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INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. OUSELEY FOR HIS GUIDANCE IN THE
ANGLO-FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE RIVER PLATE.

(FROM THE ARCHIVO AMERICANO.)

Engl. — Foreign Office
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No. 4.

Foreign Office
20th February 1845.

SIR,

You are already aware that the first and most important duty which will present itself to you upon your arrival at your post will be the endeavour to effect a cessation of the hostilities which have been so long carried on by General Rosas against the City of Montevideo, and to restore and secure Peace throughout the State of the Uruguay.

You are also aware that, at the close of last year, the Government of Brazil, in its character of a neighbouring power, and being a party to the Convention of August 1828, which declared the Independence of Montevideo, as well as deeply interested in the restoration of tranquillity on its own frontier, urged upon the cabinets of London and Paris, through the Viscount D'Abrantes, the necessity of prompt and effective interference in order to put an end to the war; and you will have learnt by the papers of which copies have been furnished to you in my Despatch No. 3 of the 20th instant, and by the personal communication which you have lately had with the Ministers of the King of the French, that the determination of Her Majesty's Government to accomplish this object is shared by the Government of France, and that it is the intention of the two Countries to unite their influence, and, if need be, their force for that purpose.

I will now proceed to give you some Instructions by which to guide your conduct in the discharge of the important duty before you.

It is not probable that the new Representative of France who is about to be accredited to the Government of Buenos Ayres will have reached that city at the time of your arrival; and, although it would be improper to attempt any coercive measures, except in strict concert with your French Colleague, there seems no reason why you should not try the effect of amicable representation without any delay. Your first steps, therefore, will have to be taken singly; and it is the wish of Her Majesty's Government that they should be directed to set before General Rosas, in candid and friendly terms, the danger in which his refusal to listen to former representations from Her Majesty's Government has placed him, and to induce him at once, and of his own act, to desist from taking any further part in the operations against Montevideo.

You will therefore lose no time in entering into communication with General Rosas, and with his Ministers.

You will state that the spirit in which Her Majesty's Government address themselves to the Government of Buenos Ayres is not one of hostility to that state, or to the influential individual who is at the head of it; on the contrary, that the advice which you are instructed to offer is conceived in friendship, and in a true regard for the interests of the Republic.

It can scarcely be necessary to assure the Government of Buenos Ayres that we have no selfish or exclusive object in view. General Rosas will himself fully comprehend and acknowledge the true character of our proceeding.

You will say that, in exhorting General Rosas to desist from the contest to which he has made himself a party, Her Majesty's Government disclaim all intention of interfering in any manner with the Independence of Buenos Ayres; they do not deny the right of that state to wage war like any other Independent Power, provided always that the war be conducted according to the custom of civilized men and the law of Nations; but the war in which the Argentine Arms are at present engaged is waged against a state the Independence of which Great Britain is virtually bound to uphold; and the object of that war is to place the domestic Government of Montevideo in hands other than those to which the consent of the state has entrusted it. This alone might justify the interposition of a power under whose mediation the Independence of Montevideo was established; and certainly the fact that the war is without any national character, so far as Buenos Ayres is concerned, and that General Rosas is, by his own confession, engaged in it as an Auxiliary only, and not as a Principal, would enable him, without any sa-



crifice of Honour or Independence, to submit to a termination of the contest, by the peaceful interposition of friendly powers. You will earnestly entreat General Rosas so to consider the question, and, by accepting the mediation of England and France, to open a door to its settlement before it is too late to do so with dignity; and you will represent to him that the time is come when the rejection of this advice will involve him in dangers and difficulties, from which He cannot hope to escape without serious injury to His power; for that the long continuance of the war, the daily increasing losses which European interests are suffering by it the hopelessness of its termination, and the barbarities which mark its character, have, in addition to the claims of Montevideo for the preservation of her Independence, determined Her Majesty's Government and that of France to unite for the purpose of putting an end to it.

