

TEXAS INVASION—LOUISIANA.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING

*Information in relation to the Invasion of the Southwestern Frontier
by an armed force from the Republic of Texas.*

JANUARY 10, 1839.

Read, and laid upon the table.

To the House of Representatives:

I communicate to the House of Representatives, in compliance with its resolution of the 3d instant, reports from the Secretaries of State and War, containing all the information called for by said resolution now in possession of the Executive.

M. VAN BUREN.

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1839.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, January 9, 1839.

The Secretary of State, to whom has been referred a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 3d instant, requesting the President to communicate to that House "such information as he may have received touching the invasion of the Southwestern frontier of the United States by an armed force from the republic of Texas," has the honor to submit the accompanying papers, containing all the information received at the Department of State on the subject.

JOHN FORSYTH.

To the PRESIDENT.

List of enclosures.

Letter from Hon. R. Garland to the President, dated December 28, 1838.

Letter from J. Cable to Hon. R. Garland, dated December 1, 1838.

Letter from Hon. R. Garland to the President, dated January 3, 1839.

Extract from a newspaper dated December 6, 1838.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *December 28, 1838.*

SIR : You will receive, enclosed, a letter from Mr. Cable, a resident of Natchitoches, Louisiana, addressed to me, which I received this morning. Mr. C. is a respectable citizen, and his information is, no doubt, derived from a source which he considers entitled to credit. The letter is laid before you, that you may give it the necessary consideration. I hope that prompt action will be had on this matter, as it is time the officers of the Texian Government should be informed they cannot come into the State of Louisiana with an armed force, at their will and pleasure.

About two years ago, a party of Texians, under the command of a man named Harden, or Harding, pursued some Mexican officers sixty or seventy miles east of the Sabine, surrounded the house of Thomas Bilbo, a citizen of my State, and threatened to fire upon him unless he would agree to give up the Mexicans who were in his house, claiming his protection, and that of the laws of the United States. The Mexicans had been made prisoners of war at the battle of St. Jacinto, and escaped from the custody of the Texians, who had them in charge, *by violating their parole, as was alleged.* But from the determined resolution of Mr. Bilbo and his family, these men would have been seized by a military force thirty miles east of the Sabine; and, after Mr. B. had set off with the Mexicans, to deliver them to the United States officers at Opelousas, the Texian party pursued him upwards of forty miles, as he informed me. I have heard of other instances of Texians coming into Louisiana, in alleged pursuit of property or fugitives from justice, but whether under the direction of officers of the Government, or not, I am not informed. I believe it has also happened that parties of citizens of the United States have, without authority, in pursuit of persons or property, gone into Texas.

These occurrences, together with the difficulties that frequently occur from the uncertainty as to the boundary between the two countries, from the point where the 32d degree of north latitude crosses the Sabine to Red river, are producing a state of feeling on the frontier that ought to be repressed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. GARLAND.

His Excellency M. VAN BUREN,

President of the United States.

NATCHITOCHES, *December 1, 1838.*

DEAR SIR: You will, no doubt, be surprised to learn that General Rusk, of the Texian army, has been invading our territory, and is now in the parish of Caddo, fifteen miles from Shreveport, with one hundred and sixty Texians under his command, to chastise the Caddo Indians, for whom he is in search; so said the express that was sent from Shreveport to Col. J. B. Many at Fort Jesup. The express arrived the night before last at the fort, and, on receipt, Col. Many, who commands the fort, gave orders for every effective man in the fort to be in readiness to march forthwith. At two o'clock yesterday evening, he marched off with the command of about one hundred and sixty-five men, and one piece of artillery, to arrest General Rusk and his band of Texians, and bring them to justice. The old colonel went off very angry indeed.

How this affair will terminate, I am unable to say. I think the Texians will leave the territory before Colonel Many gets to them. It has produced great excitement here.

Your obedient servant,

J. CABLE.

HON. R. GARLAND.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

January 3, 1839.

SIR: Enclosed, is a slip from the Herald, a newspaper published at Natchitoches, Louisiana, giving some other information in relation to the invasion of the State of Louisiana by a body of Texian troops under the command of General Rusk, of which I gave you information some time ago.

I now request a rigid examination into all the facts connected with this invasion of our territory, and the punishment of all persons concerned in it, and particularly of those who may have menaced or insulted our citizens.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. GARLAND.

His Excellency M. VAN BUREN,
President of the U. S.

NATCHITOCHES, *December 6, 1838.*

Invasion of the United States by Texas.—It was hardly to be expected that we should ever be called on to record that our neighbors on the Sabine had invaded this country, yet, strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true. A courier was despatched about a week ago from Shreveport to Fort Jesup, with the astonishing intelligence that that town was filled with an armed force from Texas, amounting to about one hundred men, under the command of General Rusk, and that the lives of some of its citizens had been threatened by the invaders. On the receipt of this intelligence, Colonel Many, with all the troops under his command, taking with him one field-piece, promptly marched to succor the citizens of Shreveport. The result of his expedition is not yet known, though, since he left Fort Jesup, we are in receipt of later news from Shreveport, which renders it certain that our gallant colonel and his command will not have a chance to measure swords with the Texians, as they had already left the country. We understand that General Rusk stated that he came with no hostile intentions towards the citizens of the United States, but that the Caddo Indians, living within the United States, had crossed over into Texas, and waged war upon its citizens, and that he came to disarm them. This we understand he did, as well as threaten Mr. Sewall, the Indian agent at Shreveport, for having furnished them with arms and ammunition. General Rusk, we learn further, had a talk with the Caddoes, made a treaty with them, and returned to Texas.

