John Tyler, a Virginia states' rightist who had broken politically with Andrew Jackson, was nominated as a no-principle candidate by the Whig party for the vice presidency in 1840 to strengthen that party's appeal in the South. When Tyler succeeded to the presidency in 1841 upon the death of William Henry Harrison, it became evident that Tyler was a Whig in name only, for he soon began to veto the Whig measures of a Whig Congress. By 1843 he was a man without a party but still politically ambitious. To sustain his political life he required an issue of great potential popularity; he discovered it in the Texas question. Tyler, although a Southerner and under direct Southern influence, cast his appeal in national terms. In his message to Congress on April 22, 1844, transmitting the annexation treaty which his Secretary of State, John C. Calhoun, had negotiated with the Texas Republic, the President made it clear that Texas, as a part of the American Union, would serve all sections of the nation.

... The country thus proposed to be annexed has been settled principally by persons from the United States, who emigrated on the invitation of both Spain and Mexico, and who carried with them into the wilderness which they have partially reclaimed the laws, customs, and political and domestic institutions of their native land. They are deeply indoctrinated in all the principles of civil liberty, and will bring along with them in the act of reassociation devotion to our Union and a firm and inflexible resolution to assist in maintaining the public liberty unimpaired—a consideration which, as it appears to me, is to be regarded as of no small moment. The country itself thus obtained is of inexhaustible fertility it unites a genial and healthy climate, and is destined at a day not distant to make large contributions to the commerce of the world. ... A new and powerful impulse will thus be given to the navigating interest of the country, which will be chiefly engrossed by our fellow-citizens of the Eastern and Middle States, who have already attained a remarkable degree of prosperity by the partial monopoly they have enjoyed of the carrying trade of the Union, particularly the coastwise trade, which this new acquisition is destined in time, and that not distant, to swell to a magnitude which can not easily be computed, while the addition made to the boundaries of the home market thus secured to their mining, manufacturing and mechanical skill and industry will be of a character the most commanding and important. Such are some of the many advantages which will accrue to the Eastern and Middle States by the ratification of the treaty—advantages the extent of which it is impossible to estimate with accuracy or properly to appreciate. Texas, being adapted to the culture of cotton, sugar, and rice, and devoting most of her energies to the raising of these productions, will open an extensive market to the Western States in the important articles of beef, pork, horses, mules, etc., as well as in breadstuffs. At the same time, the Southern and Southeastern States will find in the fact of annexation protection and security to their peace and tranquility, as well against all domestic as foreign efforts to disturb them, thus consecrating anew the union of the States and holding out the promise of its perpetual duration. Thus, at the same time that the tide of public prosperity is greatly swollen, an appeal of what appears to the Executive to be of an imposing, if not of a resistless, character is made to the interests of every portion of the country. Agriculture, which would have a new and extensive market opened for its produce; commerce, whose ships would be freighted with the rich productions of an extensive and fertile region; and the mechanical arts, in all their various ramifications, would seem to unite in one universal demand for the ratification of the treaty. But important as these considerations may appear, they are to be regarded as but secondary to others. Texas, for reasons deemed sufficient by herself, threw off her dependence on Mexico as far back as 1836, and consummated her independence by the battle of San Jacinto in the same year, since which period Mexico has attempted no serious invasion of her territory, but the contest has assumed features of a mere border war, characterized by acts revolted to humanity. In the year 1836 Texas adopted her constitution, under which she has existed as a sovereign power ever since, having been recognized as such by many of the principal powers of the world; and contemporaneously with its adoption, by a solemn vote of her people, embracing all her population but ninety-three persons, declared her anxious desire to be admitted into association with the United States as a portion of their territory. This vote, thus solemnly taken, has never been reversed, and now by the action of her constituted authorities, sustained as it is by popular sentiment, she reaffirms her desire for annexation. This course has been adopted by her without the employment of any sinister measures on the part of this Government. No intrigue has been set on foot to accomplish it. Texas herself wills it, and the Executive of the United States, concurring with her, has seen no sufficient reason to avoid the consummation of an act esteemed to be so desirable by both. ... The documents now transmitted along with the treaty lead to the conclusion, as inevitable, that if the boon now tendered be rejected Texas will seek for the friendship of others. In contemplating such a contingency it can not be overlooked that the United States are already almost surrounded by the possessions of European powers. The Canadas, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, the islands in the American seas, with Texas trammeled by treaties of alliance or of a commercial character differing in policy from that of the United States, would complete the circle. Texas voluntarily steps forth, upon terms of perfect honor and good faith to all nations, to ask to be annexed to the Union. As an independent sovereignty her right to do this is unquestionable. In doing so she gives no cause of umbrage to any other power; her people desire it, and there is no slavish transfer of her sovereignty and independence. She has for eight years maintained her independence against all efforts to sub-
due her. She has been recognized as independent by many of the most prominent of the family of nations, and that recognition, so far as they are concerned, places her in a position, without giving any just cause of umbrage to them, to surrender her sovereignty at her own will and pleasure. The United States, actuated evermore by a spirit of justice, has desired by the stipulations of the treaty to render justice to all. They have made provision for the payment of the public debt of Texas. We look to her ample and fertile domain as the certain means of accomplishing this; but this is a matter between the United States and Texas, and with which other Governments have nothing to do. Our right to receive the rich grant tendered by Texas is perfect, and this Government should not, having due respect either to its own honor or its own interests, permit its course of policy to be interrupted by the interference of other powers, even if such interference were threatened. The question is one purely American. In the acquisition, while we abstain most carefully from all that could interrupt the public peace, we claim the right to exercise a due regard to our own. This Government can not consistently with its honor permit any such interference. With equal, if not greater, propriety might the United States demand of other governments to surrender their numerous and valuable acquisitions made in past time at numberless places on the surface of the globe, whereby they have added to their power and enlarged their resources.

