

**Andrew Jackson to Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna,
March 1, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew
Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>TO ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA. 1

1 Handwriting of A. J. Donelson.

Hermitage, March 1, 1844.

To Genl. Santa Anna

President of the Republic of Mexico.

Genl. , Being solicited by letters from at least One Hundred of the most respectable of the citizens of this country to address you on behalf of the prisoners from Texas, now confined at Perote in Mexico, I have ventured to do so relying upon your forbearance and kindness to excuse me if I transcend the delicacy which belongs to the subject.

I beg you to be assured that any suggestions which I may make will be consistent with the highest veneration for your character as an individual, as a General, and as President of the Republic of Mexico: and they would not be offered to you if I did not believe their adoption would contribute to the security of the high standing which you already enjoy in the opinion of all civilized nations.

It is not my province to inquire into the existing relations between Mexico and Texas. It is enough for me to know that Texas has been acknowledged by several of the European nations and by the United States, and that in this enlightened era all the Christian world is interested in the alleviation of the treatment of prisoners. These prisoners it is alledged

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are ironed, and held to work with the convicted of crime in the streets of your cities. Statements to this effect appear in the public journals and are generally credited. It is also said on the same authority that Texas has passed a law to raise an army to be marched into Mexico to take prisoners to be held as hostages, thus commencing a system of retaliation that cannot but end disastrously to both nations, and against the spirit of which the civilized world must enter its protest.

In view of such information and such results pardon me, General, for making the following suggestions. It is stated that the prisoners taken at St. Antonio were attending a court, and were non-combattants. If so 0293 269 international law distinguishes between them and those who were taken with arms in their hands at Mier—it permits the treatment of the latter as prisoners of war, but it shields the former from such treatment and inculcates in its place the practice of humanity and protection. In respect to both classes of prisoners, could you not issue an order liberating them on their parole of honor, and charging Texas only with the expense of keeping them? It seems to me that such an order would be justified by the facts, and that it would be regarded as an evidence of liberality and greatness that would be honorable and flattering not only to your individual fame, but to that of Mexico. If in the face of such a step the prisoners taken at Meir should again be taken in arms their lives would be justly forfeited: and if Texas should then persist in her threatened invasion to capture prisoners for retaliation she will be in the wrong, and the civilized world will frown upon her.

This suggestion is offered in the spirit of frankness and friendship, under the belief that if adopted it will increase your fame in the eyes of the good and brave of all nations. I am aware, however, that it is a delicate one at this time, because Texas is in the attitude of menace, and the circumstances may be varied by facts of which I have no knowledge, Determine upon it as you may it comes from your friend, and one who wishes to see the sphere of your usefulness extended and preserved.

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That your life may be long preserved and your power to do good to your country and to your fellow men increased with your years is the sincere prayer of your friend and obedient Svt.