

TEXAN SCHOONER SAN BERNARD

Sacrificios, 16th June 1841.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 10th inst. in answer to mine of the first, and by which, and the documents accompanying it, I am informed of the determination of the Mexican Government to listen to no overtures of pacification from mine, predicated upon the separation of what it terms the Department of Texas from Mexico.

I can but regret this determination, as I fear it will lead to a State of things which every philanthropist must depreciate, and which my Government has been heretofore most anxious to avoid. That the authorities of Texas have sincerely desired to pursue a pacific policy towards Mexico, is abundantly evinced in the repeated efforts which have been made to settle by amicable negotiations the differences existing between the two Countries; and especially, in prosecuting those efforts under the most discouraging circumstances, and at times too, when had they been disposed to renew hostilities, the internal feuds and external difficulties of Mexico, afforded the most inviting opportunities of doing so.

You are no doubt aware, that repeated overtures have been made by the Federalists of the Northern and Southern provinces of Mexico, accompanied by the most alluring offers, to induce the people of Texas to unite with them in a war against their Government, and to make common cause in forcing an acknowledgement of our and their Independence; and you are no doubt equally aware that all of these overtures have been rejected on the part of my Government. This course was pursued by us under the impression, that Mexico appreciating the motives of our forbearance, and perceiving the amicable spirit which Texas was disposed to cultivate towards her, would change her policy in reference to us—a policy, which, without incurring the imputation of boasting we think we may confidently assert, can never result in any benefit to her.

What course my Government will feel itself bound to pursue in reference to this controversy in future, I am unprepared to say. One thing is certain, having voluntarily made three distinct efforts for amicable negotiations, She can never make a fourth unless invited to it? Your suggestions of a continuance of the pacific policy heretofore adopted, shall be duly made known, and I have no doubt will have great weight; but the people of Texas generally, have received so much annoyance from the disturbed condition of her frontier, and from the repeated, tho' hitherto unmeaning threats of invasion, that they would decidedly prefer an active and energetic prosecution of the war, to the state of suspense and sullen hostility which has existed between the two Nations for the last five years; and altho' the Gov-

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ASTIAN CAMACHO

MAJESTY'S MISSION.
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ernment might be disposed to longer forbearance, I think it possible that so general an expression of public Sentiment may exercise an influence on the public councils which can no longer be resisted.

The communication from Viscount Palmerston to which I referred in my last, I have now the honor of enclosing to you, tho' from the letter of Mr Burnley, I presume it cannot in the present posture of affairs be rendered available. I have also the honor of enclosing to you the original letter of the Secretary of State of Texas, to the copy of which heretofore forwarded, I have received your reply addressed to that officer.

I cannot close this communication without tendering to you my sincere thanks, as well as those of the President of Texas, for the many acts of kindness and friendship which you have exhibited towards our infant nation. Be assured Sir, they are all fully appreciated by the Government and the people, and will long be remembered by them.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of great respect and consideration, your very

Obt Servt.

JAMES WEBB

Hon

RICHARD PAKENHAM
*Her Britannic Majesty's Minister
Mexico.*

WEBB TO LAMAR.^a

GALVESTON, 29. June 1841.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I arrived here last night from the Coast of Mexico, having been compel'd to return in consequence of the loss of our foremast at sea, when only one half of my duties had been performed. By my instructions I was directed, if not received at Mexico, to proceed to Tabasco and Yucatan, and ascertain what course those two States, and the other Federalists of Mexico in Combination with them, would be willing to pursue in the event of Texas renewing the War with the Central Government; and it was while proceeding from Vera Cruz to Tobasco for the purpose of carrying out that branch of my instructions, that our foremast was carried away, and the Schooner so crippled as to render a farther prosecution of the Voyage impracticable.

From my letter to the Secretary of State of this date, and the Correspondence which accompanies it, you will perceive that all expectation of ever accomplishing any thing *by negotiation* with the present

^aA. L. S.

