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58TH CONGRESS,
1st Session.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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M E S S A G E

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

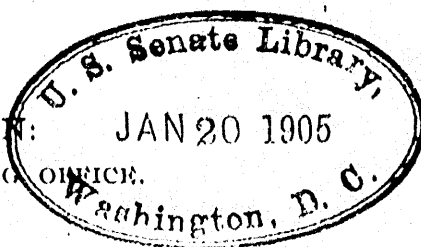
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AT THE

BEGINNING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
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M E S S A G E .

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

I have convened the Congress that it may consider the legislation necessary to put into operation the commercial treaty with Cuba, which was ratified by the Senate at its last session, and subsequently by the Cuban Government. I deem such legislation demanded not only by our interest but by our honor. We can not with propriety abandon the course upon which we have so wisely embarked. When the acceptance of the Platt amendment was required from Cuba by the action of the Congress of the United States, this Government thereby definitely committed itself to the policy of treating Cuba as occupying a unique position as regards this country. It was provided that when the island became a free and independent republic she should stand in such close relations with us as in certain respects to come within our system of international policy; and it necessarily followed that she must also to a certain degree become included within the lines of our economic policy. Situated as Cuba is, it would not be possible for this country to permit the strategic abuse of the island by any foreign military power. It is for this reason that certain limitations have been imposed upon her financial policy, and that naval stations have been conceded by her to the United States. The negotiations as to the details of these naval stations are on the eve of completion. They are so situated as to prevent any idea that there is the intention ever to use them against Cuba, or otherwise than for the protection of Cuba from the assaults of foreign foes, and for the better safeguarding of American interests in the waters south of us.

These interests have been largely increased by the consequences of the war with Spain, and will be still further increased by the building of the isthmian canal. They are both military and economic. The granting to us by Cuba of the naval stations above alluded to is of the utmost importance from a military standpoint, and is proof of the good faith with which Cuba is treating us. Cuba

has made great progress since her independence was established. She has advanced steadily in every way. She already stands high among her sister republics of the New World. She is loyally observing her obligations to us; and she is entitled to like treatment by us.

The treaty submitted to you for approval secures to the United States economic advantages as great as those given to Cuba. Not an American interest is sacrificed. By the treaty a large Cuban market is secured to our producers. It is a market which lies at our doors, which is already large, which is capable of great expansion, and which is especially important to the development of our export trade. It would be indeed shortsighted for us to refuse to take advantage of such an opportunity, and to force Cuba into making arrangements with other countries to our disadvantage.

This reciprocity treaty stands by itself. It is demanded on considerations of broad national policy as well as by our economic interest. It will do harm to no industry. It will benefit many industries. It is in the interest of our people as a whole, both because of its importance from the broad standpoint of international policy, and because economically it intimately concerns us to develop and secure the rich Cuban market for our farmers, artisans, merchants, and manufacturers. Finally, it is desirable as a guaranty of the good faith of our Nation towards her young sister Republic to the south, whose welfare must ever be closely bound with ours. We gave her liberty. We are knit to her by the memories of the blood and the courage of our soldiers who fought for her in war; by the memories of the wisdom and integrity of our administrators who served her in peace and who started her so well on the difficult path of self-government. We must help her onward and upward; and in helping her we shall help ourselves.

The foregoing considerations caused the negotiation of the treaty with Cuba and its ratification by the Senate. They now with equal force support the legislation by the Congress which by the terms of the treaty is necessary to render it operative. A failure to enact such legislation would come perilously near a repudiation of the pledged faith of the Nation.

I transmit herewith the treaty, as amended by the Senate and ratified by the Cuban Government.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

WHITE HOUSE,

November 10, 1903.