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VICENTE PAZOS, AGENT FOR THE AMELIA ISLAND FILIBUSTERS, 1818

by CHARLES H. BOWMAN, JR.*

THE APPEARANCE OF A North American squadron under John D. Henley and a land force under James Bankhead at the mouth of the St. Marys River on December 18, 1817, with orders to move against Luis Aury and his establishment on Amelia Island, compelled the filibusters to abandon posthaste their ill-fated Republic of the Floridas. Aury had occupied the island since September under the flag of Mexico. It was obvious that the North American fighting power was superior to any that Aury could muster and that surrender of the island was inevitable.

The assembly of representatives sitting at Fernandina consequently proceeded to gather as much evidence as it could, in the time that it had, to refute the charges of President James Monroe that the port had become a hotbed of piracy and smuggling. The testimony of respectable citizens in the nearby Georgia town of St. Marys as to the correct conduct of the patriots was collected by the assembly and inserted into its minutes. On December 19, Dr. J. Parsons, Francis Young, Edmund Richardson, and Joshua Hickman—residents of St. Marys or its environs—certified that they had no knowledge of any law of the Republic of the Floridas that encouraged the introduction of slaves from Africa into any territory. Several Spanish vessels had been captured that were coming from the African coast with slaves, but that was another matter. In no instance, to the knowledge of the subscribers, had a slave escaped from the United States to Fernandina, “but he has immediately been restored on application being made.” Furthermore, the patriots had never intended to make that port a place for smuggling goods into the United

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States; the principal captured property, in point of fact, had been brought to and entered in the customhouse at St. Marys.

The next day two other residents in St. Marys, D. Lewis and James Monk, gave similar testimony of the honorable deportment of the citizens of the infant republic. Lewis took the opportunity to point out that he had read many erroneous statements in American newspapers against the character and behavior of the persons in authority at Fernandina. He considered it "no more than an act of justice to the individuals composing that government, to state, that as regards any encouragement given to runaway negroes, from the United States, a publick order was issued by the authorities there, at an early period, to prevent that evil."¹

When the Mexican flag was lowered at Fernandina on December 23, Aury informed Monroe that only because his force was inferior he had offered no resistance. His concern was to avoid "the loss of many worthy republicans, on both sides." The surrender of Amelia Island was, nonetheless, a painful thing to him: "In consequence of this event, no less unpleasing than unexpected, and in order that the government of the United States may be correctly informed of the grounds, on which this part of East Florida; was dismembered from the dominions of the king of Spain, by the arms of the independent states of South America, I have appointed citizen don Vicente Pazos, to undertake the said duty, and at the same time, to secure and demand reparation for, and place on a safe and sure footing, the injured rights of the said states."²

After Pazos's appointment as agent had been confirmed by the assembly, he was entrusted with a number of papers, including a packet for the Washington government which consisted of Aury's letter to Monroe and copies of his various commissions, the report of the committee chaired by Pazos in

1. Certificates of Sundry Inhabitants of St. Mary, Georgia, dated December 19 and 20, 1817, *State Papers and Publick Documents of the United States, from the Accession of George Washington to the Presidency, Exhibiting a Complete View of Our Foreign Relations since that Time*, 3rd ed., 12 vols. (Boston, 1819), XII, 433-34; State Department, Territorial Papers, Florida, p. 71, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
2. For the sake of appearances, Aury ordered a gun with a blank cartridge fired when the United States troops went ashore at Fernandina. *City of Washington Gazette*, January 10, 1818; Aury to Monroe, December 23, 1817, *State Papers and Publick Documents*, XII, 401-02.

