

James Buchanan's 1832 Mission to the Tsar, the Plight of Poland, and the Limits of America's Revolutionary Legacy in Jacksonian Foreign Policy*

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I. To Russia without Love

James Buchanan brought no love to Russia when he sailed for St. Peterburg in the spring of 1832 as the incoming U.S. minister to the court of Tsar Nicholas. Only a year earlier, then Pennsylvania Congressman Buchanan had stood before the U.S. House of Representatives to denounce that irredeemable tyrant, as Buchanan viewed him. "The madness and folly," Buchanan charged, "of a single despot have aroused the people of that continent to vindicate their rights; and I trust in God they may never lay down their arms until the liberties of each of its nations shall be secured by constitutional charters."¹ In particular, Russia's suppression of Poland's 1830 November Uprising disconcerted Americans like Buchanan. Launched by a cadre of military officers in Warsaw, the nationalist uprising accused Russia of trampling the constitutional rights reserved to Poland after the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Liberals throughout Western Europe wrung their hands in response to Poland's treatment, but Buchanan and many Americans judged Nicholas guilty of smothering the ideals and institutions that were the distinctive historical legacy of their own nation's founding. By early 1831, breathless accounts of Polish resistance against Russian depredations spread from Poland's many sympathizers in France and Britain to the American press, spurring public denunciations such as Buchanan's.

In that speech to Congress, Buchanan urged the political foes of President Andrew Jackson to unfreeze the salary of the current U.S. minister to Russia, the Virginian John Randolph. Terminally ill, Randolph had abandoned his frigid post for London after half-

* This essay emerged from a collaborative project with Dr. Agnieszka Smelkowska on the Polish political refugees who landed in the U.S. following the 1830 November Uprising.

¹ "Remarks on a Motion to Strike from the General Appropriation Bill the Appropriation for the Salary of the Minister to Russia" in John Bassett Moore, *The Works of James Buchanan, comprising his speeches, state papers, and private correspondence* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott Company, 1908, volume 2), 164.

heartedly attempting to negotiate a commercial treaty with Russia's foreign minister. In London, Randolph found Polish expatriates and their local sympathizers lobbying in vain for national support of the November Uprising. He wrote Jackson that, "the brave Poles continue to perform prodigies of valour that should crimson the face of Europe with shame."² For their part, Americans in the U.S. and abroad formed pro-Polish committees, raised funds to support the Polish cause, and lobbied the U.S. government to offer some succor. The exiled National Polish Committee in Paris directly petitioned Jackson, likening America's "wise institutions" to a plant that had "sent forth vigorous shoots of freedom" to places like Poland that should be defended.³ Calling on Jackson to support the Polish cause a year later, the Marquis de Lafayette chose July 14—France's national day—to emphasize the broader stakes of the Polish independence struggle: "The two great categories that divide Europe...under the name of the oppressors and the oppressed, are more and more getting asunder."⁴ The very contest and principles behind America's own founding seemed at stake in Eastern Europe.

At the time of his speech, Buchanan had no idea that he would soon fill Randolph's boots and trudge into the uncertain terrain of U.S. commercial negotiations with Russia amid this torrent of international condemnation. Once nominated and confirmed in 1832, Buchanan sighed to his diary about his fate: "to leave the most free and happy country on earth for a despotism more severe than any [other] which exists in Europe. These gloomy reflections often came athwart my mind."⁵ Nonetheless, Buchanan weathered well the next year from his luxurious legation headquarters overlooking the Neva River. "My time here is gliding on not unpleasantly," he wrote to his brother that autumn.⁶ With considerable diplomatic talent, he eked out an unprecedented bilateral commercial treaty with Russia, which his predecessor Randolph had failed to seal but Jackson had remained adamant to win. Buchanan confided to Jackson from St. Petersburg that, "the Emperor is the very beau ideal of a sovereign for Russia; and in my opinion, notwithstanding his conduct towards Poland, he is an able and a better man than any of those by whom he is surrounded. I flatter myself that a favorable change has been affected in his feelings towards the United States since my arrival."⁷ Buchanan thought himself a favorite of the emperor and empress. Although he claimed to be a "greater Republican than ever" when he sailed home 15 months later, in that time Buchanan went from assailing Russia's assault on Poland's constitutional rights as an independent nation to mourning the "suffering" and "gallant" Poles, from condemning to condoning the tsar's policy in Eastern Europe, from demonizing Russia to cherishing their friendship.⁸ *What happened there?*

² Randolph to Jackson, 6 June 1831, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, vol. IX (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 293-4.