To Mexico the Executive is disposed to pursue a course conciliatory in its character and at the same time to render her the most ample justice by conventions and stipulations not inconsistent with the rights and dignity of the Government. It is actuated by no spirit of unjust aggression, but looks only to its own security. It has made known to Mexico at several periods its extreme anxiety to witness the termination of hostilities between that country and Texas. Its wishes, however, have been entirely disregarded. It has ever been ready to urge an adjustment of the dispute upon terms mutually advantageous to both. It will be ready at all times to hear and discuss any claims Mexico may think she has on the justice of the United States and to adjust any that may be deemed to be so on the most liberal terms. There is no desire on the part of the Executive to wound her pride or affect injuriously her interest, but at the same time it can not compromit by any delay in its action the essential interest of the United States. Mexico has no right to ask or expect this of us; we deal rightfully with Texas as an independent power. The war which has been waged for eight years has resulted only in the conviction with all others than herself that Texas can not be reconquered. . .

In full view, then, of the highest public duty, and as a measure of security against evils incalculably great, the Executive has entered into the negotiation, the fruits of which are now submitted to the Senate. Independent of the urgent reasons which existed for the step it has taken, it might safely invoke the fact (which it confidently believes) that there exists no civilized government on earth having a voluntary tender made it of a domain so rich and fertile, so replete with all that can add to national greatness and wealth, and so necessary to its peace and safety that would reject the offer. Nor are other powers, Mexico inclusive, likely in any degree to be injuriously affected by the ratification of the treaty.

The prosperity of Texas will be equally interesting to all; in the increase of the general commerce of the world that prosperity will be secured by annexation.

