

---

## The Confederate Diplomatic Mission to Mexico: A Testing Ground for European Recognition

Jack E. Cunningham

*Jack Cunningham is a junior history major from Fox River Grove, Illinois. He wrote this paper for Dr. Hubbard's HIS 4940: Early Republic class. After graduation, Jack plans on pursuing a master's degree in public history.*

---

The American Civil War has been taught in history classrooms around the nation ever since the guns fell silent in 1865. Children learn of the glorious leaders, grand armies marching across the continent, huge bloody battles, the shifting and expanding Union war aims to end slavery as the conflict progressed, and they learn about Jefferson Davis and his failed attempt at forming a nation. Yet the Civil War is far more complex than that. The war touched almost every American citizen in one way or another between 1861 and 1865. The war would claim over 600,000 Americans over the course of its duration. It tore the nation apart and divided the North and the South so deeply that we still see evidence of the war today. The guns may have fallen silent, but the anger and divisiveness rage on.

The Civil War was ultimately won on the battlefields, but there were many other battles that erupted during the war: the fight to break the Union blockade, battles in Congress, on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, and the failed battle for international Confederate recognition. This last issue was the fight the South needed to win in order to prevail in the larger conflict and gain its independence. The Confederacy needed a quick war to defeat the Union, and European recognition was the way to guarantee that victory. European recognition, Confederates hoped, would help them break the superior Union blockade that was starving and strangling the Confederacy, put pressure on the Union from multiple fronts, and allow the Davis administration some leverage over the Union at the negotiating table. Davis and the Confederate Cabinet members thought recognition would be easy. The South had extensive economic ties with England and France, and cordial relations with Mexico. It aimed to invoke the same strategy used by American colonists in 1776 that allowed France to recognize the Americans and intervene on their side. Davis and his diplomats understood the importance of their foreign relations missions to the Great Powers of Europe. Their survival depended on it. Despite the grave importance of their mission, however, the Davis Cabinet and the diplomats sent to Mexico were over confident and did not care to understand the Mexicans. This spelled the end for the mission before it ever began. Union diplomats were determined to keep Mexico out of the hands of the Confederacy, and they had the patience, time, and money to do so.

Despite the American Civil War being one of the most written about topics, little is written about the Confederate mission to Mexico. Studies of the mission are in need of updating. The sources we do have blame politics and economics for the Confederate failure, not the diplomats themselves. One such book is *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy*, by Lynn Case and Warren Spencer. Their analysis focuses on the French side of diplomacy with only parts of the book touching on the Mexico mission. While a great analysis of Civil War diplomacy, the book fails to point out the unwillingness of the Confederate delegation to compromise during its mission as well as the feeling of superiority the Confederate diplomats had while in negotiations with the Mexican government.

Jefferson Davis, a United States Senator from Mississippi, was elected President of the Confederate States of America on February 9, 1861, in Montgomery, Alabama. It is here that Davis would select his Cabinet; of particular importance, he appointed Robert Toombs as his Secretary of

State.<sup>1</sup> Toombs, born in 1810 and the son of a Revolutionary War veteran, found himself in Congress in 1844 representing the citizens of Georgia.<sup>2</sup> He was a member of the Whig party and a legend in Washington. Charming, charismatic, appealing to the average citizen, Toombs had a reputation for being an expert in giving speeches and winning debates. This legacy and reputation would follow him to Washington. A staunch Whig, Toombs favored a moderate protective tariff. He even enjoyed singling out his fellow Southerners, Whig or Democrat, who put their own interests ahead of the Union or their state. Although Toombs was a defender of slavery, he broke with his fellow southerners to oppose President Polk and his Mexican War. He knew and predicted that once the United States had won the Mexican War, it would lead to “the acquisition of Mexican territory and that would precipitate a disastrous argument on slavery.”<sup>3</sup> He defended slavery and the rights of the South, but he saw the need to protect the Union more. After the Mexican American War, Toombs would accept the territorial gains of the United States and the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny and become an unyielding champion of the rights of the South in the newly acquired territory.<sup>4</sup>