Fernandina to investigate the troublesome *Tentativa* affair, and the certificates of the several men in St. Marys. He left Fernandina on December 27 aboard the brig *Commodore Porter* bound for New York where he arrived January 6, 1818. Pazos turned over several of the documents to William Coleman, editor of the *New-York Evening Post*, who published them. Coleman noted that the letter that Pazos and his fellow representatives had addressed, under Aury's name to Henley and Bankhead, protesting the occupation of Amelia Island contained "a well-written and strong appeal to the executive." The strongly-worded communication produced a sensation in Washington and Baltimore. Coleman called on Monroe to furnish an explanation for his action "satisfactory to the laws of nations." In the meantime, the editor remained "yet at a loss for the constitutional authority of the president, to order the taking forcible possession of the territory of a power [the so-called republics of the South] still at peace" with the United States.³

Before Pazos reached Washington, a group of congressmen were voicing disapproval of Monroe's policy toward the patriots. Henry Clay and others attacked the President's annual message of December 2 in which he announced his decision to take Amelia Island. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs called for the papers dealing with the situation at both Amelia Island and Galveston. Monroe submitted the material on December 15. It was nearly a month later before he announced the seizure of Amelia Island on grounds that an American law of January 15, 1811, prohibited any foreign power from occupying the Floridas. In time, Manuel Hermenegildo de Aguirre, the official agent from Buenos Aires, criticized Monroe's decision as "an invasion of the common sovereignty over which Spain and her revolted colonies were contending in civil war." He did admit

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3. *New-York Evening Post*, January 6, 7, 1818; Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, 12 vols. (Philadelphia, 1874-1877), IV, 38-39. As late as March 31, 1818, letters addressed to Pazos remained in the post office at St. Marys. *Savannah Columbian Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette*, April 8, 1818.
 4. Charles Carroll Griffin, *The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, 1810-1822: A study of the relations of the United States with Spain and with the rebel Spanish Colonies* (New York, 1937), 135; *State Papers and Publick Documents*, XI, 343-88, 395-411; *New-York Evening Post, for the Country*, January 14, 1818.

to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams that he was not speaking for his government in regard to the Floridas. That bit of hedging proved wise, for the Buenos Aires authorities and Simón Bolívar disavowed the whole Amelia Island adventure and saw in the measure taken by the United States the manifestation of "the most friendly disposition."⁵

Pazos left New York for Philadelphia to confer with the agents Lino de Clemente of Venezuela and Manuel Torres of New Granada about the best way of protesting Monroe's action against Amelia Island.⁶ On January 15, 1818, Clemente gave Pazos a copy of Gregor MacGregor's commission authorizing him to conquer the Floridas, which he and two other Spanish American "deputies" had signed, to help prove that the island had been taken from the Spaniards by a competent authority. Clemente also called on Pazos to protest in the name of his government the invasion and other acts of the Monroe administration contrary to the rights of the Spanish American republics. The President's motives, wrote Clemente, demonstrated that his sole object was the acquisition of the Floridas. With Spain nearly exhausted in the struggle to retain her American colonies, it was propitious for Monroe to argue that the patriots lacked authority to take possession of Amelia Island and Galveston, that these establishments had served as shelters for pirates and smugglers, and that no foreign power could be allowed to station itself in the Floridas, referring to an act passed in 1811 "which is inapplicable to the present case."⁷

Pazos carried several letters written on his behalf before his departure from Fernandina. On December 23 Pedro Gual of Venezuela wrote a letter of introduction to William Thornton, head of the patent office in Washington: "Mr. Pazos has been many years ago engaged in the revolution of S. America, and is

5. Samuel Flagg Bemis, "Early Diplomatic Missions from Buenos Aires to the United States, 1811-1824," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, XLIX (April 1939), 46n, 63-65.

6. Aury had harangued the assembly of representatives in Fernandina on December 12 on the legitimacy of his activities and the history of his exploits. He maintained that "the establishment at Galveston was legally formed" and believed the same was true vis-à-vis Amelia Island. *City of Washington Gazette*, January 22, 1818; *State Papers and Publick Documents*, XII, 422-23.

