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“Earnest Persuasion but Not Peremptory Demand:”
United States Government Policy toward the
Kingdom of Hawai‘i, 1820–1863

“EARNEST PERSUASION but not peremptory demand.”¹ With these words, in 1848, Secretary of State James Buchanan summed up the policy of the Government of the United States of America towards Hawai‘i for Anthony Ten Eyke, his Commissioner to the Hawaiian Islands. Based on a careful examination of the U.S. government’s consular and diplomatic files the statement by Secretary Buchanan was the reiteration of a course of action dictated by Washington throughout the first 43 years of diplomatic and consular relations between the two countries, from 1820 until 1863.

While the United States had consular and diplomatic officials in the Hawaiian Islands for a total of 78 years, this study covers only the period from 1820 to 1863, the years when the United States was represented by agents, consuls, and commissioners, relatively low ranking officials and when communications between Honolulu and Washington, D.C. were precarious and slow. After 1863, commu-

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nications between the two capitals improved and Washington sent diplomats and consular officers of a higher rank to the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

If the official policy of the United States was consistent, the next question is whether or not it was faithfully carried out by the representatives of the U.S. government in Hawai'i, and if not, why not. In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to understand the types of consular and diplomatic appointments made during the 43-year period and to determine what guidance or lack of it American officials in the islands received from the Department of State.

The following chart lists the various types of diplomatic and consular officers the U.S. government appointed to Hawai'i between 1820 and 1863.

Diplomatic Appointments		Consular Appointments
	1820	Agent for Commerce and Seamen
Commissioner	1843	
	1844	Consul
Minister Resident	1863	

From 1820 until 1843, the U.S. had only a consular representative in the Hawaiian Islands who held the lowest rank in that branch of the U.S. Foreign Service: Agent for Commerce and Seamen. From 1843 on, consular and diplomatic officers of increasingly higher rank were assigned to the islands.

What were the responsibilities of these early official representatives of the U.S. government? Agents, consuls, and later consuls general were charged with reporting on commercial matters, solving problems posed by the hordes of seamen who visited or were stranded in the islands, and protecting American citizens in trouble with the local authorities. Commissioners, ministers and other diplomatic officers were expected to cultivate good relations with the host government, in the case of Hawai'i with the king and his government officials and, from time to time, to negotiate treaties.

The commissioners and ministers occasionally also had to supervise the activities of the consuls when, in serious cases and to give added

weight to its instructions, Washington felt obliged to send a directive to the consul through the diplomatic representative, but by and large the functions of the two offices were completely separate.

The U.S. government communicated with its consuls and commissioners through "Instructions" and in response received "Despatches."²

In view of the distance between Washington, D.C. and Hawai'i, and the limited means of communication, by sea and later by rail and sea, it is important to examine the quantity, and particularly the quality of the "Instructions" issued by the Department of State in Washington. Based on these two factors some approach can be made to determining whether or not the official policy of the United States was carried out by her representatives in Hawai'i.

CONSULAR OFFICERS

The first official U.S. representatives in the Hawaiian Islands were agents for Commerce and Seamen stationed in Honolulu between 1820 and 1844. Two men held his post: John Coffin Jones Jr. and Peter A. Brinsmade. Both were merchants who had previously lived and worked in Hawai'i and were willing to undertake, in addition to their regular commercial pursuits, the task of representing their government in the islands. They served without salary from the U.S. government and were expected to report on commerce in Hawai'i and to help distressed American citizens ashore, both seamen and civilians.

What sort of guidance did Jones and Brinsmade receive from the Department of State? Unfortunately, the file of "Consular Instructions" for Hawai'i ends in 1834 so we do not have a complete record, but between September 19, 1820 and September 27, 1834, a period of 14 years, John Coffin Jones Jr. received exactly fourteen Instructions from Washington.

