

## Document 2

### **Henry Clay, Letter to editors of the *National Intelligencer*, April 17, 1844**

I know there are those who regard such a war with indifference and as a trifling affair, on account of the weakness of Mexico, and her inability in inflict serious injury upon this country. But I do not look upon it thus lightly. I regard all wars as great calamities, to be avoided, if possible, and honorable peace as the wisest and truest policy of this country . . . I do not think that Texas ought to be received into the Union . . . in decided opposition to the wishes of a considerable and respectable portion of [the United States]. I think it far more wise and important to compose and harmonize the present union, as it now exists, than to introduce a new element of discord and distraction into it . . . I conceive that no motive for the acquisition of foreign territory would be more unfortunate than that of obtaining it for the purpose of strengthening one part against another part of the common confederacy. Such a principle, put into practical operation, would . . . certainly sow the seeds of a dissolution of the Union . . .

## Document 3

### **José Joaquin de Herrera, acting President of the Republic of Mexico. A Proclamation Denouncing America's Intention to Annex Texas, June 4, 1845.**

[T]he congress of the United States of the North has . . . resolved to incorporate the territory of Texas with the American union . . . [T]his manner of appropriating to itself territories upon which other nations have rights, introduces a monstrous novelty, endangering the peace of the world, and violating the sovereignty of nations . . . [T]his usurpation, now consummated to the prejudice of Mexico . . . tramples on the conservative principles of society, attacks all the rights that Mexico has to that territory, is an insult to her dignity as a sovereign nation, and threatens her independence and political existence . . .

**Document 6**  
**Editorial, New York Evening Post, 1848**

Now we ask, whether any man can coolly contemplate the idea of recalling our troops from the [Mexican] territory we at present occupy . . . and . . . resign this beautiful country to the custody of the ignorant cowards and profligate ruffians who have ruled it for the last twenty-five years? Why humanity cries out against it. Civilization and Christianity protest against this reflux of the tide of barbarism and anarchy.

**Document 7**  
**Editorial, Milwaukee Sentinel (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), Jan. 20, 1848**

There are many reasons why the war with Mexico is to be deplored, beside the loss of valuable lives which it has occasioned, and the immense amount of money expended in its prosecution. One result of this stupendous offspring of folly and wickedness [is that] . . . political movements, schemes of conquest and annexation, which but a few years ago would have alarmed every man of common sense in the nation, are discussed and advocated with as much earnestness and zeal, as though the subjugation of the world were the true and only mission confided to “the Model Republic.” And what is to be the end of this? . . . One thing is certain, that hereafter officers of the army, and their relations, friends and flatterers, will wield a most important influence in the direction of national affairs, and it is not less certain that such influence will always be exerted in opposition to the policy . . . that seeks to cultivate peace with all nations, and is satisfied with our present territorial limits. Let this Mexican war be continued and the evil alluded to will increase, it is to be feared, beyond all remedy, and we shall begin to discover that “our manifest destiny” is to tread the same path trodden by the kingdoms and republics that have gone before us—the downward road to national decay, ruin and death.

**Document 8**

**Creator unknown. 'We'll Conquer All Before Us'  
in 'General Taylor's Old Rough and Ready Songster' .  
New York: Turner and Fisher, 1848.**

We'll Conquer All Before Us.

The Mexicans are on our soil,  
In war they wish us to embroil,  
They've tried their best and worst to vex us,  
By murdering our brave men in Texas

Chorus -- We're on our way to Rio Grande,  
On our way to Rio Grande,  
On our way to Rio Grande,  
And with arms they'll find us handy.

We are the boys who fear no noise,  
We'll leave behind us all our joys,  
To punish those half savage scamps,  
Who've slain our brethern in their camps.  
The God of War, the mighty Mars,  
Has smiled up our stripes and stars;  
And spite of any ugly rumours  
We'll vanquish all the Montezumas!

We're on our way to Matamoras;  
On our way to Matamoras,  
On our way to Matamoras,  
And we'll conquer all before us!

### **Document 9**

**James K. Polk, State of the Union Address, December 5, 1848**

One of the most important results of the war into which we were recently forced with a neighboring nation is the demonstration it has afforded of the military strength of our country. Before the late war with Mexico European and other foreign powers entertained imperfect and erroneous views of our physical strength as a nation and of our ability to prosecute war, and especially a war waged out of our own country . . . The war with Mexico . . . which we have just closed by an honorable peace evinces beyond all doubt that a popular representative government is equal to any emergency which is likely to arise in the affairs of a nation. The great results which have been developed and brought to light by this war will be of immeasurable importance in the future progress of our country. They will tend powerfully to preserve us from foreign collisions, and to enable us to pursue uninterruptedly our cherished policy of "peace with all nations, entangling alliances with none." Occupying, as we do, a more commanding position among nations than at any former period, our duties and our responsibilities to ourselves and to posterity are correspondingly increased. This will be the more obvious when we consider the vast additions which have been recently made to our territorial possessions and their great importance and value.

### **Document 10**

**Editor Horace Greeley, New York Herald Tribune, 1851**

Opposed to the instinct of boundless acquisition stands that of Internal Improvement. A nation cannot simultaneously devote its energies to the absorption of others' territories and the improvement of its own. In a state of war, not law only is silent, but the pioneer's axe, the canal digger's mattock, and the house builder's trowel also.

### **Document 11**

**General Ulysses S. Grant, Memoirs, c. 1870**

. . . to this day I regard the war [with Mexico] . . . as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory . . . The occupation, separation and annexation [of Texas] were, from the inception of the movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states might be formed for the American Union . . . The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times.