

[cross]

No. 33

The governor of the province of Texas, informed of Your Lordship's letter dated the 9th of December of the proximate past year, concerning [the decision] that parties going out on campaigns against the enemy are to continue these operations a month or more in view of the reasons expressed therein, discloses to Your Lordship how impossible this practice is with those [parties] that go out from the companies of the presidios of Béxar and [La] Bahía del [Elsp[íri]ltu S[an]to, for the ponderous reasons he makes known to Your Lordship.

My dear sir: Informed of Your Lordship's official letter dated the 9th of December of the proximate past year, concerning [the provision] that parties going out on campaigns against the enemy are to continue these operations a month or more in view of the reasons expressed therein, I must explain to you that this practice is impossible for those that go out from this presidio and that of La Bahía del [Elsp[íri]ltu S[an]to. On this Your Lordship's honorable predecessor was well informed when, as commandant inspector, he was at this location in the months of May and June of the past year // ^{lv} 1783,

when we discussed this matter at length. Thus he left to my discretion, with respect to the circumstances occurring in these presidios, the making of sorties and sweeps, on the same terms as had been observed up to now and are continuing.

The reason it is not possible for troops from these two presidios

to go on campaigns and remain for a month is because of the small number of troops remaining for [the purpose] and because, when it has been necessary to go on any general sorties, it is necessary to make use of the citizenry and Indians from these missions, who cannot stand to stay away from their homes for a month, as it is difficult and costly for them to equip themselves with supplies and horses necessary for such a long time. And since it is not possible to make these sorties with the troops alone, because of the slight number of them ² // for such cases, one exercises the prerogative of making ~~with-them~~ the customary sweeps, and only when they go precipitously in pursuit of the enemy are said parties enlarged and reenforced with the residents and mission Indians considered most prepared for it. And [even] with all [this preparation] it has not been possible for one of the said parties to exceed one hundred in number.

The enemies that commit hostilities at this presidio and that of La Bahía del Espíritu Santo are the Cumanche and Carancahuaz Indians.

The first [of these] are located more than 200 leagues to the north of these presidios, and thus they come in small parties, and if they were pursued after committing some act of hostility, it would hardly be feasible to overtake them, first, ^{2v} // because of their practice of splitting up, and second, because they retreat into hilly areas, where, when such engagements have occurred [in the past], virtually all our horses stumbled. Herein is evidence of how difficult it is to succeed in overtaking them.

The second [i.e. the Karankawas] have established themselves on the islands of the northern sea [i.e., the northern coast of the Gulf

of Mexico], ~~for-which~~ and thus whenever they come to commit their hostilities, they move on in a sufficient number of small boats that they have for that [purpose], and as soon as they commit a hostile act, they embark thereon and return to their settlements. There was one occasion when the troops came to the beach in pursuit of them and were witness to the transportation they use, [and] they were unable to pursue them or to redress ³ // the damage they had caused.

For these reasons it is appropriate at these presidios to perform the maneuver of sweeping around the outskirts without planning to go on campaigns, because of the impossibility of this practice and also because, if the ~~remaining-troops~~ few remaining troops were missing for a month, one could not relieve the guard ~~nor~~ [or] the horse herd detachment or have [men] with which to form the escort for the mail pouch. But the most aggravating [result] would be that if, in the meantime, any small party of hostiles appeared, there would be no means of dispatching any men to restrain them or proceed with any maneuver.

These two presidios of Béxar and La Bahía have the misfortune of not having any neighboring [settlements]. ^{3v} // For between that of Béxar and that of La Bahía there is a distance of 40 leagues, and [from the latter] to Río Grande, 60. Thus one may surmise what slight assistance [MS: one word struck through] may be given to one by the other, and especially to that of Río Grande, not only because of its distance, but because it is under another governorship [and] the greatest difficulties ~~may-arise~~ arise in giving even the slightest assistance, as has already been experienced. For this reason this

presidio and that of La Bahía ought necessarily to be manned with 300 men each, since each one by itself should operate along the distance intervening between one and the next. [These presidios] are unlike those of the province of Cohahuila, where, in less than twenty-four hours, it is possible to assemble more than one hundred men // ⁴ from the troops and to be able to overtake the hostiles committing the aggression, since they have their settlements within the same province. [But the Indians there] are quite different from those that attack this [province], because of how remote and difficult [to reach] their locations are. This should indicate to Your Lordship that many operations cannot be conducted by general rules. But rather those must be accommodated which experience has shown bring about the best results.

God keep Your Lordship many years. Béxar, February 16, 1785.

Your Lordship's most attentive
and true servant
kisses your hand.

Dom[ing]o Cabello
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[Note on MS: Signature is not
in Cabello's handwriting.]

Señor Don José }
Ant[on]ilo Rengel }

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[L.S., 1-4 pp., 2/16/1785]