Government of Mexico that they will never source whatever, which from Mexico. After character, back'd too tures, and the Mediation left for our discussion, to let things remain as delay, as will coerce admit the question to re known that Mexico has negotiation, and reject farther efforts of that destroying all confidence and will most certainly still lower than it is, if greatest evils under which want of a full confidence institutions. It has been those, unacquainted with that a Nation possessing could not at any moment lation of less than 150 done, has heretofore kept which alone can give wa an impression which must manner in which Mexico conciliation.

Heretofore, as you well cific policy pursued by I believed that the War fully without much gr would enable the Govern effort, so far from relie attitude than it already Mexico, and information of the Condition of the my opinions, and I now the War, and Conduct poses, without its costic explain myself satisfac view of the present po Tobasco, two of the m aware, have already see the existing Governmen

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Government of Mexico, is at an end. They declare emphatically, that they will never discuss, or ever receive propositions, *from any source whatever*, which have for their object, the separation of Texas from Mexico. After an avowal so positive and unequivocal in its character, back'd too as it is, by the prompt rejection of our Overtures, and the Mediation of England, there can be but one question left for our discussion. That question is, whether it is better for us to let things remain as they are, or to take such steps without farther delay, as will coerce an acknowledgement of our rights? If we permit the question to remain as it is, unsettled; especially when it is known that Mexico has a third time rejected our efforts at Amicable negotiation, and rejected them in terms, which must preclude all farther efforts of that sort from us, I think we run a great risk of destroying all confidence abroad in the Stability of our Government, and will most certainly risk [sinking] our already prostrate credit still lower than it is, if it be possible for it to get lower. One of the greatest evils under which we have heretofore labor'd, has been the want of a *full* confidence in other countries, in the permanence of Our institutions. It has been impossible to produce a conviction with those, unacquainted with the Mexican Character, and with ourselves, that a Nation possessing a population of 8 Millions of inhabitants, could not at any moment reconquer a revolted province with a population of less than 150 thousand; and the impression that it could be done, has heretofore kept from our shores that class of emigration which alone can give wealth, Credit, and Character to the Country—an impression which must gain additional strength from the haughty manner in which Mexico has rejected our third proposition for conciliation.

Heretofore, as you well know, I have been an advocate of the pacific policy pursued by your administration. I advocated it, because I believed that the War could not be renewed and prosecuted successfully without much greater resources than our embarrassed finances would enable the Government to command, and that an unsuccessful effort, so far from relieving us, would place the Country in a worse attitude than it already occupied; but my recent trip to the Coast of Mexico, and information which I have obtained from various sources of the Condition of that Country, has worked a thorough change in my opinions, and I now conscientiously believe that we can renew the War, and Conduct it to a successful termination for all our purposes, without its costing the Nation a single dollar in the end. To explain myself satisfactorily, it is necessary to take a very cursory view of the present posture of affairs in that Country. Yucatan and Tobasco, two of the most important states of Mexico, as you are aware, have already seceded, and declared themselves independent of the existing Government. Their object is not to establish for them-