You will assure General Rosas that, not only is this determination taken, and the means of accomplishing it at hand, but that its execution cannot be long delayed, unless it shall be anticipated by a timely and becoming acquiescence on His part in the proposal about to be made to Him by England and France. You will add, that you state this not as a threat, or in order to accomplish by words what Her Majesty's Government will hesitate to enforce by acts, but as a kindly warning, and with a sincere desire to avoid the necessity of adopting measures offensive to the dignity of a state with which Great Britain has hitherto preserved Her relations of friendship unbroken.

I must leave to your own judgment the mode in which you will press these considerations, or any others which the state of affairs at your arrival may suggest to you, upon the attention of General Rosas; but I am inclined to think that in the first instance it will be better not to do so by formal or official communications; and, although there should not be any reserve or secrecy on your part towards the Representative of France, who may be actually resident at Buenos Ayres at the time, it is probable that, until the arrival of the French Minister with the Instructions of his Government, the chances of success to our common cause will be best consulted by your speaking in the first instance independently, and singly, as the Minister of Great Britain.

If, as Her Majesty's Government cannot but hope, your representations in that character should have their due weight, and the Government of Buenos Ayres should withdraw its Troops from the Banda Oriental, and its Naval Forces from before Montevideo, or should issue orders for a suspension of Hostilities and

the raising of the Blockade, the first and most important object which Her Majesty's Government have in view will have been accomplished.

The terms upon which Peace shall be finally settled and declared between the two Republics may then be properly left to the united mediation of the friendly Powers, to be discussed and recommended to the Two Principal Parties so soon as the arrival of your French Colleague at Buenos Ayres may enable you to act together in the matter.

It is essential that you should observe a strict impartiality in the propositions which you may make to the Contending Parties; but the character of the Contest, and the absence of all substantial and national objects—at least on the side of Buenos Ayres—make it difficult to prescribe any conditions as a proper basis whereupon to negotiate a Peace. The point, however, to be principally kept in view, and the one which is of most importance to the Mediating Parties, is the preservation of the Independence of Montevideo. To this the honour of England, France, and Brazil; respectively pledged, and it is one upon which no compromise can be admitted.

The obligations indeed of Buenos Ayres to acknowledge that Independence are equally strong as those by which the Mediating Powers are bound; nor is there any reason to suppose that General Rosas will hesitate to recognise it.

The Recognition, however, will be of little value so long as He shall continue the Chief Supporter of General Oribe's cause, whether that support be given ostensibly by arms, or secretly by the aid of money or other influence. With the view, therefore, of setting at rest all jealousy on this score, it might be well that the conditions of Peace should include on one side the removal of General Oribe from the Montevidean Territory, and, on the other, that any Political Refugees or other Persons, whose presence in Montevideo may be a reasonable source of disquietude to the Buenos Ayrean Government, should seek an asylum elsewhere. Amongst these General Rivera would no doubt be included. And to this extent alone would Her Majesty's Government be disposed to sanction, either on their own part or on that of others, any interference in the internal affairs of Montevideo.

Should it appear necessary, under such an arrangement that security should be furnished for the persons and properties of the Individuals affected by it, you are at liberty, under proper precautions, to offer the Intervention of Her Majesty's Government for the purpose.

If you should find that General Rosas's Government has any

just complaint to make, or any redress to ask of the Government of the Uruguay, or if, on the other hand, it should appear to you that Montevideo is entitled to require something more from Buenos Ayres than security against future aggression, it will be your duty, in conjunction with your French Colleague, closely and impartially to examine the claims of each Party, and to recommend such an arrangement as you may judge to be equitable, and consistent with the honour and independence of the Two States.

In conducting enquiry or negotiation on any such points you will, when necessary, put yourself in communication with the Government of Montevideo; either through Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in that City, or, if you deem it requisite, by repairing thither in person. I need scarcely add, that it is fully understood between Her Majesty's Government and that of France, that the settlement of the matters in dispute between the Two Republics is not to be accompanied by the concession of Territorial, or any other separate advantages to the Parties concerned in the Mediation.

