

U.S.S. Raritan
Off Vera Cruz, 25th Sept. 1846

My dear Sir,

I rejoice to learn from the late newspapers that you will remain in the Cabinet. I hope and pray that so long as the President and yourself can understand each other; that no cause whatever will induce you to leave your present situation. You are doubtless looking to this part of the world for news, and I will give you what little we have knowing that you have correspondents much better informed than myself. For months I have been carefully reading the Mexican and Vera Cruz papers, and I converse almost daily with Mexicans. The war is becoming more and more popular throughout the country – all parties seem to be writing against “El Norte” and the principle means of carrying on the war will be delay, procrastination. The dispatch which has gone on has long since been in your hands; here we are still ignorant of its nature, but I am convinced its whole purpose will be to gain time. They are well aware of the expenses of a war to our Gov’t, while with them there is little or no expense, while the mass of Mexicans, rejoice in the opportunity to bear arms, as they are too lazy & too proud to work – St Anna [Santa Anna] has requested the command of the army on the northern frontier, which agreeably to the papers from Mexico consists of 14,000 men, 8000 of whom are at Monterey. The troops at M- have recently been reinforced with 40 pieces of artillery and threaten a vigorous resistance to Gen[’]l Taylor. St Anna has left his estate for the city of Mexico, but had not reached at the last dates. Paredes was still in confinement and preparations are going on for the elections for the new Congress which convenes in December.

Our Fleet here is very large – 5 steamers Three frigates – 4 sloops, and many brigs and smaller vessels. Our Commodore Connor has more writing to do than the Sec’y of the Navy, which occupies all his attention. He has no time for fighting. He is infirm and over cautious. There is much ill will in the Squadron against him, for his inactivity, and since the demonstrations on Alverado his best friends have become disgusted with him. These small towns on the coast could have been much injured by destroying their defenses, shipping and public buildings. Nothing has been done. The much talked of castle of St Juan, is a solid mass of work, and to take by cannonading and ships, would be impossible. I have seen the fortifications of Talou, Genoa, Calais, Algiers and Gibraltar, all of which have been taken; and I am convinced that this castle will also fall if an attempt is made by escalade. There is deep water on two sides of it. The walls are 3 feet high, which can be boarded from the yards and spars of vessels; and our men once upon the ramparts, the troops within will surrender. Steamers could take our men alongside, and with scaling ladders both the outer and inner walls, will be crossed. Another method would be to take the city of Vera Cruz first, which with the co-operation of 2000 land troops could be effected. The landing can be effected either north or south of the town, when the city can be easily taken as there are hills overlooking it- After taking the city the castle could be starved out; but it is not my province to write to you about military affairs – All I desire to communicate is, that I am convinced that the Mexicans will endeavor to protract the war- That they will never make such a peace as we desire until further punished and that our present commander is physically and mentally unfitted for the important position which he holds, and so long as he remains here, defeat and disaster will be the sad fate of that branch of the service to which I



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belong. Com: Perry who is here second in command, can do nothing at present; if he were here alone, the Navy would not be long in making her mark upon the page of the History of this war.

My long residence between the tropics [?] and confinement on board ship has impaired my health- I am much broken down also with a sickly ship my duties have recently impaired my health. I am much broken down also with a sickly ship – my duties have recently been arduous, and I long for my native hills and brooks, it is only their airs and sweet waters that can again restore me to strength & vigor, hoping that this war may soon end and a speedy return I am with great respect your old friend &

obedient servant

J. M. Foltz

Hon. James Buchanan
Secretary of State

Second item, handwritten notation:

J M Foltz

Sept 23. '46

rel to the affairs of Mexico & the operations of our squadron in the Gulf



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