tion. We venture to hope that [illegible] inaction is unauthorised, and to express a wish that, in the full possession of security and talent, you will not refuse the citizens the benefits arising [illegible] political experience, and deprive them of the full opportunity of exercising their choice and judgment in selecting their President from the whole number of the people.

In pursuing and completing the measures so happily begun; in encouraging the industry, and protecting the rights of the citizens; in promoting the happiness of the people, and supporting the dignity of the government, we, with confidence, assure you of our most cordial support. And relying on that Divine Being who holds, in his hand the destiny of empires, we trust we shall be so directed as to long exist a peaceful, a prosperous and happy nation.

AARON LELAND, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

DOCUMENTS *accompanying the President's Message of the 2nd inst.*

(COPY.)

NATCHITOCHES, *August 5, 1806.*

SIR,

It has been reported to me for several days past, that a large body of the troops of the King of Spain had assembled near the Sabine, and were about to cross that river; and I am just informed that this body has crossed the said river and taken post within the territory of the United States. It has, therefore, become my duty to address you on this subject; to demand an explicit avowal of the object of this movement; to insist on this body of troops being immediately withdrawn; and to warn you of the consequences which may result from its continuance within the territory of the United States.

It is well known that the government of the United States and the king of Spain, are at this moment negociating on the subject of the boundaries of Louisiana; and there cannot be a doubt, but an amicable adjustment of existing differences will soon take place.

The reinforcements which have lately reached this post, are only intended as a security to the territory actually surrendered to us, and which we consider as extending to the Sabine. There is no disposition on the part of the United States, to commit hostilities on the troops or possessions of Spain; but we cannot suffer aggressions on our territory; and should you persist in making them, you will be justly chargeable with all the consequences which such conduct is calculated to produce. I have only to add, that if you should think proper to return the Spanish troops to the west side of the Sabine, and continue them there, no attempt will be made on the part of the United States, to interrupt that friendship and harmony which ought to subsist between neighboring nations: but if you should attempt to continue those troops within the territory of the United States, after this explicit and friendly warning, it will be my duty to consider you as an invader of our territory, and to act accordingly.

This letter will be handed you by major Moses Porter, of the artillerists of the United States, who will wait a reasonable time for your reply, which, if convenient, I hope may be accompanied by an English or French translation, to enable me to ascertain its contents with greater certainty.

The major will be attended by one non-commissioned officer, and one private soldier, of the army of the United States.

I avail myself of this opportunity of tendering my best wishes for your health, happiness and honor.

And am, sir, with respectful consideration, your obedient servant,

T. H. CUSHING,

Colonel, commanding a detachment of the army of the United States.

To Colonel HERRARA, or officer commanding the troops of the king of Spain, on the east side of the Sabine.

Plantation of Mr. Prudhamme, August 6, 1806.

SIR,

With all possible respect I answer your excellency's letter, which was delivered me at this place, by Moses Porter, major of artillery of the U. States.

It is true that I have crossed the Sabine river, with a detachment of troops belonging to the king, with orders from the captain general (by whom I am governed) to keep this territory from all hostile attempts, as belonging from time immemorial to the king, and which is a dependance of the province of Texas. The inhabitants still acknowledge obedience to our government, notwithstanding the violence committed on a small detachment of our troops by those of the U. States.

From this moment I hold myself responsible to the real letter of the orders that govern me, which are by no pretext whatsoever to interrupt or break the good intelligence which subsists between his majesty and the U. States; but I cannot permit, without violating my duty, any usurpation upon the land he possesses. If your excellency makes any infringement, you alone will be answerable to the two courts, and may interrupt the amicable convention perhaps now on foot, but of which I have no knowledge.

I did not send a translation of this in French or English, not having any person capable of translating with purity a thing of so serious a nature. I felicitate myself of this opportunity in offering my best services.

Your humble servant,

(SIGNED) SIMON DE HERRARA.

Senior Don Thomas Cushing, commandant of a detachment of the army of the U. nited States.

Natchitoches, August 26, 1806.