It is very possible that the present juncture may be considered favourable for securing the free Navigation of the Tributaries of the River Plate, although only indirectly connected with the chief object of our intervention.

Without expressing any opinion as to the course which it may be necessary to follow, if eventually we should be compelled to occupy those Waters with a combined force, Her Majesty's Government are disposed to think that it will be better in the first instance, and so long as there remains a hope of restoring Peace without the aid of force, to abstain from any mention of this matter.

It is true that to open the great Arteries of the South American Continent to the free circulation of Commerce, would be not only a vast benefit to the trade of Europe, but a practical, and perhaps the best security for the preservation of Peace in America itself. And should Her Majesty's Government not be disappointed in the hope which they entertain of being able, conjointly with France, to put an end to the Contest by amicable mediation, I shall be prepared to give you Instructions to unite with the French Minister in an endeavour to place the free navigation of the River Plate and its Tributaries upon a secure footing. For the present, however, and as the question does not appear to have any necessary connection with the differences between the two Republics, the adjustment of which is our first and most important end, you will do well not to introduce it as

an essential point of negotiation. You will, at the same time, be careful not to enter into any engagement which should fetter the discretion of Her Majesty's Government in dealing hereafter with this important subject.

I am not aware that I can lay down for you any further directions as to the terms upon which Peace may be concluded. In any condition which may occur to you as adapted to the position of the two Parties, or which you may be called upon to support, you will, of course, be careful not to sanction anything which may be offensive to the dignity and true interests of Montevideo, any more than to those of the State to which you are accredited. Bearing this in view, you are authorized to declare the willingness of Her Majesty's Government to become a Mediating Party to the Treaty.

Hitherto I have assumed that you will find General Rosas well disposed to listen to the Representations which, in the name of Her Majesty's Government, you will make to him upon your first arrival.

If, unfortunately, this should not be the case, and if he should refuse to take any step for the suspension of hostilities, it will still be your duty to abstain from all threatening language, and from any further allusion to force. You will wait the arrival of the French Minister, and as soon as he shall have presented himself at Buenos Ayres, you will concert with him the form in which your joint representations shall be made to the two Republics. A ready acceptance of our mediation by Montevideo may confidently be anticipated; and the points to which you have already been directed singly to call the attention of General Rosas, will then have to be urged upon him with the additional weight of the Government of France, and in a more formal and solemn manner.

Whatever may have been the hopes and intentions of General Rosas up to that moment, it is hardly possible to conceive that when the consequences which must follow from a refusal to listen to the advice of the two Powers shall have been made evident to him, he will allow it to pass unheeded. But if he should refuse to act upon your united representations, and if there should be any signs of an intention to temporize, and to protract the Negotiation, with a view of supporting General Oribe in a last effort for the subjugation of Montevideo, you will invite your Colleague to join with you in declaring, that if, by a certain day, the support of the Argentine Troops is not withdrawn from the besieging Army, and the Blockade of the City

raised, the Commanders of the English and French Squadrons will be directed to effect those objects by force.

It is needless to say that this declaration, when once made must be adhered to. It will therefore be your duty, as soon as you shall perceive a probability that such a step may be necessary, to put yourself in communication with the Commander of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in the River Plate, to make him acquainted with the objects proposed in the Declaration, and to request him to concert with the French Commander as to the mode in which it shall be carried out. The raising of the Blockade will of course be effected at once, and without difficulty. With respect to the withdrawal of the Argentine Troops from the Montevidean Territory, it will be for your joint consideration how this can be best enforced. From the information possessed by Her Majesty's Government it would appear that a Blockade of those Ports through which the Buenos Ayrean Government are at present in the habit of carrying on communications with the besieging Army, more especially that of Buseo, and, if necessary, the occupation of the lower Waters of the Uruguay, would effectually cut off all intercourse between Buenos Ayres and General Oribe's forces, and thereby compel their retreat or dissolution.

These, however, are matters upon which, if any doubt exists, the decision must rest with the Commanders of the force.

