

lyzing group of Spanish oppression. Already in revolt as a result of three centuries of misgovernment and fired by the brilliant example of the North American republic, they had succeeded in making good their independence. With the restoration of the Bourbon Ferdinand the Seventh by the Congress of Vienna (1815), Spain began to cherish the design of again subjugating its magnificent colonial empire of America of which all but Cuba had been lost. To its lost colonies (with the exception of Mexico only) the Spanish Monarchy had never abandoned its formal claim. Left to its own resources the crippled and effete monarchy could not have compassed its object. But it found a timely aid in the allied sovereigns of Europe, now linked together in what was called the Holy Alliance, a mutual insurance league of potentates which now proposed to fill the measure of its unholiness by aiding Spain to extend to America the monarchical despotism which it had sworn to maintain in Europe. It seemed imminent that a new Spanish Armada would unfurl its sails for the reconquest of the western world.

It was at this critical moment of the world's history that the President of the United States intervened: not indeed without diplomatic backing, for he had behind him the moral support of the British Government. The latter, all questions of morality and liberty aside, was ill disposed to see so large a colonial empire and so extensive a field of trade placed again under the restrictions of Spanish control. Canning, the Foreign Secretary, had already (Sept. 1823) proposed to the American Minister that the United States should co-operate with Great Britain in preventing the reconquest of the Spanish colonies. The support of British power was thus assured in advance. Indeed it has often been claimed, though erroneously, as the extracts above amply prove, that the Monroe doctrine proceeded from Canning, and the latter himself declared pretentiously years later, "I called the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old."

A minor dispute with Russia, whose Czar Alexander was the leading figure of the Holy Alliance, gave a further ground