

## **CQ: Should the United States, in 1846, go to war with Mexico?**

**Perspective: Anson Jones, President Republic of Texas, February 1846 says yes**

Texas President Jones gave this address to a joint session of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate in February of 1846 after the United States government agreed to annex the independent country of Texas into the Union as a state. The speech has been excerpted for instructional use. He is relinquishing his role as President and gives his reasons for annexation. Use these arguments to help build a case he might make in Congress to support going to war with Mexico.

Gentlemen of the Senate and the House of Representatives:

The great measure of annexation, so earnestly desired by the people of Texas is happily consummated... A government is changed both in its officers and in its organic law – not by violence and disorder, but by the deliberate and free consent of its citizens and amid the most perfect and universal peace and tranquility, the sovereignty of the nation is surrendered, and incorporated with that of another.

There is no precedent for this and henceforward “Annexation” is a word of new import in the political vocabulary of America... Nations have generally extended their dominions by conquest; their march to power involving bloodshed and ruin, and their attainment of it often followed by suffering and calamity to a despairing and subjugated people. It was left for the Anglo-American inhabitants of the Western Continent, to furnish a new mode of enlarging the bounds of empire, by the more natural tendency and operation of the principles of their free government...

In accordance with the provisions of the new constitution adopted in the Convention, called by me on the fourth of July last, a State government is now perfectly and fully organized and I, as President of the Republic, with my officers, am now present to surrender into the hands of those whom the people have chosen, the power and the authority which we have some time held. This surrender is made with the most perfect cheerfulness, and in respectful submission to the public will... I have considered annexation on favorable terms as the most secure and advantageous measure for Texas... I have obtained from Mexico a formal acknowledgment of our National independence, thereby removing the principle objection to the measure on the part of the United States...

I am happy to congratulate you, gentlemen upon the universally prosperous condition of our country at the present time. Our foreign relations have all been closed in a manner satisfactory, I believe, to all the governments with which we have had intercourse. The frontier is quiet and secure, and the [farmer] sows and reaps his fields in peace. Industry and enterprise have received new guaranties and a new impulse – a market is found at home for nearly everything our citizens have to dispose of, and a large and very desirable immigration to the country is now taking place.

The Lone Star of Texas, which the years since arose amid clouds, over fields of carnage, and obscurely shone for a while, has culminated and following an inscrutable destiny, has passed on and become fixed forever in that glorious constellation, which all freemen and lovers of freedom in the world must reverence and adore – The American Union... The final act in this great drama is now performed: the Republic of Texas is no more.

Anson Jones Valedictory Speech, February 19, 1846. Texas State Library and Archives Commission.  
<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/earlystate/nomore-1.html>

Discussion Questions:

1. What reasons does President Jones give for 'Texas' desire to become part of the United States?
2. What legal reason does he give that the Republic is free of its obligations to Mexico?
3. What democratic values does he give as reason for why Texas should be allowed to become part of the United States?
4. What examples does he give that Texas will have a bright future?
5. How does he see Texas being an example for other territories?