

**- 23 -****Year 1887****823. MR. GARDINER PEARCE TO MR. TURNER**  
**[1 January 1887]**

*Pomeroon District, January 1, 1887.*

Sir,

Attached is a letter from the catechist at Waini River Mission reporting arrival of Spanish steamer there, and that the Spaniards scared the people by saying the lands belong to them, not the English. The messenger who brought the letter told me it was a large steamer, with plenty people; could not say whether they were soldiers, but the Spaniards told them they would return next week to take the lands, and also Waramira Mission in the Morucca River. . . .

(Signed) W. GARDINER PEARCE, C.T.

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**824. SEÑORES JESUS MUÑOZ TEBAR AND SANTIAGO RODIL TO SEÑOR MANUEL ANDRADE, VENEZUELAN ACTING CONSUL IN GEORGETOWN**  
**[1 January 1887]**

*On board the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", anchored in the River Demerara, off Georgetown, January 1, 1887.*

The Undersigned, as you, have seen by the credentials presented to you, have been commissioned by the President of the United States of Venezuela to investigate with a view to deciding certain affairs which we here beg to lay before you.

Whereas it has become an urgent necessity for the safe navigation of the River Orinoco, now performed by numerous vessels, that a lighthouse be immediately erected at Barima Point, the President of the Republic has decided to erect the same, the selection and survey of a convenient spot and the construction of this lighthouse being one of the objects of the Commission.

However, as it has reached the notice of the Government of the Republic that on the Amacura, Barima, Guaima, and other river districts, there are at present several parties who it is said have been appointed Rural Constables by the British authorities of the Colony, the President of the Republic has also resolved that these facts be investigated, and that orders be given for the immediate reorganization of the parishes of the territory situated on the banks of the said rivers; this likewise is included in the instructions received by the Commissioners.

In virtue, therefore, of these instructions, and after the preliminary works of the erection of a lighthouse at Punta Barima had been made, we proceeded to survey the Amacura River, the Brazo Barima, the Mora passage, and the Barima, Aruca and Guaima Rivers; and in fact, Sir, we

found in the neighbourhood of the Amacura a wooden house thatched with straw, said to have been built by orders of the authorities of this Colony, and two men who handed us their precepts as Rural Constables, signed by Michael McTurk, Stipendiary Magistrate. In the neighbourhood of Aruca we were informed there was another Rural Constable, whom, however, we were unable to see, as he had come down to town. In Cuabana, on the banks of the Guaima River, a missionary, the Rev. Walter Heard, had some seven years ago built with public subscriptions a small house that is in actual use as a church and school-room, the salary of the schoolmaster being defrayed by some religious body; and in the register of marriages kept there it is stated that the village forms part of the county of Essequibo.

In all those places, and acting upon the instructions we received from the President of the Republic, we have protested in the name of Venezuela against such proceedings, and declared to the inhabitants that all those districts belong to Venezuela, and not to Her Britannic Majesty.

Allow us, Sir, to relate in as concise a form as possible the chief points of the question in litigation.

You are well aware of the fact that the boundaries between Venezuela and British Guiana have not yet been settled. Venezuela has always sustained as its boundary the left bank of the Essequibo, but since 1803, Great Britain, adducing the existence of Dutch forts beyond the Essequibo River, took possession of a considerable extent of land.

Since that time Venezuela has been protesting against such encroachments on her territory, and has been endeavouring to arrange a Treaty of Limits between the two countries.

In 1841 Schomburgk, the engineer who surveyed the country, fixed the most preposterous boundaries to the Colony, guiding himself not by any previous facts or documents whatsoever, but simply by geographical considerations. He even erected a look-out, posts, and other marks of dominion on Barima Point. In consequence, however, at the prompt and just remonstrances of the Venezuelan Government, these pretensions were abandoned, and negotiations for a Treaty of Limits were entered into.

The Venezuelan Plenipotentiary proposed that the Essequibo should be the boundary of the two countries, and Lord Aberdeen that it should commence at the Moroco River. The death of the Venezuelan plenipotentiary, Dr. Fortique, unfortunately put a stop to these negotiations.

In 1881 Lord Granville rejected the longitudinal boundary of his predecessor, and urged that the line should be drawn more to the northward of the Moroco, at a spot 29 miles to the east of the right bank of the Barima River. Venezuela has never entertained such a proposal, but has urged that the matter be referred to a Court of Arbitration, is the most satisfactory, and rational manner of settling a question of frontiers between the two nations whose mutual relations of friendship have ever been and are still on the most cordial footing.

There exists a Convention proposed in November 1850, by the Honourable Mr. Wilson, British Chargé d'Affaires at Caracas, who in consequence of the question being raised of the erection of a fort at Barima Point, declared in the name of his Government that they had not the intention of occupying or usurping the lands in dispute, and that no order or sanction would be given to such acts of occupation or encroachment on the part of their authorities. The same declaration he solicited and obtained from the Government of Venezuela.

But it must be remarked, Sir, that Venezuela has never considered as territory in dispute the districts watered by the Rivers Amacura, Barima, and Guaima.

It is evident that England has never considered herself "Joint Suzerain" ("Condueña") with

Venezuela of the mouths of the Orinoco, and the River Amacura discharges its waters some distance above the great mouth. Barima Point juts out into that magnificent river, and Brazo Barima with the Mora Guana passage are but channels of the same Orinoco River on its right bank in an easterly direction, as are likewise the Macareo, Pedermales, and other channels, which, flowing northward into the Gulf of Paria, form together the Great Delta of the Orinoco River, of which Venezuela has been the exclusive and sole mistress.

As one of the many proofs that this is a fact recognized by Great Britain, we beg to inclose copy of the official note of the 26th May, 1836, sent through the British Legation in Caracas, earnestly requesting the construction of a beacon at Barima Point.

Recent intelligence received by the Government of Venezuela is to the effect that gold is being dug in our territory situated between the Cuyuni, Massaruni, and Puruni Rivers, and that a large quantity of that precious metal has been exported through the custom-house of this city.

One of the instructions of the Commission confided to the Undersigned is that in case the late invasion our territory be true, as it appears to be, we should repair to British Guiana, and there lay a formal statement of the matter before you, so that you may immediately transmit it to his Excellency the Governor of the Colony, requesting him to be pleased to send you an answer to these facts as herein presented to your consideration.

As soon as this answer is received, and we hope you will transmit us a copy of it at your earliest convenience, we return immediately to Venezuela.

Moreover, Sir, you will be kind enough to send us a note stating all you know regarding the subject of this communication, and accompanying it with all the official documents you may obtain. . .

(Signed) JESUS MUÑOZ TEBAR  
SANTIAGO RODIL

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***Inclosure: Sir Robert Ker Porter, British Envoy in Caracas, to Señor José Gallegos, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 May 1836*** [Document No. 583 in *From 1803 to 1840*]

**825. SEÑOR MANUEL ANDRADE, VENEZUELAN ACTING CONSUL IN GEORGETOWN, TO SIR HENRY IRVING, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA**  
[5 January 1887]

*Consulate of the United States of Venezuela,  
Georgetown, Demerara, January 5, 1887*

Your Excellency,

I have the honour of informing you that on the 31st ultimo the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario" arrived in the River Demerara, having on board the Commissioners Señores Dr. Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil, who have been sent here on an important mission. In pursuance of the orders received from his Excellency the President of the United States of Venezuela

on the 1st instant, the Commissioners handed in to me an official note, with instructions to transmit your Excellency a copy of it with all possible dispatch. This I would have immediately done, but unfortunately I have not yet received my exequatur, and only yesterday I obtained your Excellency's authorization to act provisionally pending the receipt of my exequatur as Consul for the United States of Venezuela.

I now have the honour of transcribing here the official note of the said Commissioners, which, copied literally, is as follows: –

*[Here follows the Spanish text.]*

This is the full text of the original under reference; and with a view to render this document intelligible to your Excellency, and trusting the same will facilitate an early answer, I beg to append herewith a translation of the note under consideration. . . .

(Signed) MANUEL L. R. ANDRADE  
Acting Consul

**826. MR. CHARLES BRUCE, GOVERNMENT SECRETARY OF BRITISH GUIANA,  
TO SEÑOR MANUEL ANDRADE, VENEZUELAN ACTING CONSUL IN  
GEORGETOWN**

**[6 January 1887]**

*Government Secretary's Office, Georgetown, Demerara, January 6, 1887*

Sir,

I am directed by his Excellency the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, reporting the arrival here, on the 31st ultimo, of the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", having on board Señores Dr. Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil. Your letter embodies an official note in which those gentlemen have communicated to you the object of their visit to British Guiana.

I am desired, in reply, to refer you to the notice dated the 21st October, 1886, published in the *London Gazette* by authority of Her Majesty's Government, of which a copy is herewith inclosed, and to state that the districts referred to in the official note inclosed in your letter are included within the limits as defined by the terms of that Notice, and form part of the Colony of British Guiana. . . .

(Signed) CHAS. BRUCE

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***Inclosure: Extract from the London Gazette, 22 October 1886*** [Document No. 811 in *Year 1886*].

**827. SEÑOR MANUEL ANDRADE, VENEZUELAN ACTING CONSUL IN GEORGETOWN, TO SIR HENRY IRVING, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA**  
[7 January 1887]

*Consulate of the United States of Venezuela, Georgetown, Demerara, January 7, 1887.*

Your Excellency,

I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, and beg to inform you that I have immediately communicated it to the Commissioners, Señores Drs. Jesus Munoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil, who, as soon as their vessel has finished taking in her supplies of coals and provisions, will leave for Caracas to lay the result of their mission before their Government. . .

(Signed) MANUEL L. R. ANDRADE  
Acting Consul

**828. SIR HENRY IRVING, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO MR. EDWARD STANHOPE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES**  
[7 January 1887]

*Government House, Georgetown, Demerara, January 7, 1887.*

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a letter from the Acting Consul for Venezuela, reporting the arrival at Georgetown on the 31st ultimo of the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", and embodying an official note addressed to him by two gentlemen on board that vessel, Dr. Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Señor Santiago Rodil, who represent themselves to be Commissioners of the Venezuelan Government, and the object of whose mission is set forth in their official note.

2. I also inclose copy of my reply to the Acting Consul.

3. I further inclose copies of certain reports which have reached me relative to proceedings of the "Centenario" in the districts of the Amacura, Barima, and Waini Rivers.

4. The action taken by the Venezuelan Government, and the proceedings of the Commissioners, as exhibited in these papers, appear to be a direct challenge of the action of Her Majesty's Government, and in contravention of the terms of the Notice issued by their Authority under date the 21st October, 1886, and published in the *London Gazette*, and in this Colony.

5. It is manifestly impossible that the present position can be allowed to continue, in which the British subjects inhabiting districts declared by Her Majesty's Government to be within the limits of British Guiana are required by the Venezuelan Government, with an exhibition of armed force, to render obedience to them.