selves, separate and independent Governments, but to restore the Confederation, and reestablish the Constitution of 1824, with such modifications as experience have taught them are essential to its preservation. In doing this, however, they have no expectation or desire of uniting Texas with that Confederation, for they are fully convinced, that with a population like ours, composed of persons of manners, habits, education and religion, so different from their own, there never could be harmony in a strict union, and that in establishing such an Union, they would be planting in it the seeds of discord which would eventually overthrow their own fabric. They are therefore perfectly willing to give us up, and to form such amicable relations with us as a foreign power, as will be to the mutual convenience and benefit of both. Indeed, I am assured, that they are now anxious to form such relations upon a permanent basis, because they feel convinced, that with our assistance and support, they can in a short time put down the Central Government, and establish the Confederacy in its stead. The plan proposed is this. Let Texas enter into arrangements at once, with Yucatan and Tobasco, and each party mutually recognize the Independence of the other, and then let them conjointly renew and prosecute the War until the Central Government shall be forced into terms, or put down beyond the hope of resuscitation. In renewing the War conjointly with Yucatan and Tobasco, Texas would only be expected to furnish her Navy,—the whole of the land operations to be carried on by the Federalists, and by which means we would be saved the entire expense of keeping an Army in the field. The Captures made by the Navy would not only pay the expenses incur'd in keeping it afloat, but would absolutely produce a Revenue to the Country. In making arrangements of this sort, it should be distinctly understood that our object is not farther conquest, but simply the acknowledgement of our Independence—the permanent establishment of our rights of Territory as now claimed, and a full remuneration for the expenses we may incur in carrying on the War. Let it also be understood that we do not intend to interfere with the Confederation of the States, to the South and West of the Rio Grande, but will aid in its restoration and instead of finding enemies in the Federalists which are scattered all over the Country, and composing near two thirds of the entire population, (as we should do were we to carry on the War alone) we will find in them active and zealous Co-operators and supporters. With the disaffection at present prevailing in all the Towns along the Coast, which are now subject to the Central power, I am fully convinced that our Navy could Capture every one of them, if it were understood we made the attack [as] friends and supporters of the Federal cause, because I am satisfied that at least one half of the population would be ready to aid us, and would throw off the yoke of centralism so soon as they found that

they would be sustained however, we could not but in this arrangement that when we had taken the public Coffers for to be given up to them. As relieve us from all farther

The Federalists of Yu is necessary to carry on want no assistance from out a Navy they can make and that is the most through the sea ports that the Government is their resources and render anxiety of the Federalists lieve with our assistance bring the Central party

Is it not important the picious moment to make of ever achieving anything ment of Mexico. We must we remain as we are, I of our Government absolutely wholly prostrated, and eral party, we have not all their political hostilities think we invade them so Conquest. They hate each hate hereticks with a big jealous of the encroachment friendship unaccompanied will be grateful.

By my instructions, permanent arrangements basco. I was directed states, and ascertain if we renew the War; and gone down and compelling any engagement back, would it not be it be thought advisable ample powers and in this question, and my sent up my Secretary

they would be sustained in their rebellion. Without a land force however, we could not hold their Towns after they were Captured, but in this arrangements with the Federalists, let it be understood that when we had taken possession, and remunerated ourselves from the public Coffers for the expenses of the Capture, the Towns should be given up to them. And we would immediately find them ready to relieve us from all farther trouble in respect to them.

The Federalists of Yucatan and Tobasco have now everything that is necessary to carry on the War successfully, but a Navy, and they want no assistance from us but such as the Navy would afford. Without a Navy they can make no effectual impression upon the Sea ports, and that is the most essential object to be obtained; because it is through the sea ports and the revenue derived from their Commerce that the Government is sustained—take away that, and you cut off all their resources and render them hopelessly imbecile. Hence the great anxiety of the Federalists to make terms with us, because they believe with our assistance in taking their ports, they can immediately bring the Central party down.

Is it not important then for us to avail ourselves of this most auspicious moment to make terms with them? I repeat, there is no hope of ever atchieving anything by negotiation with the Central Government of Mexico. We must either remain as we are, or fight them. If we remain as we are, I again say, I fear confidence in the permanence of our Government abroad will be greatly impaired, and our credit wholly prostrated, and if we fight alone, independently of the Federal party, we have no hopes of success, because the Mexicans with all their political hostility to each other, will unite to repel us if they think we invade them solely for our own benefit, or for the purpose of Conquest. They hate each other with a hatred bitter enough, but they hate hereticks with a bitterness ten times greater, and are particularly jealous of the encroachments of the Texians. They have no idea of friendship unaccompanied with services, but serve them, and they will be grateful.

