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Affairs on the Texas frontier. Letter from the Secretary of War, relative to the political complexion of affairs on the Texas frontier

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AFFAIRS ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

RELATIVE TO

The political complexion of affairs on the Texas frontier.

MARCH 28, 1872.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *March 25, 1872.*

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the House of Representatives, with a request for its reference to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, copy of further correspondence in regard to the political complexion of affairs on the Texas frontier, which is furnished in connection with the papers transmitted to the House on the 16th instant.

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS POST OF FORT BROWN, TEXAS,
February 16, 1872.

SIR: I have the honor to report that a revolution of magnitude, which promises the successful overthrow of the Juarez government in Mexico, is in full tide of operation. On our immediate border the towns of Mier and Camargo are in the hands of the revolutionists, and the city of Matamoras will be invested in a short time.

The object of this communication is to inform the general commanding the department of the exact condition of affairs here; also to apprise him of the real causes of the said revolution.

The following is the exact text of the grievances which led to the revolution, as given me by the most reliable man identified with the movement.

The revolution you will perceive is more directed against President Juarez personally than the form of their government.

CAUSES.

1. That Juarez was last year illegally declared President.
2. That he has violated the constitution of 1857, more than once; the facts being admitted by himself.
3. That during the last four years of his administration, every suggestion offered by Treviño, late governor of Nuevo Leon, and now general-in-chief of the army of the North, for the progress and true interest of the whole frontier, have been resented in the most wicked and insulting manner.

When informed that the existing stock-stealing from, and Indian raids into, Texas, and the injuries caused by the Zona Libre, to the interior cities of Mexico, as well as to the American frontier, would finally bring on war, if not a filibustering expedition of thousands, which would be worse than war, Juarez answered Treviño, that the government of Mexico was sufficiently strong to protect itself against any external enemy, whether in filibustering or other kind of war on its soil.

Therefore, General Cortina, a bandit, who has seven indictments against him for murder in Cameron County, Texas, and for many other atrocities, was sent to the frontier as commander-in-chief of the whole Rio Grande line.

In conversation, Juarez said to Dr. Fernandez (the commissioner sent by Treviño to him) that Cortina had proved in former years what he could do on the Rio Grande; with a force which he intended to give him, that his presence would put a stop to all American filibustering movements.

Treviño in his statement to the government on the subject of the Zona Libre asked that it be extended to all the States of the republic, or be abolished altogether. The former proposition was known to be impossible, as the whole system of revenue would be destroyed thereby. He consented to give this privilege only to a few little smuggling towns on the frontier, to the injury of the great trading cities of the interior.

Treviño's suggestions were considered by Juarez as revolutionary and dangerous; therefore Generals Cerillo, Briggioni, and Revera, with a large infantry and cavalry force, were ordered to the State of Nuevo Leon, to keep Treviño in check. General Treviño having been well informed of all the designs and intrigues of Juarez, pronounced against him before Cerillo reached Nuevo Leon.

Treviño opposes the Zona Libre as injurious to the trade of the interests of Mexico.

Parts of the following-named States have pronounced against the Juarez government: Sonora, Sinaloa, Guerrero, Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, Jalisco, and Michoacan; the greater part of the State of Tamaulipas. The following-named States are wholly identified with the revolution: Nuevo Leon, Cohahuila, Durango, Zacatecas, Aguas, Calientes, and San Luis Potosi, except the capital, which is now besieged by eleven thousand men.

The State of Guanajunto pronounced for Lerdo de Tejado.

The small States of Chiapa, Campeche, and Tabasco, follow successful parties in revolution.

Chihuahua is neutral, perhaps declared herself independent.

Nearly all the wealthy and reliable men of Mexico are with the revolution, and are determined it shall succeed.

The revolutionists thus far have not met with a reverse, but have gained decided successes.

The temporary occupation of Oaxaca is not considered a success. There were but two or three hundred men, most of them sick, in the place when attacked. Colonel Felix Diaz, the brother of General Porfirio Diaz, was in command.

I have written thus in detail to express to the general commanding the department, that this revolution is of serious import to Mexico, and there never has been a revolution of like magnitude in that country that the American side of the Rio Grande was not more or less involved; and I would respectfully recommend that four or five companies of cavalry be sent to this frontier, to insure a proper enforcement of the neutrality laws; one company stationed at Laredo, one company at Ringgold Barracks, and two companies at Fort Brown, Texas. They can be foraged cheaper here than at any other point in Texas, and it is not known at what moment they may be needed.

The post returns from Fort Brown, Ringgold Barracks, and Fort McIntosh, (Laredo,) Texas, will show how inadequate the force is at the present time.

Up to this date perfect quiet exists on this side of the river.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. McD. McCOOK,
*Lieutenant Colonel Tenth Infantry,
Brevet Major General, U. S. A., Commanding.*

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL,
Department of Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS, *March 2, 1872.*

Official copy respectfully furnished for the information of the lieutenant general commanding the military division.

C. C. AUGUR,
Brigadier General.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, March 13, 1872.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant General of the Army for his information.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant General, Commanding.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, March 19, 1872.

Official copy:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant General.