6. Deeming it my duty to convey to you the earliest possible intimation of these proceedings, I yesterday addressed to you the telegram, of which copy is inclosed,\* giving an outline of the

facts, and suggesting that the best mode of counteracting the action of the Venezuelan Government, and, I may add, of allaying excitement and alarm, would be the stationing for a time of one of Her Majesty's ships of war in the neighbourhood.

7. The Admiral is now at Barbados, and is, I understand, to visit this Colony on the 22nd instant. . .

(Signed) HENRY T. IRVING

[\*Not included]

**829. SIR HENRY IRVING, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO MR. EDWARD STANHOPE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES**

**[7 January 1887]**

*Government House, Georgetown, Demerara, January 7, 1887.*

Sir,

In continuation of my despatch of this date on the subject of the visit of the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", I have the honour to transmit to you the reply which I have received from the Acting Consul for Venezuela to my answer to his communication embodying the official note of the two gentlemen representing themselves to be Commissioners of the Venezuelan Government.

I also inclose a written statement which has been handed to the Government Secretary by Rural Constable Neames to the effect that Constables or Commissioners have been appointed by Venezuelan authority in these districts.

In reference to Neames' statement, I have to add to it that he states verbally that such Constables or Commissioners have instructions not to act on their commissions without further orders. . .

(Signed) HENRY T. IRVING

**830. SIR HENRY IRVING, GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA, TO MR. EDWARD STANHOPE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES**

**[7 January 1887]**

*Government House, Georgetown, Demerara, January 7, 1887.*

Sir,

With reference to my despatches of the 7th instant, relative to the proceedings of the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", and of certain Venezuelan Commissioners, on board of that vessel, in the Amacura, Barima, and Waini Rivers, I have the honour to state that I propose to direct the Stipendiary Magistrate to proceed as soon as possible to those districts, with a view to allay any uncertainty or uneasiness as regards their position which the action of the Venezuelan Com-

missioners may have occasioned in the minds of the inhabitants, and to assure them of the protection of Her Majesty's Government; and, further, that I propose to dispatch to the frontier a moderate force of police to maintain order and to prevent any further trespass on this territory. . .

(Signed) HENRY T. IRVING

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**831. MR. FRANCIS NEAMES, RURAL CONSTABLE, TO MR. CHARLES BRUCE,  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARY OF BRITISH GUIANA**

**[7 January 1887]**

*Georgetown, Demerara, January 7, 1887.*

Sir,

On the 24th December, 1886, there was a Spanish steam-boat entered the Amacura River from Caracas, having on board three Commissioners, viz., Jesus Muñoz Tebar, Santiago Rodil, and another, name unknown, and inquired from me who appointed me as Rural Constable in that district, and the time of my appointment. I forwarded my precept to them, and they took a copy of it. They then asked who built the station there. I replied the Colony of British Guiana. They asked how long. I said since last year, August. They asked me how many times they have held Court there. I told them three times. They have appointed seven Constables or Commissaires to act and rule there as territories of Republic of Venezuela, and that they are to come to Georgetown and have the boundaries measured, as they say that they claim up to Essequibo, but as the English have so many buildings, they claim only Amacura, Barima, and Waini River. . . .

(Signed) FRANCIS STEPHEN NEAMES, R. C.

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**832. SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**

**[8 January 1887]**

*(Translation: Original – Spanish)*

*Caracas, January 8, 1887.*

Your Excellency,

I have had the honour to receive your note, dated the 9th ultimo, in answer to the request of the Government for information from the Legation regarding certain proceedings on the part of British authorities.

The President of the Republic, to whom I read that answer, has directed me to state to you his regrets that the friendly spirit by which he was moved in imparting to you the information which he had received, and his proposal to send an engineer and new officials to Barima, Amacura, and

other places, should have proved unavailing. You refuse to give the explanation which perhaps might have modified that intention either materially or as regards the time of its execution, for which reason his Excellency has commanded me to here point out that for all time the interview of the 6th initiated by him and the note from this Department, in which was summed up what passed thereat, will remain as proof of the loyal frankness and conciliatory wishes of the Head of the Government of Venezuela in this affair.

I should here conclude, had you not added two remarks notwithstanding your declaration to decline what was asked, and to discontinue the discussion, but those remarks call for some explanation.

In the first place, you deny my assertion touching the territory situated between the Rivers Barima and Amacura, alleging that it was already mentioned in Lord Aberdeen's note to Señor Fortique of the 30th March, 1844, as part of British Guiana.

Venezuela has never admitted, nor will ever admit, that Dutch Guiana bordered on the Orinoco; and it results from the note with which Señor Fortique commenced the negotiation of limits, as well as from preceding ones in which he called for the removal of flags, posts, and marks placed in 1841 by the Engineer Schomburgk at Barima and other places, and from the conference which took place on the subject with their Excellencies the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Colonies.

It was precisely the placing of such marks of foreign dominion in the places mentioned to which Great Britain holds no title, which give rise to such serious feeling in Venezuela, and led to the emission of MM. José Santiago Rodriguez and Juan José Romero to Demerara in the capacity of Commissioners to ask for explanations regarding these astounding acts. In a note of the 11th December, 1842, Lord Aberdeen wrote to Señor Fortique that the marks had been placed as a means of enabling his Government to discuss the question of limits with the Government of Venezuela, that they were placed for this very purpose, and not, as Venezuela seemed to fear, for the purpose of establishing dominion and authority on the part of Great Britain.

Lord Aberdeen added that he had learnt with pleasure that the two Commissioners sent by the Republic to British Guiana were enabled to convince themselves by the statements of the Governor of that Colony that Barima Point had not been occupied by British authorities.

The usurpations sanctioned by Spain by the Treaty of Munster were those concerning the Colonies of Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, immediately confirmed by the Convention of Extradition concluded at Aranjuez, whence you will see that the Dutch Colonies of Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, with Curaçoa and San Eustaquio, are specified in contradistinction to the Spanish Colonies of the Orinoco, Coro, and Puerto Rico. Of said Dutch Colonies, the Netherlands transferred to His Britannic Majesty, by the Treaty of London of the 13th August, 1814, those of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice. Whence comes, therefore, British right over the Spanish Colonies of the Orinoco?

Your second remark is to the effect that the British Agent in Caracas, namely, Sir Robert Ker Porter, in 1836 Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain in this Republic, proceeded to request its Government to place a lighthouse at Barima Point without the knowledge or authority of his Government, and you add, by quoting a note of the Legation of the 26th September, 1851, to this Department, that the doctrine that every act and word of a Diplomatic Agent binds his Government is inconsistent with international law, it being well known that not even a Treaty concluded by a Plenipotentiary is valid without it be ratified by his Government.



On these points the President commands me to declare it inconceivable (inadmissible) to the Government of Venezuela that during the long space of fifty years since the date of the communication of Sir Robert, the Government of Great Britain, informed by him or his successors of the step he had taken, should not have notified to Venezuela the fact of that want of authority of which, after fifty years, you now for the first time inform her, but which she had no ground for presuming. . .

(Signed) DIEGO B. URBANEJA

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**833. THE EARL OF IDDESLEIGH, BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[12 January 1887]

*Foreign Office, January 12, 1887.*

Sir,

Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the despatch of the 7th ultimo, in which you report the circumstances under which President Guzman Blanco made to you the intimation, of which you informed me by telegraph on the same day, that the Venezuelan Government intended to erect at once a lighthouse at Barima Point; and that, should any opposition be made by Great Britain, the President would break off relations with Her Majesty's Government.

In the first, place, I have to acquaint you that the language which you inform me you held at your interview with General Guzman Blanco has the approval of Her Majesty's Government; they do not, however, wish you to say anything further concerning the pursuit of fugitives into the disputed territory by the Venezuelan police, as it is not desirable to encourage the Venezuelan Government to adopt such action; and I now proceed to give you their instructions as to the reply which you should make to the communication from the Government of Venezuela.

You will inform President Blanco that the request by the British Consul for the erection of such a lighthouse in 1836, to which his Excellency referred in conversation with you as justifying the intention which he announced, was unknown to, and unauthorized, by the British Government of the day; that an attempt to erect such a lighthouse without the consent of Her Majesty's Government would be a departure from the reciprocal engagement taken by the Governments of Venezuela and England in 1850 not to occupy or encroach upon the territory in dispute between the two countries; and that Her Majesty's Government would be justified in resisting such a proceeding as an act of aggression on the part of Venezuela. Nevertheless, as it appears that a light at Barima Point would render the navigation of the Orinoco River safer, and thus be of undoubted benefit to commerce generally, Her Majesty's Government do not desire unduly to insist on their rights, and I have to instruct you to inform President Blanco that they will give their consent to the erection of a light at Barima Point on condition that an arrangement shall be come to between the two Governments as to the quantity of land to be occupied for the purpose, and that the Venezuelan Government shall give a formal engagement in writing that the placing

of the light will in no way be held as prejudicing the British claim to the territory in dispute, of which Barima Point forms a part, nor be construed hereafter as evidence of any right on the part of Venezuela to Barima Point, nor as an acquiescence by Great Britain in such an assumption.

On receiving such written assurances, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to instruct the British local authorities not to offer any opposition to the erection of the proposed light, but you should warn the Venezuelan Government against the danger of their taking action in the matter without a previous understanding with this country. . .

(Signed) IDDESLEIGH

**834. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**[19 January 1887]**

*Caracas, January 19, 1887.*

Señor Ministro,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 8th instant on the subject of my interview of the 6th ultimo with the President of the Republic, and must express to you my astonishment at one of the statements it contains, namely, that it was owing to my neglect to furnish explanations regarding certain alleged proceedings on the part of British authorities in Guiana, and my refusal to enter upon a discussion of the question generally, that the President was induced to persist in his intention to occupy Barima Point by erecting there a lighthouse.

Permit me, Sir, to state briefly my recollections of the main features of the interview in question.

The President commenced by saying he had received news of the gravest kind that British authorities were in actual occupation of the territory lying between the Barima and Amacura Rivers – territory which his Excellency alleged, and I denied, belonged to Venezuela and had never been disputed; and he asked me to explain such conduct. To this I replied that I was unable to do so, for the reason that I had until that moment, not heard a single word on the subject of the alleged occupation; and I suggested that perhaps there might have been one of the usual police expeditions in pursuit of criminals. His Excellency then proceeded to inform me that he intended immediately to occupy Barima Point by erecting there a lighthouse, and he should, he continued, instantly break off relations with Great Britain if opposed.

Your Excellency will doubtless recollect that, at this stage of the interview, I ventured to remonstrate with the President on his determination to precipitate matters, and I asked for time in order to communicate by telegraph with Her Majesty's Government and await an answer. But his Excellency refused on the grounds, he said, that he had determined to bring this long-pending question at once to an issue; and on my asking, at the termination of the interview, if he authorized me to telegraph to Her Majesty's Government in the sense of what he had just stated, his Excellency answered in the affirmative.