Toombs’s emergence as a champion of the South’s right in this new territory did not automatically align him with Davis and the radical states’ rights advocates. Davis and Toombs disagreed on many issues that led up to the Civil War. Toombs supported the Compromise of 1850, California entering the Union as a free state, popular sovereignty in the New Mexico Territory, and the banning of the slave trade in the District of Columbia.<sup>5</sup> Jefferson Davis would oppose all these measures that Toombs worked so hard to defend. Toombs would also oppose John Calhoun’s creation of a sectional Southern party in 1849 because, in Toombs’ view, any party that was not continental in sweep was not a true party of the American republic.<sup>6</sup> In the years leading up to the Civil War, Toombs would refer any man who was undermining the existing national system in America as “bad men and traitors.”<sup>7</sup> This strong, genuine sense of unionism would dominate Toombs’ political thinking and career during the 1840s through the 1850s. However, as the nation became more divided on slavery, Toombs and other southern defenders of unionism began to change their minds.

The nation was a very different place in 1860 than ten years earlier following the victory over the Mexican forces. The rise of the Republican Party and its growing calls for the destruction of slavery, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry, the Dred Scott ruling, and the final blow of Lincoln’s election in 1860 all contributed to the drastic change that occurred in the United States in the ten years before the war. All of these factors also changed Robert Toombs’ views on unionism and southern rights as well. Toombs would leave the Senate in January 1861 after delivering a heated speech in which he branded Abraham Lincoln “an enemy of the human race” who “deserves execration of all mankind.”<sup>8</sup> Toombs would become one of the most outspoken members of secession by the winter of 1860 into 1861.

He reversed his defense of the Constitution and argued that the South would be better off without it. His final statement in the United States Senate called for war against the Union and declared that his home state of Georgia is “on a war path,” and that Georgia and the South are

---

<sup>1</sup> Burton J. Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause: Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet* (New York: The Literary Guild of America, 1939) 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 74-75.

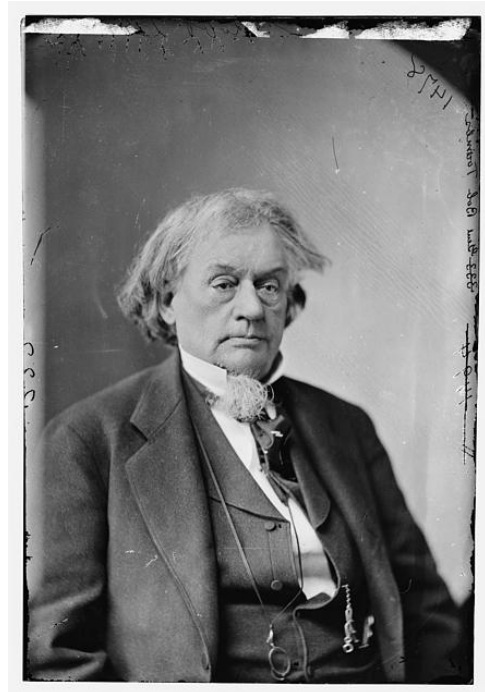
<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

“ready to fight now as we ever shall be!”<sup>9</sup> He then stormed out of the Chamber, went to the Treasury and demanded his salary and mileage compensation and took it all back to Georgia. Soon after his explosive resignation, later that month in fact, Georgia left the Union on January 19, 1861 with Toombs leading the call for secession. This outspoken loyalty to the secession movement and to his home state along with his reputation and statesman-like quality led Davis to appoint Toombs his Secretary of State.