³ Joachim Lelewel et al., "National Polish Committee," 1 September 1832, *Niles' Weekly Register*, American Periodicals.

⁴ Marquis de Lafayette to Jackson, 14 July 1832, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, vol. X (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016), 417-8.

⁵ Diary entry for 21 March 1832, in Moore, 182.

⁶ Buchanan to Edward Buchanan, 14 October 1832, in Moore 241.

⁷ Buchanan to Andrew Jackson, 29 May 1833, in Moore, 338.

⁸ Buchanan to George Leiper, 3 July 1833, in Moore, 366.

Buchanan's surprise success forging a commercial treaty with Russia in 1832 shows us much more about U.S. foreign policy at this historical juncture than has been recognized.⁹ In contrast with the twentieth-century canonization of the 1823 "Monroe Doctrine" as a firm barricade against European colonization in the Americas and U.S. intermeddling in Europe, Buchanan and Randolph were among the myriad Americans who in practice fretted about European affairs and debated the role that the U.S. should play across the Atlantic in the antebellum period. Between the Spanish American wars of independence and the European revolutions of 1848, Americans gazed out at a panorama of liberal nationalist movements, big and small, in the Atlantic world. Buchanan's diplomatic mission to Russia revealed that Jackson's vision of aggressive commercial expansion grated against the ideals and historical identity that many Americans could not simply anchor at the water's edge. During Jackson's presidency and Buchanan's mission to Russia, however, the American response to the Polish independence movement ultimately made clear that U.S. commercial interests could trump Americans' ideological commitment to a foreign people fighting in the name of Americans' own historical identity.¹⁰

II. Buchanan on the Neva

⁹ To the extent that Buchanan's brief mission to Russia has received scholarly attention, it typically appears as a short digression from his own national political career; as a strictly commercial episode in the early history of U.S.-Russian relations, or as just another of the various trade treaties that Jackson struck during his two terms—and not a consequential one at that. For instance, Buchanan's successful commercial treaty is reduced to a sentence in the second volume of Robert Remini's study of Andrew Jackson, appearing as an unremarkable instance of Jackson's desire for foreign recognition of the nation's international status; in the biography of Buchanan by Jean Baker, his mission to Russia occupies one page. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832*, vol. II (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 285-290; Jean H. Baker, *James Buchanan* (New York: Times Books, 2004), 31. More detailed discussions of Buchanan's mission to Russia are included in Philip Shriver Klein, *President James Buchanan, a Biography* (Falls Creek, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962); Frederick M. Bender, *James Buchanan and the American Empire* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1996); John M. Belohlavek, *The Foreign Policy of Andrew Jackson: "Let the Eagle Soar!"* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); Norman E. Saul, *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763-1867* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991).

¹⁰ A panorama of liberal nationalist movements challenged or upended political systems in the Atlantic world between the 1815 Treaty of Vienna and the 1848 "Spring of Nations," which antebellum American observers could place in relation to their own founding revolution: the emergence of Latin America's republics in the 1820s, Greece's revolt against its Ottoman rulers in the early 1820s, France's July Revolution in 1830, Belgium's break with the Dutch thereafter, the Canadian Patriots resistance to British rule later that decade, and the uprisings across Europe in 1848, among others. American responses to some of these movements have received excellent analysis, but the full panorama remains patchy. Concerning the 1810s and 1820s, important studies include Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2016) and Maureen Connors Santelli, *The Greek Fire: American-Ottoman Relations and Democratic Fervor in the Age of Revolutions* (Cornell University Press, 2020). The most substantive account of the American response to the Polish Uprising in the 1830s is Jerzy Jan Lerski, *A Polish Chapter in Jacksonian America: The United States and the Polish Exiles of 1831* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958). Works examining the influence of 1848 on American politics and culture include Larry Reynolds, *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988) and Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009). David Brion Davis has reflected on the larger questions at stake in these case studies in *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). Both specific case studies such as the Polish November Uprising and the larger question of antebellum Americans' engagement with these foreign movements should invite more scholarly analysis.