The record, however, is less impressive when the actual letters are examined. The first two, both written in September of 1820, concern Jones' appointment and were sent to him in Boston before his departure for Honolulu.³ He heard nothing from Washington during his first tour of duty in Hawai'i. While on home leave, in 1825, Jones asked the Department of State if he was to continue as agent for Com-

merce and Seamen in the islands.⁴ This elicited two letters from the department, one assuring him of the continuance of his appointment and the other dealing with regulations governing disbursements.⁵

Another five years went by before Jones heard from Washington again, and then, in 1830 and 1831, he received three circular letters also sent to a number of other consuls around the world, the first regarding protocol between consuls and naval officers, the second asking for information about a Sardinian Count who was missing somewhere in the "Indies," and the third informing him of the appointment of a new Secretary of State.⁶

In 1833, Secretary of State Louis McLane wrote Jones asking him why he had not reported for some time.⁷ The next year Jones' mail bag was full. He received six messages from the department in 1834, four of them circular letters and two reproving him for not writing to Washington more regularly.⁸

In Jones' defense, the file of "Despatches from Consuls" shows that between 1820 and 1829 he did write the department at least once a year and usually more often.⁹ The overall score during that nine year period is: Jones 17—Department of State four. There was a lapse in Jones' correspondence from 1830 until 1833, however, during which time the department bombarded him with three circulars and one letter. Spurred on, in 1834, Jones sent off five Despatches from Hawai'i in answer to, or as a result of, four circulars and two letters from the department that year.¹⁰ From then until he was replaced as agent for Commerce and Seamen in 1839, Jones sent 18 more Despatches to Washington but unfortunately there is no record available of what he may have received in return.¹¹

Based on the above record for the years during which we do have copies of the correspondence between Jones and the department, 1820 through 1834, Jones holds a slight numerical lead: seventeen Despatches to the department's 14 Instructions, none of which gave the agent much guidance. On the other hand, Jones' Despatches to the department were generally full of information on American commerce in the islands and the cargoes of American ships touching Hawai'i. He also kept Washington informed of rumors which drifted in to him from California and the Northwest Coast concerning the activities of the Mexicans and Spaniards in the south and the Rus-

sians in the north, of the comings and goings of American and other naval vessels in the area, and of the activities of the Hawaiians, representatives of other foreign countries, and of the various missionary groups. If he did not smother the Department beneath a pile of mail, Jones certainly provided his superiors with a great deal of interesting information.

In exchange Jones received from the department only four Instructions which might be considered to contain useful information. The first was written by the Secretary of State on September 25, 1820, while Jones was still in Boston, in answer to his inquiry about the title he had been give-Agent for Commerce and Seamen.

The Commission enclosed to you as Agent to [*sic*] the United States for Commerce and Seamen at the Sandwich Islands, is in the form usually employed in those cases which do not admit of the appointment of regular consuls, either because officers of that denomination are not admitted at the places where the officer is to reside, or because the sovereignty of the country is in an unsettled or doubtful state. The Sandwich Islands have been heretofore considered as not under regular Government, but as inhabited by men in the earliest stages of Human society. It appears however that they have since their intercourse with Europe and the United States made considerable advances in civilization, and that they are the central point of a valuable commerce.

Your duties under the appointment herewith transmitted will be those ordinarily assigned to Consuls. A copy of the circular Instructions which are issued to them will be sent to you. The consular office being long established and recognized among Commercial Nations, its duties and powers, and the countenance and protection to which it is entitled from the Government to which the person holding it is addressed, are ascertained and well known. How far the principles may be recognized in the Sandwich Islands, and indeed the nature of the government which has arisen there is little known.

I have therefore to request of you while residing there, communications as full and as frequent as you may think it useful to make them, of the political condition of these islands, of the numbers of their inhabitants; of their Institutions as far as they have any, or their prospects in relation to future civilization and government, and especially of the commerce carried on with them, whether by Americans of the U.S. or others. You will as far as may be practicable make semi annual returns

of all the vessels of the United State and of other nations which may communicate with these Islands, and of the merchandise, whether of export or import which they carry. And give any other information the possession or which may be made beneficial to the public service.”¹²

In other words, the United States government was interested in all information available about the Sandwich Islands which could be of benefit to American commerce and that is exactly what Jones provided, although on an irregular schedule. Nothing was said about relations with the Hawaiian government or any diplomatic duties.