Toombs would not be the only Confederate secretary of State during the Civil War. He resigned on July 24, 1861, in a letter to Jefferson Davis. Toombs left the Davis Cabinet because “duty calls me to the battlefield.” He and Davis, Toombs insisted, “never had a single difference of opinion in any degree affecting the public interest.”<sup>10</sup> Despite his early departure from the Davis Administration, Toombs set the course for Confederate foreign policy and took the early steps to gain European recognition. He got to work right away after his appointment. It would be his job to forge friendly relationships with the European Powers, primarily France and England, in the hopes of guaranteeing European recognition of the Confederate States of America. The war might even come to an early end if England and France were to recognize the Confederacy. The United States would have to fight a war on multiple fronts and prepare for potential invasion from Europe. The superior English and French navies could destroy the Federal blockade of Southern ports which would allow the Europeans to resupply the South with manufactured goods that they needed to win the war on the battlefield. Then the South could again resume shipping cotton to European markets. The European Great Powers were key to the success of the Confederacy.



Robert Toombs

However, Davis and Toombs sent the first Confederate foreign diplomatic mission, not to Europe, but to Mexico. Toombs appointed John Pickett from Kentucky to head the Confederate diplomatic delegation to Mexico.<sup>11</sup> On May 17, 1861, Pickett received a letter that contained his formal post as the Confederate commissioner to Mexico and his diplomatic instructions from Toombs. Pickett was to “assure them [Mexico] of the readiness of this Government to conclude a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with that Republic on terms equally advantageous to both countries.”<sup>12</sup> The unstable and poor nation of Mexico hardly appeared a likely candidate for a Confederate diplomatic mission for recognition. But Mexico’s instability, Tombs and Davis believed, might play into the hands of the Confederates because “no country enjoyed less respect or influence in the foreign offices of the world, and none would seem less likely to be flattered by a proud young people, like the Confederacy, seeking international standing.”<sup>13</sup> Pickett would be responsible for

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 79-80.

<sup>10</sup> Toombs to Davis, July 24, 1861, in *Papers of Jefferson Davis 1861*, vol. VII, eds., Lynda Lasswell Crist and Mary Seaton Dix, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 266.

<sup>11</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 107.

<sup>12</sup> Toombs to Pickett, May 17, 1861, in *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy: Including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, vol. II ed., James D. Richardson (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1966), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 109.

opening the door with Mexico then, in turn, opening a door with the European Powers. The planned diplomatic attack was not a frontal assault on Paris or London, but a backdoor approach through Mexico City.<sup>14</sup>

The European powers retained a vested interest in Mexico ever since the Spanish left in 1821. Mexico was the jewel of Central America and its resources highly desired by the English and the French in particular. The Mexican government, however, was constantly in turmoil, and it was in massive debt to the European powers, which wanted their cash back from Mexico and decided that they knew how to run the country better than the Mexicans did. After all, since the departure of the Spanish in 1821, the Mexican government went through seventy-five presidents.<sup>15</sup> Nor did the Mexican government show signs of stabilizing either. The most formidable opponent to the European plans for Mexico was the United States. Americans had already shown their desire for land in the New World. Their massive land grab in 1848 reaffirmed the European belief that America was a growing economic threat. The Monroe Doctrine was another obstacle to European ambitions in Mexico. Many European leaders and governments had dismissed the Doctrine when it was first announced in 1823. However, as the United States continued to expand west to the Pacific Ocean and grow its economy, Europeans took the Doctrine more seriously. It was not stopping any European power, but it was certainly something to consider. Now, with Americans engulfed in a Civil War, the European plans for Mexico were back on. Americans would be too occupied with their blockade of the East Coast to worry about European fleets entering and leaving the Gulf of Mexico. Of the European powers, the French, under Napoleon III, had the greatest hopes and plans for Mexico. France had seen the turbulent Mexican governments fail time and time again. To restore glory to France and rebuild her Empire, Napoleon III and his noble Spanish wife Eugènie, had drafted up plans for an invasion of Mexico that would place Archduke Maximilian of Hapsburg, second in line for the Austro-Hungarian throne, on the throne in Mexico to establish a stable, European government there to hopefully bring glory to France.<sup>16</sup> With a weakened, distracted U.S. government, the French saw opportunity to pursue their plan. From the European perspective, secession turned the Monroe Doctrine back into a laughable document. A divided America could not stand up to massive European fleets or armies looking to encroach into Central and South America.