From his first annual address to Congress in 1829, President Jackson stressed the importance of U.S. commercial relations with Russia, the country's "steadfast friend."¹¹ By that time, strategic interests between the two territorial behemoths were largely aligned, diplomatic relations mostly unruffled, and bilateral trade still slight.¹² Despite his many differences with James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, his two predecessors in office, Jackson built on their avid promotion of international commerce, hoping to strike as many reciprocity treaties as possible, including with Russia.¹³ Jackson envisioned a bilateral commercial deal that would treat American merchants, vessels, and cargoes on the same terms as Russia's own, an arrangement which would incentivize American commerce to both the Baltic and the Black Sea—where the U.S. had recently signed a reciprocity treaty with the Ottoman Empire—while drawing more Russian hemp, sail duck, and bar iron to U.S. ports.

As Randolph prepared to set sail in 1830, Jackson reminded him that he was "very anxious that you should arrive at your place of destination post sufficiently early to enable you to carry into effect the object of your mission in season for my annual message to Congress."¹⁴ For his part, Randolph hoped to meet Jackson's domestic political deadline too—so that he could skip town and spend the winter recovering in southern Europe. Political turmoil in Western Europe, a cholera outbreak, and Randolph's own inexperience as a diplomat made that deadline impossible in 1830. But Jackson still assured Congress of the rosy outlook for U.S.-Russian relations and continued to push for the deal throughout his first term.¹⁵ Even as Americans anxiously followed the Polish crisis and public opinion toward Russia darkened, Jackson impressed upon Buchanan the importance of striking a commercial treaty with Russia when he sailed for St. Petersburg in 1832.

For Jackson, it was about more than bilateral trade with Russia, which made up only a tiny percentage of U.S. imports and an even tinier percentage of its exports in the early 1830s—though a considerable portion of Russian imports.¹⁶ The deal reflected his vision of a global commercial empire to serve the country's expanding territorial empire. It was also

¹¹ Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message to Congress," 8 December 1829, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-8-1829-first-annual-message-congress>.

¹² The best analysis of this complicated but largely cordial relationship prior to Jackson's presidency is Hiroo Nakajima, "The Monroe Doctrine and Russia: American Views of Czar Alexander I and Their Influence upon Early Russian-American Relations," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 3 (June 2007): 439-463.

¹³ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140-142; 165-7; Belohlavek, "Let the Eagle Soar!", 2-9; Paul A. Gilje, "Commerce and Conquest in Early American Foreign Relations, 1750–1850," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 37, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 735-770.

¹⁴ Jackson to John Randolph, 3 June 1830, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, vol. VIII (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 344-5.

¹⁵ "Our relations with Russia are of the most stable character. Respect for that Empire and confidence in its friendship toward the United States have been so long entertained on our part and so carefully cherished by the present Emperor and his illustrious predecessor as to have become incorporated with the public sentiment of the United States. No means will be left unemployed on my part to promote these salutary feelings and those improvements of which the commercial intercourse between the two countries is susceptible." Jackson, "Second Annual Message to Congress," 6 December 1830, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-6-1830-second-annual-message-congress>.

¹⁶ Based on the most recent Treasury reports at the U.S. legation, Buchanan noted that total annual U.S. exports did not top \$40,000, but imports were more than \$1.6 million. Buchanan to Livingston, 20 December 1832, in Moore, 271; Saul estimates that goods imported from the U.S. or on U.S.-owned vessels accounted for up to 30% of Russia's imports by this decade. Saul, *Distant Friends*, 113.

a source of prestige and political clout. He hoped to receive good news from Buchanan by December of 1832, a mere six months after Buchanan's arrival in St. Petersburg, so that he could announce it in his annual address to Congress. Jackson remained indifferent to the popular vehemence against Russia and fellow feeling for Poland that remained front-page news in 1832, including in the *Washington Globe*, the Jacksonian paper edited by his unwavering supporter, Francis Preston Blair.¹⁷

This urgent task in hand, Buchanan likely became the most isolated U.S. diplomat in the world from his arrival in June of 1832 to the conclusion of the commercial treaty on December 18, the tsar's birthday. He was shocked to learn that the most recent American newspapers at the U.S. legation in St. Petersburg were nine months old.¹⁸ Even with the Baltic Sea free of ice and American vessels regularly delivering shipments of sugar and coffee and cotton from plantations in the Caribbean and U.S., news and official communications from the U.S. were meager to non-existent, censored by the Russian government. He complained often of this, observing that, "every avenue through which liberal opinions might enter this empire is carefully closed."¹⁹ Buchanan saw this breach of diplomatic norms as an extension of Russia's illiberal treatment of its own people, whom it denied a free press. In his mind, this above all else sharply divided American from Russian governance.