The only other Instructions from Washington which could be considered to have constituted guidance for Jones were a “Circular Instruction,” in 1830, regarding the protocol to be observed between consuls and visiting U.S. naval officers and two other circulars in 1834, one advising all consuls that “. . . in future, they will not, unless the consent of Congress shall have been previously obtained, accept, under any circumstances, presents of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince or Foreign State.”¹³ The other concerned regulations for the payment of costs for legal aid to seamen accused of violating the laws of foreign countries. The cost of the defense of such men was not to be allowed in future.¹⁴

Of course, Jones had been provided with “General Instructions,” but these dealt with routine paper work and did not cover special cases such as whether or not it was proper for him to negotiate a treaty with Hawai‘i. This problem came up, in 1826, when Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones of the *USS Peacock* sailed into Honolulu Harbor charged by the U.S. Navy to find a method of recovering deserters from American ships. Captain Jones proceeded to negotiate a treaty with the Hawaiian government on behalf of the United States. It was the first formal international treaty entered into by the Hawaiian government, although it was never ratified by the United States. Agent Jones could not find anything in his Instructions” which would authorize him to draw up such a treaty so he left that diplomatic function to Captain Jones, who seemed to have no qualms about his own authority.¹⁵

By and large, Agent Jones was provided by his government with only the most general of instructions, but the Secretary of State may be excused for his lack of specific directions due to the relative unimportance of Hawai‘i to the United States at that time.

The career of Jones' successor, Peter A. Brinsmade, does not add much to the record of U.S. government interest in Hawai'i. Brinsmade was appointed Agent for Commerce and Seamen on April 13, 1839; in July of 1844 he was promoted to the rank of Consul; in January of 1845 he was replaced by Alexander G. Abell.¹⁶ Much of the time Brinsmade was assigned to Honolulu he was actually traveling in the United States and Europe attempting to recoup his personal finances. There are a few Despatches from him to the department of file but no Instructions from the department to him.¹⁷ Jones' experience, therefore, will have to remain for the time being as the sole example of the quality and quantity of the Instructions sent out by the Department of State to its consular representative in Hawai'i.

Between 1844 and 1898 a series of 16 consuls and, after 1885, four consuls general were charged with the same duties as were Jones and Brinsmade. These men were generally not resident merchants but were appointed specifically for consular duties. They were instructed to report on commerce and to protect American citizens in the islands.¹⁸

DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS

Given the limited instructions to U.S. agents and consuls, our search for some evidence of official U.S. government guidance on Hawaiian problems sent to its representatives in Hawai'i, should turn up in the files of "Diplomatic Instructions" to U.S. diplomatic appointees in Hawai'i.

The first American diplomats in Hawai'i were commissioners, the lowest of diplomatic ranks. There is no such position in the U.S. Foreign Service now, but in the 19th century it was accorded to men assigned to special missions which were considered to have a semi-diplomatic character. The duties of these officers were separate from consular functions.¹⁹ The commissioners to the Sandwich Islands were sent out specifically to represent the United States at the Hawaiian court. They were charged with fostering good relations with the king and his government officials, reporting on any suspicious moves they detected taken by official representatives of other countries and, when necessary, negotiating treaties. Seven men held this rank between 1844 and 1863.²⁰

The first was George Brown of Massachusetts, who was appointed to his post in March of 1843 and remained in office for over three years. During all that time he received exactly five Instructions from the Department of State. The first, sent to Brown by Secretary of State Daniel Webster in March 1843, is long and informative. Webster explained that Brown's title

“ . . . is not meant to intimate that the Islands, . . . are not entirely independent, on the contrary, this is a fact respecting which no doubt is felt, and the hope that through the agency of the Commissioner that independence might be preserved, . . . It is obvious from circumstances connected with this position, that the interests of the United States require that no other power should possess or colonize the Sandwich islands or exercise over their government an influence which would lead to partial or exclusive favors in matters of navigation or trade . . . You will give the government of the Sandwich Islands distinctly to understand that the Government of the United States in all its proceedings and in setting on foot your mission, has not in any way been actuated by a desire or intention to secure to itself exclusive privileges in matters of navigation or trade or to prevent any or all other commercial nations from an equal participation with ourselves in the benefits of an intercourse with those Islands. We seek no control over their government, not any undue influence whatever. Our only wish is that the integrity and independence of the Hawaiian territory may be scrupulously maintained and that its government should be entirely impartial towards foreigners of every nation. In making resolute and stern resistance, therefore, to any claim of favor or exclusive privilege, by other powers, you will at all time, frankly, disavow any desire that favors or exclusive privileges should be granted to the United States, their ships, commerce, citizens.”²¹

