Pan-Americanism," *Caribbean Studies* 34, no. 2 (Dec. 2006): 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

Caribbean Pan-Americanism was a falsehood. Douglass also realized that Haiti would not be willing to allow for the U.S. to violate its sovereignty as a free-Black nation. According to Polyné, “Haitians lived more than eight decades as a sovereign people and Douglass recognized that Haitian leaders made it quite clear that they would not cede any land to the United States.”¹⁸² After this failure of U.S. diplomacy to lease land in Haiti, Douglass resigned from the position of U.S. Minister of Haiti and grew even further critical of the white politicians and their inherently racist undertones to U.S. expansion into the Caribbean via Haiti. “White men professed to speak in the interest of black Haiti...” Douglass wrote, “...and I could have applauded their alacrity in upholding her dignity if I could have respected their sincerity.”¹⁸³ After 1891, Douglass would no longer aid in U.S. planned movements into the Caribbean.

Douglass’ incredible tenure as a U.S. dignitary provides insight into the struggle of U.S. expansion and its conflict with the legacy of emancipation. Douglass sought to further the practice of benevolent intervention by the U.S. into the Caribbean. By citing Pan-Americanism as a move towards racial inclusion and uplift, Douglass continuously gave his approval to U.S. expansionism into the Caribbean as long as it met his moral standards. When the U.S. government proved that uplifting majority Black nations and the advancement of the Black race as a whole was not central to its plan of expansion, Douglass’ support faded quickly. Frederick Douglass proved to be a lynchpin in the federal government’s plans to peacefully expand into the Caribbean, and once he retracted his support, peaceful intervention fell by the wayside.

Definitions of emancipation and the racialized issues surrounding the implementation of the subsequent constitutional amendments protecting African Americans did not translate well

¹⁸² Ibid., 35.

¹⁸³ Douglass speaking on the inherent racial inequality in dealing with Haiti, cited in Polyné “Expansion Now! Haiti, 'Santo Domingo,' and Frederick Douglass at the Intersection of U.S. and Caribbean Pan-Americanism,” 33.

into foreign policy. Even though the U.S. was perceived as an emancipatory force from within the Caribbean, the U.S. was unwilling to translate racially uplifting domestic laws into foreign policy. Complications such as admitting entire populations of Black ethnicity into the United States during a period of racial turmoil could not be reconciled. As Grant stated that he had hoped that annexation would bring the emigration of African Americans to the Dominican Republic, racism continued to pervade the federal government even though laws were passed to specifically to protect them.

The turning point of U.S. intervention into the Caribbean came during the Spanish-American War in 1898, where the U.S. unilaterally declared war on Spain after the mysterious sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in the harbor of Havana. The Spanish-American War, according to historian Eric T. L. Love, “began with the selfless declaration on the part of the United States that it fought not for its own aggrandizement or territory but to free Cuba and its people from foreign tyranny. At war’s end, however, America had seized a new empire reaching from the Caribbean to the Pacific and governance over more than ten million people.¹⁸⁴ The U.S. successfully transitioned from the long standing legacy of diplomacy of acquiring new territory through annexation to obtaining land through military siege and occupation. Imperialism no longer took the form of annexation, as Love writes that “after 1898, the territorial phase of American imperialism came to a startling and abrupt close. Imperialists abandoned annexation, a tradition reaching back to the first days of the nation’s independence, as a viable policy option.”¹⁸⁵ By divorcing itself from the older institution of annexation, U.S. imperialism completed its transformations that started after the failure of annexing the Dominican Republic.

¹⁸⁴ Eric T.L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865– 1900*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 196.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Further and more important changes sprouted out of the new territorial acquisitions the United States incurred during the Spanish-American War. During the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic, many Black Dominicans stated that their support of annexation was due to the promise of being included into the U.S. and protected under her laws as a state. This hope of foreign people to obtain the same rights as Americans under American occupation were dashed completely in 1901. The Supreme Court rulings in the Insular Cases shut down any hopes of foreign individuals in the Caribbean from being able to partake in American rights. The Insular Cases were Supreme court cases in the early 1900s that involved lawsuits involving the extension of constitutional rights to territories obtained during the Spanish-American War. “In the Insular Cases,” writes Love, “the Supreme Court determined that the Constitution, specifically the Bill of Rights, did not follow the flag, extending automatically to the inhabitants of distant places. In short, the court gave the president and Congress a free hand to carry out a grand expansionist project: to seize and annex distant places, to govern their populations as they saw fit. Unless Congress explicitly did so, annexation would not grant U.S. citizenship to the hypothetical subject peoples.”¹⁸⁶ This would solve American imperialism’s issue regarding incorporating other people of different races and ethnicities. The Insular Case provided the president and Congress enough power to obtain new territory without having to provide citizenship to the people inhabiting that land.