Russian censorship of his mail was designed to cut Buchanan off from the U.S., including negative coverage of Russian policy toward Poland. While stopping in Liverpool on his way to St. Petersburg, Buchanan had acquired a cipher invented by the U.S. consul there, Francis Barber Ogden, which Ogden claimed "the best in the world."²⁰ When messages from Jackson and Secretary of State Edward Livingston did arrive, Buchanan struggled to remind them to not include confidential information that Russian government censors would surely read; sometimes his mail arrived opened, the censors having not bothered to re-seal it. Only in January of 1833, after the treaty had been signed and dispatched to the U.S. in the care of John Randolph Clay, the long-time secretary of legation in St. Petersburg, did Foreign Minister Nesselrode release the half-ton of incoming correspondence, newspapers, books, and congressional journals that had accumulated since Buchanan's arrival.²¹

On the one hand, this did not hurt and may well have helped Buchanan's primary objective in Russia. Alone on the Neva, he had no choice but to immerse himself in the unfamiliar court life of the imperial capital; insulated from negative coverage of Russia's policy toward Poland, he slowly shed his animosity toward the tsar and came to accept what he described to Jackson as "the calm of despotism."²² Each Russian interlocutor—from the Russian Ambassador to Britain, Prince Lieven, to its Ambassador to the U.S., Baron von Krüdener, to the Russian Foreign Minister Count Nesselrode—charmed Buchanan. He studiously learned French, hosted the diplomatic community (with Republican simplicity, he noted, given his salary), and ingratiated himself to Nicholas. Buchanan praised the tsar's manners, appearance, and character— "whatever opinions we may entertain of his

¹⁷ Elbert B. Smith, "Francis P. Blair and the 'Globe': Nerve Center of the Jacksonian Democracy," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* vol. 57, no. 4 (October 1959): 340-353; Elbert B. Smith, *Francis Preston Blair* (The Free Press: New York, 1980).

¹⁸ Buchanan to Edward Livingston, 3 June 1832, in Moore, 193.

¹⁹ Buchanan to Edward Buchanan, 15-27 July 1832, in Moore 217.

²⁰ Buchanan diary, 4 May 1832, in Moore, 184.

²¹ Bender, 28.

²² Buchanan to Jackson, 22 June 1832, in Moore, 198.

politicks.” His personal sympathy toward his Russian interlocutors reflected the national friendship that he hoped to build between the U.S. and Russia. At his first royal audience, Buchanan assured Nicholas “that the President in common with the people of the United States entertained the kindest feelings towards his Majesty, and I could assure him that the friendship he had displayed towards them, had made a deep and lasting impression upon their hearts.”²³

On the other hand, his isolation placed him under the influence of the Russian court, which diluted his antipathy toward Russia’s response to the November Uprising. Buchanan learned quickly not to mention Poland. He observed the diplomatic fallout for the British and French in St. Petersburg, who faced Nicholas’s frustration with the pro-Polish debates raging in their national legislatures. He reported to Jackson that during his audience with the Empress Alexandra, “she observed we were wise in America not to involve ourselves in the foolish troubles of Europe; but she added that we had troubles enough among ourselves at home, and alluded to our difficulties with some of the Southern States.”²⁴ Deflected by this allusion to the South Carolina Nullification Crisis that was roiling Jackson’s presidency, he kept his criticisms to himself, concluding after a few months that it would be a lost cause to intercede on behalf of the Poles. “The Emperor will cling to Poland with the grasp of death,” he wrote to Livingston, “and treat it as a conquered nation, in despite of all their remonstrances.”²⁵ Buchanan realized that Russia’s preoccupation with Poland and other political disturbances across Europe only undermined Jackson’s hopes for a commercial deal.