Your Excellency will also recollect that the day following I called at the Department; where I

was received by yourself and Señor Seijas; that I besought you to speak with the President, offering to keep back for twenty-four hours my telegram to Her Majesty's Government, which I did accordingly, but to no purpose, and so my message to England was at last dispatched.

I trust your Excellency will now perceive not only how impossible it was to supply the information asked for, but how difficult it would have been for me, consistently with my duties, to have entered, unauthorized by my Government, upon a discussion of a question of which the aspect was so entirely changed by this new and unexpected resolve on the part of the President of the Republic. . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

P.S – Your Excellency mentions in the second paragraph of your note under acknowledgment the sending of new functionaries to Barima, etc; I shall be obliged if your Excellency will inform me when such functionaries were sent there on former occasions, and how long they remained.

F. R. ST. J.

**835. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARCAS, TO SIR JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE, UNDER-SECRETARY AT THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE**  
**[19 January 1887]**

*Caracas, January 19, 1887.*

Sir,

Referring to my despatch to the late Earl of Iddesleigh of the 10th December last, I have the honour to inclose, in translation, a further note addressed to me by the Venezuelan Government on the subject of the contemplated occupation of Barima Point.

If I am not mistaken, this note implies hesitation on the part of the President of Venezuela to carry out a threat which could only result in determining Her Majesty's Government to withdraw their offer of surrendering the lower bank of the Orinoco River, in compliance with the wishes, not of those living on the spot, and directly concerned, but of the Venezuelan Government, and it attempts to effect a retreat from a difficult position by throwing all the blame on me for having failed to supply to the Venezuelan Government the explanations asked for, and for refusing to discuss the question without authority.

In the leading portion the phrase "his" (the President's) "proposal to send an engineer and new officials to Barima" is evidently intended to convey the idea, when published, that the Barima River is habitually occupied by Venezuelan officials, and there is therefore no departure from custom in the proposed measure. In a subsequent paragraph, though allusion is made to Lord Aberdeen's note of 1844, which I had quoted in proof of what Great Britain claimed many years ago as British Guiana, it is endeavoured to show that the removal, at the request of the Venezuelan Representative, of the flags, posts, and marks placed by Sir Robert Schomburgk in 1841 was proof of our admission that the territory belonged to Venezuela; and in the concluding

part it is affirmed, despite the explanations given by me, in my note of the 10th December, 1886 (see my despatch to Lord Iddesleigh of the 10th December); that my statement that Sir Robert Porter recommended to the Venezuelan Government the erection of a lighthouse at Barima Point without authority from Her Majesty's Government is unworthy of credit.

In order to avoid any possible doubt, as to what really passed at my interview of the 6th December with the President, I deemed it right, without entering into discussion or taking any further notice of the frivolous plea that Sir Robert Porter's suggestion of 1836 justifies the occupation of Barima Point by Venezuela, to place on record a brief account of my interview, firstly with the President; and then with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, already reported in my despatch to the Earl of Iddesleigh No. 106 of the 7th December last. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

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***Inclosure 1: Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, 8 January 1887*** [Document No. 832 above].

***Inclosure 2: Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, to Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, 19 January 1887*** [Document No. 834 above].

### 836. COLONIAL OFFICE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

[25 January 1887]

*Downing Street, January 25, 1887.*

Sir,

I am directed by Secretary Sir Henry Holland to transmit to you, to be laid before the Marquess of Salisbury, copies of three despatches from the Governor of British Guiana relative to the arrival at Georgetown of the Venezuelan gun-boat "Centenario", with Commissioners from the Government of Venezuela, and the proceedings of the gun-boat on the coasts claimed by the Colony, and of a letter addressed to the Admiralty on the 24th instant.

I am also to suggest that Her Majesty's Minister at Caracas should be instructed to inform the Venezuelan Government that Her Majesty's Government cannot permit any interference with British subjects in the territory claimed by Great Britain. . . .

(Signed) EDWARD WINGFIELD

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***Inclosure 1: Sir Henry Irving, Governor of British Guiana, to Mr. Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7 January 1887*** [Document No. 828 above].

***Inclosure 2: Señor Manuel Andrade, Venezuelan Acting Consul in Georgetown, to Sir Henry Irving, Governor of British Guiana, 5 January 1887*** [Document No. 825 above].

***Inclosure 3: Señores Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil to Señor Manuel Andrade, Venezuelan Acting Consul In Georgetown, 1 January 1887*** [Document No. 824 above].

***Inclosure 4: Sir Robert Ker Porter, British Envoy in Caracas, to Señor José Gallegos, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 May 1836*** [Document No. 583 in *From 1803 to 1840*]

***Inclosure 5: Señores Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil to Señores Nuñez and Geffrie, 24 December 1886*** [Document No. 818 in *Year 1886*].

***Inclosure 6: Mr. Charles Bruce, Government Secretary of British Guiana, to Señor Manuel Andrade, Venezuelan Acting Consul in Georgetown, 6 January 1887*** [Document No. 826 above].

***Inclosure 7: Mr. Pearce to Mr. Turner, undated – but believed to be 27 December 1886*** [Document No. 820 in *Year 1886*].

***Inclosure 8: Mr. Gardiner Pearce to Mr. Turner, 1 January 1887*** [Document No. 823 above].

***Inclosure 9: Mr Jacobus Lugles, the catechist, Waini River Mission, to Mr. Pearce, 27 December 1886*** [Document No. 821 in *Year 1886*]

***Inclosure 10: Sir Henry Irving, Governor of British Guiana, to Mr. Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7 January 1887*** [Document No. 829 above]

***Inclosure 11: Señor Manuel Andrade, Venezuelan Acting Consul in Georgetown, to Sir Henry Irving, Governor of British Guiana, 7 January 1887*** [Document No. 827 above].

***Inclosure 12: Mr. Francis Neames, Rural Constable, to Mr. Charles Bruce, Government Secretary of British Guiana, 7 January 1887*** [Document No. 831 above].

***Inclosure 13: Mr. Francis Stephen Neames, Rural Constable, to Señores Jesus Muñoz Tebar and Santiago Rodil, 24 December 1886*** [Document No. 819 in *Year 1886*].

***Inclosure 14: Sir Henry Irving, Governor of British Guiana, to Mr. Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7 January 1887*** [Document No. 830 above].

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**837. SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[26 January 1887]

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, January 26, 1887.*

Sir,

In accordance with what was communicated to you by this Department on the 7th December last, the President of the Republic sent as Commissioners to Barima and other spots, with the object already explained, Engineer Dr. Jesus Muñoz Tebar and General Santiago Rodil.

The Head of the Commission has just returned here, and has informed the Government of its result.

Unfortunately, the grave reports which caused that step are confirmed.

Firstly, the Commission found in the neighbourhood of the right bank of the River Amacura two Commissaries, Messrs. Francis Stephen Neame and J. B. Jeffrey.

These produced their warrants as rural constables, sent by Mr. Michael McTurk, who styles himself as Her Majesty's Stipendiary Magistrate in and for the Colony of British Guiana. The warrants are dated the 1st March, 1885, and the 6th September, 1886, respectively.

In reply to a communication from the Commissioners, the Commissaries stated that they had not received instructions to prevent the Venezuelan authorities of the left bank from descending the Amacura, but that they were authorized to prevent any Venezuelan vessel from selling rum of spirituous liquors on British territory, and they added that any one selling rum without a licence to that effect issued by the Government (of Demerara) could be arrested at any time.

In the said village of Amacura the Commission took declarations on oath from the Venezuelan Commissary, Mr. Robert Wells, and Messrs. Aniceto Ramuñez and Alfonso Figueredo.

Their depositions corroborated the capture and arrest of the first in that same place, his conveyance to Georgetown and confinement in the prison of that place for two months, his trial, and sentence to a fine of 20 dollars, and, moreover, established the fact of the existence of a wooden house with a tiled roof, which serves as a public office, flies the British flag, was built by order and at the expense of the Colonial Government, and was seen by the Commissioners. It was in the same manner also proved that an English revenue-cutter, named "Transfer," had on various occasions made voyages to the Amacura, conveying the British Magistrate and armed police functionaries, with the object of inquiring into, judging, and deciding criminal and police cases; and that vessels legally dispatched from Ciudad Bolivar are registered in Amacura as well as Barima, and are prohibited from selling their goods and continuing their course on the Barima unless in ballast, requiring them, in order to trade, that they obtain permission in Georgetown.

The Commissioners proceeded to the right bank of the Amacura, where they put themselves in communication, written and verbal, with the said Commissaries. From thence they proceeded to the neighbourhood of Acura, where they were told there was a Commissary, named Harrington, who was at that time absent, and that a Judge of the Peace was there until three months previously on account of the assassination of a coolie, and that the culprit was arrested and conveyed to Georgetown for trial. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

In Cuabana, a village situated on the right bank of the River Guainia, they found a shed which serves for a Protestant church and public school, built under the superintendence of the missionary, Walter Heard. In the register of marriages found there it is stated that the place pertains to the county of Essequibo. No Commissary was found in the place.

Moreover, according to information obtained from the schoolmaster, Mr. Jacob Inglis, the Colonial Government keeps one in the village of Guaramuri, on the bank of the River Moruca. The Commission also ascertained that gold-mines are worked under English authority in our territory situated between the Rivers Cuyuni, Maiaruni, and Puruni, and that a great quantity of that mineral has been already exported through the English Custom-house.

Lastly, the Commission proceeded to Georgetown, and, through the Venezuelan Consulate in that town, made the Governor of Demerara acquainted with the duty with which they were charged, what, by virtue of it, they had done, and with the (fact of the) proved violation of Venezuelan territory.

The Secretary of said British functionary confined himself to replying on the 6th of this month that he inclosed a Notice published in the *London Gazette* on the 21st October, 1886, of which he sent a copy, and he declared that the districts referred to in the official note of the Commission are within the limits indicated by the terms of the Notice, and form a part of the Colony of British Guiana.

In the Notice it is proclaimed and notified that the limits of British Guiana, being in dispute between the Government of Her Majesty and that of Venezuela, and it having come to the knowledge of Her Majesty that the Government of Venezuela has granted and intends to grant concessions of land within the territory claimed by the Government of Her Majesty, such titles will not be admitted nor recognized, and that all persons taking possession of such lands, or exercising in them any right on the strength of such titles, will be tried as trespassers.

In conclusion, it is stated that in the Library of the Colonial Office, Downing Street, or in the Secretariat of the Government in Georgetown, British Guiana, may be seen a map which indicates the limits between British Guiana and Venezuela as claimed by Her Majesty's Government.

It is incomprehensible why in the said Notice these limits are not specified, and why they are left in a map separated from the Notice to which they relate.

Well, then, by what is seen there remains not the slightest doubt that an extensive territory in Venezuela and the great artery on the north of the Continent of South America, the Orinoco, are practically under the authority of Great Britain, on the specious ground that there exists a dispute of limits between the Republic and Her Britannic Majesty.

