

Washington Aug 21 1862

My Dear Sir

The military authorities are inflexible in reference to the order excluding correspondents from the lines of the army. They admit that the Herald, with all its extraordinary facilities for obtaining news, has been prudent in publishing and that if other newspapers had pursued a similar course there would be no need for the exclusion of their correspondents, but they say that the minutest details of the most important movements are invariably exposed to the great benefit of the enemy and detriment to the federal government. The exposition of the recent movement of the Army of the Potomac when that movement had only begun is cited as particularly damaging in warning the enemy to mass his forces on the Rappahannock before our army could be placed in position there. I have asked that all requisite restrictions shall be improved or that those who have kept faith shall not be included in the penalty incurred by reckless presses. But at present no modifications can be procured. General Halleck is determined to carry out the same order he promulgated at Corinth, and neither he nor the Secretary of War are willing to make any distinction between different journals. Under the circumstances, if it is desirable to evade the order, steps must be taken at once to provide for it, by allowing such of the correspondents as are willing to do so, enter or remain within the lines in the capacity of paymasters or sutlers clerks, or military secretaries to general officers. Please let me know if any and which ones are to be retained in service so that I may notify the others to settle their accounts.

In reference to obtaining permission for a correspondent to go out in the Ironsides or with Porters flotilla, the Secretary of the Navy will not only not give his consent but if consulted by any officer upon the subject will refuse permission. He explained his reasons at length. They are good ones, and have reference to the imposition of a correspondent upon any officers mess. Fox says however that if any commander is willing to take a correspondent along as Slack was taken in the Potomac flotilla, without consulting the Department, he has nothing to do with it.

It is evident that the military authorities believe that a crisis in our affairs is at hand. The President expresses himself "reasonably hopeful" that Pope will be able to repulse the attack of the rebel army and that our forces old and new can be concentrated so as sweep over the whole South. Some of the authorities have apprehensions that Jackson may be able to break through Popes lines and get into Maryland and place us on the defensive. The impression prevails that an aggressive movement on the part of the federal forces at all points is essential to success, and this policy is to be pursued as rapidly as possible. McClellan's army is just now much scattered. Fitz John Porters and McCall's corps. are at Acquia Creek, and Heintzlemans is to night reported to have arrived at Alexandria. The rest are at Fortress Monroe, Newport News and afloat. Whether or where it is to be concentrated only General Halleck and General McClellan know. Many of the new regiments recently arrived here have been ordered forward and so far from there being any indication of a retreat from the Rappahannock, everything is moving hence in that direction except the garrisons of the forts.

I have been suffering physically for some weeks to such an extent as to be compelled to forego all labor except what was actually necessary to keep up the "correspondence," and for this reason have omitted to write you as often as I desired and to make up my accounts for adjustment. This omission will now be supplied. I hoped during this month to avail myself of your permission to find some rest, but

shall remain at my post until affairs are more clearly defined and there is assurance that I can leave without danger of being away when needed. At all events I shall leave the business in charge of someone upon whom I can depend whenever I shall leave.

Messrs Bullitt, Cottman and Roselius will perhaps have posted you in reference to New Orleans affairs. The charge that the report of the appointment of Johnson and Dix was dinner table talk, I have reason to believe emanated from Mr. Seward. At least the item to that effect published by the Associated Press came from the State Department, where Associated Press dispatches are frequently made up. Mr. Bullitt will recognize the connection of this fact with another in his possession.

Respectfully,

L.A. Whiteley

Jas Gordon Bennett, Esq