Two more important pieces of legislation regarding territorial expansion and the Caribbean arose from the Spanish-American War. The Platt Amendment of 1903 and the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904 dictated by President Theodore Roosevelt both provided the means for extending and upholding an American empire into the Caribbean without the need of

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 197.

upholding American laws in occupied nations. The Platt Amendment allowed for the United States to intervene in Cuba to maintain peace and order, and facilitated the U.S' procurement of Guantanamo Bay for use as a naval station.¹⁸⁷ As for the Roosevelt Corollary, Love explains it proclaimed that “when ‘chronic wrongdoing’ by a weak or bankrupt nation in the Western Hemisphere might incite ‘intervention by some civilized nation,’ the United States had the right to exercise ‘international police power.’...His Corollary would be used to justify interventions into the Caribbean and Central America for three decades.”¹⁸⁸ These two pieces of legislation not only solidified U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean, but completely validated U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere.

The Platt Amendment as well as the Roosevelt Corollary were the dramatic shifts in which diplomacy conducted by the United States in the Caribbean became officially aggressive in nature. Aggressive acts of territorial expansion that occurred during the antebellum period, such as the filibusters, were not officially sponsored by the United States. On the contrary, the federal government openly disapproved of the private military expeditions lead by individual U.S. citizens, and condemned them as hostile provocations of war against allied nations. By the late 1890s to early 1900s though, the federal government approved of and sanctioned aggressive interventions into the Caribbean. The Platt Amendment and Roosevelt Corollary are proof to this shift away from formal negotiations with the Caribbean nations, towards unprovoked, aggressive intervention.

In addition to the Platt Amendment and the Corollary, racialized issues also sprouted up as reasons for direct intervention into the Caribbean by the United States. According to historian Gail Bederman, “American men must struggle to retain their racially innate masculine strength,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 200.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

which had originally been forged in battle with the savage Indians on the frontier...with no Indians left to fight at home, then, American men must press on and confront new races, abroad.”¹⁸⁹ The idea and mantra of the “White Man’s Burden” would prove emblematic behind President Theodore Roosevelt’s Caribbean policies. Roosevelt, as Bederman stated, saw that “only by embracing virile racial expansionism could a civilization achieve its true manhood.”¹⁹⁰ Not only was the mantle of imperialism a white burden, but a white man’s burden, in the eyes of Roosevelt. This ideology directly comes from the issues that pervaded Reconstruction and the Liberal Republicans who saw that it was a necessity to maintain a racial hierarchy throughout the South during Reconstruction.

By the early 1900s, the United States had effectively reinstated the Monroe Doctrine as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. President Roosevelt’s interventionist policies into the Caribbean made European intrusion into the Western Hemisphere theoretically impossible. This point is further validated by the work of G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson. Atkins and Wilson write that after 1898, “the primary U.S. objectives in the Caribbean were the prevention of further foreign (European) influence and force and the maintenance of political stability in the sub-regional states.”¹⁹¹ By establishing military dominance over the Caribbean during the Spanish-American War, the United States completed the promise of the Monroe Doctrine, and the promises of the past presidents that wanted to re-establish it. America gained control over the nation of Puerto Rico as well as provisional influence in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

¹⁸⁹ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 187.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁹¹ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 37.

American imperialist and expansionists in the 1890s through 1900s had finally rejoiced in their success of expanding U.S. influence over the Caribbean. No longer did the United States have to worry about the intrusion of European nations into what it deemed as its Manifest Destiny to spread across the continent and surrounding territories. The United States benefitted from its territorial acquisition of Puerto Rico establishing manufacturing and cheap labor economies on the island. Spain would no longer hold vestiges of its old empire in the Western Hemisphere, and retreated back to Europe. The transformation of U.S. imperialism and foreign policy was complete by the end of the early 1900s.

The annexation attempts of the United States to obtain the Dominican Republic in the 1860s through 1870s marks the end of a period of peaceful diplomacy. Congressmen and diplomats alike did not practice the same types of diplomacy and foreign policy after this failed attempt. Douglass, during his tenure as U.S. minister to Haiti clearly saw the beginnings of this transition during the early 1890s. The United States, in the position of Haiti, imposed upon its sovereignty by placing multiple naval squadrons in its port. An expression of military superiority such as this not only unnerved the Haitian government, but unnerved Douglass as well. Once it was made clear that the Haitian government did not want U.S. intervention in their politics, Douglass echoed their sentiments. Haiti effectively checked U.S. imperialists and further caused U.S. diplomacy to transition to direct intervention.

Emancipatory thought and the subsequent constitutional amendments further set the United States on the track towards the transition from peaceful diplomacy to direct intervention. During the annexation attempt of the Dominican Republic, the U.S. Congress could not reconcile the issue of extending rights protected by the constitution to that of a foreign nation. Even though the commission of inquiry to the Dominican Republic haphazardly deemed the nation ready and

receptive to U.S. laws, the Senate specifically did not agree with vesting American rights in a foreign nation. White supremacy and racist ideologies created after emancipation further broke down foreign affairs in the Caribbean. Senators such as Sumner did not want to subject other populations of African descent to the same types of racial violence that were plaguing the United States during Reconstruction. Emancipatory thought thus degraded U.S. foreign policy with the Caribbean and paved the way for the vast interventionist policies that came to fruition during the Spanish-American War.