By my instructions, I am not authorized to make any decisive or permanent arrangement with the Governments of Yucatan and Tobasco. I was directed in a certain event, simply to proceed to those states, and ascertain if I could, what course they would pursue should we renew the War; and had we not lost our foremast, I should have gone down and complied literally with my instructions, without making any engagement on our part; but as I have been compel'd to put back, would it not be better before I proceed a second time, (should it be thought advisable for me to go on) to furnish me with more ample powers and instructions? It is for the purpose of submitting this question, and my deliberate views upon the subject, that I have sent up my Secretary to confer with you. Having been already better

than six weeks at sea, confined to a small, close, hot and foul cabin, only six feet square, I can feel no desire to return to sea again, unless some object is to be attained by it, advantageous to the Country, and what with me is almost as important, creditable to your administration. I think if active steps are taken, the War may be renewed, and consequences most important to the Nation be achieved by it, before your administration closes. At all events, the War can be renewed, and placed upon such a footing by you as will preclude your successor from discontinuing it, and your administration will have the Credit of it. Should Genl. Houston succeed in the Presidential Canvass (and of this there is now the strongest probability) I understand that he will be opposed to a renewal of the war. Unless therefore it is done in your time, we may expect an additional three years of doubt, difficulty, and embarrassment.

But suppose the war is not renewed, will not something be gained for us by obtaining from Yucatan and Tobasco, the two most powerful and Commercial states of Mexico, the unconditional acknowledgement of our Independence, together with the assurance of obtaining a similar acknowledgement from the other states, as they shall throw off the Central Yoke and unite with the Confederacy? The acknowledgement of Yucatan and Tobasco alone, will exercise an influence on the other States when the Confederacy is established, too powerful to be resisted, and that the Confederacy will eventually be reestablished, I have not the shadow of a doubt; at all events, untill it is reestablished, we shall never get our Independence acknowledged by Mexico.

I can see no benefit that will result to the Country, or to your administration for me now to go to Yucatan and Tobasco under my present instructions. If it be intended by you to renew the War, I ought to be authorized to make full arrangements at once, as we have no time to loose. If on the other hand, it should be thought most advisable not to renew it, it can be of no service for me to ascertain what course those states would pursue in an event which is not to happen. Unless therefore, I am instructed to make positive arrangements with them for Conjoint Operations against our Common enemy, or to obtain from them a recognition of our Independence so far as they can give it, I respectfully suggest the propriety of my recall. In making this suggestion, I hope I will not be understood as manifesting any desire to shrink from a duty which I had previously undertaken, and which properly devolves upon me. I do it from a full Conviction, that under my present instructions, I shall not be able to render any effectual service to the Country.

Should you think it the better policy to renew the war immediately, provided it can be done at so little cost and hazard (and of this I can hardly entertain a doubt) I feel it to be my duty to call your attention to the act of the last Congress directing the Navy to be laid up

in Ordinary, because it can be effectual in any act or whether any be put into service. If there be of sufficient importance to cause but little delay. Members were asked for any criterion from which one tenth of the war was felt here, the Nation's Navy to sea, even if it were however for one, would

You will perceive that the Secretary of State and his policy. I call your attention to what would do so, but at the same time upon the subject is not less would be on matters that are essentially a Mexican of the kind and has all his interests not advise a Course that he be pleased to see Mexico because he has sense enough to do so and I am sure of his gratification with

If the War should be persons here desirous to know whether Congress would be of fitting out one, to

Knowing your own I am ashamed of sending you so anxious to put you to which I regard as a mark of perspicuity in the Mr. Hammeken let me know things which were not be able even to look between you and I, that

Should you conclude that Tobasco, it will be a credit to the credence for each of the Governors of each

I pray you to determine remain here under

in Ordinary, because it is the Navy alone which will be required or can be effectual in such a War. I do not recollect the terms of that act or whether any discretion is left to the President in bringing it into service. If there be no such discretion allowed, is it not a matter of sufficient importance to justify a Call of Congress? This would cause but little delay, as the Vessels could be getting ready while the Members were assembling. I do not know that Galveston presents any criterion from which to judge of public sentiment, but if there be one tenth of the war fervor in the other parts of the Republic that is felt here, the Nation would justify by acclamation the sending the Navy to sea, even without the action of Congress to authorize it. I however for one, would not advise you to do it.

