A PROCLAMATION

BY THE GENERAL COMMANDING THE ARMY OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA.

To the people of Mexico:

After many years of patient endurance, the United States are at length constrained to acknowledge that a war now exists between our government and the government of Mexico. For many years our citizens have been subjected to repeated insults and injuries, our vessels and cargoes have been seized and confiscated, our merchants have been plundered, maimed, imprisoned, without cause and without reparation. At length your government acknowledged the justice of our claims, and agreed by treaty to make satisfaction, by payment of several millions of dollars; but this treaty has been violated by your rulers, and the stipulated payments have been withheld. Our late effort to terminate all difficulties by peaceful negotiation has been rejected by the dictator Paredes, and our minister of peace, whom your rulers had agreed to receive, has been refused a hearing. He has been treated with indignity and insult, and Paredes has announced that war exists between us. This war, thus first proclaimed by him, has been acknowledged as an existing fact by our President and Congress, with perfect unanimity, and will be prosecuted with vigor and energy against your army and rulers; but those of the Mexican people who remain neutral will not be molested.

Your government is in the hands of tyrants and usurpers. They have abolished your State governments, they have overthrown your federal constitution, they have deprived you of the right of suffrage, destroyed the liberty of the press, despoiled you of your arms, and reduced you to a state of absolute dependence upon the power of a military dictator. Your army and rulers extort from the people, by grievous taxation, by forced loans, and military seizures, the very money which sustains the usurpers in power. Being disarmed, you are left defenceless, an easy prey to the savage Cumanches, who not only destroy your lives and property, but drive into a captivity, more horrible than death itself, your wives and children. It is your military rulers who have reduced you to this deplorable condition. It is these tyrants, and their corrupt and cruel satellites, gorged with the people's treasure, by whom you are thus oppressed and impoverished, some of whom
have boldly advocated a monarchical government, and would place
a European prince on the throne of Mexico. We come to obtain
reparation for repeated wrongs and injuries, we come to obtain
indemnity for the past and security for the future, we come to
overthrow the tyrants who have destroyed your liberties; but we
come to make no war upon the people of Mexico, nor upon any
form of free government they may choose to select for themselves.
It is our wish to see you liberated from despots, to drive back the
savage Cumanches, to prevent the renewal of their assaults, and
to compel them to restore to you from captivity your long lost
wives and children. Your religion, your altars and churches, the
property of your churches and citizens, the emblems of your faith
and its ministers, shall be protected and remain inviolate. Hun-
dreds of our army, and hundreds of thousands of our people, are
members of the Catholic church. In every State, and in nearly
every city and village of our Union, Catholic churches exist, and
the priests perform their holy functions in peace and security, un-
der the sacred guarantee of our constitution. We come among the
people of Mexico as friends and republican brethren, and all who
receive us as such shall be protected, whilst all who are seduced
into the army of your dictator shall be treated as enemies. We
shall want from you nothing but food for our army, and for this
you shall always be paid; in cash, the full value. It is the settled
policy of your tyrants to deceive you in regard to the policy and
character of our government and people. These tyrants fear the
example of our free institutions, and constantly endeavor to mis-
represent our purposes, and inspire you with hatred for your re-
publican brethren of the American Union. Give us but the oppor-
tunity to undeceive you, and you will soon learn that all the
representations of Paredes were false, and were only made to in-
duce you to consent to the establishment of a despotic govern-
ment.

In your struggle for liberty with the Spanish monarchy, thou-
sands of our countrymen risked their lives and shed their blood in
your defence. Our own commodore, the gallant Porter, maintained
in triumph your flag upon the ocean, and our government was the
first to acknowledge your independence. With pride and pleasure
we enrolled your name on the list of independent republics, and
sincerely desired that you might in peace and prosperity enjoy all
the blessings of free government. Success on the part of your
tyran against the army of the Union is impossible; but if they
could succeed, it would only be to enable them to fill your towns
with their soldiers, eating out your substance, and harassing you
with still more grievous taxation. Already they have abolished the
liberty of the press, as the first step towards the introduction of
that monarchy which it is their real purpose to proclaim and es-

Mexicans, we must treat as enemies and overthrow the tyrants
who, whilst they have wronged and insulted us, have deprived you
of your liberty; but the Mexican people who remain neutral during
the contest shall be protected against their military despots, by the
republican army of the Union.
HEAD-QUARTERS, Army of Occupation,  
Camp near Matamoros, Texas, April 26, 1846.

Sir: I have respectfully to report that General Arista arrived in Matamoros on the 24th instant, and assumed the chief command of the Mexican troops. On the same day he addressed me a communication conceived in courteous terms, but saying that he considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them. A translation of his note and a copy of my reply will be transmitted the moment they can be prepared. I despatch this by an express which is now waiting.

I regret to report that a party of dragoons, sent out by me on the 24th instant to watch the course of the river above on this bank, became engaged with a very large force of the enemy, and after a short affair, in which some sixteen were killed and wounded, appear to have been surrounded and compelled to surrender. Not one of the party has returned, except a wounded man sent in this morning by the Mexican commander, so that I cannot report with confidence the particulars of the engagement or the fate of the officers, except that Captain Hardee was known to be a prisoner and unhurt. Captain Thornton, and Lieutenants Mason and Kane, were the other officers. The party was 63 strong.

Hostilities may now be considered as commenced, and I have this day deemed it necessary to call upon the governor of Texas for four regiments of volunteers—two to be mounted and two to serve as foot. As some delay must occur in collecting these troops, I have also desired the governor of Louisiana to send out four regiments of infantry as soon as practicable. This will constitute an auxiliary force of nearly 5,000 men, which will be required to prosecute the war with energy, and carry it, as it should be, into the enemy's country. I trust the department will approve my course in this matter, and will give the necessary orders to the staff departments for the supply of this large additional force.

If a law could be passed authorizing the President to raise volunteers for twelve months, it would be of the greatest importance for a service so remote from support as this.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,


The Adjutant General of the Army,  
Washington, D. C.