

President U.S. Grant's message to the Senate on the Santo Domingo Annexation Treaty

**Senate Executive Journal --TUESDAY, May 31, 1870.**

Executive Mansion, May 31, 1870.

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit to the Senate for consideration, with a view to its ratification, an additional article to the **treaty** of the 29th of November last, for the **annexation** of the Dominican Republic to the United States, stipulating for an extension of the time for exchanging the ratifications thereof, signed in this city on the 14th instant by the plenipotentiaries of the parties.

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It was my intention to have also negotiated with the plenipotentiary of San **Domingo** amendments to the **treaty** of **annexation** to obviate objections which may be urged against the **treaty** as it is now worded. But on reflection I deem it better to submit to the Senate the propriety of their amending the **treaty** as follows: First, to specify that the obligations of this Government shall not exceed the one million five hundred thousand dollars stipulated in the **treaty**; secondly, to determine the manner of appointing the agents to receive and disburse the same; thirdly, to determine the class of creditors who shall take precedence in the settlement of their claims; and finally, to insert such amendments as may suggest themselves to the minds of Senators to carry out in good faith the conditions of the **treaty** submitted to the Senate of the United States in January last, according to the spirit and intent of that **treaty**. From the most reliable information I can obtain, the sum specified in the **treaty** will pay every just claim against the Republic of San **Domingo** and leave a balance sufficient to carry on a territorial government until such time as new laws for providing a territorial revenue can be enacted and put in force.

I feel an unusual anxiety for the ratification of this **treaty**, because I believe it will redound greatly to the glory of the two countries interested, to civilization, and to the extirpation of the institution of slavery.

The doctrine promulgated by President Monroe has been adhered to by all political parties, and I now deem it proper to assert the equally important principle that hereafter no territory on this continent shall be regarded as subject of transfer to a European power.

The Government of San **Domingo** has voluntarily sought this **annexation**. It is a weak power, numbering probably less than one hundred and twenty thousand souls, and yet possessing one of the richest territories under the sun, capable of supporting a population of ten millions of people in luxury. The people of San **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. Shall we refuse them?

I have information, which I believe reliable, that a European power stands ready now to offer two millions of dollars for the possession of Samana Bay alone. If refused by us, with what grace can we prevent a foreign power from attempting to secure the prize?

The acquisition of San **Domingo** is desirable because of its geographical location. It commands the entrance to the Caribbean Sea and the Isthmus transit of commerce. It possesses the richest soil, best and most capacious harbors, most salubrious climate, and the most valuable products of the forest, mine, and soil of any of the West India Islands.

Its possession by us will in a few years build up a coastwise commerce of immense magnitude, which will go far toward restoring to us our lost merchant marine. It will give to us those articles which we consume so largely and do not produce, thus equalizing our exports and imports.

In case of foreign war it will give us command of all the islands referred to and thus prevent an enemy from ever again possessing himself of rendezvous upon our very coast.

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At present our coast trade between the States bordering on the Atlantic and those bordering on the Gulf of Mexico is cut in two by the Bahamas and the Antilles. Twice we must, as it were, pass through foreign countries to get by sea from Georgia to the west coast of Florida.

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.

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.

San **Domingo** will become a large consumer of the products of northern farms and manufactories; the cheap rate at which her citizens can be furnished with food, tools, and machinery will make it necessary that the contiguous island should have the same

advantages in order to compete in the production of sugar, coffee, tobacco, tropical fruits, etc. This will open to us a still wider market for our products.

The production of our own supply of these articles will cut off more than one hundred millions of our annual imports, besides largely increasing our exports. With such a picture it is easy to see how our large debt abroad is ultimately to be extinguished. With a balance of trade against us (including interest on bonds held against us by foreigners and money spent by our citizens traveling in foreign lands) equal to the entire yield of the precious metals in this country, it is not so easy to see how this result is to be otherwise accomplished.

The acquisition of San **Domingo** is an adherence to the Monroe doctrine; it is a measure of national 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 Isthmus of Darien; it is to build up our merchant marine; it is to furnish new markets for the products of our farms, shops, and manufactories; it is to make slavery insupportable in Cuba and Porto Rico at once, and ultimately in Brazil; it is to settle the unhappy condition of Cuba and end an exterminating conflict; it is to provide honest means of paying our honest debts without overtaxing the people; it is to furnish our citizens with the necessities of life at cheaper rates than ever before; and it is, in fine, a rapid stride toward that greatness which the intelligence, industry, and enterprise of the citizens of the United States entitle this country to assume among nations.

U. S. Grant.

Executive Mansion, May 31, 1870.