SIR—On my arrival at this post, I learned with certainty that a considerable Spanish force had crossed the Sabine, and advanced within the territory claimed by the United States. It was hoped, sir, that pending the negociations between our respective governments for an amicable adjustment of the limits of Louisiana, that no additional settlements would be formed, or new military positions assumed by either power, within the disputed territory; a policy which a conciliatory disposition would have suggested, and justice sanctioned. But since a contrary conduct has been observed on the part of certain officers of his Catholic Majesty, they alone will be answerable for the consequences which may ensue.

The above proceeding, sir, is not the only evidence of an unfriendly disposition which certain officers of Spain have afforded. I have to complain of the outrage lately committed by a detachment of Spanish troops, acting under your instructions, towards Mr. Freeman and his party, who were ascending the Red river, under the orders of the President of the U. S. Mr. Freeman & his associates were navigating waters which pass through the territory ceded by France, to the U. States; they were navigating a river on which the French had formerly made settlements far beyond the place where they were arrested; a fact of great notoriety, and in support of which, the testimony of several citizens residing at and near the post of Natchitoches can be adduced: but nevertheless, Mr. Freeman and his party were assailed by a battalion of Spanish troops, and commanded to return. A proceeding the more exceptionable, since the objects of Mr. Freeman were merely scientific, having in view nothing hostile to Spain; objects which were long since communicated by me to his excellency the Marquis of Casa Calvo, and which through him, I presume, must have been made known to the governor general of the province of Texas.

This detachment of Spanish troops whose movements I learn are directed by your excellency, did, on their march, commit another outrage towards the United States, and of which it is my duty to ask an explanation. In the Caddo nation of Indians the flag of the United States was displayed, and commanded from the chief and warriors, all the respectful veneration to which it is entitled. But your troops are stated to have cut down the staff on which the pavilion waved and to have menanced the place and safety of the Caddoes should they continue their respect for the American government, or their friendly intercourse with the citizens of the United States.

I experience the more difficulty in accounting for this transaction, since it cannot be unknown to your excellency, that while Louisiana appertained to France, that the Caddo Indians were under the protection of the French government & that a French garrison was actually established in one of their villages.—Hence it follows, sir, that the cession of Louisiana to the United States "with the same extent which it had when France possessed it" is sufficient authority for the display of the American flag in the Caddo village, and that the disrespect which that flag has experienced, subjects your excellency to a serious responsibility.

I am unwilling to render this communication unnecessarily lengthy, but I must complain of another outrage which has been committed under the eyes of your excellency. Three citizens of the United States of the names of Shaw, Irvin and Brewster, were seized by Spanish soldiers within twelve miles of Natchitoches, and have been sent prisoners to Nacogdoches. I cannot suppose that this proceeding is unknown to your excellency, and I should be wanting in duty did I not avail myself of the present occasion, to demand information as to the cause of their arrest and detention.

There is still another subject on which I must address your excellency. It is reported to me, that several slaves, the property of citizens of the United States, have lately escaped from the service of their masters, and sought and found asylum at Nacogdoches. I have seen the correspondence between your excellency & judge Turner upon this subject and I learn your determination to await the orders of the governor general of the province of Texas; I will forbear therefore, for the present, to press their immediate delivery to the order of their masters, but I must urge your excellency to discourage, for the future, the escape of slaves from this to your territory, and I request that such as may repair to the bounds of your command may be forthwith returned. Your excellency will readily perceive the cause of my solicitude on this subject. If fugitive slaves are to receive the protection of the Spanish authorities, the property of the citizens of this territory is indeed insecure, and a good understanding between our two governments ought not and cannot be preserved. During the last year I had a correspondence with his excellency the marquis of Casa Calvo, who was then at New Orleans, relative to some negroes who who had escaped to Nacogdoches, and in consequence of the interference of the marquis, I am led to believe that they were restored—I was since officially informed by the marquis, that his conduct on the occasion was approved by his Catholic majesty, and I consequently concluded that the mischief was at an end.

It cannot, I presume, be unknown to the officers of his Catholic majesty, that ministers from the United States have repaired to Spain for the avowed purpose of amicably adjusting the existing differences: I should greatly regret, therefore, if any occurrences in this quarter should prevent that amicable arrangement which the interest of each nation would advise. But if the officers of Spain should persist in their acts of aggression, your excellency will readily anticipate the consequences, and if the sword must be drawn, let those be responsible, whose unfriendly conduct has rendered it indispensable.