7. Clemente to Pazos, January 15, 1818, State Department, Miscellaneous Letters, folio 91, National Archives; *State Papers and Publick Documents*, XII, 422-23.

worthy of the esteem of all those who like you feels [*sic*] so much interest for the cause of your Southern brethren."⁸ Gual and Aury, on December 26, informed Clemente of the nature of Pazos's mission. Pazos was also recommended to Thornton by R. Gravier of New York City, who held power of attorney for one of the privateers from Buenos Aires.⁹

Thornton agreed to assist Pazos in his work. In an article written for a Washington paper he noted that the men who had directed the Fernandina operations could furnish "such testimonials of their regularity and attention to the laws of nations and particularly to those of the United States, that they defy an instance to be produced of reprehensible conduct."¹⁰ Thornton, moreover, introduced Pazos into Washington's social and intellectual circles where he became friendly with such diverse personages as Ferdinando Fairfax, son of Lord Fairfax; Dr. David Ott, Washington's most prominent pharmacist; and the Reverend Dr. Burgess Allison, the Baptist minister who was serving as chaplain of the House of Representatives.¹¹

Pazos devoted the greater part of his time in late January and early February to writing his *Exposition, Remonstrance and Protest* directed to Monroe.¹² Available to offer suggestions were – in addition to Thornton – the editor Baptis Irvine, the merchant John Laborde, Commodore David Porter, and one Dr. Rouse of Charleston who had accompanied MacGregor to Amelia Island. The work completed on February 7, Pazos asked

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8. Gual to Thornton, December 23, 1817, Papers of William Thornton, V, 792-93, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
 9. Gravier to Thornton, February 18, 1818, *ibid.*, V, 802-03; February 20, 1818, *ibid.*, V, 804-05.
 10. "On Amelia Island &c.," February 9, 1818, written by Thornton under the pseudonym "Franklin" for the Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, but never published, *ibid.*, V, 795-98. Thornton's wife observed after his death: "He was a friend to the oppressed of all nations and colors and zealously forwarded to the utmost of his abilities . . . the emancipation of the states of South America." Anna Maria Thornton, "History and Life of Dr. William Thornton," *ibid.*, [18-19].
 11. Thornton to Pazos, September 30, 1820, *ibid.*, V, 914; Thornton to John Quincy Adams, February 17, 1820, *ibid.*, V, 889-90.
 12. Vicente Pazos Kanki, *The Exposition, Remonstrance and Protest of Don Vincente Pazos, Commissioner on Behalf of the Republican Agents Established at Amelia Island, in Florida, under the Authority and in Behalf of the Independent States of South America; with an Appendix* (Philadelphia, 1818). Pazos was comfortably ensconced in the Seven Buildings at Pennsylvania Avenue and Nineteenth Street. See Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: Village and Capital, 1800-1878* (Princeton, 1962), 78-79.

Irvine, who was to visit Secretary of State Adams that day, to inquire when and how he could present his paper to the President. Adams offered to present it personally to Monroe.¹³ The next day Pazos delivered a manuscript copy of the *Exposition* in Spanish, along with supporting documents and a cover letter.¹⁴ Monroe received the material on February 9.

In a foreword to his *Exposition*, Pazos indicated that he had authority "to expose to the chief executive magistrate of the confederate republics of the United States of North America" the circumstances of the conquest of Amelia Island, to protest "the aggression, by force of arms" and the occupation of the island by American troops, and to demand reparations. Aury, on December 29, 1817, estimated the value of the property that he and other patriots had relinquished as between \$35,000 and \$40,000.¹⁵ Pazos added that, "unhappy as the present occurrences are," he still expressed his "most sincere attachment to the American nation, and respect for its chief magistrate," and described the recent situation as "the quarrels of brethren."¹⁶