The Confederacy saw the opportunity to capitalize on diplomacy during this time as well. The necessities of war and conflict brought the Confederates and French very close. In 1861 any enemy of the U.S. federal government, wherever they were found, were destined to become friends with the Confederacy.<sup>17</sup> That was one of the founding principles of the Confederate foreign policy at the start of the war. Better yet, Davis and Toombs had something concrete to offer Napoleon III, and the French had much to offer the Confederacy in return. If the Confederate States of America could get the French to recognize their independence, England was sure to follow because France and Great Britain were acting as a single unit in the American crisis. They both sent a joint delegation to Washington after both nations declared the Confederacy a belligerent in the war, one step shy of recognition. They would also act as a single nation in the possible recognition of the Confederacy as an independent nation.<sup>18</sup> This infuriated William Seward, the American secretary of state. Lord Lyons and M. Mercier, English and French ministers to the United States requested an audience with Seward and demanded they be met with together. This was unacceptable to Seward

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 114.

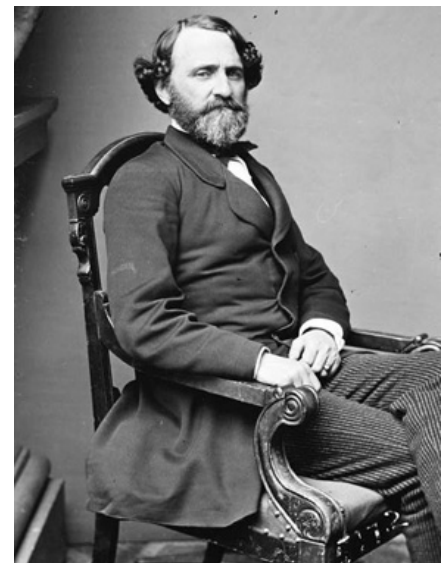
<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 115.

and Lincoln. Meeting with them together would only encourage their commitment to join forces, if the South were to be recognized.

To Jefferson Davis and Robert Toombs, the news that England and France would be working very closely with one another during the American crisis was welcome. If Toombs could get the French to recognize the Confederacy as independent, that might bring in the much more valuable prize, England. To achieve this goal, Toombs would have to promote the Napoleonic scheme in Mexico because the “quickest way to a possible diplomatic triumph in Europe lay through Mexico.”<sup>19</sup> Even though this was a quick solution to the recognition issue that plagued the Confederacy, endorsing a European scheme to place a monarch on the throne of a nation in the western hemisphere, would counter the entire American way and the American system and tradition. And, on top of all that, the European monarch would be placed right on the border with the Confederate States of America—another concerning issue. Despite George Washington’s famous insistence that America avoid “entangling alliances” with Europe and its ideas, and President Monroe’s outspoken opposition to any extension of European influence in the New World, Toombs and Davis were willing to defy the ideals of fellow southerners Washington and Monroe and make those concessions.<sup>20</sup>

The odds looked good in early 1861 regarding a Confederate diplomatic victory in Mexico. Davis, at the request of John Forsyth, the American minister to Mexico in the years leading up to the Civil War, appointed John Pickett as a special agent to represent the Confederate government in Mexico. According to the letter that accompanied that request, Forsyth boasted that Pickett was “admirably qualified for such a mission.” Forsyth also noted that Pickett’s “knowledge of Mexican character, its language and its public men, his well-known Southern loyalty and personal chivalry recommended him as eminently suitable to fill a position so delicate and important as this.”<sup>21</sup> A graduate of West Point, Pickett had resigned his Army post for an exciting life as a diplomat. He would need to obtain the support of the Mexicans in order to secure an alliance with the French.