Having issued such comprehensive instructions to the new commissioner, Secretary of State Daniel Webster apparently felt he had done his duty. Unfortunately, Instruction #2 and #3 are lost. Instruction #4 gave Brown some additional guidance on the rights of Americans in Hawai'i to jury trials and #5 advised him of the appointment of his successor.²² Five Instructions in three years! In return Brown sent out 70 Despatches, most of them lengthy and many with numerous enclosures.²³

Before Commissioner Brown was appointed, in 1842, King Kamehameha III had sent off a mission to the United States and Europe to secure treaties which would recognize the independence of the Hawaiian government. William Richards and Timoteo Haalilio succeeded in London and Paris but in Washington they were only able to secure expressions of friendship from the President and his Secretary of State.²⁴ When Commissioner George Brown was sent to the islands as the first U.S. diplomatic representative, however, he was instructed to adhere to the principle of equal treatment for Americans with those of other foreigners who had treaty relationships with the Hawaiian government and he was to protest to the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs any infringement of American rights.²⁵ The Secretary of State realized the potential problem his commissioner might face in the absence of a U.S. treaty similar to the ones already negotiated with Britain and France, so he did empower Brown to negotiate a convention with the Hawaiian government similar to those already existing with Britain and France, but only on one specific question, the trial of Americans by a jury of American not Hawaiian citizens. If, in the future, Britain or France were to agree to trial of their nationals by a Hawaiian jury, the United States would, of course, make the same concession, "But whether there be or be not treaty stipulations between us and the Islands, the United States can never consent that their citizens should be put in any other footing than those of the most favored nations."²⁶

Throughout his tenure in Hawai'i, Commissioner Brown actively protested to the Hawaiian government on this issue, perhaps a bit too firmly for, in September of 1844, King Kamehameha III requested the U.S. government to send a new representative to Hawai'i.²⁷

Anthony Ten Eyke of Michigan replaced Brown and served for two years, during which time he received ten Instructions from the department in answer to 60 Despatches, many of them long (e.g., #50 covers 70 pages) and with a great number of enclosures.²⁸ Three of the Instructions to Ten Eyke, however, were extremely comprehensive and might have served as excellent guides for the new commissioner.

On his departure for Hawai'i, Ten Eyke received instructions from Secretary of State James Buchanan in which he referred to "... the unfortunate difficulties which have arisen between the Hawai-

ian authorities and your predecessor.” The Secretary hoped that Brown’s recall, Ten Eyke’s arrival, and a letter from the President of the United States to the king of Hawai‘i would serve to heal the breach, but instructed Ten Eyke that if those measures did not suffice he could, but only as a last resort, “express the President’s disapprobation of Mr. Brown’s conduct . . .” It was clear that the President did not want to censure Brown, but “He does not believe, however, that the interests of the country should suffer for the sake of sparing the feelings of an individual, especially when the question is with a feeble and inexperienced government just struggling into independent existence, which has so many claims upon the sympathy of the government and people of the United States as that of the Hawaiian Islands.”²⁹ The Secretary added:

The United States have a deep stake in the continued independence of the Hawaiian Islands. They present one of those commanding commercial positions which Great Britain, judging from her past history, would be anxious to annex to her dominions. To promote the prosperity and secure the independence of these islands is therefore the clear policy as well as the duty of the Government of the United States. We could not view with indifference their transfer to or their dependence upon any European Power.³⁰

Ten Eyke was instructed to maintain friendly relations with the Hawaiian government, to cultivate the king and the officials of that government and to do all he could to restore the good relations which had been interrupted by the previous commissioner. Furthermore, he was authorized to negotiate a treaty with the Hawaiian government and was furnished with a copy of the Hawaiian treaty with Great Britain as a model.³¹

In June of 1847 the Secretary of State sent further Instructions to Ten Eyke.