Over the next six months, as the Baltic froze over, communication with the U.S. stopped, and he delved deeper into negotiations with Count Nesselrode, Buchanan not only quashed his explicit disapproval of Russia’s policy in Eastern Europe but consciously changed his tune, actively promoting non-interference in Russia’s affairs and even defending its conduct in the war. Attempting to square U.S. commercial interests with American ideals, Secretary of State Livingston, he argued that non-entanglement in European affairs both facilitated U.S. commercial policy and secured the U.S. as a model for other countries, and in this way “we thus more essentially promote the cause of liberty throughout the world, than we could do by the most direct and active interference in the concerns of other nations.”²⁶

To do this, Buchanan argued to Jackson that the U.S. should adopt as non-threatening a stance toward Russia as possible. In Buchanan’s appraisal to Secretary Livingston, Nicholas feared “the introduction of liberal principles into his Empire” above all else. “It is impossible,” Buchanan continued, “that whilst he continues to be animated by such feelings, he can regard that Country with much favor, which, thank God! has been the beacon-light of liberty to all the Nations.”²⁷ Buchanan did not stop believing in the U.S. as a beacon of liberty for Europe. That the “Monroe Doctrine” had clearly partitioned political Americans’ geopolitical and ideological interests on one side of the Atlantic was a fiction, and Buchanan’s experience demonstrates how American agents abroad struggled to make sense of this imaginary

²³ Buchanan to Livingston, 8 June 1832, in Moore, 197-8.

²⁴ Buchanan to Jackson, 22 June 1832, in Moore, 198

²⁵ Buchanan to Livingston, 9 August 1832, in Moore, 228.

²⁶ Buchanan to Livingston, 29 June 1832, in Moore, 210.

²⁷ Buchanan to Livingston, 9 August 1832, in Moore, 227.

division on the ground. But with such claims to Livingston and in his private writing, Buchanan ultimately resolved his cognitive dissonance around the Polish question and how the U.S. should respond to it: not pressing the Russians on political issues was the surest way to promote U.S.-Russian relations, which would ultimately be in the best interest of expanding liberty around the world, including Eastern Europe. A world away from the Potomac on the Neva, Buchanan was implementing a theory of foreign policy that sought to maintain the nation's commitment to its founding ideals while strengthening its relationship with a country perceived as diametrically opposed to them.

For all Buchanan's caution and deference at the Russian court, the negotiations nearly derailed that late summer and autumn. Buchanan surmised that the cause was correspondence from an incensed Baron von Sacken, the Russian chargé d'affaires in Washington, D.C., who had assailed Jackson's administration for permitting the *Washington Globe* to print negative coverage of Russia's treatment of Poland.²⁸ Throughout 1832, the *Globe* had indeed—like most U.S. newspapers—published a steady stream of articles celebrating the Polish cause and denouncing Russia. In St. Petersburg, Foreign Minister Nesselrode ignored Buchanan for weeks.

Nonetheless, both decided to postpone any discussion of that dispute, and negotiations proceeded. Between October and December, Buchanan focused his energy on convincing Russian officials that a commercial treaty would be in their economic interest as well as a symbolically important means to solidify Russo-American friendship. Nesselrode too was moved by the prospect, reporting to Buchanan that the opportunity for a commercial treaty “appeared all the more satisfying to the Emperor for offering once again the chance to show the U.S. government the sincerity of his friendly disposition.”²⁹ Finally, in an uncommon and pointed flourish at the emperor's *levée* on his birthday, December 18, Nicholas announced in front of the other assembled diplomats—including the British and French ambassadors—that he had happily signed the treaty.

Only when the ink on the treaty had dried did Nesselrode confront Buchanan about the treatment of the Emperor in the U.S. press, especially the *Washington Globe*. Buchanan hastened to assure the foreign minister of several things: that Americans were ignorant of Russia's perspective on the issue due to the lack of available Russian press coverage; that the abundance of embellished French and British coverage had seeped into the American press; that the inflammatory articles in question were ephemeral, not especially interesting to American readers, and not reflective of American popular opinion toward Russia; and, above all, that Jackson's administration had nothing to do with what appeared in the press, out of respect for its inviolable freedom.

In particular, this last claim about the *Globe*—edited by a Jackson loyalist, funded by Jackson loyalists, read by Jackson loyalists—was a barefaced falsehood. And despite Buchanan's impatience with the Russian claim that Americans' press was anything less than free, he agreed to pass on to Livingston and Jackson the foreign minister's suggestion that Jackson lean on the *Globe* editor to publish more favorable coverage of Russia.³⁰ To judge by

²⁸ Buchanan to Livingston, 9 August 1832, in Moore, 221. Nesselrode received another communication that Sacken penned on October 14. The episode concerning Sacken is discussed in more depth in more detailed accounts of Buchanan's diplomatic mission by Bender, Belohlavek, and Saul.