Colonel Henry Hopkins the adjutant general of the militia of this territory, will have the honor to deliver to your excellency this communication, and to await your answer.

I tender to your excellency the assurances of my great respect, and high consideration.

(Signed,) WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE.

His excellency governor Herrera, or the officer commanding a detachment of Spanish troops at or near the settlement of Bayou Pierre.

(COPY.)

SIR—The troops of the king my master, which I have the honor to command, on this side of the Sabine, have no other object but to maintain good harmony between the United States and his majesty, and to preserve inviolate the territory which belongs to him.

Major Freeman was navigating the Red river on that part of the territory which never belonged to the province of Louisiana, now appertaining to the U. States, for which reason he was notified by the commandant of the troops to retrograde as far back as the country that did belong to them.

I agree with your excellency that all the territory which his Catholic majesty ceded to France belongs to the United States, but the Caddo Indians are not on that land, but at a great distance from it, and live now on the territory of Spain, for which reason it was notified to them that if they chose to live under the government of the United States, they must go to the territory under their jurisdiction, but if they desired to remain where they were, it was required of them to take down the American flag. They consented not to abandon their village; but being more tardy than was conceived they might have been, in pulling down the flag, they (the Spaniards) were obliged to do it by force.

The reason why I detained the three citizens of the United States was, because they were found twice, and on different days, observing our positions and movements, and three several times that I questioned them, I observed they did not agree as to the motives of visiting this place; but finally one of them told me that they wished to establish themselves under the government of the king at St. Antoine, which determined me to send them to the governor of the province with an escort, as well on account of the distance of the road, as for having rendered themselves suspected persons.

The detention of the runaway negroes of Louisiana at Nacogdoches is an affair now in suspense, before the captain general of this province, who likewise will have knowledge of the motives why those were sent back whom your excellency cited; and for the better security of the matter, I shall send your letter which I received by col. Hopkins, and who likewise will be the bearer of this. The troops of the king, neither from disposition nor character, will ever cooperate directly or indirectly in encouraging the emigration of negro slaves; for my part I assure your excellency that those I command will commit no hostility, which can frustrate the negociations now pending between our courts; but if I am provoked to it I shall endeavor to preserve the honor of my troops and to fulfil the obligations with which I am invested, a duty which my character, and that of my subalterns demands.

I avail myself of this opportunity to offer your excellency my respect and consideration.

(Signed,) SIMON HERRARA.

Spanish Camp, Aug. 28, 1806.

To his excellency governor WM. C. C. CLAIBORNE.

COPY.

Natchitoches, August 31, 1806.

SIR,

By the return of col. Hopkins, I am honored with your excellency's reply to my communication of the 26th inst.

I continue of opinion that the advance of Spanish troops within a territory claimed by the United States, is evidence of an unfriendly disposition; nor can I perceive any thing in your excellency's letter, which can justify or extenuate the offensive conduct observed towards Mr. Freeman and his associates, or the indignity offered in the Caddo nation to the American flag.

You have not denied, sir, that the French, when in possession of Louisiana, had established a garrison on the Red River, far beyond the place where Mr. Freeman and his associates were arrested on their voyage; or that the Caddo Indians were formerly considered as under the protection of the French government. The silence of your excellency on these points, proceeds probably from a knowledge on your part of the correctness of my statements. I shall, however, touch no further on these transactions in my correspondence with your excellency; but will hasten to lay the same before the President of the United States, who will know what measures to direct, when wrongs are offered to the American nation.

