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## How the Kaiser Tested The Monroe Doctrine

(Being the third and last of a series of articles dealing with letters published in The Life of John Hay, by William Roscoe Thayer.)

Here is an instructive passage from Volume II. of The Life of John Hay, by William Roscoe Thayer:

"From this time on, as the Isthmian Canal project came to be a certainty, the Germans redoubled their efforts to get a foothold in the western hemisphere and if possible within striking distance of the Canal. In May, 1901, Hay received information that German warships had been inspecting the Santa Margarita Islands, off the coast of Venezuela, with a view to occupying them as a naval base. Later he learned that the Kaiser was secretly negotiating for the purchase of two harbors for his own personal use whatever that meant on the desolate coast of Lower California. Both these essays came to nought."

**Demand on Venezuela.**

"In that same year, 1902, one of the periodic outbreaks to which Venezuela was addicted, gave him an excuse for putting to the test whether or not the United States would defend the Monroe Doctrine by force of arms. The Venezuelans owed the Germans, the English, and the Italians large amounts which they had put off paying until their creditors began to suspect that they never intended to pay at all. The Kaiser apparently counted on the resistance of the Venezuelans to furnish him a pretext for occupying one or more of their seaboard towns. In order to disguise the fact that this was a German undertaking he looked about for accomplices who would give to it an international semblance. It happened just at that time that Germany found herself isolated, as France and Russia had renewed their bond of friendship, England, too, always suspicious of Russia, and recently irritated by France, seemed to be looking for a friend.

By offers which cannot yet be made public Germany persuaded the Tory Government to draw closer to her. The immediate result of this adventure in international coquetry was the joint demand of Germany and England on Venezuela to pay them their dues. Venezuela procrastinated.

The Allies then sent warships and established what they called a "pacific blockade" on the Venezuelan ports (December 8th, 1901). During the following year, Secretary Hay tried to persuade the blockaders of the unwisdom of their action. He persistently called their attention to the fact that a "pacific blockade" was a contradiction in terms and that its enforcement against the rights of neutral nations could not be tolerated. He also urged arbitration. Germany deemed that her opportunity had now come, and on December 8th, 1902, she and Great Britain severed diplomatic relations with Venezuela, making it plain that the next steps would be the bombardment of Venezuelan towns and the occupation of Venezuelan territory.

**Test of Monroe Doctrine**

"Here came the test of the Monroe Doctrine. If the United States permitted foreign nations, under the pretence of supporting their creditors' claims, to invade a weak debtor state by naval or military expedition, and to take possession of its territory, what would become of the Doctrine? At this point the direction of the American policy passed from Secretary Hay to President Roosevelt.

"England and Italy were willing to come to an understanding, Germany refused. She stated that if she took possession of territory, such possession would only be 'temporary,' but such possessions easily become permanent, and besides, it is difficult to trust to guarantees which may be treated as 'scraps of paper.' President Roosevelt did not shrink the test. Although his action has never been officially described, there is no reason now for not describing it. One day, when the crisis was at its height, he summoned to the White House Dr. Holleben, the German Ambassador, and told him that unless Germany consented to arbitrate, the American squadron under Admiral Dewey would be given orders, by noon ten days later, to proceed to the Venezuelan coast and prevent any taking possession of Venezuelan territory.

**Giving Information.**

"Dr. Holleben began to protest that his Imperial master, having once refused to arbitrate could not change his mind. The President said that he was not arguing the question, because arguments had already been gone over until no useful purpose would be served by repeating them; he was simply giving information which the Ambassador might think it important to transmit to Berlin.

"A week passed in silence. Then Dr. Holleben again called on the President, but said nothing of the Venezuelan matter. When he rose to go, the President asked him about it, and when he stated that he had received nothing from his Government, the President informed him in substance that, in view of this fact, Admiral Dewey would be instructed to sail a day earlier than the day he, the President, had originally mentioned. Much perturbed, the Ambassador protested; the President informed him that not a stroke of pen had been put on paper; that if the Emperor would agree to arbitrate, he, the President, would heartily praise him for such action, and would treat it as taken on German initiative; but that within 48 hours there must be an offer to arbitrate or Dewey would sail with the orders indicated. Within 26 hours Dr. Holleben returned to the White House and announced to President Roosevelt that a despatch had just come from Berlin, saying that the Kaiser would arbitrate. Neither Admiral Dewey nor any American fleet was then manoeuvring in the West Indies), nor anyone else knew of the step that was to be taken; the naval authorities were merely required to be in readiness, but were not told what for. On the announcement that Germany had consented to arbitrate, the President publicly complimented the Kaiser on being so staunch an advocate of arbitration."

**Prince Henry's Visit**

Referring to the visit to the United States of Prince Henry of Prussia, Mr. Thayer writes: "Prince Henry's visit, however, was really intended to solidify the German-American movement in behalf of the Fatherland. Through his somewhat inept informers, Dr. Holleben and his satellites, the Kaiser had been led to believe that a million Germans were already organized and most eager to bow down and do homage to a Hohenzollern as their accepted lord. But it turned out that the German-Americans were not yet entirely Prussianized. Many of them had joined the German societies without suspecting that these were intended ultimately to substitute Imperial Germany for democratic American ideals. Prince Henry's whirlwind passage from city to city evoked everywhere curiosity—for Americans are always eager to be amused—but it failed in some quarters to stimulate the pro-Prussian and pro-Hohenzollern enthusiasm which had been expected. From that time forward, however, the paid agents and organizers pushed on their work secretly, and they were aided by many enthusiasts, not all of whom suspected the object for which they were being used. It is enough to cite the close league between the Irish and German elements of Tammany Hall—a league to which Hay has several times referred—in order to show how 'practical' and how 'ideal' was one element of the pro-Hohenzollern propagandists in this country.

**A Singular Paradox**

"It is a singular ethnological and political paradox," Hay wrote the President, "that the Kaiser, who is a German, should be so friendly to England, and that the Emperor of Germany should be so friendly to the United States."

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