²⁹ Nesselrode to Buchanan, 30 October 1832, in Moore, 252. [author's translation]

³⁰ Buchanan to Livingston, 20 December 1832, in Moore, 298-304.

the editions of the *Globe* published between late 1832 and April of 1833, when the treaty was ratified by the Senate, the Russian message was received. The active coverage of Russia's treatment of Poland throughout the summer and autumn of 1832 essentially evaporated by early 1833. A few notices from the Russian legation appeared that spring, informing "all subjects of the Kingdom of Poland now residing in the United States, who have taken no part in the Polish rebellion" to seek permission to extend their stay from the Russian legation in D.C. or the consulate in New York.³¹ In aligning their commercial interests, the Jackson administration and the tsar also aligned their stance on Polish independence.

III. Plotting Poland outside American History

Before sailing home in 1833, Buchanan toured Moscow, including the collections at the Kremlin, where he viewed portraits of Polish kings and Polish military flags. To his diary, he reflected,

The glorious standard of Poland which waved triumphantly over many a well fought field, but which the most exalted courage and self-devotion could no longer maintain against brutal and barbarian force, is there exhibited. The white eagle has been obliged to cower beneath the double-headed monster of Russia. May it again soar! though to all human appearance it has sunk forever.³²

Upon his own removal from Russia two years earlier, John Randolph had similarly bewailed the fall of Poland in a letter to Jackson. "Sir I do most heartily repent me of my timidity (the effect of disease) in not strenuously advising you to interfere on behalf of the gallant, heroic but betrayed & abandoned Poles."³³ Whether following success or failure in their commercial missions to the Russian court, upon leaving Russia both Americans echoed this lament for Poland, performing for others or for themselves their republican remorse for the fate of the Poles.

In one light, it was an effective diplomatic move by Buchanan to disentangle his and other Americans' antipathy toward Russia from this treaty negotiation. It would be hard otherwise to imagine him scoring this commercial and symbolic win for Jackson's administration. But the episode also casts light on the uncertain process by which antebellum U.S. foreign policy actors learned to draw lines between American popular sentiment, ideals, and historical identity, on one hand, and strategic interests abroad, on the

³¹ "Russian Legation, Washington, 15th April, 1833," *Washington Globe*, 17 April 1833, <https://newspaperarchive.com/washington-globe-apr-17-1833-p-3/>. The notable exceptions to the silence around Poland and Russia in early 1833 were congressional transcripts of the enflamed political rhetoric of Jackson's southern opponents as South Carolina's threat to nullify federal law and secede in the face of disadvantages tariffs wobbled and folded. Virginia Congressman, and future president, John Tyler suggested that the U.S. federal government's effort to subdue South Carolina was akin to Russia's treatment of Poland. "Poland will hate Russia until she is again free; and so would it be with South Carolina," he warned in February, a comparison echoed the next month by South Carolina congressman James Blair. "Speech of Mr. Tyler," *Washington Globe*, 19 February 1833, Newspaper Archive, <https://newspaperarchive.com/washington-globe-feb-19-1833-p-2/>; "Speech of James Blair," *Washington Globe*, 6 March 1833, Newspaper Archive, <https://newspaperarchive.com/washington-globe-mar-06-1833-p-2/>.

³² Buchanan Diary, 4-27 June 1833, in Moore, 354.

³³ Randolph to Jackson, 18 March 1832, *Jackson Papers 1832*, 175-6.

other. In doing so, Buchanan sought to maintain both, positing that the surest way to promote American ideals abroad was through the pursuit of its commercial self-interest.

As Buchanan's reflection at the Kremlin suggests, the decision to not intercede in some form on behalf of the Polish independence movement nonetheless left him conflicted. Although he hoped that the "white eagle" of independent Poland might fly again, he knew it was doubtful. Like many other Americans avidly reading about the Polish November Uprising in 1831 and 1832, Buchanan perceived it as a movement for liberty against oppression that was kindred to America's own historical narrative. However, by the end of his stint in St. Petersburg, he had decoupled Poland's historical trajectory from America's, a shift which many Americans would also make as the Polish uprising failed. Estranged from his own continental empire on the fringe of another, Buchanan drew a line between Americans' attachment to the Polish cause and the conduct of foreign commercial policy with Russia. In doing so, he plotted Poland within a narrative that was detached from America's own revolutionary origins, founding, and nationhood—a historical tragedy rather than a triumph.