The fact remained, however, that Monroe in his message of December 2 to Congress questioned the legality of the Amelia Island action by the South American republics. Pazos argued that under international law no state could interfere in the affairs or decide upon the rights of another unless previous consent had been granted. No such consent pertained in the case of Amelia Island: "That the republics of the south are at war with Spain, is a notorious fact; that the United States, until the conclusion of the contest, ought to consider them as belligerent powers; that as such, the president acknowledges them in his message;— and, as in similar cases, it has always been customary to respect present possession, it belongs to the respective authorities at war alone to take cognizance of the conduct of their officers."¹⁷

As belligerent powers, either Spain or the republics had the right to invade the other's territory, and no neutral country had

13. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 53; Philadelphia *Aurora and General Advertiser*, March 23, 1818.

14. Pazos to Adams, February 8, 1818, State Department, Territorial Papers, Florida, 104, National Archives.

15. Pazos Kanki, *Exposition*, 3; Philadelphia *Aurora and General Advertiser*, February 18, 1818.

16. Pazos Kanki, *Exposition*, 4.

17. *Ibid.*, 17.

authority to question them. The Floridas and Amelia Island belonged to Spain. Since the island was taken in the name of the republics, its occupation by the patriots was legal, and the United States had no right to interpose itself. These were the arguments set forth by Pazos. He noted Aury's liberal policies. Aury had ordered rations on one occasion to be distributed among the inhabitants. No matter that the United States was supposed to be negotiating at the time for the acquisition of the Floridas, it could not alter the validity of the conquest. As long as a Spanish possession had not openly and lawfully detached itself from the Spanish crown, it was subject "to all the operations of war." The United States, Pazos insisted, could not have lost what it did not actually possess. Since the cession of the Floridas had not taken place, the Americans had no right to that territory.¹⁸

Pazos denied that Monroe had any reason to think that a republic on Amelia Island would become a dangerous neighbor. Even if the location of the island favored the smuggling trade and the introduction of slaves into the United States, American occupation could not be justified any more than the occupation of, say, Cuba. The authorities in Fernandina, in any case, had prohibited "the infamous traffic" in slaves and would never have suffered it to continue on the island. As to the objection to the disgraceful character given the patriots from various quarters, Pazos could only regret that such "has always been the fate of those who struggle for liberty; their sacrifices are numbered and praised by posterity," while their own generation "seems to consider them as entitled only to derision or reproach."¹⁹

Pazos also protested the seizure by the U. S. brig *Saranac* of "private properties belonging to the citizens of the new republics, captured in the waters of the Floridas, without any other right than that of force."²⁰ He demanded the restitution of all the vessels taken by the United States navy and indemnification for the losses suffered by owners of cargoes and vessels held by the United States for adjudication. He further demanded a just estimate by a joint commission of all public property found on the island when the patriots arrived to be paid by the United States. He also wanted the total expense of the patriot expedition

18. *Ibid.*, 17-19.

19. *Ibid.*, 22, 24-27.

20. *Ibid.*, 28.

to be levied against the United States. The agent ended his *Exposition* by renewing his petition for a redress of grievances.²¹

Accompanying the *Exposition* were a number of documents: copies of MacGregor's commission, sundry commissions of Aury, Pazos's commissions from Aury and Clemente, the report of his committee investigating the *Tentativa* controversy, and certificates of residents in St. Marys as to the conduct of the patriots. One English translation of the material was made by John H. Purviance, a clerk in the state department, and another was soon published in Philadelphia.²² The *Exposition* was given much publicity by the American press and was supported by Henry Clay in Congress, but its two most important readers were unmoved by any of Pazos's arguments.