The logical conclusion from the existence of a difference respecting the proprietorship of land and water should be all the more reason for neutralizing by common accord the places in dispute, pending a decision of the same. But for one of the litigants to determine by himself, and without consideration of the rights of the other, upon the appropriation of the object in dispute, is by the light of all jurisprudence an unjustifiable violation of the most sacred law of nations, and is a mortal wound (inflicted) on the sovereignty of the Republic.

Great Britain has herself, in an analogous case, condemned the very act which she has now committed against Venezuela.

According to the Decree issued by the King of Spain in 1768 the Province of Guiana was bordered on the south by the Amazon and on the east by the Atlantic.

So that the acquisitions of other Powers within these limits were unlawful, except such as were afterwards recognized by that Monarchy. As regards the Netherlands, to whose rights Great Britain succeeded, all that was left in their power of the said territory were the establishments of Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, of which the Dutch had taken possession during

their long war with their former Suzerain, which ended with the Treaty of Munster of 1648.

That the Dutch then possessed no other Colonies than those mentioned is proved by the Convention of Extradition concluded in Aranjuez between Spain and the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth century, on the 23rd June, 1791, in which only these are named.

And it is to be observed that the Dutch could not encroach upon the Spanish possessions, because Article VI of the Treaty of Munster forbade them to navigate and trade thither; notwithstanding this they continued to advance; but Spain, far from consenting to fresh usurpations, recalled them by force.

Lord Aberdeen himself mentions in his note of the 30th March, 1844, to M. Fortique, that in 1797 the attack by Spain of the fort of New Zealand, without attaching importance to its unfavourable result [*sic*].

What it is endeavoured to prove is not the superiority of her forces over the Dutch garrison, but the opposition made to the latter's advances. Therefore, all beyond the Essequibo was outside the jurisdiction of Holland, who, on her side, only ceded to Great Britain in 1814 the establishments of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice.

In 1844 Lord Aberdeen proposed as limit the Moroco.

In 1851 Lord Granville suggested to Venezuela a line commencing 29 miles east of the eastern bank of the Barima.

In 1886 Lord Rosebery suggested a frontier which should start from the sea-shore to the west of the River Guainia.

In 1868, the Governor of Demerara, in a Decree on land survey, fixed none more northerly than the Pomaroon.

It was on the 6th November, 1886, when on the repeal of that Decree, by order of Her Majesty's Government, that he ordered new surveys reaching the eastern bank of the Amacura.

It was also in 1885 and 1886 that he named Commissaries for the Amacura.

In 1841 the Engineer Schomburgk capriciously fixed the frontier claimed today by Her Majesty, placing posts and other marks.

The Republic, being alarmed by such acts, sent two Commissioners to Demerara to demand explanations, and ordered their Minister in London to request that the marks be removed.

The Governor of Demerara stated to the Commissioners that, as the frontier was undefined and a matter of question, the work of Mr. Schomburgk was not and could not have been made with the idea of taking possession of the line, but, as a simple indication of the line presumed on the part of British Guiana, and that in the meantime, while the frontier remained undetermined, the Government of Venezuela might rest assured that no fort should be ordered to be built on the territory referred to, nor should any troops or forces be sent there.

On his part Lord Aberdeen replied that the marks placed by Mr. Schomburgk, in various parts of the country which he had explored, were only a preliminary step subject to future discussion by the two Governments; that they were the only practicable means of preparing oneself for the discussion of the question of the frontier with the Government of Venezuela; and they were placed with this express object, and not as stated by the Venezuelan Government, with the intention of establishing the dominion and rule of Great Britain.

He added that he was pleased to learn, by a note from Señor Fortique, that the two Commissioners sent by this Government to British Guiana were able to convince themselves, from the statements of the Governor of that Colony, that Barima Point had not been occupied by British



functionaries. This was written on the 11th December, 1841.

Soon after, on the 31st January, 1842, Lord Aberdeen ordered the marks to be removed, in order to put an end to the ill-feeling which existed in Venezuela in consequence of the proceedings of Mr. Schomburgk, and in compliance with the renewed representations of Señor Fortique; how to reconcile, therefore, this proceeding, at a time when it was held that during dispute it was impossible to take possession of the territory, with the act of today, by which the British Government has arrogated to itself the dominion of that which it professes to claim, exceeds the understanding of Venezuela.

And I must here remark that the latter never understood that the proprietorship of the places situated on this side of the mouth of the Pomaroon was ever in dispute, but only those to be found between this river and the Essequibo, and it very clearly follows from the proposal of Lord Aberdeen that it was agreed that the mouth of the Moroco should constitute the western limit of the British possessions.

However, even admitting, by way of argument, that the territory in dispute was more extended, this would not have authorized Great Britain in occupying it, not only for the reason of the thing in itself, but because she bound herself not to do so.

I refer to the Convention concluded in November 1850 by exchange of notes with Mr. Wilson, Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain, at his request, and in pursuance of clear instructions from his Government. He declared the rumours then bruited about here, that Great Britain desired to claim Venezuelan Guiana, to be without foundation and the reverse of true. He followed up this statement by declaring that Great Britain would neither occupy nor usurp the territory in dispute, nor order such occupations or usurpations, nor authorize them on the part of her authorities, and she requested and obtained from Venezuela similar assurances.

Hence it is clear that Great Britain has violated this Agreement, which was her work; that she has penetrated into forbidden places, visited the Rivers Guainia, Morazuana, and Amacura, and Barima Creek, affixing Notices on the trees on the river banks that her laws were there enforced; that she named Commissaries; carrying off a Venezuelan Commissary on pretext that he had maltreated a Portuguese, even though within jurisdiction of the Republic, conveying him to Georgetown, imprisoning him, trying him, and inflicting on him the fine of 20 dollars; that she established in Amacura a public office, traversing the space lying between it and the Barima by means of the coastguard schooner "Transfer"; that she included those places within the district of the Governor of Demerara, sending thither a Magistrate in order to inquire into and decide police and criminal cases; that she authorized the working of mines on Venezuelan territory, and finally appropriated it on the ground, as alleged, that the dispute of limits was pending.

As Minister of the Republic, General Guzman Blanco claimed from the British Government, in a note of the 28th July last, the explanation which such acts demanded, and the reply has been to proclaim and publish, by a Notice in the *London Gazette* of the 1st October, 1886, that what is included in the delimitation of the Engineer Schomburgk belongs to her; that is to say, that Great Britain, by herself and for herself, with exclusion of Venezuela, has decided as hers the mouth of the Orinoco, the most important river of the Republic, of which the Barima and Morajuana are branches, and including Barima Point, which her Charge d'Affaires, Sir Robert Porter, spontaneously surrendered on the 26th May, 1836, as being under the sovereignty of Venezuela. Many times has the latter proposed that the question be submitted to the decision of an arbitrator of rights, and the Government of Her Majesty has declined, on the ground of being unable to apply

such a method in a dispute of limits. She has persisted in her refusal, notwithstanding that by Conventions in 1827 and 1871 she referred to arbitration boundary disputes with the United States, the one respecting possessions in North America, and the other respecting the Haro Canal, with the circumstance that in the last case the proposal emanated as many as six times from herself.

Venezuela continues to be disposed to end the controversy by recourse to arbitration, which is the only way compatible with her existing Constitution.

On the grounds of what has been explained, the President of the Republic demands from Her Majesty the evacuation of Venezuelan territory from the mouth of the Orinoco to that of the Pomaroon, which she (Great Britain) has unjustly occupied with the understanding that if by the 20th February next, at the meeting of Congress, to whom the Government is bound to render an account of everything, no reply should be received, or should be negative, the diplomatic relations between the two countries shall be broken off. . .

(Signed) DIEGO B. URBANEJA

**838. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO SIR J. PAUNCEFOTE, UNDER-SECRETARY AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE**

**[29 January 1887]**

*(Telegraphic)*

*January 29, 1887.*

Frontier Commission returned. I am officially informed that evacuation by us of territory between Orinoco and Pomeroun is required, and if no satisfactory assurance is received by meeting of Congress, 20th February, relations will cease. Instruct me for this contingency.

*(Received February 4, 8.00 a.m.)*

**839. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**[31 January 1887]**

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, January 31, 1887.*

Señor Ministro,

Referring to my interview of the 6th December last with his Excellency the President of the Republic, and to your Excellency's note of the day after, in which was signified to me the intention of the Government of Venezuela to proceed at once to occupy Barima Point by erecting

there a lighthouse in compliance with the alleged desire of Her Majesty's Government, I am now instructed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to state to your Excellency, for the information of the President, that the request by the British Consul for the erection of such a lighthouse in 1836 was unknown to and unauthorized by the British Government of the day; that an attempt to erect such a lighthouse without the consent of Her Majesty's Government would be a departure from the reciprocal agreement taken by the Governments of Venezuela and England in 1850 not to occupy or encroach upon the territory in dispute between the two countries, and that Her Majesty's Government would be justified in resisting such a proceeding as an act of aggression on the part of Venezuela.

Nevertheless, as it appears that a light at Barima Point would render the navigation of the Orinoco River safer, and thus be of undoubted benefit to commerce generally, Her Majesty's Government do not desire unduly to insist on their rights, and I am in consequence instructed to inform the President that they will give their consent to the erection of a light at Barima Point, on condition that an arrangement shall be come to between the two Governments as to the quantity of land to be occupied for the purpose, and that the Venezuelan Government shall give a formal engagement in writing that the placing of the light will in no way be held as prejudicing the British claim to the territory in dispute, of which Barima Point forms a part, nor be construed hereafter as evidence of any right on the part of Venezuela to Barima Point, nor as an acquiescence by Great Britain in such assumption.

I am further instructed to state that, on receiving such written assurances, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to instruct the British local authorities not to offer any opposition to the erection of the proposed light. But I must warn the Government of Venezuela against the danger of their taking action in the matter without previous understanding with Great Britain. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

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**840. SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[31 January 1887]

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, January 31, 1887.*

Sir,

I have submitted to the President of the Republic the note which you delivered to me this morning, and in which you inform me that the request of the British Consul regarding the erection of a lighthouse on Barima Point in 1836 was neither known to nor authorized by the British Government of the time; that the attempt to erect such a lighthouse without the consent of Her Majesty's Government would be a departure from the reciprocal engagement undertaken by the Governments of Venezuela and England in 1850 not to occupy or encroach upon the territory in dispute between the two countries; that Her Majesty's Government would be justified in resisting such a proceeding as an act of aggression on the part of Venezuela; that, nevertheless, as a light-

house at Barima Point would render the navigation of the Orinoco safer, and thus be of undoubted benefit to commerce generally, Her Majesty's Government do not desire unduly to insist on their rights, and consequently will consent to the erection of a light at Barima Point; on condition that an arrangement shall be come to between the two Governments as to the quantity of land to be occupied for the purpose; and that the Venezuelan Government shall give a formal engagement in writing that the placing of the light will in no way be held as prejudicing the British claim to the territory in dispute, of which Barima Point forms a part, nor be construed hereafter as evidence of any right on the part of Venezuela to Barima Point, nor as an acquiescence by Great Britain in such an assumption.