You will perceive from Mr. Packenhams letters both to the Secretary of State and myself, that he advises us still to pursue the peace policy. I call your attention to the fact, because I assured him I would do so, but at the same time I must say, that I think his advice upon the subject is not entitled to as much consideration as it doubtless would be on most others. He is in feeling and interest, essentially a Mexican of the Central party. He Married in the Country and has all his interests established there, and he would therefore not advise a Course injurious to that interest. He no doubt would be pleased to see Mexico recognize the Independence of Texas, because he has sense enough to know that it would be to her advantage to do so and I am strongly inclined to believe that the larger portion of his gratification would be derived from that consideration.

If the War should be renewed, I understand that there are several persons here desirous of fitting out privateers, and [they] are anxious to know whether Commissions could be had for them as letters of Marque. I have heard that Col. Love and Capt. Wheelwright speak of fitting out one, to be under the command of the latter.

Knowing your aversion to reading long letters, I am almost ashamed of sending you this tedious and desultory scrawl. But being anxious to put you fully in possession of my views upon a subject which I regard as of great importance, and having no time to think of perspicuity in style (as I have many other letters to write before Mr. Hammeken leaves in the morning) I have just put down the things which were suggested to my mind at the time, and shall not be able even to look them over for the purpose of correction, but between you and I, this is a matter of but little consequence.

Should you conclude to send me other instructions for Yucatan and Tobasco, it will be necessary to send me a Commission and letters of credence for each State, the letters of credence to be addressed to the Governors of each respectively.

I pray you to despatch Mr. Hammeken as soon as possible, as I shall remain here under much anxiety until his return. It may also be

proper that orders be sent to Com. Moore to get one of the other vessels ready to take me down as the San Bernard cannot be repaired until she gets a new mast, and the San Antonio is now ready and will no doubt be off on her surveying expedition. The Ship can be got ready in less time than any other vessel, as she is now in complete order, and there are men enough to man her.

Very sincerely and truly,
Your friend and obdt. servt.

JAMES WEBB.

ROBERTS TO WEBB.^a

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Austin July 7th 1841.

SIR.

Your Communication of the 31st^b ult to this Department was received two days ago, and it, together with the accompanying documents, was immediately laid before the President, and he considers the questions involved of such magnitude as to determine him to go at once in person to Galveston, where he can best determine what will, under all the Circumstances, be most proper to be done. He will accordingly leave here in the morning, and will probably be not more than one day behind Mr Moore on his arrival at Galveston.

I have the honor to be Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt

SAML. A ROBERTS
Acting Secy of State

The Hon
JAMES WEBB.

VAN NESS AND MORRIS TO URIBE.^c

VAN NESS AND MORRIS TO CARRASCO.^d

VAN NESS AND MORRIS TO ARISTA.^e

ARISTA TO VAN NESS AND MORRIS.^f

^a See Records of Department of State (Texas), Book 38, p. 197.

^b This must be inadvertently written for the 29th.

^c July 18, 1841. See correspondence transcribed with Morris to Roberts, September 30, 1841.

^d July 25, 1841. See correspondence transcribed with Morris to Roberts, September 30, 1841.

^e August 6, 1841. See correspondence transcribed with Morris to Roberts, September 30, 1841.

^f August 8, 1841. See Morris to Roberts, September 30, 1841.

Hon.

SAMUEL A. ROBERTS
Acting Secy of State

DEAR SIR

Your communicating the necessity of "immediately" at a time so extremely that its call to wish and we would

As you are aware have many cases, of great loss to ourselves many other circumstances at present.

We however hope Mr. Chevallia will be Commissioners from may be deemed fit w

It is not my intention actions connected with shall be in Austin so will be on Friday or response and can only deem it necessary has been entered slightest degree class with the commission character towards the of Texas, so far as to pursue any course Texas in any manner towards Mexico

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With the highest
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