To Monroe and Adams the Amelia Island episode had been distasteful from the start. The issuing of MacGregor's commission in itself, as Adams saw it, was an outrage upon the neutrality and sovereignty of the United States. He especially found Clemente's actions irksome; had he been an accredited agent of a recognized government, his signing of the commission would have been highly offensive.²³ Authorization of acts of war against a foreign nation was a power "not even a sovereign can lawfully exercise within the dominions of another in amity with him, without his consent." To make matters worse, Adams thought the language "disrespectful" in the letter commissioning Pazos to protest in the name of the Republic of Venezuela. Pazos was also censured for using the example of Franklin in Europe to justify MacGregor's commission. Pazos, declared Adams, definitely erred, for "this example, instead of furnishing an exception, affords a direct confirmation of the principle now advanced. The commissions issued by the diplomatic agents of

21. *Ibid.*, 28-39.

22. The original manuscript of the *Exposition*, in Spanish and in Pazos's handwriting, is to be found in State Department, Territorial Papers, Florida, 90-103, National Archives. For an English translation, see *State Papers and Public Documents*, XII, 401-35. Editor William Duane of Philadelphia was a great one for discovering discrepancies between the official translations of the Amelia Island documents and those made under the careful eyes of Torres and himself. *Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, January 7, 1818. On the title page of the Philadelphia version of the *Exposition* were quotations from the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence of 1776.

23. Adams to Smith Thompson, May 20, 1819, Navy Department, Private Letters, I, 271, National Archives.

the United States in France, during our revolutionary war, were granted with the knowledge and consent of the French Government, of which the following resolution from the Secret Journal of Congress of 23d December, 1776, is decisive proof: '*Resolved, That the commissioners be authorized to arm and fit for war any number of vessels, not exceeding six, at the expense of the United States, to war upon British property; and that commissions and warrants be for this purpose sent to the commissioners: provided the commissioners be well satisfied this measure will not be disagreeable to the court of France.*' "²⁴

President Monroe resented the fact brought out in Pazos's *Exposition* that the patriot project to seize Florida was developed and executed at a time when it was understood that Spain had decided to cede the area to the United States. Their main aim was to prevent the cession from taking place, and, to Monroe, the "whole proceeding in every state and circumstance was unlawful."²⁵ Neither the President nor the secretary of state felt inclined to hurry in giving Pazos an answer. They certainly had no intention of being put on the defensive.

His patience spent, Pazos finally spoke with Monroe who immediately referred him to Adams. On February 27 Pazos went to Adams's office to ask if perhaps Commodore Porter had spoken of him yet. The commodore had not. Adams assured Pazos that he would inform him of the President's decision as soon as possible.

The politeness with which Monroe and Adams received Pazos indicated to at least one commentator a significant new departure, for when Aguirre had presented his credentials as agent from Buenos Aires, his reception had been quite different.²⁶ Even so, when five days elapsed and Pazos had heard nothing, he wrote Adams. With Thornton's help he composed a letter in Spanish and, in order to facilitate a speedy response, he also sent along an English translation. Once more he insisted on

24. "John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to President James Monroe," January 28, 1819, William R. Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*, 3 vols. (New York, 1925), I, 89-90.

25. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, ed., *The Writings of James Monroe*, 7 vols. (New York, 1898-1903), VI, 39.

26. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 55, 57; *City of Washington Gazette*, February 19, 1818.

the return of patriot property taken "on ground entirely independent" of the United States and now held, along with the proceeds from sales already made, in that republic without any just reason.²⁷

As it turned out, Pazos's letter was not needed. The cabinet on March 3 suggested that Adams draft a reply to be reviewed by the President.²⁸ This was done two days later. Pazos could take no comfort in the communication, which stated flatly that Monroe saw "no reason for revoking any of the measures which have been [taken] . . . and nothing that requires any other answer to your representations."²⁹