Pickett was heading to a Mexico torn apart by yet another Civil War. Benito Juárez, the leader of the liberal, anticlerical popular majority, was fighting the opposition party, the Conservatives, composed of property owners and good churchmen, devoted to the restoration of the hierarchy and its ravished lands.<sup>22</sup> The United States government formally recognized the Juárez regime as the legitimate government in Mexico after Juárez defeated the Conservatives, led by Zuloaga. This was bad news for Pickett and Toombs. If Zuloaga were to have won the civil war, the prospects of Mexican recognition of the Confederacy and the restoration of a European monarch on the throne of Mexico would have improved dramatically. Davis and Toombs decided to send Pickett despite the challenges. They still needed that relationship with the Mexican government to ensure victory over the Union. Forsyth noted in a March 20, 1861, letter to Davis that “recognition by Mexico would follow that of European powers as a matter of course.”<sup>23</sup> Pickett would not be working alone in his mission to Mexico;



*John Forsyth*

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 116.

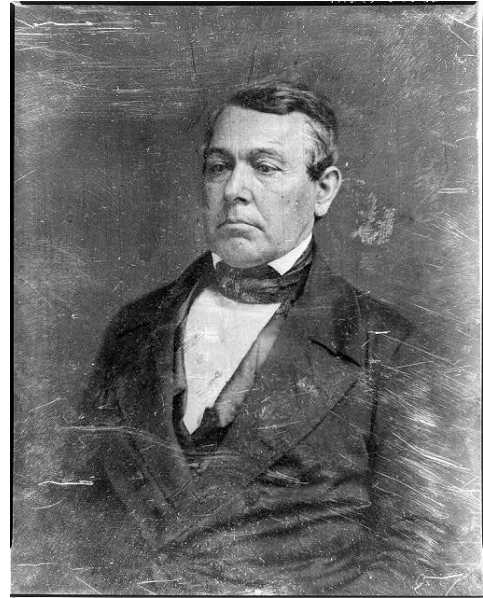
<sup>21</sup> Forsyth to Davis March 20, 1861, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis 1861*, 75-76.

<sup>22</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 116.

<sup>23</sup> Forsyth to Davis, March 20, 1861, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis 1861*, 75.

John Forsyth of Alabama and John Slidell of Louisiana would be joining him. Pickett was no stranger to Mexico either. He served as U.S. consul at Vera Cruz between 1856 and 1859, after he left the army and bounced around the Caribbean for a time.<sup>24</sup> These three men were among the most qualified men in North America to take on Mexico. And luckily for the Confederacy, all three of these men would join the secession movement and resign from their posts in the United States government to join Jefferson Davis.

The Confederates aimed to open and friendly relations with the people of Mexico as soon as possible. They wanted to be in Mexico City and have a relationship with the Mexican government before the Americans could gain any sort of diplomatic advantage over the Confederates.<sup>25</sup> Toombs was looking for Pickett to feel out Mexican merchants and traders on the subject of privateering. Pickett, however, never had the opportunity because the American diplomat sent from Washington D.C. arrived soon after Pickett. The Union sent Thomas Corwin to Mexico to thwart any attempt by the Confederacy to establish a relationship with Mexico.<sup>26</sup> In his instructions from Seward, Corwin was to “not allude to the origin or causes of our domestic difficulties in your intercourse with the government of Mexico.”<sup>27</sup> Seward and Lincoln thought it best that the difficulties at home were downplayed in order to help Union diplomats on the ground. Corwin was the one man the Confederacy did not want Lincoln and Seward to appoint to Mexico. Pickett hated Corwin with a burning passion. Corwin was originally from Kentucky, like Pickett, however, Corwin moved to the North and served as the Governor of Ohio in 1840 and secretary of the treasury under President Millard Fillmore. Corwin quickly became an outspoken critic of slavery; his name was detested all throughout the South.<sup>28</sup> Corwin took his antislavery rhetoric a step further when he was elected to the Senate in 1845. There, he attacked President Polk’s actions and motives during the Mexican-American War. Corwin’s outspoken nature won him favor in the North, but he was labeled a traitor in the South.<sup>29</sup> Pickett had Central American experience, but his affiliation with the Confederacy would prove a handicap. The South dreamed of having a Central American and Caribbean empire once they gained their independence. Mexico took note of this and remembered this when Pickett arrived.<sup>30</sup>