You will bear in mind that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of carrying on any operations whatever by land; and you will not consent to the disembarkation of any men from Her Majesty's Vessels beyond what may be requisite for the occupation of the Island of Martin Garcia, or any other spot of which, for the security of the combined forces or to make their operations effective, it may be necessary to take temporary possession.

In such case you will be careful that the amount of force contributed by each party shall be as nearly equal as possible. I must add, however, that at any moment, or in any place in which the lives of British Subjects may be in danger, it will be your duty to call for the aid of such force as may be necessary to insure their prompt and efficient protection.

How far it may be just and proper to adopt the same precaution in the event of danger to British Property only, will depend upon the degree and extent of the risk, and upon other circumstances of the moment, which it is impossible to anticipate. Upon this point therefore I must leave you to be guided by your own judgment.

It is the hope of Her Majesty's Government that neither a continued refusal on the part of General Rosas to come to terms, nor the still more improbable event of active resistance on his part, may make it necessary to have recourse to a Blockade of the Port of Buenos Ayres. The objects which they have immediately in view—the restoration of Peace, and a tranquil Government to the Republic of the Uruguay—the removal of pressure from its Capital, and the re-opening of its ports to Foreign Trade—may be effected without any such measure; but Her Majesty's Government do not conceal from themselves that circumstances may force them to take the step; and, should all other efforts to induce General Rosas to abandon the cause of General Oribe, and to conclude a peace fail, you are authorized to suggest its adoption to your French Colleague; leaving, as in the case of the relief to be given to Montevideo, the execution of the measure to the judgment and responsibility of the Naval Commanders.

It is to be borne in mind, that under whatever circumstances you may be led to direct the blockade of any point on the shores of the River Plate, or its Tributaries, every encouragement consistent with the maintenance of that Blockade is to be given to the trade of Neutral Vessels with Ports not within the limits of the blockaded district.

But Her Majesty's Government are not at present prepared to recommend that, in the event of General Rosas refusing to recognize the free Navigation of the Tributaries of the River Plate, the combined forces should on this account alone occupy those Rivers, for the purpose of maintaining the freedom of their navigation.

In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, it is desirable to keep the one great purpose which they have in view as distinct from, and as little encumbered, with other considerations as possible. At the same time, if an opportunity of furthering any collateral object of importance should offer itself—such, for instance, as the opening the navigation of those Rivers, or the restoration of Peace to the Governments of Corrientes and Entre-Rios upon their banks—I need hardly tell you that it will be your duty to use it to the best of your ability.

You are now in possession of the general views of Her Majesty's Government upon the matters in which you are about to act. Incidents may occur for which these Instructions do not specifically provide;—and upon which, being far removed from home, it will be necessary for you to act under your own responsibility; but the knowledge which you have had the opportunity

of acquiring personally of the sentiments of the two Governments, will, I doubt not, enable you to carry out their Instructions under any circumstances which may arise.

If indeed you should find, what Her Majesty's Government are not led to look upon as probable, that the City of Montevideo, has fallen into the hands of General Oribe before your arrival in the River Plate, the above Instructions will for the most part, be no longer applicable. Still, until you can receive directions adapted to the circumstances under which the event shall have taken place, you will remember that, as I have already stated, the chief object which Her Majesty's Government have in view, is the preservation of the Independence of the Uruguay; and that, therefore, an attempt by General Oribe, or by any other Individual or Party, to support themselves in power by the presence of Buenos Ayrean Troops in Montevideo, as it would be a flagrant violation of such Independence, might, if persisted in, force upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of an active interference.

It only remains for me to add, that it will be one of your most important duties to maintain a cordial understanding on all points with the French Minister at Buenos Ayres, and to contribute everything in your power to promote the same feeling between the Naval Officers of the two Countries.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

ABERDEEN.

N. ° 20.

Foreign Office
November 5th 1845.

SIR—

Your several Despatches to No. 47 of the 17th of August, describing the course of events in the River Plate up to that date, have received the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

Her Majesty's Government have also given their attention to the Despatches of Mr. Turner relating to the same matters, and especially to his Despatch No. 64 of the 13th August to which reference is made in yours of the 17th of the same month.