In acknowledging the independence of the Hawaiian Islands, we recognize that their Government possessed the rights and was competent to perform the duties of an independent State. That Government is yet, as it were, struggling into existence and no doubt is controlled by unfortunate influences. Still, a diplomatic agent is not sent abroad to reform the Government to which he is accredited. Any attempt to do

this on his part, unless conducted with great discretion, can only be productive of injury to his own country. Feeble governments are always the most jealous of the appearance of foreign interference in their domestic concerns. You should therefore carefully avoid this appearance, unless when your agency shall become necessary to protect the rights of American citizens.³² (33)

Ten Eyke received only one more Instruction from the Department of State and that was sent out a year later, in August of 1848. In it the Secretary of State disapproved of his commissioner's conduct and requested his resignation as he had failed in the principal object of his mission, to negotiate a treaty with the Hawaiian Government acceptable to the United States; he had been furnished with a copy of the British-Hawaiian treaty yet had submitted to the department a completely different one.³³

In the same Instruction, the Secretary of State covered a number of problems Ten Eyke was having in Hawai'i and laid down the U.S. policy of "earnest persuasion but not peremptory demand," stressing the U.S. government's desire for the continued independence of the islands, particularly in view of the recent addition to American territory on the Pacific Coast. That was the last message Ten Eyke received from Washington. Upon receipt he resigned and left the islands in 1849.³⁴

Charles Eames of New York was appointed commissioner on January 12, 1849 and resigned October 29, 1849.³⁵ Eames received two Instructions from the department. They dictated the terms of a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation which he was to negotiate with Gerrit P. Judd of the Hawaiian government and he managed to accomplish that task while still in San Francisco, without ever setting foot on Hawaiian soil.³⁶

Luther Severance, a former newspaper editor and congressman from Maine, was then appointed commissioner, on June 7, 1850.³⁷ In the three and a half years Severance remained in Hawai'i, he spent a good deal of time writing, possibly due to his newspaper training. He sent to the Department of State 100 Despatches and in return received 12 Instructions. Of these 12, ten were routine. They advised Severance of his own appointment, the appointment of consuls or vice-consuls, the transmittal of documents, copies of Wilkes' *Narrative*

of the *United States Exploring Expedition* for presentation to the Hawaiian government, details of mail service and rates of exchange, and finally notice of the appointment of his successor and his own letter of recall. None of these could be considered to be of much use to the commissioner in formulating or following U.S. policy in the Hawaiian Islands.³⁸

There were, however, two Instructions which could be extremely helpful to Severance. In the first Secretary of State Daniel Webster wrote the newly appointed commissioner that he recognized that there was jealousy between naturalized Hawaiians and alien resident of the islands and that Severance's predecessors, Brown and Ten Eyke, had been drawn into the controversy, with the result that they had developed a resentment against the local authorities which endangered their usefulness to the United States. He cautioned Severance "Your principal duty will be to attend to the faithful execution of the treaty (just concluded in Washington) by that Government." When Severance was appealed to by the resident Americans, he was to extend his "personal good offices" but no more.³⁹

In Hawai'i, 1850 was an exiting year. The French Navy had made its presence felt the previous year to such an extent that the Hawaiian government decided that its sovereignty was threatened and had requested that the United States use its good offices to adjust the differences between them and the French government. This the United States was not willing to do. Negotiations dragged on and, in January of 1851, another French naval force appeared in Hawaiian waters and again threatened Honolulu.⁴⁰

On March 10, 1851, a deed of session to the United States was drawn up by the Hawaiian government and submitted to Severance who transmitted the information to Washington. This brought an immediate response from Secretary Webster. On July 14, 1851, he wrote two Instructions to Severance, one public and the other confidential.

In the public Instruction Webster advised his commissioner that the purpose of the U.S. government was to favor the establishment and maintenance of a Hawaiian government in the islands and that their nation expected all other nations to respect the sovereignty of Hawai'i too. However, the United States could not be indifferent to the course of affairs in Hawai'i as the islands were so close to the United States and the commerce of the two countries so intermingled. Finally, he

laid down as United States policy: “. . . that while the government of the United States, itself faithful to its original assurance, scrupulously regards the independence of the Hawaiian Islands, it can never consent to see those islands taken possession of by either of the great commercial powers of Europe, nor cannot consent, that demands, manifestly unjust and derogatory, and inconsistent with a bona fide independence, shall be enforced against that government.” He also noted in his public Instruction that the U.S. Navy in the Pacific had been alerted to the possibility of trouble in the islands.⁴¹

The same day Webster wrote confidentially to Severance making three principal points. First, the deed of session was to be returned to the Hawaiian government immediately, and on any further question of the Hawaiian government surrendering its sovereignty to the United States Severance was to serve only as a channel of communication, he was not to express an opinion. Secondly, the commissioner was not to encourage any American naval officer to involve himself or his ship in a hostile act against the French. And finally, that Americans settled in the islands were no longer American citizens and, while the United States government might express a special interest in their problems, they had no right to the protection of their former government. Severance was cautioned to be especially careful not to give the Americans in the islands any cause to expect the United States to annex Hawai'i, for that was a question to be settled later and in Washington.⁴² It is fair to say that while the Secretary of State was no match for his commissioner as a correspondent, 12 Instructions to 100 Despatches, when an important issue arose, Webster provided Severance with full and specific instructions.