*Thomas Corwin*

Corwin was charming, a born diplomat. His challenge to the Mexican American War in the late 1840s helped his case dramatically. The Mexicans took to Corwin almost instantly. Pickett had to convince the Mexican government that Davis was not the threat; Lincoln and the Union were the ones to fear. Pickett and the Confederacy could offer greater protection to Mexico than the Union could. The Mexican-Confederate border was the only part of the Confederate coast not covered by

---

<sup>24</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 118.

<sup>25</sup> James Morton Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1964), 71.

<sup>26</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 120.

<sup>27</sup> Seward to Corwin, April 6, 1861, United States Department of State. *Message of the President of the United States to the two houses of Congress, at the commencement of the second session of the thirty-seventh congress: Instructions and Dispatches: Mexico*, Vol. I. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1861), 66.

<sup>28</sup> Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 120.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

the federal blockade. It could be here that supplies could be smuggled into the Confederacy and cotton and other exports could be shipped to Europe from Mexico.<sup>31</sup> The Confederates also had leverage over the Mexicans. Across that same frontier that goods could be shipped and traded, troops could be moved as well. The Confederacy could easily invade Mexico, should Davis feel the need.<sup>32</sup> Pickett wanted to be friendly but forceful with the Mexicans. As an opening gesture, he drafted a letter comparing Mexico and the Confederacy in order to persuade Mexico that Davis and the South were not the hostile, dangerous ones. Pickett noted how both nations were rooted in agriculture, used similar forms of labor systems, and mutually feared northern aggression. He also noted that the political upheaval in Mexico resembled that of the Confederacy. Uprisings in both nations were founded in political freedom from an oppressive government.<sup>33</sup> Pickett's letter was picked up by the Mexicans five days later. He was granted a personal, not official, audience with Zamacona, the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, at his home.<sup>34</sup> In his seven months in the country, that would be his only interview with a Mexican official. President Juárez never met with the Confederate delegation, and his ministers gave the Confederates a wide berth as well. Pickett managed to set up a meeting with a Mexican official, but had not obtained anything even mildly resembling an alliance or trade agreement with Mexico. The main reason Juárez resisted meeting with the Confederates was that he was busy meeting with Corwin on a regular basis. The Confederates could give the Mexicans promises and hopes, but the Union could give the Mexicans what they really needed, money.

Juárez and his government were not huge supporters of either the Union or the Confederacy. To Mexican officials, both sides of the Potomac were “gringos and therefore obnoxious to patriotic Mexicans,” claimed historian Burton Henrick.<sup>35</sup> The Union understood that for good, effective diplomacy to work, Corwin could not play into that stereotype. In a letter to Seward on June 29, 1861, Corwin remarked that Mexico regards “the United States as its true and only reliable friend in any struggle which may involve the national existence.” Corwin goes on to say how remarkable that is with the “deep prejudices engendered in the general Mexican mind by the loss of Texas, which they attribute to our citizens, and the compulsory cession of territory which was a consequence of our war with them.”<sup>36</sup> Corwin was shocked when the Mexican government even talked to him because of the strained past relationship between the United States and Mexico. This realization would go a long way in the negotiations. Juárez also worked with Corwin because the Union had money that could potentially save him from European debt collectors. Mexico had defaulted on its debts to England and France and had no hope of repaying them. Juárez, in fact, had little control over Mexico. Opposition was still a threat and his people were divided on his rule. Tax money and trade revenue were not enough to balance the budget, let alone pay the Europeans back. This offered the justification European powers were waiting for. They drew up a Convention with Spain for the seizure of Mexican ports.<sup>37</sup>

Corwin and Seward knew this would play into the hands of the Confederacy if this were to happen. Why not cut the Europeans off at the pass? Seward sent Corwin a note telling him to work out a loan to Mexico from the United States for the liquidation of the European debts. This money would pay back the Europeans, reestablish domestic order, and make the Mexican government indebted to the Union. Juárez and Corwin came to an agreement for the United States to assume

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 124.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>36</sup> Corwin to Seward, May 29, 1861, *Message of the President Instructions and Dispatches: Mexico*, 70.