Adams's letter did not stop Pazos from having recourse to another branch of the government, i.e., Congress. Even before he submitted his *Exposition*, it was reported from Washington that Pazos contemplated such an appeal.³⁰ On March 6 he finished preparing a memorial listing "evidences of injuries, so grievous to the cause of liberty, and to the progress of the Revolution, which involves the happiness of so many millions." He stated that the Florida action had been conceived in Philadelphia as a means of severing communication between Cuba and Puerto Rico and the United States, thus paralyzing the Spanish in an important part of their empire. The "ardent desires of those islanders for emancipation from the most cruel oppressor" would thereby be realized. The attack on Amelia Island was seen as "the most direct mode of obtaining possession of the contemplated object." According to Pazos, the supplies of Spanish General Pablo Morillo, whose troops were pitted against Bolívar, were furnished chiefly from Cuba, and that island derived many of those supplies from the United States by way of the Floridas. Moreover, the money needed to prosecute the war against the patriots in Venezuela and New Granada was obtained through loans from the inhabitants of Cuba. Those creditors judged that, if the patriots could take Amelia Island, they would be able "to possess themselves of the rest of the Floridas, and finally Cuba, long ready for revolt." The capture

27. Pazos to Adams, March 4, 1818, Thornton Papers, V, 806-09.

28. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 59-60.

29. Adams to Pazos, March 5, 1818, State Department, Domestic Letters, 129, National Archives. See also *Niles' Weekly Register*, May 2, 1818.

30. *Lexington Kentucky Gazette*, February 21, 1818.

of Amelia Island was part of a grand plan and not motivated by “causes of a confined, a private, and even of a sinister nature,” as many American newspapermen— who imputed motives of “the most diabolical kind to the chiefs of this expedition”— would have their readers believe.

MacGregor and Aury had taken Amelia Island with only a vanguard of men. They had expected the arrival of other patriots and foreigners who had promised to join them. But “to the surprise, to the heart-rending regret, of all the friends of this great Revolution, the volunteers were stopped in their egress from the United States, and many of these [were] thrown into prison.” Such measures, Pazos decried, changed “the whole appearance of our views.” Instead of being able to capture the Floridas, “intended finally for the United States” after “the great events of the Revolution” had been accomplished, the patriots were confined to Amelia Island. There they avoided whatever could be construed as a violation of American sovereignty or of international law. The patriots had been deprived of their territory and their property, and they were being denied compensation for their expenditures in the erection of barracks and other buildings. They were prevented from recovering debts due from the legal sale in the United States of various goods and were threatened by their own creditors. The predicament called for immediate resolution.³¹

Through his friends in Washington, Pazos had met Henry Clay, speaker of the House and champion of Spanish American independence, to whom he gave his manuscript on March 8. Meanwhile, representatives of the administration were lobbying against any House action.³² Clay, nonetheless, laid the memorial before the House on March 11, and an animated discussion lasting nearly three hours ensued.

First there was a debate over whether the memorial should even be read, and this was followed by discussion on whether or not to receive the memorial. John Forsyth of Georgia led the opposition, contending that, since Pazos was “the agent of a foreign Power, and applied to Congress as an appellate power

31. Vicente Pazos Kanki, “The Memorial of Vicente Pazos,” Thorton Papers, V, 807-09; *City of Washington Gazette*, March 12, 1818; Philadelphia *Aurora and General Advertiser*, March 20, 1818.

32. Griffin, *The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire*, 137.

over the Executive," it would be improper to receive his memorial. Elijah Hunt Mills of Massachusetts felt that a foreigner had no right to petition Congress, and George Poindexter of Mississippi described the memorial as "one of the most impudent applications . . . that was ever made to any branch of this Government."