The President of the Republic, far from finding in the note above quoted a way to a solution of the existing difficulty, is of opinion that it is thereby more and more aggravated, as will presently be shown.

He does not admit that now, fifty years and eight months after the step taken by Sir Robert Ker Porter, it can be said that it was neither known nor authorized by the British Government, and that he (Sir R. Porter) be designated "Consul" as though to weaken the force of his words. At the beginning he was Consul, but after the exchange of the Treaty of 1834 between the two countries he was named Charge d'Affaires, a rank which he had assumed and held when, on the 24th May, 1836, he pressed for the placing of a light at Barima Point.

Venezuela neither admits, nor has ever admitted, nor ever will admit, that Barima Point was ever in question, which it neither is now, nor ever has been, nor ever shall be, like Barima Island, which, with the Island of Pedernales and many others, is situated geographically and politically in the great mouth of the Orinoco, and is the exclusive property of Venezuela, its mother-country, of which they all form an integral part. No doubt it was out of respect for this sacred and unimpeachable right of proprietorship that none of the successive proposals of either Lord Aberdeen, Lord Granville, or Lord Rosebery included Barima Island.

The Government of Her Majesty appeals to the engagement of 1850 as a reason for refusing to Venezuela the right of placing a light on Barima, and thus justifies more and more the complaints and claims of the Republic, since it was with a full knowledge of this Agreement that she (Great Britain) has (now) possessed herself of the vast territory lying between the Pomaroon, Barima, and the right bank of the Amacura, thereby rendering any settlement impossible.

I had stated to you, and repeat, that Venezuela has never considered the territory lying between the Pomaroon and the Amacura as disputed, but only that situated between the Pomaroon and the Essequibo, and that, even had the first been included, it would still have been impossible for Great Britain (with justice) to occupy or retain it, because she was precluded by the existence of that Agreement of which now avails herself (as an instrument) against the Republic, but which she has broken for her own benefit.

The President does not submit to the conditions offered him for the construction of the light-house at Barima Point, because it would be equivalent to assenting to unjustifiable encroachments on the part of Great Britain, and would amount to a fatal surrender of the incontestable rights of the Republic.

And now comes the most important point of all.

This is the first occasion on which the Government of Her Majesty has pretensions to the River Orinoco, and has mentioned her rights in this respect by asserting that Barima Point forms part of the disputed territory, and has assumed the proprietorship of it, as well as laid down con-

ditions for the use of the particular spot where the lighthouse is to be created.

Hitherto, all had been limited to acts on the one side unknown to the other, but today it is notified to the other what is being done, and it sought to obtain her approval for acts and pretensions which are opposed to her rights.

The President of the Republic has, in consequence, ordered me formally to renew the demands contained in my note of the 26th instant regarding the evacuation of the whole territory unjustifiably occupied and held by Great Britain from the Amacura to the Pomaroon in violation of the rights of Venezuela by the 20th February, when Congress meets.

And I have to add that should this not be done by the day specified, and should, moreover, the evacuation not be accompanied by acceptance of arbitration as the means of deciding the pending frontier question, that diplomatic relations will be broken off between the two Governments, and a protest shall be made which shall for all time to come establish the unquestionable rights of Venezuela as opposed to proceedings that were not to be expected from a Power with which it has been her wish to cultivate the most friendly relations and frank dealing. . .

(Signed) DIEGO B. URBANEJA

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**841. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**[1 February 1887]**

Caracas, February 1, 1887

My Lord,

I had the honour on the 29th ultimo to report to Her Majesty's Government, by telegraph, that unless an assurance were received by the Venezuelan Government before the 20th February that the territory lying between the Rivers Orinoco and Pomaroon would be evacuated by Great Britain, diplomatic relations should cease between the two countries.

I have now the honour to forward a translation of the communication from the Venezuelan Government in which this determination is officially conveyed to me.

The note in question commences by informing me that the Head of the Venezuelan Commission which was sent to the Guiana frontier had returned to Caracas and reported that they found two British Commissaries on the bank of the Amacura River, where, by depositions taken, it was proved that jurisdiction had been and is exercised by such Commissaries and others; that there exists there a building used as a public office and flying the British flag; that vessels clearing from Ciudad Bolivar are not allowed to trade in rum or ascend the River Barima without permission from the British authorities at Georgetown; further, that gold-mines are worked on territory situated between the Rivers Cuyuni, Mazaruni, and Puruni, whence a great quantity of gold had been exported through the British Colonial Custom-house. Lastly, that the Commission had proceeded to Georgetown and acquainted the Governor with this violation of alleged Venezuelan territory.

The Venezuelan note then proceeds to discuss at length the right of Great Britain thus to appropriate territory of which the ownership is still in dispute, and argues from the incident, men-

tioned in Lord Aberdeen's note of the 30th March, 1844, to the Venezuelan Representative, of an unsuccessful Spanish attack upon the Dutch at New Zealand in 1797, that the latter must have been in unlawful possession of the place.

It is further complained that by way of reply to the explanation of these acts demanded by General Guzman Blanco, then Venezuelan Representative in London, Her Majesty's Government published a notice in the *London Gazette* of the 28th July last that all territory within the delimitation of Sir Robert Schomburgk is British.

The note then affirms that Venezuela is still disposed to end the controversy by recourse to arbitration – the only mode of settlement consistent with her Constitution – and concludes by stating that for the reasons which are set forth the President of the Republic demands that the territory lying between the Orinoco and Pomaroon Rivers be evacuated by Great Britain, failing which the Government of Venezuela will, in the case of either no reply or of a refusal, break off diplomatic relations.

The despatch from the Earl of Iddesleigh of the 12th ultimo, of which I was directed to communicate the substance to the Venezuelan Government, having reached me immediately after I received the Venezuelan note of which the enclosed is a copy, I thought it the best reply I could give to a communication the receipt of which I did not otherwise acknowledge. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

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***Inclosure: Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, 26 January 1887*** [Document No. 837 above].

**842. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**[1 February 1887]**

*Caracas, February 1, 1887*

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the late Earl of Iddesleigh's despatch to me of the 12th of last month, directing me to inform the Venezuelan Government of the conditions on which Her Majesty's Government would not be indisposed to sanction the placing of a light at Barima Point, and I beg to inclose herewith a copy of the note which I, in consequence, addressed to this Government. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

P.S. – I should mention that the communication above referred to was delivered by me personally to the Venezuelan Minister, and that in doing so I drew attention to the conciliatory spirit in which it was conceived, adding that I hoped it might be the means of avoiding a rupture.

F. R. ST. J.

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*Inclosure: Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, to Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuela Minister of Foreign Affairs, 31 January 1887* [Document No. 839 above].

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**843. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
**[7 February 1887]**

*Foreign Office, February 7, 1887.*

Sir,

I received on the 4th instant a telegram from you reporting that you had been officially informed by the Venezuelan Government that they require the evacuation by this country of the territory situated between the Orinoco and Pomeroon Rivers, and that, in the event of no satisfactory assurance being received by them before the meeting of Congress on the 20th February, diplomatic relations would be suspended between Her Majesty's Government and that of Venezuela.

I have instructed you by telegraph, to inform the Venezuelan Government, in reply, that, while Her Majesty's Government are still ready to enter into friendly negotiations for the settlement of the boundary question, they are not prepared to accede to the demand now made by the Venezuelan Government, much as they would regret the course of action indicated as the probable alternative on the part of that Government.

(Signed) SALISBURY

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**844. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**[7 February 1887]**

*St. Thomas, February 7, 1887.*

*(Telegraphic)*

Your despatch of the 12th January.

This Government indignantly reject conditions, and insist on evacuation and arbitration, or rupture.

*(Received February 11, 8.00 a.m.)*

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**845. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**[7 February 1887]**

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, February 7, 1887.*

Señor Ministro,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of two notes on the Guiana frontier which your Excellency did me the honour to address to me, one dated the 26th and the other the 31st ultimo, and I must express my astonishment that despite the positive assurance I gave – which was afterwards confirmed by Her Majesty's Government – namely, that Sir Robert Porter's request in 1836 for the placing of a light at Barima Point had been made without the authority or even without the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, the Government of Venezuela should doubt the statement and persist in regarding the circumstance as a justification of their claim to the spot. As well might it on the other side be argued that the merchants of Ciudad Bolivar (or Angostura as it was then called) presumably, from their proximity, better acquainted with the locality than Sir Robert, having petitioned the British Agent at Caracas instead of the Venezuelan local authorities for the means of safer navigation, that the circumstance proved that the merchants looked upon Barima Point as British and not Venezuelan territory.

With equal surprise do I observe that, notwithstanding your Excellency's allusion in your first note to the several instances, namely, in 1844, 1850, and 1886, in which Her Majesty's Government have, from a friendly feeling to Venezuela, offered to cede the lower right bank of the Orinoco, your Excellency should affirm in your second note that the Venezuelan Government now for the first time learn (by my note of the 31st ultimo) that the territory claimed by Great Britain extends to the Orinoco.

I have only to add that your Excellency's first note was transmitted a few days ago to Her Majesty's Government, and that your second note will be forwarded by the next opportunity. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

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**846. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**[7 February 1887]**

*Caracas, February 7, 1887.*

With reference to the late Earl of Iddesleigh's despatch to me of the 12th of last month, instructing me to communicate to the Venezuelan Government the willingness of Her Majesty's Government to permit the placing of a light at Barima Point on receiving a written assurance that the rights of Great Britain over the territory would not be prejudiced thereby, I have the honour



to inclose a translation of the reply which I received from the Venezuelan Government, together with my rejoinder.

Your Lordship will perceive that this Government look upon the offer made to them in the light of an additional grievance, and that they indignantly reject it as a proposal calculated, if accepted, to imply a recognition of the rights of Great Britain over Barima Point and the lower right bank of the Orinoco.

Your Lordship will also perceive in this note that the Venezuelan Government have increased the demands made in their previous note, namely, that the alternative of a rupture must be the assurance of our evacuation of the whole territory lying between the Orinoco and the Pomaroon Rivers, by adding the condition that we shall accept their proposal to submit the whole question of limits to the arbitration of a third party.

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***Inclosure 1: Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, 31 January 1887*** [Document No. 840 above].

***Inclosure 2: Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas to Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, 7 February 1887*** [Document No. 845 above].

**847. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
[11 February 1887]

*Trinidad, February 11, 1887.*

*(Telegraphic)*

This Government have replied officially that President decline further discussion till conditions in their notes of 20th and 31st are complied with.