But one view of the subject remains to be presented. It grows out of the proposed enlargement of our territory. From this, I am free to confess, I see no danger. The federative system is susceptible of the greatest extension compatible with the ability of the representation of the most distant State or Territory to reach the seat of Government in time to participate in the functions of legislation and to make known the wants of the constituent body. Our confederated Republic consisted originally of thirteen members. It now consists of twice that number, while applications are before Congress to permit other additions. This addition of new States has served to strengthen rather than to weaken the Union. New interests have sprung up, which require the united power of all, through the action of the common Government, to protect and defend upon the high seas and in foreign parts. Each State commits with perfect security to that common Government those great interests growing out of our relations with other nations of the world, and which equally involve the good of all the States. Its domestic concerns are left to its own exclusive management. But if there were any force in the objection it would seem to require an immediate abandonment of territorial possessions which lie in the distance and stretch to a far-off sea, and yet no one would be found, it is believed, ready to recommend such an abandonment. Texas lies at our very doors and in our immediate vicinity.

2 | John C. Calhoun's Southern View of Texan Annexation, April 1844 *

For Southern sectionalists, led by John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, Texas annexation was never more than a Southern issue—a program to expand the plantation system and slave labor into the Southwest. Only with the addition of Texas as slave territory could the South maintain some balance between free and slave states. "I only ask the south to stand by me," Calhoun wrote while negotiating the Texas treaty. "Now is the time to vindicate and save our institutions." Calhoun's letter to Richard Pakenham of April 1844 was more than a defense of United States annexationist diplomacy; it was a moral and constitutional defense of slavery against the assaults of British abolitionism. Calhoun made it clear that the domestic institutions of the United States were not the proper concern of British diplomacy.

The Undersigned Secretary of State of the United States, has laid before the President the note of the Right Honorable Mr. Pakenham, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty. . . .

In reply, the Undersigned is directed by the President to inform the Right Honorable Mr. Pakenham that, while he regards with pleasure the disavowal of Lord Aberdeen of any intention on the part of Her Majesty’s Government “to resort to any measures, either openly or secretly, which can tend to disturb the internal tranquility of the slave-holding States, and thereby affect the tranquility of this Union,” he, at the same time, regards with deep concern, the avowal, for the first time made to this Government, “that Great Britain desires, and is constantly exerting herself to procure the general abolition of slavery throughout the world.”

So long as Great Britain confined her policy to the abolition of slavery in her own possessions and colonies, no other country had a right to complain. It belonged to her, exclusively, to determine according to her own views of policy whether it should be done or not. But when she goes beyond, and avows it as her settled policy, and the object of her constant exertions, to abolish it throughout the world, she makes it the duty of all other countries, whose safety or prosperity may be endangered by her policy, to adopt such measures as they may deem necessary for their protection.

It is with still deeper concern the President regards the avowal of Lord Aberdeen of the desire of Great Britain to see slavery abolished in Texas; and, as he infers, is endeavoring, through her diplomacy, to accomplish it, by making the abolition of slavery one of the conditions on which Mexico should acknowledge her independence. It has confirmed his previous impressions as to the policy of Great Britain in reference to Texas, and made it his duty to examine with much care and solicitude, what would be its effects on the prosperity and safety of the United States should she succeed in her endeavors. The investigation has resulted in the settled conviction that it would be difficult for Texas, in her actual condition, to resist what she desires, without supposing the influence and exertions of Great Britain would be extended beyond the limits assigned by Lord Aberdeen; and that, if Texas could not resist, the consummation of the object of her desire would endanger both the safety and prosperity of the Union. Under this conviction, it is felt to be the imperative duty of the Federal Government, the common representative and protector of the States of this Union, to adopt, in self-defence, the most effectual measures to defeat it.

This is not the proper occasion to state at large the grounds of this conviction. It is sufficient to say, that the consummation of the avowed object of her wishes in reference to Texas, would be followed by hostile feelings and relations between that country and the United States, which could not fail to place her under the influence and control of Great Britain. That, from the geographical position of Texas, would expose the weakest and most vulnerable portion of our frontier to inroads, and place, in the power of Great Britain, the most efficient means of effecting in the neighboring States of this Union, what she avows it to be her desire to do in all countries, where slavery exists. To hazard consequences which would be so dangerous to the prosperity and safety of this Union, without re-
duties are limited to protecting, under the guaranties of the constitution, each member of this Union, in whatever policy it may adopt, in reference to the portion within its respective limits. A large number of the States has decided, that it is neither wise nor humane to change the relation, which has existed from their first settlement, between the two races; while others, where the African is less numerous, have adopted the opposite policy.