On the other side, David Trimble of Kentucky maintained that to reject the memorial "would hold out to the South American Governments an improper rule of action." He was backed by Thomas Bolling Robertson of Louisiana who announced that, when the United States took control of Amelia Island, it was already "in possession of Aury, Gual, Pazos, and others," who had "formed a government, and elected a legislature and other officers, of whom the individual presenting this petition was one." The right to petition, he felt, belonged to foreigners as well as to citizens. The motion by Congressman Forsyth to refuse the memorial passed by a vote of 124 to 28.³³ The House asked that it be allowed to examine the papers that Pazos had sent to the White House, and on March 25 the President complied with that request.³⁴

Of the editors who discussed the controversy, none was more perceptive than Jonathan Elliot of the *City of Washington Gazette*. Those who regarded Pazos's memorial as nothing but an appeal from the executive to the Congress had missed the point; had it been merely an appeal, it would have found its way to Congress before the President had been addressed. The memorial, Elliot discerned, had a two-fold object: "the one to indicate the principles and character of those who were concerned in the establishment at Amelia Island; the other to reclaim property captured by the patriots from the royal Spaniards, and which, to

33. *House Journal*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 320-21; *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 1251-68; John Forsyth to Nicholas Biddle, March 11, 1818, Nicholas Biddle Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Charles Bagot to Lord Castlereagh, April 7, 1818, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office, 5/131: 86-87. Foreign Office hereinafter cited as FO. See also *New-York Advertiser*, March 17, 1818; *Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, March 14, 1818; *Niles' Weekly Register*, March 14, 21, 1818. An analysis of the geographic distribution of the votes against Forsyth's motion reveals that Pazos had a scattering of support in the middle Atlantic, the southern, and the western states: New Hampshire, 1; New York, 1; New Jersey, 3; Pennsylvania, 4; Virginia, 4; North Carolina, 4; South Carolina, 2; Louisiana, 1; Indiana, 1; Ohio, 1; Kentucky, 5; Tennessee, 1.

34. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 61; *State Papers and Publick Documents*, XIX, 388.

the injury of the patriots, has found its way into the hands of the officers of the United States." The "violent" rejection of the memorial "did not comport with equity" or with the spirit of moderation that ought to distinguish the proceedings of the House. Pazos should have been heard upon that part of his memorial which related to the rights of property.³⁵ Another Washington friend of Pazos aired similar thoughts in a letter to William Duane, editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora and General Advertiser*: "I cannot discover in what part of the Constitution the principle is established, that a *foreign individual*, complaining of injustice and wrong, shall have no means of seeking justice, no medium of complaint; that having been first injured in his *person*, his *rights*, and his *property* – it is made a new crime to complain; and that the absurdity is held forth to him, that for the injury which he declares to be committed by the *president* of the United States, he shall be bound to complain to the president, against the president, for the wrong done by the president, and to demand the president to pass judgment on the president for the wrong, and that there is no other remedy than this!"³⁶

The Washington *Daily National Intelligencer* incorrectly referred to Pazos as "the agent of the republics of Venezuela and Buenos Ayres."³⁷ Pazos pointed out that he was "the deputy of the authorities acting in the name of the republics of Venezuela, New Grenada [*sic*], and Mexico."³⁸ The error was rectified.³⁹

Duane in Philadelphia and Elliot in Washington supported both the *Exposition* and Pazos's memorial. Many people supposed the two works to be one and the same, but Duane tried to dispel this thought. One of his correspondents in Washington, on March 12, blamed President Monroe for the failure.⁴⁰

Monroe, however, neither reconsidered nor regretted his policy. He suspected that Pazos, Clemente, and Aguirre alike had been used "as tools against the Administration" and that their

35. *City of Washington Gazette*, March 13, 1818.

36. *Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, March 16, 1818.

37. *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 12, 1818.

38. Pazos to Elliot, March 12, 1818, in *City of Washington Gazette*, March 12, 1818.

39. *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 13, 1818.

