

## Andrew Jackson to John Forsyth, March 6, 1838, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO SECRETARY FORSYTH.

Hermitage, March 6, 1838.

*My dear sir,* Your letter of the 14th ultimo with its inclosures has been received. Upon reading the inclosures, I find that Mr. Fulton has on file in Arkansa, my original letter, I therefore coincide with the President that it is proper to await the receipt of that letter before any communication is made to congress, unless, from the proceedings of Mr. Adams, or some of the opposition, a case may arise, to give judge Fultons statement to congress to meet the assault, until the original letter can be produced which will shew, with what vigilence I have guarded our nutrality with mexico. . . .1

1 Fulton's letter to Forsyth dated Washington, Feb. 13, 1838, and enclosed to Jackson is as follows:

“ *Sir,* My attention was called to a communication made by you to the House of Representatives in answer to a call upon your department for a confidential communication made by the late President of the United States to myself some time in the fall of 1830, relative to the designs of Genl. Sam Houston towards Mexico, in which you inform the House that no copy of such a letter was to be found in your department; and, as I was induced to believe that the object and contents of that letter were not correctly understood, and as the original was among my papers at home, where no one but myself could find it, I concluded to address a letter to Genl. Jackson, requesting him to furnish me copies of the correspondence; presuming as it was confidential, that he might have taken

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the letter and my answers, or copies of them with him to Tennessee. I have received his answer to my letter, and regret to learn that he has not found among his papers any part of the correspondence upon the subject. Under these circumstances it is the wish of Genl. Jackson that I should prepare such a statement as my memory will enable me to make, of the character of that correspondence and communicate the same to you, as the best evidence within reach of what took place.

“In conformity with this request I have the honor to state to you that in the Winter of 1830–31, I received a confidential communication from Genl. Jackson informing me that owing to certain intelligence to be relied upon which he had received, he was led to believe that Genl. Houston was at that time engaged in fitting out in Arkansas a military expedition against Texas, in violation of the neutral relations existing between the United States and Mexico, that men were enlisted, Steamboats employed and supplies of ammunition and provisions etc. were procured; and that points of rendezvous had been selected in Arkansas from whence the expedition was to move. He stated that feeling it to be his duty to prevent if possible the organization of such a force within the United States, although he could not place entire reliance upon what he had heard, yet he was anxious to ascertain fully, whether there was any foundation whatever for the report. With this view he authorized me to institute a diligent and thorough enquiry into the matter; but admonished me as it was a subject of great delicacy both as it regarded the Mexican Government, and the individual accused, that I must use the utmost caution and circumspection in conducting the enquiry, and also maintain the greatest secrecy possible in relation to results.

“Under these instructions I went myself to the Western frontier and ascertained in person all the facts on the subject of enquiry to be obtained in that quarter. I adopted means also of getting satisfactory information from the Mississippi river at the various points, at which it would be likely that such an expedition could be prepared or fitted out, and for obtaining intelligence also from the line which divides Arkansas from Texas. I communicated such information as I obtained from time to time to the President; and finally becoming satisfied

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myself, that no organized expedition was at that time in contemplation or on foot from any point within the Territory of Arkansas against Mexico, either on the part of Genl. Houston or any other person; I communicated that conclusion to the President in the fall I think of the Year 1831. The letter of the late President of the United States herein referred to, shall be furnished to the department as soon as I can find it; and I am satisfied it will be found to display the utmost vigilance on the part of the Chief Magistrate, for preventing a violation of the neutral relations of his Country towards a neighbouring friendly nation; and to express none other excepting the most just and patriotic sentiments on such a subject.”