In 1853, David L. Gregg of Illinois succeeded Severance and served for four and a half years.⁴³ Gregg outdid Severance in quantity, sending the department 264 Despatches. In return he received 36 Instructions, 31 of a routine nature, and five containing significant directions.⁴⁴

In September of 1853, Secretary of State W. L. Marcy wrote Gregg warning him to be alert to any danger to the independence of Hawai'i, for the importance of the islands to the United States had increased due to the U.S. presence on the Pacific Coast, the prospect of a new and more stable government in China, and the opening of Japan to commerce. Hawai'i was now considered as a possible stop-over port enroute to the “distant East . . . It is consequently indispensable to

our welfare that the policy which governs them should be liberal and that it should continue to be free from the control of any third country.”⁴⁵

When Gregg reached the islands and reviewed his predecessor’s files, he had become aware of the rumors of Hawai‘i being annexed to the United States and immediately wrote the department asking for instructions on that point. He was promptly advised that the department knew that the subject of a transfer of sovereignty had been brought up and strongly advocated by many, but that it was the policy of the United States to maintain the “status quo” [underlined in Instructions] in Hawai‘i, not to accelerate such a change. The Secretary of State added, however, that if the transfer of Hawaiian sovereignty is inevitable, the United States must acquire the islands rather than any other power, but Gregg was only to discuss terms in such an eventuality.⁴⁶

More than talk of annexation continued in Hawai‘i. Towards the end of 1854, Gregg sent to Washington a draft treaty of annexation. The reaction of the Department of State was immediate. On January 31, 1855, Secretary Marcy wrote Gregg:

The policy of the United States in relation to the future of the Sandwich Islands is presented in the instructions heretofore given you. That policy is not to accelerate or urge on any important change in the government of that country, but if it has or should become so far enfeebled that it cannot be continued, and the sovereignty of the Islands must be transferred to another power, then a state of things will exist in which it will be proper for the United States to have a regard to the future condition of that Country. If the Hawaiian government and people become convinced of the necessity of such a change, it is probably that they will, if left to their free choice, look to the United States as the country to which they would wish to be united. To a proper arrangement of this kind this government certainly has no objections.⁴⁷

As a matter of fact Gregg’s treaty had already been overtaken by events in Hawai‘i and in Washington. On December 15, 1854, King Kamehameha III died. One of the first acts of his successor was to withdraw the annexation treaty. It was a dead issue, however, for the U.S. government had not approved it, partly due to the provision for statehood for Hawai‘i.⁴⁸

There is one other Instruction to Gregg which might fall into the category of a "policy" statement. In October of 1856, Secretary Marcy replied to Gregg's inquiries. He explained that contrary to rumors no specific arrangements had been made in Washington to station United States, French, or British warships in Hawaiian waters to guarantee the sovereignty of the islands against filibustering expeditions from the Pacific Coast.⁴⁹ In May of 1858, Gregg resigned as U.S. Commissioner and was immediately appointed Minister of Finance in the Hawaiian government.⁵⁰

James W. Borden of Indiana replaced Gregg in Hawai'i.⁵¹ During his three years as commissioner, Borden sent off 42 Despatches and received 21 Instructions.⁵² His initial instructions were perfunctory. Secretary of State Lewis Cass reminded him of the good relations between the U.S. and Hawai'i and urged him to keep them so.⁵³ The only other guidance Borden was sent was the suggestion that he take a firm stand against the Hawaiian government's claim to Johnson's Island.⁵⁴

Thomas J. Dryer was the last commissioner to serve the United States in Hawai'i. He was in the islands for barely two years, June 15, 1861 to June 20, 1863, and his exchanges with the Department of State were infrequent: 15 Instructions, all of them routine, and 34 Despatches.⁵⁵ Civil war was raging in the United States while Dryer was in Hawai'i, and there were repercussions in the islands. The American community was divided, commerce was curtailed by the presence of the Confederate raider *Shenandoah* in the Pacific, and the Secretary of State presumably did not have time for the sort of problems which arose in far off Hawai'i.

