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## Article From the Washington Post, January 25, 1911

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DOLLARS VS. BULLETS.

The peculiar importance attaching to the ratification of the convention recently signed between the United States and Honduras lies in the fact that it squarely raises the issue whether or not the American government can have a policy of good constructive work in relation to the neighboring republics of Central America and of the Caribbean Sea, a zone in which the geographical and commercial circumstances and the future of the Panama Canal give to the United States a special position.

So far as Central America is concerned, the proper policy of the United States is there crystalized also by the obligations which it assumed by becoming a moral party to the Washington Conventions of 1907, whereby, among other things, the neutrality of Honduras and non-interference therewith by the neighboring republics were guaranteed.

The Monroe Doctrine, under its modern interpretation, does not compel the United States by any means to protect extravagant and improvident governments from the just claims of European or other creditors. But when an American republic is on the brink of bankruptcy, no friendlier or politically wiser action could be taken by the United States than to seek, through the instrumentalities of American capital, by one stroke to remove all question of European intervention, and at the same time to start the country concerned upon the road to progress, peace, and prosperity.

For the greater part of a century the United States has been called upon with great frequency to help the weaker republics, especially of Central America and the Caribbean, out of their dif-

difficulties. This was done successfully in the tutelage of Santo Domingo, the success of which is shown by statistics. The force of events has gradually rendered the United States almost responsible for the progressive and peaceful evolution of the region between the canal and Mexico, and probably no one could be so fatuous as to suppose that this Government could with any self respect or any regard for its plain duty sit by indifferently and see insurrection and chaos continue so often to prevail in these republics.

Their misfortunes are due almost invariably to the ambitions of a few politicians, and the customs revenues are the sinews of war. Financial and fiscal reform and honest customs administration are, therefore, the most practical bulwarks of strength. It is understood that the new government of Nicaragua has asked the good offices of the United States for the reform of its finances. Others are likely to follow.

Hence the bare issue presented by the question of the ratification of the Honduran convention is this: Are dollars or bullets the better instruments of reform? Can American capital be better used than along the line of a policy to build peace and prosperity in neighboring countries, which ask and expect the friendly aid of this Government?

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