40. *Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, March 18, 19, 1818. See also *Daily National Intelligencer*, February 9, 21, 26, March 2, 9, 1818.

course of action was "in concert with and dictated by Clay."⁴¹ Torres told the President as much and wrote to Juan Germán Roscio in Venezuela about the inability of "Don Quixote" Aguirre or Pazos to negotiate effectively in Washington. Unlike Torres, they never learned the diplomatic lesson of not pressing upon Monroe and Adams anything contrary to their wishes or policy.⁴² Aguirre demanded American recognition of the government in Buenos Aires at almost the same time that Pazos was demanding either the return of Amelia Island and patriot property or proper indemnification. Both men were being used by Clay in his "open and systematic opposition to the measures of the Administration."⁴³ Early in March, Clay declared his intention of broaching the issue of recognition. He first tried to provide for recognition of status that would give the patriots the benefits of an acknowledged independence in American courts. When the House tabled this, he introduced an amendment to an appropriation bill to provide \$18,000 for expenses and salary of a minister to the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata. This strategy also failed by a vote of 115 to 45.⁴⁴

Isaac Munroe of the *Baltimore Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser* who strongly supported the Spanish American patriots, showed no remorse that the Buenos Aires government had not been recognized. The proof of the exercise of arbitrary power by Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, Pazos convinced him, equaled "anything to be met with in the annals of Robespierrean despotism." Munroe emphasized the necessity of a free press in Buenos Aires.⁴⁵ His feelings reflected those of Pazos, who had been exiled by Pueyrredón because of his outspoken criticisms.

The agent had one more card to play before quitting Washington. During the debate on his memorial, Henry St. George Tucker of Virginia had suggested that Pazos withdraw the paper

41. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 472.

42. Torres to Roscio, April 12, 1819, in Guillermo Hernández de Alba, "Origen de la doctrina panamericana de la confederación," *Revista de historia de América*, XXII (December 1946), 385-86, 394. See also Charles N. Bowman, Jr., "Manuel Torres in Philadelphia and the Recognition of Colombian Independence, 1821-1822," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, LXXX (March 1969), 17-38.

43. Bagot to Castlereagh, April 7, 1818, FO 5/131: 87.

44. Griffin, *The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire*, 135-36.

45. *Baltimore Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, March 28, 1818.

and resubmit it "in a more simple and unobjectionable form."⁴⁶ On March 31 Pazos drafted a petition to the House and Senate, on behalf of himself and the other individuals that he represented, asking for compensation for the private property taken by American troops on Amelia Island. Pazos avoided mention of the political questions connected with the occupation and stressed instead the idea that the expedition that originally took Amelia Island was authorized by "the Independent Governments of South America." It had been privately financed by the men engaged in it, although the political sovereignty of the island was reserved to these "Independent Governments." By capture of the island, Spanish property became the property of the captors. Justice, as well as the terms of Aury's capitulation, established a claim on the American government for all private losses suffered as a result of the occupation.⁴⁷

On the morning of April 2, Clay presented Pazos's petition to the House, where it was referred to the Committee on Claims, but the committee failed to report before Congress adjourned April 20. It was understood that Pazos would try to have a hearing at the next session, but he did not. He left Washington on May 2 for Philadelphia. Likely he had decided that indemnification was a lost cause. Pazos reported on May 20 that he was leaving the next week for New York City.⁴⁸ His name appeared occasionally in the news during the summer of 1818.⁴⁹

Pazos lived in New York City for more than a year before beginning an odyssey that took him to Brazil, Portugal, England, France, Belgium, and, finally, back to Buenos Aires. The Amelia Island fiasco had apparently not embittered him at all. Like Pedro Gual, an associate in the enterprise, Pazos announced that he had left the United States with regret.⁵⁰

46. *City of Washington Gazette*, March 14, 1818.

47. Petition of Vicente Pazos, April 2, 1818, Committee on Claims, H.R. 15A-G1.1, pp. 229-32, National Archives.

48. *House Journal*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., p. 411; *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 1666; *City of Washington Gazette*, April 3, May 5, 1818; *Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, April 10, 1818; Pazos to Thornton, May 20, 1818, Thornton Papers, V, 820.

49. *Philadelphia Democratic Press*, July 29, 1818; *City of Washington Gazette*, August 6, 1818.

50. *City of Washington Gazette*, April 16, 1818.