<sup>37</sup> Henrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 126.

\$62,000,000 of the Mexican debt. To ensure security of repayment, Corwin added that the Mexican government use public land and mineral assets as security. The treaty also included the Americans right to seize those assets and the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Lower California, and Chihuahua in the event that the Mexican government could not repay the loan within six years.<sup>38</sup> There was no possible way that Mexico would be able to repay the loans in six years, but Juárez agreed. The treaty would never go into effect however. It was blocked by Congress because the Federal Treasury was already overburdened, and England and France would not agree to the terms.<sup>39</sup> Still, even though this treaty was never signed nor implemented, it was still extremely valuable to the Union. The negotiations took over a year, and in that time, Juárez was becoming more aligned to the Union with each passing day. Each day he met with Corwin, he did not meet with Pickett. Also, the treaty blocked any hope of a Confederate or European domination of Mexico or Central America. Corwin held the prospect of ready money in front of Juárez the entire time he was in Mexico. The Americans remained in control of the situation and the proceedings the entire time.<sup>40</sup>

To add insult to injury for Pickett, none of his correspondence had been reaching Toombs back in the Confederacy. For over half of a year, Pickett's superiors had no idea what was going on in one of the most important nations in the world for Confederate success. As part of the deal struck between Corwin and Juárez, the Mexican authorities stopped mail between the Confederate delegation in Mexico and the Confederate government.<sup>41</sup> In essence, Pickett accomplished nothing in his seven months in Mexico. He managed to gain one audience with a Mexican official, he was diplomatically outmaneuvered by Corwin, and none of his reports were reaching Toombs or Davis. Pickett would leave Mexico in disgrace because after word got to the delegation of the Battle of Bull Run, Southerners in Mexico rejoiced; meanwhile, the Union citizens in Mexico had little to celebrate. Pickett took offense at some of the things being said by some Yankees and got into an altercation with "an unlucky pill-vendor named Bennett."<sup>42</sup> Pickett slapped him with the back of his hand. This Southern gesture soon turned into a brawl. As a member of a diplomatic delegation, Pickett assumed he would be treated with respect and be ordered to leave the country. However, the Mexican government ordered an armed detail to arrest Pickett at his home and treated him as an ordinary street brawler.<sup>43</sup> He would be thrown in jail and after twenty-four hours ordered to apologize to Bennett and pay a fine. Pickett refused and spent the next thirty days in the city jail. He eventually bought his freedom and returned north as fast as he could. This humiliation amounted to the perfect end to the Confederate attempts at recognition through Mexico. Pickett's mission was a failure, and the Confederate hopes for recognition also ended in failure.

The Confederacy assumed obtaining Mexican recognition would be an easy task. It had committed, skilled men ready to get the job done. Toombs was a skilled politician and devoted to the Southern cause. His overconfidence in his mission, however, derailed the hopes of Confederate recognition from the European powers. The Confederate States of America needed to exploit the weak Mexican government in order to insure friendly relations with France and England. Davis was even willing to back a plot to establish another monarchy on the North American continent in the hopes of gaining French support. This would lead to the ultimate prize, English recognition of an independent Confederate States of America. The two powers, England and France, were both working in tandem on the issue of the Confederacy. They both viewed the Confederates as belligerents, but Davis and Toombs wanted more. Intervention would almost guarantee a southern

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 136.



victory. The soft underbelly through Mexico, however, turned out to be tougher than first thought. Corwin and the Union out maneuvered the Confederates for Mexican support and allegiance. Once Pickett and his delegation left in disgrace after being imprisoned, there was little hope that the Europeans would intervene in the American Civil War, dooming the Confederate States of America.