

Copy.

Order of the President as Commander in chief of the Army and Navy to Major General Banks assigning him to the command of the Department of the Gulf.

Headquarters of the Army.

Washington D.C. Nov. 9, 1862.

Major General N. P. Banks,

Commanding.

General;

The President of the United States, having assigned you to the ^{Command} of the Department of the Gulf you will immediately proceed with the troops, assembling in transports at Fort Monroe, to New Orleans, and relieve General Butter. An additional force of some ten thousand men will be sent to you from Boston and New York as soon as possible.

The first military operation which will engage your attention on your arrival at New Orleans will be the opening of the Mississippi and the reduction of Fort Morgan and Mobile City in order to control that bay and Harbor."

In these expeditions you will have the cooperation of the Rear Admiral commanding the naval forces in the Gulf and the Mississippi river.

A military and naval expedition is

organizing at Memphis and Cairo to move down the Mississippi and co-operate with you against Vicksburg and any other point the enemy may occupy on that River." As the ranking General in the Southwest, you are authorized to assume control of any military forces from the upper Mississippi that may come within your command. The line of division between your department and that of Maj. Gen. Grant, is therefore left undecided for the present and you will receive superior authority as far north as you may ascend the river.

The President regards the opening of the Mississippi as the first and most important of all our military and naval operations, and it is hoped that you will not lose a moment in accomplishing it." This river being opened, the question arises how the troops and the naval forces there can be employed to the best advantage. Two objects are suggested as worthy of your attention. First: On the capture of Vicksburg, to send a military force directly east to destroy the railroad at Jackson and Marion, and thus cut off all connection by rail, between Northern Mississippi

and Mobile and Atlanta. The latter place is now the chief military depot of the rebel armies in the West.

Second: "To ascend with a ^{force} military force the Red River, as far as it is navigable, and thus open an outlet for the sugar and cotton of Northern Louisiana. Possibly both of these objects may be accomplished if the circumstances should be favorable."

It is also suggested, that having Red River in our possession, it would form the best base for our operations in Texas. It is believed that the operations of General Rosecrans in East Tennessee, of Gen. Grant in Northern Mississippi, and of General Steele in Arkansas, will give full employment to the enemy's troops in the West, and thus prevent them from concentrating in force against you; should they do so, you will be reinforced by detachments from one or more of these commands. These instructions are not intended to tie your hands or to hamper your operations in the slightest degree. So far away from Headquarters you must necessarily exercise your own judgment and discretion in regard

to your movements against the enemy,
keeping in view that the opening of the
"Mississippi river is now the great and
primary object of your expedition"; and
I need not assure you, General, ~~that~~ the
Government has unlimited confidence
not only in your judgment and discretion,
but also in your energy and military
promptness.

Very respectfully, your obedient
servant.

(signed) H. W. Halleck,
General in chief -

Official copy.

(signed) J. C. Kelton
Assistant Adj. General

Headquarters of the Army -

January 20, 1865.