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*Mexico  
Amel...*

HEADQUARTERS U. S. EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

Office of the Commanding General,

Vera Cruz, Mexico.

OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WAR COLLEGE DIVISION

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WAR DEPARTMENT

August 1, 1914.

General W. W. Wotherspoon,  
War Department,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear General Wotherspoon:

I was very glad, indeed, to receive your several very kind letters during the past two or three weeks, and shall try to give you personally some idea of the situation here, that is, as it exists today, for we have already seen that some pretty rapid changes can take place here.

We are in <sup>a</sup> pretty good position here to keep track of the general situation and of the drift of things, as we are constantly brought in contact with persons from Mexico City and other parts of the interior of the country, these including not only Americans and other foreigners, but many Mexicans themselves. The way the Mexicans come to me and unbosom themselves and tell about their troubles with their own countrymen is almost amusing. I have a hard time convincing them that I have no authority to go out from here and protect their haciendas or to occupy the City of Mexico on their invitation. I do not know what is thought in Washington, but it is my opinion as well as that of every person that I have talked with in the past few days, that the situation as regards the pacification of the country is absolutely hopeless. Even if Carranza desired to do so, he cannot grant an amnesty to those who supported Huerta for the very simple reason that his military leaders will not acquiesce in such action. Those who go to make up what is left of the Federal army cannot be expected deliberately to put their necks in the noose, and for their own preservation will continue to resist until they overwhelmed or forced into our lines here. From news received this morning we know that the forces of Jesus Carranza and Obregon are making all possible haste to occupy the Capital, the advance troops of the former having already passed Queratero, and this while negotiations are supposed to be in progress between Carranza and the

delegates appointed by Carbajal. The Federals, who are now in considerable force in and about the Capital, may either attempt to fight a decisive battle to prevent the capture of the city, or they may retire in this direction, probably to Puebla, and either try to hold out there for a time or come straight on to Vera Cruz to be interned. I hope they do not conclude to do the latter, as I have troubles enough without attempting to feed and guard thirty or forty thousand men with their "soldaderas" and other camp followers. If Carranza's people should follow them and demand entry or that the interned troops be surrendered to them, the chances for an interesting event would be excellent. I suppose the Federals would sit down on their haunches and let us fight it out. I know that I would be afraid to entrust any part of the line to them. Against four or five times our number of such troops as the rebels have shown themselves to be we would have a red-hot time of it. All talk of our being assisted by the fire of the guns of the fleet is moonshine. Those people would have too much sense to operate against our flanks where they would be exposed to fire from the fleet, but would confine themselves to an attack on our center and on cutting off the water supply. The terrain is such that if our center were being attacked the fleet would not dare fire as there would be a confused struggle in the sand hills back of the port, where friend and foe could not be distinguished. Where the fleet would be of great help would be in the men and guns that it could land to assist us, and with this help I would have no fear as to the result. I have reason to believe that it is the intention of the Federal troops if an amnesty is not arranged to retire on Vera Cruz, as the only place in the Republic where they can seek shelter. Of course, we are bound by international law to receive them.

I hope that in some way the rebels can be induced to forego their desire for more blood-letting, for in that case the Federal army, if proper guarantees were given, would probably surrender. If the attitude of those who are here in Vera Cruz is any criterion, however, that is scarcely to be hoped for, as they are absolutely uncompromising in insisting on having their revenge. It has been quite interesting here for the past two weeks, with so many prominent rebels in town at the same

time with a lot of the most prominent supporters of Huerta. All they dared do was glower at each other. At one time we had three ex-cabinet ministers, five general officers, thirty or forty other officers and the families of nearly all of them. Even two sons of Huerta did not disdain to land here when they were brought up with a lot of others from Puerto Mexico by the British cruiser Bristol.

As to the remarks made by the War College apropos of my plan for saving some of the Interoceanic Railway in case of war, to which remarks you refer in one of your letters; I feel sure that in its criticism the War College overlooked several facts which were well known to us here but to which I probably did not call sufficient attention in my letter. The principal one of these was not only that we were fifty percent stronger than the Mexican force facing us on that road, but that the force referred to had very little fighting quality. After we had once got them on the run our difficulty would have been to follow them fast enough to get in another blow on them. Another thing which I think was overlooked is the fact that the rebels of the north were exerting such pressure that it would have been impracticable to reinforce the troops along the Interoceanic. For the six days before other troops from the United States could reach Vera Cruz and follow us up it would not have been necessary to patrol that part of the road that we had captured. All that was required was to get them on the run once and keep them going. Their only line of retreat was along the railroad itself or the nearby Camino Real. As soon as we stopped they would begun the systematic destruction of the track as distinguished from isolated damage here and there.

Conditions have so changed now that I acknowledge that my plan is no longer of much use, as the elimination of Huerta and the conciliatory attitude of his successor make a war with the Federals quite unlikely. If we get in a mix-up at all I feel that it will be with the present rebels, and probably under some such conditions as I have referred to earlier in this letter, in which case this little force will be thrown quickly on the defensive owing to the great numbers and the morale of the rebels. In the face of several thousands of the men who have been winning the recent

victories in the north and center of Mexico it would behoove us to be pretty careful about getting too far from Vera Cruz with the troops that we have.

I do wish we could have some recruits, especially for the 4th and 28th regiments of Infantry, as those organizations are rapidly becoming mere skeletons. The health of the troops remains good, and so far, with seven thousand men on shore, we have lost but three from disease in three months - one in the Army and two, including an officer, in the Marine Corps. Of course, the vitality of the men has been considerably reduced by the hot, moist climate, and a good many of them would fall out on a hard march. Really, I do not believe it is any hotter, however, than it is in most parts of the United States at this time of year. But the trouble is that but little relief will come to us in the Fall of the year. I can tell you one thing, and that is that when on clear days we gaze on the snow-covered peak of Orizaba, eighty miles to the westward, it almost makes us wish something would break.

Well, this has been a rather long and rambling letter, and I think I had better bring it to a close. I am going to take advantage of your suggestion, and from time to time write you personally about things here.

Very sincerely,

FREDERICK FUNSTON