It does not appear that hitherto any events have occurred under which the Instructions received by you on leaving England do not furnish you with general principles for your guidance.

I have the satisfaction of informing you, that Her Majesty's Government entirely approve of the manner in which you have carried out those Instructions in your transactions both with the Government of Buenos Ayres and that of Montevideo.

The only point upon which I see occasion to add anything to my despatch No. 4 of the 20th February, is, with respect to the light in which the present position of General Oribe, and his pretensions to the Presidency of Montevideo are to be viewed.

In that Despatch, after stating that the main object of the Mediating Powers is the security of the Independence of Montevideo, and that it is one upon which no compromise can be admitted, it was suggested as a means of setting at rest all jealousy on that head, that the terms of pacification should include the removal of General Oribe from the Montevidean Territory. It is probable, however, that whilst a close adherence to this condition would be more than is necessary to secure to the State and City

of Montevideo their Independence and self Government, it would also prove a serious obstacle to an accommodation with General Rosas; and, therefore, I think it well to remind you, that Her Majesty's Government have no interest or wish to interfere with the full enjoyment by General Oribe of his rights as a Citizen of Montevideo, so long as neither his presence in the State, nor his pretensions to Authority, are supported by Foreign Arms. To a free election of General Oribe, conducted according to the forms and spirit of the Constitution, Her Majesty's Government would have no right or desire to object. But to secure that freedom of choice to his fellow-citizens, it will be absolutely necessary that the Argentine Force, by which he is now supported, should be withdrawn beyond the frontier, and that the only Troops in Arms in the Banda Oriental should be under the authority of the Provisional Government. This, therefore, if the occasion should arise, you will require, and any other precautions, such as the postponement of the Elections until a certain time shall have elapsed after the withdrawal of General Rosas's Force, and until notices shall have been given to the Citizens of Montevideo who may be beyond the precincts of the Republic, you will propose according to your judgment of the necessities of the case.

What I have here said with respect to General Oribe, applies equally to General Rivera, for though Her Majesty's Government would regret the return of the latter to Montevideo at the present moment, as likely to add to the difficulties which have to be met both there and at Buenos Ayres, yet they could not, without departing from the impartiality of mediators, propose the exclusion of one from the rights of Citizenship enjoyed by the other.

You will use your discretion in making the views of Her Majesty's Government, as above stated, generally known. When a Contest is essentially one of Party, it is of course difficult to divest Intervention of all Party character, and Her Majesty's Government have reason to suppose that the object of Great Britain and France has been misrepresented and misunderstood in more quarters than one.

In your Despatch No. 47 of the 17th of August, you state that it suits General Rosas' present purpose to avoid the appearance of being opposed to the English and French Governments, and that he represents their operations as solely directed against General Oribe and his Party in the Oriental State. On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government are aware that the Monte Videans, who are in the service or under the influence of General Oribe,

having at first been taught that the interference of the Two Powers was in favour of their leader, were subsequently, upon the adoption of coercive measures, persuaded that the Mediation was, in fact, an interested foreign aggression, which their duty and their honour called upon them to resist. And Her Majesty's Government also know that a Party in the Town of Monte Video have endeavoured to create the belief that the mediation is entirely in favour of its present government, and that England and France are prepared to enter into a close alliance with them.

This being the case, Her Majesty's Government will be glad to hear that you have taken every fitting opportunity to place the policy of the Two Countries in its true light; to disclaim on the part of their Governments any interested motives, as well as any preference for one or other of the Parties into which the state of the Uruguay is divided; and to convince both those Parties that the measures of hostility to which we have had recourse are directed solely against the interference of a Foreign Power in a question purely national, and one which cannot be decided by Foreign Arms without violence to the Independence of their Country an Independence which Great Britain and France are virtually bound to uphold.

I am, &c.,

(signed)

ABERDEEN.

Spanish American Printing Office.