*(Received February 17, 9.30 p.m.)*

**848. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
[11 February 1887]

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, February 11, 1887.*

Señor Ministro,

Having telegraphed to Her Majesty's Government the substance of your Excellency's note to me of the 26th ultimo, I have this moment received, by telegraph, instructions from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to state to you, in reply that the Government of Her Majesty, while still prepared to enter into friendly negotiations with the object of settling the Guiana boundary question, are unable to accede to the present demands of the Government of Venezuela, much as they would regret the action indicated in the note from your Excellency above mentioned. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

**849. SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
**[11 February 1887]**

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

Caracas, February 11, 1887.

Sir,

As soon as I received your note of to-day's date I transmitted it, by telegraph, to the President of the Republic, who through the same channel replied to me as follows: –

“I have just received your telegram. Say, in reply, to the British Minister, the Government of Venezuela repeats and confirms in all its parts the contents of their notes of the 26th and 31st ultimo, and are consequently unable to enter into fresh discussion till the whole of the territory down to the Pomaroon be evacuated by Great Britain, which Venezuela has, according to the Agreement of 1850, the right to demand.”

(Signed) DIEGO B. URBANEJA

**850. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**[11 February 1887]**

*(Extract)*

*Caracas, February 11, 1887.*

As already reported today, by telegram, I received this morning your Lordship's telegram of the 7th instant, the substance of which I at once communicated to the Venezuelan Government, receiving the same an official reply, in which was intimated to me the President's refusal to discuss any further the Guiana frontier question until the demands contained in the Venezuelan notes to me of the 26th and the 31st of last month should have been acceded to by Her Majesty's

Government.

From the different reasons given by the President to myself and others for breaking off relations, it is difficult to look otherwise upon the threatened step than as a foregone conclusion.

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***Inclosure 1: Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, to Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, 11 February 1887*** [Document No. 848 above].

***Inclosure 2: Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, 11 February 1887*** [Document No. 849 above].

**851. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[19 February 1887]

*Foreign Office, February 19, 1887.*

*(Telegraphic)*

*(Extract)*

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 19th ultimo, addressed to Sir Julian Pauncefote, inclosing copies of your recent correspondence with the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs in regard to the right of the Venezuelan Government to occupy Barima Point and other territory in its immediate vicinity hitherto held by the authorities of the Colony of British Guiana.

I have to express to you my approval of the note which you addressed to Dr. Urbaneja on the 19th January last.

**852. SEÑOR DIEGO B. URBANEJA, VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[20 February 1887]

*(Translation – Original: Spanish)*

*Caracas, February 20, 1887.*

The Republic of Venezuela succeeded Spain in her rights over the Captaincy-General of that name by the Treaty of Recognition signed at Madrid on the 20th March, 1845.

Of the Captaincy-General the Province of Guiana formed part. Its limits were, on the east the Atlantic Ocean, and on the south the River Amazon.

Only by cession on the part of Spain could these boundaries be trenched on.

The Dutch having made themselves masters of certain spots in Guiana during their long war of emancipation, Spain, on recognizing their independence, sanctioned their usurpations on the American coasts by the Treaty concluded at Muster on the 30th January, 1648.

The Settlements which she was surrendering to the Dutch were not therein specified, but in the Treaty of Extradition of Aranjuez, dated the 23rd June, 1791, the Colonies of Puerto Rico, Coro, and the Orinoco were mentioned as Spanish, while those of St. Eustache, Curaçao, Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, lying opposite to them, as Dutch.

Of the four last-mentioned Colonies the Low Countries ceded three – those of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice – to Great Britain by the Treaty of London of the 18th August, 1814.

The English possess in Guiana no other rights than those thus ceded to them by Holland.

It should, moreover, be here observed that though the Dutch, in contravention of the Treaty of Munster, which prohibited them even from touching and trading with the Spanish possessions, succeeded in encroaching on them, His Catholic Majesty always resisted these attempts at usurpation by force.

That the Dutch did not believe themselves to be the legitimate possessors of more territory than that of Essequibo on the north side of their Colonies is proved by the fact that no other is mentioned in the aforesaid cession to Great Britain.

In 1810, moreover, the Essequibo was the limit between the Province of Guiana and Holland, and it is this same which appertains to Venezuela, according to her Constitution.

Since 1822 the Government of Colombia, the predecessor of Venezuela, claimed the Essequibo as belonging to the Republic.

In 1841 the engineer Schomburgk, a Commissioner of the British Government, explored Venezuelan Guiana, and fixed posts and other marks of possession as far as the Barima and Amacura.

Public opinion in Venezuela was aroused, the Government remonstrated, and Her Britannic Majesty ordered the removal of the marks, explaining that they had not been set up as marks of possession. Since that time Venezuela has been calling for a Treaty which should settle this question of boundaries.

It was not till 1844 that the Plenipotentiary of the Republic in London, after long preparation of the preliminaries, commenced negotiating a Treaty, grounding it on treaty rights, on history, and the authority of charts, and he proposed the Essequibo as boundary.

Lord Aberdeen, Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in his turn, proposed the Moroco; with this, as he said, Venezuela would retain entire proprietorship of the Orinoco.

The Republic did not accept a boundary which deprived her of the space lying between the Essequibo and the Moroco, to which the English could allege no title whatsoever.

In 1850 a rumour was spread that England wished to claim Venezuelan Guiana. Mr. Wilson, Charge d'Affaires of that nation in Caracas, denied it, affirming that it was exactly the reverse of truth, and that his Government had no intention of occupying or of usurping the territory in dispute; that it would not order such occupation, nor sanction it on the part of its authorities; that it would order them to abstain from such, and would with pleasure renew these orders when necessary. He requested and obtained analogous declarations from Venezuela.

The territory in dispute was not at that time specified, but Venezuela has never understood it to be that lying between the Pomeroon and the Amacura, but that contained between the Poma-

roon and Essequibo.

Without ever losing sight of the question, Venezuela pressed for its settlement in 1876. At the end of five years, in September of 1881, Lord Granville proposed a new frontier, which commenced at a spot on the sea-shore 29 miles of longitude to the east of the right bank of the River Barima, adding that with this he should satisfy all reasonable pretensions and claims of Venezuela by ceding to her the so-called Dardanelles of the Orinoco and complete possession of its mouth.

The Republic also refused this line, which was offered for no known reason, and would have been much more unfavourable to her than that proposed by Lord Aberdeen.

In 1833 the British Government united the three questions of the boundary, the 30 percent. additional duty on goods coming from the Antilles, and the pecuniary claims, and pressed for their simultaneous and amicable settlement.

General Guzman Blanco went, in consequence, to London, with full powers as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, and he devoted himself with energy to the settlement of those matters.

In the negotiations respecting the new Treaty of Commerce, he already held the written promise of Her Britannic Majesty's Government to apply arbitration to all disputes between the two countries. This involved the question of the settlement of the boundary. But before the Agreement was signed there was a change of Cabinet. Lord Granville's successor, while fulfilling the promises made by the preceding Administration to other States, refused to sanction the Agreement with Venezuela, alleging that Great Britain could not apply arbitration to controversies respecting boundaries, while he forgot that she had applied it in 1827 and 1871 to such questions with the United States, the Arbitrator in the first case being the King of Holland, and in the second the present Emperor of Germany.

This was with reference to the Haro Canal, and it was the Government of Great Britain which as many as six times solicited and finally obtained arbitration.

In July of 1886, owing to certain steps of the Venezuelan Legation, Lord Rosebery proposed a boundary commencing to the east of the Guainia, but which was considered unacceptable for various reasons, amongst them that it was coupled with a demand for the free navigation and commerce of the Orinoco.

During these negotiations in Europe, agents of the Governor of Demerara have been entering Venezuelan Guiana, settings up marks and notices, and reaching once more the Amacura, have taken away from there the (Venezuelan) Commissary, Mr. Robert Wells, to try and punish him for maltreating a Portuguese subject, as, in effect, they did, notwithstanding that they possessed no jurisdiction in the locality of the act.

At the same time, they declared that those places were British territory, and that the laws of the neighbouring British Colony were there in force.

The Venezuelan Legation, with reason, protested against such unmerited outrages, and demanded due reparation.

The complaints of Venezuela were disregarded and unanswered.

It would seem as if they have been seized upon as a pretext for aggravating the injuries.

When the President of the Republic was informed of these incidents he called on you on the 6th December, 1886, requested you to explain, and asked for a communication as to these incredible occurrences. Moreover, he informed you that he was about to order the erection of

lighthouse at Barima Point, as most urgently solicited so early as 1836 with repeated instance by Sir Robert Ker Porter, Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain. You refused to give the explanation asked for, because the President did not consent to postpone the execution of his intention until you had consulted your Government on the matter. That is to say, you wished in effect that the President should not act administratively on Venezuelan territory without the permission of Her Britannic Majesty, who without any right has occupied and retains it.

You informed me in reply that the occupation of Barima Point would be considered as a violation of the above-mentioned Agreement of 1850, namely, not to occupy nor usurp the territory in dispute, and you, moreover, said that, nevertheless, as the lighthouse would be general utility, they (Her Majesty's Government) did not wish to insist duly on her rights, and would not object to its erection should an agreement be come to respecting the extent of land to be occupied to that end, and if a written promise be given that it should not be regarded as prejudicial to the British claim to the territory in dispute, of which Barima Point forms part, not be construed afterwards as evidence of a right on the part of Venezuela to Barima Point, nor as an acquiescence by Great Britain in such assumption.

To the Republic it appears most strange that the Agreement of 1850, violated as it has been by Great Britain to her own advantage, should be now appealed to, and she has rejected conditions, the acceptance of which would have been destructive of her rights, and has declared that such an answer aggravated more and more the position of affairs. It cannot be otherwise, since by quoting the Agreement Great Britain recognizes the duty of obeying it, and her conduct contrasts singularly with what should be her rule of conduct.

In order to proceed safely and promote the construction of the lighthouse and for other reasons, the President last December, sent a Commission composed of Messrs. Dr. J. N. Tebar and General S. Rodil. These explored various places, beginning with the Amacura; and as the result of their personal observations have brought back the following information: –

They found on the right bank of the Amacura two Commissioners, Messrs. F. S. Neames and G. B. Jeffrey, appointed by Mr. Michael McTurk, who styles himself Her Majesty's Stipendiary Magistrate in and for the Colony of British Guiana, the first Commission dated the 1st March, 1885, and the second the 6th September, 1886. These Commissions are authorized to prevent the sale of rum or spirituous liquors by any Venezuelan vessel not holding a licence from the Government of Demerara, and to seize any person so doing.