It belongs not to this Government to question whether the former have decided wisely or not; and if it did, the Undersigned would not regard this as the proper occasion to discuss the subject. He does not, however, deem it irrelevant to state, that, if the experience of more than half a century is to decide, it would be neither humane nor wise in them to change their policy. The census and other authentic documents show that, in all instances in which the States have changed the former relation between the two races, the condition of the African, instead of being improved, has become worse. . . .

Taking the two extremes of North and South, in the State of Maine the number of negroes returned as deaf and dumb, blind, insane and idiots, by the census of 1840, is one out of every twelve; and in Florida, by the same returns, it is one out of every eleven hundred and five; or ninety-two to one in favor of the slaves of Florida, as compared with the free blacks of Maine.

In addition, it deserves to be remarked, that, in Massachusetts, where the change in the ancient relation of the two races was first made, (now more than sixty years since), where the greatest zeal has been exhibited in their behalf, and where their number is comparatively few, (but little more than eight thousand in a population of upwards of seven hundred and thirty thousand,) the condition of the African is amongst the most wretched. By the latest authentic accounts, there was one out of every twenty-one of the black population in jails or houses of correction; and one out of every thirteen was either deaf and dumb, blind, idiot, insane, or in prison. On the other hand, the census and other authentic sources of information establish the fact, that the condition of the African race throughout all the States, where the ancient relation between the two has been retained, enjoys a degree of health and comfort which may well compare with that of the laboring population of any country in christendom; and it may be added, that in no other condition, or in any other age or country, has the negro race ever attained so high an elevation in morals, intelligence, or civilization.

If such be the wretched condition of the race in their changed relation, where their number is comparatively few, and where so much interest is manifested for their improvement, what would it be in those States where the two races are nearly equal in numbers, and where, in consequence, would necessarily spring up mutual fear, jealousy, and hatred, between them? It may, in truth, be assumed as a maxim, that two races differing so greatly, and in so many respects, cannot possibly exist together in the same country, where their numbers are nearly equal, without the one being subjected to the other. Experience has proved, that the existing relation in which the one is subjected to the other in the slaveholding States, is consistent with the peace and safety of both, with great improvement to the inferior; while the same experience proves, that the relation which it is the desire and object of Great Britain to substitute in its stead, in this and all other countries, under the plausible name of the abolition of slavery, would, (if it did not destroy the inferior by conflicts to which it would lead,) reduce it to the extremes of vice and wretchedness. In this view of the subject, it may be asserted that what is called slavery, is, in reality, a political institution, essential to the peace, safety, and prosperity of those States of the Union in which it exists. Without, then, controverting the wisdom and humanity of the policy of Great Britain, so far as her own possessions are concerned, it may be safely affirmed, without reference to the means by which it would be effected, that, could she succeed in accomplishing in the United States, what she avows it to be her desire, and the object of her constant exertions to effect throughout the world, so far from being wise or humane, she would involve in the greatest calamity the whole country, and especially the race which it is the avowed object of her exertions to benefit.

3 | The Nationalistic Defense of Texas Annexation, April 1844 *

Texas fused within the Democratic party two powerful streams of agrarian expansionism, one Southern and sectional in outlook, the other Western and national in sentiment. The latter faction, led by such men as Lewis Cass of Michigan and Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, eventually captured control of the issue and rode it into power. For them the burden of argument lay in convincing the nation that Texas annexation would serve the entire nation, not merely the South, and that expansion would strengthen rather than undermine the American constitutional system. Perhaps no single document illustrated better the nationalist appeal for Texas annexation than did the following article, which appeared in the Democratic Review of April 1844.