I cannot however, refrain from expressing my displeasure at the arrest and detention under your excellency's orders, of the three citizens of the United States, Shaw, Irvin, and Brewster; they are charged with no offence which would warrant imprisonment and transportation to St. Antonio. A state of actual war between our two nations could not have justified your conduct towards those unoffending citizens. I can venture to assert that the suspicions of your excellency as to the objects of Shaw, Irvin, and Brewster, are unfounded. They certainly could have no particular inducements to notice the positions and movements of your troops. The fact I believe is, that these men were desirous of gratifying their curiosity, and wished your excellency's passports to visit St. Antonio. Under this impression, and from the circumstance that they were within the territory claimed by the United States, I deem it my duty to demand their release, and speedy restoration to their country. It cannot be supposed that the distance to St. Antonio, or their personal convenience, occasioned the escort which attended them. They appear, on the contrary, to have been treated by your excellency as state prisoners, and as such I have information of their having passing through Nacogdoches under a strong guard. Your excellency will recollect that the subjects of his Catholic majesty, are daily in the habit of visiting the post of Natchitoches, and cannot but observe the position and movements of the American troops; they, however, are permitted to pass without molestation. A friendly and innocent intercourse between the citizens of the one, and the subjects of the other power, has not as yet been interdicted by this government. I am persuaded, therefore, that your excellency will see that the arrest of Shaw, Irvin and Brewster, was premature, and that their detention is highly improper. I have no personal knowledge of these three men: they are American citizens, and of course under the protection of the government of the United States. In the name of that government, therefore, I do now demand their release, and that they be restored to their country as soon as possible.

Pending the negociations between our respective governments, I could wish that hostilities should not commence in this quarter, but, if provoked to it, by the unjust aggressions of the forces of his Catholic majesty, the troops of the United States will endeavor to maintain their own and their country's honor.

Lieut. Duforest, of the American army, is charged with the delivery of this letter to your excellency, and to bear me such answer as you may think proper to return.

I renew to your excellency the assurances of my respectful consideration.

(Signed.) WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE.

His excellency *Governor Herrera.*

Extract of a letter from Gen. Wilkinson, to the secretary of war, dated "Head-quarters, Natchitoches, Oct. 4, 1806.

"I yesterday morning received gov. Cordero's answer to my address of the 24th ult. copies of which you have under cover. The varied style of this letter, when contrasted with those, of gov. Herrera to col. Cushing and gov. Claiborne, combined to the circumstances of the Spanish troops having recrossed the Sabine to a man, has induced me, on the ground of economy and of expediency also, to discharge the militia who had reached this place, and to countermand those under march, excepting about 100 dragoons and mounted infantry, whom I shall retain in service (until I am apprised of the determination of the captain general, Salcedo) to watch the movements of our neighbors."

Head-quarters of the army of the United States.

Natchitoches, Sept. 24th, 1806.

SIR,

After the recent communications which have passed between his excellency gov. Herrera, col. Cushing and gov. Claiborne, and his reiterated repulsion of their reasonable and rightful demands; I will confess to your excellency that nought but the very high and solemn obligations which I owe to humanity, could vanquish the repugnance with which I now have the honor to address you, on a topic profoundly interesting to our respective nations, inasmuch as it may involve a question of peace or war.

The differences of opinion which have prevailed, concerning the contested limits of Louisiana, having been submitted to amicable negociation by our respective sovereigns; the appeal to rational enquiry is an admission of the dubiosity of the right, and therefore should prevent any change of military positions, posterior to the delivery of the province of Louisiana to the United States.

The government of the American union, founded in right, and conducted by reason, has been instructed by the history of other times, how to value the blessings of peace; and being unambitious of conquest or military fame, is desirous to preserve a fair and friendly understanding with all the powers of the earth.

Thus circumstanced, and under daily expectation of a favorable issue to the depending negociations, it would mark a sanguinary spirit, and be a most ungracious and unwarrantable deed, were the military officers of either government by an act of precipitancy, to frustrate the benevolent views of pacific discussion; and make way for the commencement of hostilities, whose final issue may baffle human foresight, but whose probable consequences would be scenes of revolution and bloodshed, offensive to humanity, and subversive of the general policy of nations.

In this state of things I am ready to pledge myself that pending the negociations of the two countries, nothing shall be attempted against his catholic Majesty's subjects or territories by the troops under my command; unless his officers should attempt, as they have already done, to innovate the "statu quo" at the surrender of the province, by occupying new ground, or erecting new posts, or unless they should trespass on the rights of the citizens, or violate the sovereignty of these states; the former conduct will compel counter movements and occupancies, and the latter will not only justify reciprocation, but will infallibly excite it; and thus hostilities may be produced, notwithstanding the peaceful dispositions of the high powers, to whom we are respectively accountable.