They ascertained the existence of a wooden house which serves a public office in Amacura, flies the British flag, and was built at the expense of the Government of Demerara. They ascertained positively that a British coast-guard vessel, the "Transfer", had on various occasions made voyages to Amacura, bringing armed police and a Magistrate to try and decide police and criminal cases. They learnt that in Barima and Amacura ships legally dispatched from Ciudad Bolivar are registered and forbidden to sell their wares or to proceed to Barima Creek unless in ballast. They had information that there was another Commissary named Harrington in the neighbourhood of the Aruca, and that about three months ago a Magistrate had been there to arrest and try the murderer of a coolie, who was sentenced to five years imprisonment. In Cuabana they found Protestant church, which is at the same time a school, and in the Register of Marriages there it is stated that the place belongs to the county of Essequibo. The Commission further ascertained that the Colonial Government has appointed another Commissary in the village of Guaramuri, on the bank of the Momea; in the same manner they ascertained positively that gold mines were be-

ing worked under English authority on Venezuelan territory between the Rivers Cuyuni, Mazaruni, and Puruni and that a large quantity of that mineral had been already exported through the Custom-house of Demerara.

The Commissioners then proceeded to Georgetown, and through the Venezuelan Consul made the object of their mission known to the Governor, and informed him of what they had done in virtue of it, and of the violations of Venezuelan territory which they had verified.

The Secretary of the Government answered on the 6th January that he inclosed the Notice published in the *London Gazette* of the 21st October, 1886, and added that the localities referred to in the official note of the Commission were within the limits indicated by the terms of the Notice, and formed a part of the Colony of British Guiana.

In the Notice it is proclaimed and notified that, the limits of British Guiana being in dispute between the Governments of Her Britannic Majesty that of Venezuela, and it having come to the knowledge of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty that the Government of Venezuela have granted, or intend to grant, concessions of land within the territory claimed by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, such titles will not be admitted nor recognized, and that all persons taking possession of such lands, or exercising in them any right on the strength of such titles, will be tried as trespassers. In conclusion, it is stated that in the library of the Colonial Office, Downing Street, or in the Secretariat of the Government in Georgetown, British Guiana, may be seen a map which shows the limits between British Guiana and Venezuela claimed by Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

In addition to this the Governor of Demerara, in a Decree of 1868 on land survey, did not establish any farther north than the Pomaroon; but repealing this Decree on the 6th November, 1886, by order of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, and doubtless with this sole object, he ordered new surveys which reached so far as the eastern bank of the Amacura.

The limits which today, though not claimed, are occupied by the British Government, are those which the engineer Schomburgk capriciously fixed in 1841.

Strengthened by the most unanswerable arguments the Government, reiterating its wish to end the controversy by arbitration, called upon Her Britannic Majesty's Government to evacuate the Venezuelan territory from the mouths of the Orinoco to the Pomaroon, which she had unjustly occupied, with the understanding that if by the 20th of this present month no reply was given, or if it was answered in the negative, from that time diplomatic relations between the two countries should be broken off.

On the 31st of the same month of January, while replying to the note relative to the conditions under which the British Government would consent to the erection of the lighthouse on Barima Point, Venezuela renewed her demands, adding that of an acceptance of arbitration.

On the 11th of this month you informed me that, having communicated by telegraph to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty my note of the 26th January, you were instructed to say in reply that Her Majesty's Government, while still prepared to enter into friendly negotiations with the object of settling the Guiana boundary question, could not accede to the present demand of the Government of Venezuela, much as they would regret the action indicated in my note.

Hereupon I repeated and confirmed in all their parts the contents of the notes dated the 31st and 26th January, owing to the inability of the Executive to reopen the discussion until Great Britain evacuates the whole of the territory down to the Pomaroon, as Venezuela is, according to the Agreement of 1850, perfectly entitled to demand.

The 20th February arrived, and so did the expected refusal of the demands of Venezuela.

Thus has Great Britain rejected the just and moderate demand for reparation for the injuries which she has done and is doing to the Republic, notwithstanding the friendship which she has constantly professed, and the existence of a Treaty by which it is established:

Great Britain has violated the territory of Venezuela by encroaching on prohibited ground, by appointing Commissaries, by establishing Government offices on which the British flag flies, by arresting, trying, and punishing a functionary of Venezuela, by sending there with armed police a Judge who notified that these places were British and ordered mercantile restrictions, by running a revenue cruiser between Amacura and Barima, by including these rivers within the jurisdiction of the Governor of Demerara, by authorizing the working of mines within the territory of the Republic, and by exercising other acts of sovereignty.

Great Britain has arrogated to herself the right of deciding for herself and by herself and in her favour a question which concerns her no more than it does Venezuela.

Great Britain has declared herself to be joint owner of the Orinoco, the great fluvial artery of the north of South America, possessing herself of Barima Creek, one of its mouths, and, by these means, of the commerce of the vast regions belonging to various countries.

Great Britain has thus followed a course in regard to Venezuela which she condemned in others.

Great Britain has decided to declare as hers the places in which she has just established herself, and the limits of which are in dispute with Venezuela.

Great Britain has infringed to her own advantage the arrangement which she herself proposed to Venezuela on the 18th November, 1850, and has occupied the territory guaranteed by her.

Great Britain presumes to impose conditions to the establishment of a lighthouse on Barima Point, over which her Charge d'Affaires on the 26th May, 1836, spontaneously recognized the sovereignty of Venezuela.

Great Britain refuses to resort in the case of Venezuela to that arbitration which she had recourse to with the United States of America in 1827 and in 1871 for deciding questions of boundary, of which the last was repeatedly urged by herself.

Great Britain has continued successively her encroachments from the Essequibo to the Pomeroon, to the Moroco, to the Guainia, to the Barima and Amacura.

Great Britain has thus attacked the sovereign rights and independence of Venezuela, depriving her of the most sacred and inviolable of a nation's rights, namely, her territory.

In consequence Venezuela, not deeming it fitting to continue friendly relations with a State which thus injures her, suspends them from today.

And she protests before the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, before all civilized nations, before the whole world, against the acts of spoliation which the Government of Great Britain has committed to her detriment, and which she will never on any consideration recognize as capable of altering in the slightest degree the rights which she has acquired from Spain, and respecting which she will be always ready to submit to the decision of a third Power, as the only way to a solution compatible with principles.

After writing the above I received the note which you addressed to me on the 19th instant, and in which you communicate to me by order of the Government of her Majesty, that the latter having been informed at the recent visit of two Venezuelan Commissioners to that portion of the territory which is claimed by Great Britain as part of British Guiana and of what they there did,



will not permit any interference with British subjects in those places.

This emphasizes more and more distinctly that she arrogates to herself complete jurisdiction over the territory of Venezuelan Guiana, which she has occupied because she claims it, and presumes to act with respect to it as though she were the real and exclusive owner, without the smallest regard to the rights of the Republic which claims it as hers. In consequence, Venezuela can do no less than confirm, as she does confirm, her foregoing complaints and protests against a proceeding as arbitrary as it is oppressive, and which she will always look upon as null and of no effect. . .

(Signed) DIEGO B. URBANEJA

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**853. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**[21 February 1887]**

*Caracas, February 21, 1887.*

*(Telegraphic)*

Not rupture, only suspension of relations from today, 21st. Shall I depart, leaving Fitzmaurice charge of archives?

*(Received February 25)*

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**854. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO SIR EDWARD MALET, BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN GERMANY**

**[28 February 1887]**

*Foreign Office, February 28, 1887.*

I have to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Minister at Caracas has reported that the Venezuelan Government have suspended relations with the British Legation in consequence of a dispute as to the boundary between the Colony of British Guiana and Venezuela.

Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government would feel grateful to the German Government if they would authorize their Representative at Caracas to take British subjects and their property under his protection; and I request that you will ask Count Bismarck if he would kindly give instructions in this sense to the German Agent. . . .

(Signed) SALISBURY

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**855. MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

[28 February 1887]

*“Comus” at La Guayra, February 28, 1887. (Received at British Foreign Office on March 21.)*

My Lord,

I have the honour to inclose, with a translation, copy of a note by which the Venezuelan Government, on the expiration of the indicated time (the 20th February), informed me that relations between Great Britain and Venezuela were suspended – not broken off, as I had been led expect. Under these circumstances, as I had already broken up my household at Caracas in anticipation of a rupture with a forty-eight hours' notice to quit, I proceeded to La Guayra, where three of Her Majesty's war ships, “Comus”, “Lily”, and “Bullfrog” had arrived the previous day, and where, from want of a suitable place on shore, I transferred Her Majesty's Legation to the first-named of these ships, commanded by Captain Jackson, the Senior British Naval Officer in these waters. At the same time, I directed Mr. Consul Boulton to call on the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom he is on terms of intimacy, and ascertain whether, notwithstanding the expression “break off” (“cortar”) which was used in previous notes, the term “suspend” (“suspende”) employed in the inclosed note was to be taken as implying mere temporary cessation of official intercourse, or a complete rupture between the two countries. To this question Mr. Boulton received the most positive verbal assurance that a mere suspension, and not a rupture, was implied. I, in consequence, have not removed the Royal Arms from over the inner door of my house in Caracas, and have left my Private Secretary, Mr. Ouseley Fitzmaurice, there, in charge of the bulk of Legation archives.

As regards the inclosed note from the Venezuelan Government, it can only be described as an extension of its many predecessors, without a single new argument by which could be modified the views already held by Her Majesty's Government. Your Lordship will observe the same oft-repeated complaints that Great Britain has been, ever since 1844, continually encroaching on Venezuelan territory, though she has really done no more than diminish, for topographic reasons, her offers of concessions which the Venezuelan Government have systematically refused. Your Lordship will also notice that the circumstance of British police agents having entered upon disputed territory, in order to watch Venezuelan proceedings after the “Wells” and “Manoa Company” incidents, is seized on as evidence of a violation by Great Britain of the Agreement of 1850 not to encroach on disputed ground.

This pretended view of the case I have in vain endeavoured to correct during my conversations with General Guzman Blanco, who has always insisted that Wells was arrested on Venezuelan territory, and that the “Manoa” Company agents did not overstep Venezuelan limits, which he has arbitrarily fixed at the Pomeroon River.

There appears little doubt that the inclosed Venezuelan note is not intended to answer our arguments, but to mislead the world generally, and the Venezuelan public in particular, when it comes to be published. . . .

(Signed) F. R. ST. JOHN

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***Inclosure: Señor Diego B. Urbaneja, Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. F. R. St. John, British Minister in Caracas, 20 February 1887*** [Document No. 852 above].

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**856. AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE THOMAS BAYARD TO THE AMERICAN MINISTER TO GREAT BRITAIN, EDWARD JOHN PHELPS**  
[February 1887 – Exact date not stated]

*(Extract)*

Nevertheless, the records abundantly testify our friendly concern in the adjustment of the dispute, and the intelligence now received warrants me in tendering, through you, to her Majesty's Government the good offices of the United States to promote an amicable settlement of the respective claims of Great Britain and Venezuela in the premises.

As proof of the impartiality with which we view the question, we offer our arbitration, if acceptable to both countries. We do this with the less hesitancy as the dispute turns upon simple and readily ascertainable historical facts.