The intention with which he came is certainly some extenuation of the general's violation of our territory, in coming into the country and filling a peaceable village with his armed soldiery; yet it is an invasion alto-

gether unwarrantable, and one for which the Texian Government should be made responsible. Texas is a foreign Government, and has committed a flagrant violation of our rights in invading our territory. General Rusk ought to have known both the inclination and ability of this Government to prevent aggressions upon Texas from any portion of its citizens; and to the Government should he have applied, if it was true, as stated, that the Caddoes had made war upon his country. If any disapprovable motives can have influenced this proceeding, we are quite sure they did not originate with General Rusk, for we believe him to be a brave soldier and an honorable gentleman. We think it more than probable that the general has been betrayed into this step, and that he will avail himself of the earliest occasion to make the Government of the United States the most satisfactory explanation.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *January 9, 1839.*

SIR: In obedience to your directions, and in answer to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 3d instant, I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a copy of a report from Colonel Many, which contains all the information in the possession of this Department "touching the invasion of the Southwestern frontier of the United States by an armed force from the republic of Texas."

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

J. R. POINSETT.

To the PRESIDENT
of the United States.

HEADQUARTERS, 3d INFANTRY,
Fort Jesup, November 30, 1838.

SIR: Herewith I have the honor to enclose copies of two letters which I received yesterday: one from Mr. Charles A. Sewall, the "authorized agent of the Caddo Indians," the other from the receiver of public money at the land office in Natchitoches, and the register of the land office.

You will perceive from these communications that there has been an actual invasion of the United States by an armed force from Texas, acting under the orders of General Rusk, known to be under commission from the Government of Texas. Under these circumstances, I have deemed it my duty to march to Shreveport, on Red river, with my whole command, (except twenty men, left here under the command of First Lieutenant Macrae, to preserve the public property,) and force General Rusk and his army to recross the Sabine. I shall leave this post with my command to-day.

Should it be necessary for the peace of the frontier, I will station a company or more at Shreveport, until I can hear from the Department on the subject.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

JAS. B. MANY,
Colonel 3d infantry.

Brig. Gen. R. JONES,
Adj't Gen. U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

SHREVEPORT, (LA.,) November 26, 1838.

SIR: As the authorized agent of the Caddo tribe of Indians, I deem it my duty to call your attention to the present exposed condition of this tribe. At this very moment of my writing, a Texian army, (to use the inflated language of our sister republic,) of some seventy or eighty men, under the command of General Rusk, are now encamped in this town; and about the same number are at Scott's settlement, about twenty miles distant. The reasons assigned by General Rusk for crossing the boundary and invading the territory of the United States are, that the safety of the Texian frontier requires that the Indians shall be deprived of their fire-arms. *He* first marched into our territory, for the express purpose of meeting those Indians, and with the determination of giving them battle if they did not surrender.

He found them quietly encamped in our territory, where they had settled by my advice, with the intention of remaining until the frontier troubles were ended. They agreed, in the presence of an overwhelming force, to give up their arms, and to meet here for that purpose. Accordingly, General Rusk marched a detachment of his troops here, and left another band at Scott's; *and here he is*—a Texian general, at the head of a *Texian* army, in the territory of the United States.

A few days since we were attacked, or rather visited, by a band of the same sort of men, who came here also in quest of the Indians, charging them with depredations that cannot be sustained by a shadow of proof.

General Rusk demands that the Indians shall be disarmed, and remain here at the expense of the Texian Government. In the present condition of the country we shall be continually liable to be visited by bands; either self-organized, or under the direction of Texian officers; and the peace of our families, the welfare of our town, and the dignity of the United States, all require an efficient military force at this point—at least until these Indian troubles are at an end.

In behalf of this miserable remnant of a tribe, who took to the United States for protection, and in behalf of the citizens of this parish, I must request that you will send us troops from your command, both for the defence of the Indians and of our own families.

Should it comport with your own duties to come here in person, I will lay before you a full statement of the treatment we received from the inhabitants of the Texian borders.

Mycourier is waiting. And I will close, by again urging the necessity which exists for the presence of troops here.

I am, dear sir, with sentiments of high respect,

C. A. SEWALL,
by J. B. DORRANCE.

Colonel MANY,
commanding at Fort Jesup.

SHREVEPORT, (LA.,)

November 26, 1838.

SIR: We have been called upon by Mr. Charles A. Sewall, the present authorized agent of the Caddo Indians, for a letter of recommendation to you. It gives us much pleasure to introduce you to him as a gentleman.

His object is to lay before you a violation of the treaty of nations, lately committed by the Texian army, with General Rusk at their head, who entered this village, compelled the Caddo tribe of Indians to surrender their arms, and remain here, at the expense of the Government of Texas as prisoners of war!

For further particulars we refer you to Mr. Sewall's letter, which we believe substantially correct, and deserving your attention. In justice to General Rusk, we must state, however unprecedented has been his course in venturing thus far, he has conducted himself in a gentlemanly manner.

We have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

BENOIT LAURENTS,

P. O. LEE.

Col. MANY, *United States army.*

True copy:

P. M. BARBOUR,

Adjutant 3d infantry.