. . . That Texas is to be, sooner or later, included in the Union, we have long—nay, ever since the battle of San Jacinto—regarded as an event already indelibly inscribed in the book of future, fate and necessity. The questions of time and mode we have looked upon as comparatively of minor moment. As for the latter, the question of mode—even if the case had presented any serious obstacle of political formality, he has read all history in vain who may yet imagine that in the larger transactions of nations there is ever much difficulty about a way when there is any very earnest will to find one. And as for the former question,

that of time, it has all along been manifest that the time would be on the day when the South should arouse itself to a combined and determined demand for the reception of Texas into the Confederation; and when that just jealousy of English power and English ambition on our Continent, which is a strong pervading sentiment throughout all the sections of the Union, should become sufficiently alarmed, to counter-balance the repugnance with which the first suggestion of the proposition would be received by the North. These two conditions would probably be pretty nearly coincident, mutually connected as they indeed are with each other. Their conjunction must fix the date of the inevitable future annexation;--that the conjunction is now close at hand, if not already arrived, the signs are neither few nor equivocal.

It is very certain that the reasons which caused the settled opposition of Jefferson and Madison to any relinquishment of Texas, and which, after that unlucky mistake, caused the earnest desire of all the succeeding administrations to retrace and retrieve it, by getting back the lost territory by treaty with Mexico, even though it should be at the expense of a liberal price, have not ceased to exist. This is no new thing. It is no sudden experiment of the South, as it is alleged, to recruit a political strength felt to be failing before the rapid growth and extension of the free States. It is simply the revival of an old question, established by the emphatic authority of many of the elder and the most eminent sages of the Republic, as one of high national importance, and which has for a few past years been kept in abeyance or temporary suspension only by a peculiar state of circumstances. Whether the proper period for its revival has arrived, may perhaps be a subject of difference of opinion. Those who regard the length of time for which Texas has maintained her independence, together with the manifest and utter hopelessness of any possible reconquest by Mexico, as now sufficient to justify disregard of the nominal rights still absurdly pretended by the latter, may certainly claim that the proper period is fully mature. And when to those considerations is added that of the danger of England's acquiring the possession of, or a dominant control over, the young State, we can feel no surprise at the earnestness of their interest in the prompt settlement of the question. Mr. Tyler has seen fit to precipitate it, in a manner much more eager than dignified, to a point which now compels an early and decisive action upon it. What may have been his personal motives in thus arguing it, we little care to inquire. Perhaps they were entirely disinterested and upright,—perhaps, in the former position to which his administration had sunk, he was prompted by a desire, according to the common phrase, to make "political capital" for himself,—perhaps, as in the greater proportion of men's actions, his motives were a tangled web of the good and the evil. At any rate the thing is done; the question is forced upon us; it must be fully met, and it may as well be settled promptly and quietly, on the basis to which it is perfectly palpable that it must come at last.

The two common objections against the Annexation have but little real weight,—namely, that of unwieldy and dangerous extension of territory, and that of its alleged bearing upon the institution of Slavery. To the first a sufficient answer might be found in the peculiar reasons... of geographical and political fitness, if not necessity. But independently of these—indeed, independently,
sultation with the Representatives of the People, and before time or opportunity for any popular discussion of the question and the formation of any distinct public opinion on the subject. That such process of discussion would result in general acquiescence, we have little doubt, but the precedent would be altogether too dangerous to dispense with the former in a confident reliance upon the latter.

Nor ought the Annexation to be made without the consent of Mexico, or her recognition of the independence of her successfully revolted province. We must avoid even the appearance of evil. It is not enough that we may be abundantly certain that Mexico can never again even hope to shake the established independence of Texas. The nominal, theoretical right is still asserted, which we cannot disregard without incurring a just liability to declaration of war by Mexico. . . .