When the troops of the United States took possession of this post, the Spanish commandant, from whom it was received, did not define the limits of his jurisdiction; yet it was notorious that Nacogdoches formed the barrier post of the approximate province of Texas. It was known also that controversies had existed between France and Spain, respecting the western limits of Louisiana, and we had been assured by monsieur Laussatt, the French commissioner, who delivered the province to the United States, that the pretensions of France went so far west as the Rio del Norte. But we were not informed that any line of demarcation had ever been traced to partition these provinces.

Whether such a line of territorial jurisdiction had ever been established or not, between the provinces of Louisiana and Texas, one had been rendered indispensable by the sale of the former to the United States, for the administration of justice, the security of property, and the prevention of hostile collisions; and these states with pretensions far more extensive, adopted the Sabine river as the most obvious, most convenient, most natural and least exceptionable temporary boundary.

I am therefore, sir, commanded by the President of the United States to inform you, "that the actual quiet possession of the country by the United States east of the river Sabine, ought and will be considered as fully within the limits of the country surrendered to the U. S. on taking possession of this place, and therefore any attempt on the part of his Catholic majesty's officers to disturb the existing state of things, by endeavoring to occupy any new post east of the Sabine, or westward or northward of the former boundaries of what has been called W. Florida, must be considered by the government of the United States as an actual invasion of their territorial rights & will be resisted accordingly." While I submit these commands to your grave consideration in the hope they may have due weight, it becomes my duty to demand from you the withdrawal of the troops of Spain to the west of the Sabine.

My sense of the high respect due from one old soldier to another, prohibits the idea of menace, but as our honor forbids stratagem or deception, before our swords have been drawn, I owe it to my own fame and to the national character, to warn you that the ultimate decision of the competent authority has been taken, that my orders are absolute and my determination fixed, to assert, and (under God) to sustain the jurisdiction of the U. S. to the Sabine river against any force which may be opposed to me.

Retire then, sir, I conjure you, the troops of your command, from the ground in controversy, and spare the effusion of human blood, without prejudicing your own honor, or the substantial interest of his majesty, your royal master.

Colonel Thomas H. Cushing, chief des etats major of the army of the United States, has my orders to deliver this letter to you and to wait a reasonable time for your answer.

I pray God to keep your excellency in his holy protection for many years, and have the honor to be,

Your most obedient,

And humble servant,

J. WILKINSON.

His excellency Gov. CORDERO, &c.

Nacogdoches Camp, Sept. 29th, 1806.

EXCELLENT SIR—By the hands of colonel Thomas Cushing, chief of the general staff of U. S. army, I have had the honor yesterday to receive your excellency's letter, written from your head quarters, at Natchitoches.

Being unauthorised to enter into a discussion of the serious and interesting matters on which you treat, I hope your excellency will excuse me for transmitting your letter with the utmost celerity to the hands of the captain general brigadier Nimesio Salcedo, under whose orders I act, and I shall transmit to your excellency his answer in the same manner, by the hands of an officer of my staff.

While thus acting, I have the honor to offer to your excellency my respects and consideration, praying God to keep you alive many years.

I am sir, your excellency's most humble and obedient servant,

(Signed.) ANTONIO CORDERO.

His excellency Don Jas. Wilkinson, governor of Louisiana, and general of the army of the U S. of America

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Extract of a letter from general Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, dated

"Natchitoches, October 21, 1806.

"Accidental causes having detained the bearer, I am enabled to transmit you under cover the answer of governor Cordero to my note of the 4th instant, of which a copy has been forwarded, & a duplicate will accompany this.

"I send you a literal copy of the governor's letter in place of a very imperfect translation, which however serves to remove all doubts of the continued pretensions of the Spaniards to extend their jurisdiction to the Areoya Fonda, within seven miles of this post, and confirms my determination to advance to the Sabine, for which point, my arrangements being completed, I shall march to-morrow morning; but agreeably to the idea expressed in a former letter, I intend to propose to the Spanish commander the withdrawal of our troops respectively to the points of occupancy at the period of the surrender of the province to the U. S. and in case of his re-