Foreign affairs in the Caribbean were forever altered after the failed annexation of the Dominican Republic. By 1899, the foreign policy of the U.S. officially divorced itself from the inefficient practice of peaceful annexation. Instead, U.S. officials opted for an imperialistic policy of direct intervention into the affairs of Caribbean nations. This was solidified through the occupation of Cuba and the invasion of Puerto Rico. The failed annexation of the Dominican Republic changed the foreign policy procedures and practices of the United States. Peaceful negotiations for territory were deemed no longer an acceptable means to expand U.S. influence. Instead, during the 1890s, U.S. foreign affairs changed and adapted into a means for direct intervention into the Caribbean. Emancipatory thought and competing definitions of such created a crisis of foreign policy during the 1870s, in which the United States wrestled with extending its rights to other nations under its influence. Instead, the U.S. reconciled this issue with direct imperial conquest of the Caribbean during the Spanish-American War and set U.S foreign policy on a trajectory of hegemonic control.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources

A. Newspapers

Chicago Tribune. 18 March, 1863 - 1878.

Daily National Intelligencer (Washington D.C.). 13 April, 1861.

Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts. 26 March, 1863.

New National Era (Washington D.C.). 27 April, 1871- 26 October, 1871.

New York Herald. 26 March, 1870.

New York Times. 30 March, 1861- 24 June, 1875.

B. Government Documents

Johnson, Andrew. "Third Annual Message," December 3, 1867. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29508>. (accessed October 12, 2016).

_____. "Fourth Annual Message," December 9, 1868. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29509>. (accessed October 12, 2016).

Lincoln, Abraham. "The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863," National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation>. (accessed December 1, 2016).

_____. "Inaugural Address," March 4, 1861. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25818>. (accessed December 1, 2016).

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations, *Report of the Commission on Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 42nd Cong., 1s sess., 1871, Ex. Doc. 9.

U.S. Congress. Senate. "U.S. Senate: Treaties," <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm> (accessed October 13, 2016).

U.S. Congress. Resolution 11, Movement to Amend the U.S. Constitution, *Statutes at Large*, 38th Congress, 2nd Session, Feb. 1, 1865.

U.S Congress. *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 41st Congress, 3rd sess. 5 December, 1870 - 3 March, 1871.

_____. *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 42nd Congress, 1st sess. 4 March, 1871 – 20 April, 1871

U.S. Consul in Santo Domingo to Secretary Seward March 22, 1861, National Archives and Records Administration, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1837-1906*. Microfilm.

C. Unpublished Speeches/Letters

Douglass, Frederick “*Santo Domingo*”-Folder 1 of 5. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.28013/>. (accessed August 17, 2016).

_____. *Around the Island of Santo Domingo*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1871.

Various Dominicans, *A Brief Refutal of the Report of the St. Domingo Commissioners; Addressed to the People of the United States*. Dominican Republic, 1871.

D. Compiled Documents

Grant, Ulysses S. President Grant to Senate, May 31, 1870. In *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant: November 1, 1869-October 31, 1870*, edited by John Y. Simon, vol. 20. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995.

_____. President Grant to President Báez, July 7, 1870.

II. Secondary Sources

A. Books

Atkins, G. Pope, and Larman C. Wilson. *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Donald, David Herbert., Jean H. Baker, and Michael F. Holt, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001.

- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction 1863-1877: America's Unfinished Revolution*. New York, NY: Harperperennial, 2014
- _____. *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2005.
- Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Jones, Howard. *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- LeFeber, Walter. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 2: The Search for Opportunity, 1865– 1913*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Love, Eric T.L. *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865– 1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004
- Martínez-Fernández, Luis. *Torn between Empires: Economic, Society, and Patterns of Political thought in The Hispanic Caribbean, 1840– 1878*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994.
- May, Robert E. *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- McCurry, Stephanie. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.
- Merk, Frederick. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.
- Monaghan, Jay. *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers: Abraham Lincoln*. New York, NY: Charter Books, 1945.
- Paolino, Ernest N. *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Parsons, Timothy H. *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A World History Perspective*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.
- Roberts, William H. *Civil War Ironclads: The U.S. Navy and Industrial Mobilization*. Baltimore, MA: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002.

B. Journal Articles

Hidalgo, Dennis. "Charles Sumner and the Annexation of the Dominican Republic." *Itinerario* 21, no. 2 (July 1997): 51-65.

Pitre, Merline. "Frederick Douglass and the Annexation of Santo Domingo." *The Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (October 1977): 390-400.

Polyné, Millery. "Expansion Now! Haiti, 'Santo Domingo,' and Frederick Douglass at the Intersection of U.S. and Caribbean Pan-Americanism," *Caribbean Studies* 34, no. 2 (Dec. 2006): 3-45.