Joshua Giddings’s Dual Argument Against the Annexation of Texas, May 1844*

Texas annexation posed a special threat to both the conservative and abolitionist elements within the Whig party. For twenty years the most ardent opposition to the Whig doctrines of high tariffs and internal improvements had come from Southern Democratic leadership. The Whig and abolitionist forces of the North thus combined to oppose annexation on two counts: the expansion of slavery and the extension of Democratic power. Philip Hone, the New York merchant, detected clearly why the Texas issue was rocking the Republic to its foundations. Southern demagogues, he recorded in his diary, were promoting their personal objectives and those of the South by solidifying their power through the addition of four or five slave states (to be carved out of Texas.) It was left for Joshua Giddings, Ohio abolitionist and Whig, to demonstrate the dual nature of the expansionist conflict in American politics, and nowhere did he do so with more vehemence than in his speech before the House of Representatives on May 21, 1844.

. . . The President and his cabinet, and the southern democrats, aver that this nation shall take upon itself the support and perpetuation of slavery in Texas, and of the slave trade between our slave-breeding States and the people of that government. They urge that our army and navy shall be employed, and our national energies put forth; our character disgraced before the civilized world, in order to attain that object. They insist that we shall violate our treaty stipulations with Mexico; that we shall abandon our principles in favor of human liberty; acknowledge ourselves a nation of political hypocrites; bring dishonor upon the memory of our revolutionary patriots; turn traitors to the sacred cause of freedom; and wage an unceasing war upon humanity itself. These are the matters urged on one side, and objected to by the other. This is the issue to be determined by the people—by the electors of the North and of the South, of the East and of the West. On this issue the whigs, the democrats, and liberty men are to pass judgment.

It is true that the annexation of Texas to these United States is brought forward as the proposed means by which we may extend and perpetuate slavery, and continue the slave trade; but that object is merely collateral to the great and ulterior design of supporting slavery and the slave trade. The object and purpose for which it is now sought to annex Texas to the United States is clearly and unequivocally set forth in the official correspondence between the Secretary of State and Mr. Everett, our minister at the court of St. James; between said Secretary and our “charge de affaires” in Texas, and between him and the British minister resident in this city. In every letter of that correspondence the object is frankly avowed, without any apparent delicacy or attempt at concealment. The same object of maintaining the slave trade between the slave-breeding States of this Union and Texas, and the perpetuating slavery in Texas, is the avowed object of nearly every democratic paper south of Mason and Dixon’s line, by nearly every address upon that subject, and by the proceedings of nearly all the public meetings held in the States for the purpose of promoting the cause of annexation. . . .

And now what say our democrats of New England, and New York, and Ohio? I call upon them to come forth and show their colors; play the man, meet the issue, and let us have no dodging. We shall soon return to our constituents, and must meet this question before the people. Will the gentleman from Indiana then stand forth frankly and say to the democrats of his district “you must work hard, and live cheap, and be economical, for we have agreed to pay the debts of Texas, and every laboring man in the nation must contribute a portion of his earnings?” And then suppose the honest farmer, in the true Yankee fashion, should inquire for the benefits which this nation is to derive from the payment of this twenty millions of Texas debts; will that gentleman frankly and boldly declare to him, that, by paying that amount of money, we have established true democratic slavery in Texas, and have secured a first rate market for the democratic slave dealers of the South? . . .