CONCLUSION

While the United States of America had consular and diplomatic representation in the Hawaiian Islands for 78 years, this study covers only the early years of U.S. official relations with the Kingdom of Hawaii, the period from 1820 to 1863. In those years the United States was represented by agents, consuls, and commissioners; after 1863 Washington sent to the Kingdom of Hawaii diplomats and consuls of a higher rank. Also, this study endeavors to document the quantity and quality of the Instructions sent from the Department of

State to its officers in Hawai'i and their responses, and to answer two questions: Was the U.S. government policy consistent and, if so, was it faithfully carried out by its representatives in Hawai'i?

	Total Instructions	Useful	Despatches
Jones	14	4	17
Brown	5	2	70
Ten Eyke	10	3	60
Eames	4	2	4
Severance	12	2	100
Gregg	36	5	264
Borden	21	2	42
Dryer	15	0	34

A cursory glance at the figures above might lead one to believe that the Department of State was not giving sufficient guidance to its representatives in Hawai'i, and that the methods which the commissioners adopted for solving problems in the islands were based on a lack of understanding of U.S. policy, yet an examination of the useful Instructions sent out from the Department of State suggests quite the opposite. The department did not issue frequent orders to its representatives, but when it did issue them they were full and specific. In every period of real crisis encountered by the U.S. representatives in Hawai'i, the department responded with a policy statement which was a clear guide to its officers in their relations with the Hawaiian government.

As to whether or not U.S. policy from 1820 until 1863 was faithfully carried out by U.S. representatives in Hawai'i is another matter. A number of factors came into play but it appears from the records that deviation from U.S. policy was most frequently due to a slowness of communication. Washington was very far from Hawai'i in the 19th century and communications, by land and by sea was slow and unreliable, which hindered the best efforts of the department to advise and instruct its men in the islands in a timely fashion. After 1863 the picture began to change. Both the Department of State and the diplomatic and consular officers in Hawai'i had access to increasingly speedier communications across the United States and the Pacific.

In spite of slow and unreliable communications it seems evident from the records examined that U.S. policy was carried out in the Hawaiian Islands according to the dictates of Washington, most of the time; when an officer deviated from his instructions it was generally because of a breakdown of communications, the long intervals between the time a question was posed in Honolulu and an answer could be received from Washington.

NOTES

- ¹ Secretary of State James Buchanan to Anthony Ten Eyke, Aug. 28, 1848, Diplomatic Instructions–Hawaii, Department of State.
- ² This variant spelling of dispatch was used by the Department of State throughout the 19th Century. An “Instruction” is a letter from the Department of State to its representative abroad and is filed under either “Diplomatic Instructions” or “Consular Instructions.” “Despatches” are letters or reports to the Department of State from its representatives abroad and are filed under either “Despatches from United States Ministers” or “Despatches from United States Consuls.”
- ³ Sec. State Martin Van Buren to John Coffin Jones, Sept. 19 and Sept. 25, 1820, Consular Instructions–Hawaii.
- ⁴ Jones to Sec. State Henry Clay, Oct. 19, 1825, Despatches from Consuls in Hawaii.
- ⁵ Sec. State Clay to Jones, Oct. 24, 1825 and Daniel Brent, Nov. 10, 1825, Consular Instructions.
- ⁶ Sec. State Martin Van Buren, circulars to Thomas Aspinwall, London and all Consuls, Circulars, Jan. 25, 1830; to John Shillaber, Batavia and all Consuls, April 19, 1831; and to all Consuls, May 24, 1831, Consular Instructions. Circulars announce appointment of Sec. State Edward Livingston.
- ⁷ Sec. State Louis McLane to Jones, Oct. 18, 1833, Consular Instructions.
- ⁸ Circulars, Jan. 6 and 15, July 1, August 8, and April 28, 1834 and Sec. State John Forsyth to John Jones, Sept. 27, 1834, Consular Instructions.
- ⁹ Sec. State McLane to Jones, Oct. 18, 1833, Consular Despatches–1830–1833.
- ¹⁰ Consular Despatches, 1834, Consular Instructions–1830–1833.
- ¹¹ Consular Despatches–1834–1839.
- ¹² Sec. State J. Q. Adams to John Jones, Sept. 25, 1820, Consular Instructions.
- ¹³ Sec. State Van Buren to John Jones, Jan. 25, 1830 and Circular, Jan. 6, 1834, Consular Instructions.
- ¹⁴ Circular, Jan. 15, 1834, Consular Instructions.
- ¹⁵ R. S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, (Honolulu: U of H Press, 1968), vol. I, 98–99.
- ¹⁶ List of U.S. Consular Officers, 1789–1939, Department of State.
- ¹⁷ Peter Brinsmade to Sec. State John Forsyth, Sept. 26, 1838, April 10, 1839, Dec. 31, 1841, and April 1842, Consular Despatches–Hawaii.