Her Majesty's Government will readily understand that this attitude of friendly neutrality and entire impartiality touching the merits of the controversy, consisting wholly in a difference of facts between our friends and neighbors, is entirely consistent and compatible with the sense of responsibility that rests upon the United States in relation to the South American republics. The doctrines we announced two generations ago, at the instance and with the moral support and approval of the British Government, have lost none of their force or importance in the progress of time, and the Governments of Great Britain and the United States are equally interested in conserving a status the wisdom of which has been demonstrated by the experience of more than half a century.

It is proper, therefore, that you should convey to Lord Iddesleigh, in such sufficiently guarded terms as your discretion may dictate, the satisfaction that would be felt by the Government of the United States in perceiving that its wishes in this regard were permitted to have influence with her Majesty's Government.

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**857. SIR EDWARD MALET, BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN GERMANY, TO THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
[1 March 1887]

*(By Telegraph)*

*Berlin, March 1, 1887. (Received March 1)*

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Imperial Government consent to undertake the protection of British subjects and their property in Venezuela. They are obliged, however, to delay sending an official communication to that effect until the sanction of the Emperor has been obtained. . .

(Signed) EDWARD E. MALET

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**858. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**

**[7 March 1887]**

*Foreign Office, March 7, 1887.*

Sir,

I received on the 28th ultimo your despatch of the 7th of that month, inclosing a translation of a note from the Venezuelan Government, and a copy of your reply thereto, respecting the intention which they had announced of erecting a lighthouse on Barima Point, at the mouth of the Orinoco.

The Venezuelan note, which is a reply to the statement conveyed by you to the Government of the Republic of the condition on which Her Majesty's Government would consent to the erection of the light, denies that the right to Barima Point has ever until now been in question; and in proof of the exclusive Venezuelan right to that territory, it affirms that none of the successive proposals of either Lord Aberdeen, Lord Granville, or Lord Rosebery for a settlement of the disputed boundary question included Barima Point within British territory.

The note goes on to say that Venezuela has never considered the territory lying between the Pomaroon and the Amacura as in dispute, but only that situated between the Pomaroon and the Essequibo, and it further states that this is the first occasion on which Her Majesty's Government has unveiled its pretensions to the River Orinoco, and has mentioned its rights in this respect by asserting that Barima Point forms part of the disputed territory.

The British claim to the territory as far north as the southern mouth of the Orinoco (including Barima) is not, as the Venezuelan Government assert, of recent date. It is derived, as you are aware, from ancient Treaties with the aboriginal tribes and the subsequent cessions from Holland. The offers which have from time to time been made by Her Majesty's Government to concede to Venezuela a portion of the territory which is the right of this country were made in a spirit of conciliation with a view of reconciling the conflicting claims of the two nations. They have on each occasion been rejected by Venezuela, and the rights of Great Britain, therefore, remain unaffected by the offer of any one or other of those concessions.

I may remind you of the following facts. In the note which Lord Aberdeen addressed to M. Fortique, the Venezuelan Minister in London, on the 30th March, 1844 (to which no reply was ever returned by the Venezuelan Government), it was stated that there could be no doubt that not only was the mouth of the Orinoco always claimed by the Dutch as their western boundary, but, that it was early in their possession and military occupation; however, as it was believed that the undivided possession of the Orinoco was the object most important for the interests of Vene-

zuela, Lord Aberdeen informed M. Fortique that the British Government was prepared *to cede to the Republic a portion of the coast* amply sufficient to insure Venezuela against the mouth of this, her principal river, being at the command of any foreign Power, and that, out of friendly regard to Venezuela, Great Britain was willing to waive her claim to the Amacura as the western boundary of the British territory, and to consider the mouth of the Moroco River as the limit of her possessions on the sea-coast.

This was the British claim in 1844, although Her Majesty's Government then expressed their readiness not to press it to its full extent, and it continued to be so until 1850, when the arrangement was entered into between the two Governments that neither Government should occupy or encroach upon the territory in dispute between them pending a settlement of the boundary question.

In a note, too, which I addressed to Señor de Rojas on the 10th January, 1880, I stated that "the boundary which Her Majesty's Government claim in virtue of ancient Treaties with the aboriginal tribes, and of subsequent cessions from Holland, commences at a point at the mouth of the Orinoco westward of Point Barima, proceeds thence in a southerly direction to the Imataca Mountains, the line of which it follows to the north-west, passing from thence by the high lands of Santa Maria, just south of the town of Upata, until it strikes a range of hills on the eastern bank of the Caroni River, following these southwards until it strikes the great backbone of the Guiana district, the Roraima Mountains of British Guiana, and thence still southward to the Pacaraima Mountains."

In his reply, dated the 12th April, 1880, Señor de Rojas inquired whether Her Majesty's Government would be disposed, as they were in 1844, to accept the mouth of the Moroco as the frontier at the coast.

This Her Majesty's Government declared their inability to accept; but on the 12th of the following February, Earl Granville, who had succeeded me as Secretary of State, informed Señor de Rojas that Her Majesty's Government would be ready to consider any conventional boundary, beginning at a more northerly point on the coast, which the Venezuelan Government might propose.

In acknowledging the receipt of Lord Granville's note, the Venezuelan Representative recapitulated the line laid down in his Lordship's note of the 10th January, 1880, as the British claim.

In the Memorandum of further proposals communicated to Señor de Rojas on the 15th September, 1881, Lord Granville quoted as follows:—

5. As regards that portion of the territory which lies between the Moroco and the mouth of the Orinoco, Her Majesty's Government believe that no impartial person, after studying the records, can escape the conviction that the Barima was undoubtedly before, and at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty of Munster (1648), held by the Dutch, and that the right of Her Majesty's Government to the territory up to that point is in consequence unassailable.

6. But they view it as of such importance to the welfare and material advancement of the Colony of British Guiana that this long-pending boundary question should be speedily settled, that they think that if some of the rights of Great Britain can be waived without serious detriment to the Colony, it would be highly desirable to do so if thereby a settlement can be effected.

7. With this object in view, and in a spirit of conciliation, Her Majesty's Government

have sought to suggest a boundary which, while it shall afford due protection to the interests of British Guiana, shall be such as to recognize the reasonable claims and requirements of Venezuela and avoid the occasion for subsequent disputes.

8. They are disposed, therefore, to submit the following as a line of boundary, which they consider will yield to Venezuela every reasonable requirement while securing the interests of British Guiana: –

The initial point to be fixed at a spot on the sea-shore 29 miles of longitude due east from the right bank of the River Barima, and to be carried thence south over the mountain or hill, called on Schomburgk's original map the Yarikita Hill, to the 8th parallel of north latitude, thence west along the same parallel of latitude until it cuts the boundary line proposed by Schomburgk, and laid down on the map before mentioned, thence to follow such boundary along its course to the Accarabisi, following the Accarabisi to its junction with the Cuyuni, thence along the left bank of the River Cuyuni to its source, and from thence in a south-easterly direction to the line as proposed by Schomburgk to the Essequibo and Corentyne."

It is hardly necessary that I should quote any further communications with the Venezuelan Government in order to refute the assertion that they were, until they received your note of the 31st January, unaware that Her Majesty's Government claimed any territory between the Pomeroon and the Amacura. It will be sufficient that I should remind you that, during the course of the negotiations which were carried on between the Earl of Rosebery and General Guzman Blanco in the course of last year, a Memorandum was communicated to the General (20th July) proposing that the respective lines suggested by Señor de Rojas on the 21st February, 1881, and by Lord Granville on the 15th September of the same year, should be taken as the limits of the territory in dispute, and that a boundary line should be traced within those limits on the basis of an equal division of that territory.

The Venezuelan Government, in their note, also charge Her Majesty's Government with a breach of the reciprocal engagement of 1850.

You are already aware from General Guzman Blanco's note to the Earl of Rosebery of the 28th July, 1886, a copy of which was forwarded to you in the Earl of Iddesleigh's despatch of the 25th August last, that, although His Excellency complained of the action of the British Colonial authorities at the mouth of the Orinoco River in October 1884, and declared it to be a violation of the Agreement of 1850, no allusion whatever was made to the fact that on repeated occasions long prior to that date the Venezuelan Government had violated that engagement by granting concessions of land in the disputed territory for mining and other purposes.

I refer especially to the concessions made on the 12th May, 1881, on the 22nd September, 1883, and on the 20th March, 1884, at the very time when proposals made by the British Government for the settlement of this long-disputed boundary question were said to be actually under consideration by the Venezuelan Government.

Her Majesty's Government therefore consider that they were fully justified in issuing the Notice which appeared in the *London Gazette* of the 22nd October, 1886, and in taking such other precautions as seemed to be necessary to safeguard the rights of Great Britain. . .

(Signed) SALISBURY

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**859. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO SIR EDWARD MALET, BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN GERMANY**  
[9 March 1887]

*Foreign Office, March 9, 1887*

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 1st instant, reporting that, subject to the sanction of the Emperor being given, the Imperial Government would be prepared to undertake the protection of British subjects and their property in Venezuela in consequence of the interruption of diplomatic relations between this country and the Republic.

I have to inform you that, in the course of conversation today with Count Hatzfeldt, his Excellency stated that His Imperial Majesty had been graciously pleased to signify his assent to this invitation of Her Majesty's Government; and I request that your Excellency will have the goodness to convey to His Imperial Majesty and to the German Government the cordial thanks of Her Majesty's Government for their good offices on this occasion.

A telegram will be at once sent to Her Majesty's Minister at Caracas, directing him to leave his post and to place British subjects and their property in Venezuela under the protection of his German colleague. . .

(Signed) SALISBURY

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**860. THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO MR. F. R. ST. JOHN, BRITISH MINISTER IN CARACAS**  
[9 March 1887]

*(Telegraphic – Sent at 3.00 p.m.)*

*Foreign Office, March 9, 1887.*

German Government will authorize their representative to protect British subjects and property in Venezuela. You can return home. Leave archives in charge of British Consul.

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**861. EXTRACT FROM THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF BRITISH GUIANA OF DECEMBER 31, 1887**  
[31 December 1887]

*Proclamation*

BRITISH GUIANA

By his Excellency Charles Bruce, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-chief in and over the Colony of British Guiana, Vice-Admiral and Ordinary of the same, etc.

Whereas it has come to the knowledge of the Government of British Guiana that certain Concessions have been granted by the President, and by and with the sanction of the Government of the United States of Venezuela, purporting to give and grant certain rights and privileges for constructing a railway to Guacipati, and in and over certain territories and lands within, and forming part of, the Colony of British Guiana:

Now, therefore, I do hereby intimate to all whom it may concern that no alleged rights purporting to be claimed under any such Concession will be recognized within the said Colony of British Guiana, and that all persons found trespassing on or occupying the lands of the Colony, without the authority of the Government of this Colony, will be dealt with as the law directs.

Given under my hand, and the public seal of the Colony, Georgetown, Demerara, this 31st day of December, 1887, and in the 51st year of Her Majesty's reign.

God save the Queen!

By his Excellency's command.

(Signed) GEORGE MELVILLE  
Acting Government Secretary

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