- ¹⁸ List of U.S. Consular Officers, 1789–1939, Department of State.
- ¹⁹ Tracy H. Lay, *The Foreign Service of the United States*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1928) 103.
- ²⁰ List of U.S. Consular Officers, 1789–1939, Department of State.
- ²¹ Sec. State Daniel Webster to George Brown, Mar. 15, 1843, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ²² Sec. State Webster to Brown, Mar. 15, 1843, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ²³ Despatches from U.S. Ministers in Hawaii, 1843–1900.
- ²⁴ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 98–99.
- ²⁵ Sec. State J. C. Calhoun to George Brown, Jan. 20, 1845, 201, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ²⁶ Sec. State Calhoun to Brown, Jan. 20, 1845, 202, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ²⁷ Kamehameha III, letter to President of the United States, Sept. 20, 1844, FO&EX, July 1844, Archives of Hawai'i. Letter asks for the recall of Commissioner Brown. See also Despatches of Ministers, Sept. 24, 1844.
- ²⁸ List of U.S. Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.
- ²⁹ Sec. State James Buchanan to Anthony Ten Eyke, Sept. 10, 1845, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³⁰ Sec. State Buchanan to Ten Eyke, Sept. 10, 1845, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³¹ Sec. State Buchanan to Ten Eyke, Sept. 10, 1845, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³² Sec. State Buchanan to Ten Eyke, June 18, 1847, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³³ Sec. State Buchanan to Ten Eyke, Aug. 28, 1848, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³⁴ Sec. State Buchanan to Ten Eyke, Aug. 28, 1848, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³⁵ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.
- ³⁶ Sec. State James Buchanan to Charles Eames, Feb. 12 and 26, Oct. 27, and Dec. 31, 1849, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ³⁷ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.
- ³⁸ Diplomatic Instructions, June 1850 to Aug. 1853.
- ³⁹ Sec. State Daniel Webster to Luther Severance, June 24, 1850, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴⁰ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 388–401.
- ⁴¹ Sec. State Webster to Severance, July 14, 1851, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴² Sec. State Webster to Severance, July 14, 1851, Private Instructions, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴³ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.
- ⁴⁴ Despatches from Ministers, from #1 July 8, 1852 to #36 March 1, 1858 and Secretaries of State W. L. Marcy and Lewis Cass to David L. Gregg, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴⁵ Sec. State Marcy to Gregg, Sept. 17, 1853, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴⁶ Sec. State Marcy to Gregg, April 4, 1854, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴⁷ Sec. State Marcy to Gregg, Jan. 31, 1855, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁴⁸ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 416–427.
- ⁴⁹ Sec. State Marcy to Gregg, Jan. 31, 1855, Diplomatic Instructions.
- ⁵⁰ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.

⁵¹ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939.

⁵² Sec. State Lewis Cass to James Borden, from Feb. 26, 1855 to March 29, 1861, Diplomatic Instructions; Despatches from Ministers, June 1, 1858 to June 17, 1861.

⁵³ Sec. State Lewis Cass to James Borden, Feb. 26, 1858, Diplomatic Instructions.

⁵⁴ Sec. State Cass to Borden, Oct. 15 and Dec. 17, 1858, Diplomatic Instructions.

⁵⁵ List of Diplomatic Officers, 1789–1939; Sec. State W.H. Seward to Thomas J. Dryer, March 29, 1861 and March 18, 1863, Diplomatic Instructions.