It is well known, Mr. Chairman, that, since the formation of this confederacy, there has long been a supposed conflict between the interests of free labor and of slave labor, between the southern and northern States. I do not say that the conflict is real; I only say that in the minds of the people, both north and south, and in this hall, such conflict exists. This supposed conflict has given rise to difference of policy in our national councils. I refer to the tariff in particular, as being a favorite measure of the North, while free trade is advocated by the South. I refer also to our harbor improvements, and the improvement of our

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river navigation, as another measure in which the northwest and west have felt great interest and much anxiety, and to which the south have been constantly opposed. But so equally balanced has been the political power between these opposing interests, that for five years past our lake commerce has been entirely abandoned; and such were the deficits of the tariff, that for many years our revenues were unequal to the support of government. Time eventually gave the friends of northern interests power to amend the tariff, and, by the fixed order of nature's law, our population at the north has increased so much faster than it has in the slave States, that under the late census, the North and West now hold the balance of political power; and at the present session we have passed a bill for the protection of our lake and river commerce, which now awaits the action of the Senate, and will soon become a law. But let us admit Texas, and we shall place the balance of power in the hands of the Texians themselves. They, with the southern states, will then be held at the will of the Texian advocates of free trade. Are our friends of the north prepared to deliver over this great national policy to the people of Texas? Are the liberty-loving democrats of Pennsylvania ready to give up our tariff?—to strike off all protection from the articles of iron, and coal, and other productions of the State, in order to purchase a slave market for their neighbors, who, in the words of Thomas Jefferson Randolph, "breed men for the market like oxen for the shambles"? . . .

And I appeal to the whole population of the western States—of all classes and conditions, and political parties—to say whether they are willing to give up their harbor improvements, and the improvement of our river navigation, for the purpose of improving the southern slave trade, and of perpetuating slavery in Texas? What say my democratic colleagues on this point—will they go it? Will the democracy of Ohio march up to that point with firm and unflinching step? I think not. If they do, they had better settle their political affairs, and make their political bequests before election, or they will take their departure from the political world unprepared. . . .

Mr. Chairman, we at this moment appear before the civilized world in the disgraceful attitude of making war upon Mexico, an unoffending nation, in the obvious violation of our treaty stipulations and our national faith solemnly pledged, for the purpose of extending slavery and perpetuating the slave trade. And I am exceedingly desirous of knowing whether any political party, or any respectable portion of any political party, intend to support and maintain this policy? What say our democratic friends? Has the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. Owen] spoken the sentiments of his party? Are the democrats of our free States prepared to follow his lead? Will they enter the field with "democracy and slavery, Texas and the slave-trade," inscribed upon their banners? If so, I ask them to come forth boldly, unfurl your banners, not to the breeze, but to that whirlwind of indignation which shall scatter you to the four winds of heaven, and which will leave no other memorial of you than the disgraceful cause that shall have exterminated your party. But, sir, I have too much respect for gentlemen of that party in our free States to indulge apprehensions of this kind. I hope, on the contrary, to see them treating this odious, this reasonable proposition, with that scorn and contempt which it justly merits. . . .
every school boy must see, that to form a new union with any foreign power, would be, ipso facto, a dissolution of our present Union. Now, I would say to an imbecile President, and a demented cabinet, that they have not the power to form a union between our people of the free States and Texas. If such a union be ever formed, it will be the voluntary acts of the people of our States and those of Texas. The President and his cabinet may enter into as many treaties as they please, and make such stipulations as they please, and form such unions for themselves as they please—we shall adhere to our present Union. If they wish to leave this Union and go to Texas, I, for one, will bid them "God speed." And if any of our southern sister States are desirous of leaving our present Union to form a new compact with Texas, let them say so with generous frankness. But if northern States prefer adhering to our present Union, and refuse to follow them into such a new confederacy, do not let them attempt to charge us with dissolving the Union. I regret that any northern man should speak of dissolving the Union, if Texas be annexed. Such expressions are an abuse of language. The act of uniting with Texas would itself be the dissolution; and refusal to unite with that government would be to maintain the present Union.

5 | The Western Claim to the Oregon Question, March 1844 *

Throughout 1844, Congress was locked in a bitter struggle for control of Oregon policy. Congressmen from the Middle West, demanding no less than a settlement on the line of 50° 40', claimed Oregon as an issue of vital concern to the Western states. It was a question, declared John C. McClernand of Illinois, "of border safety, of territorial limits, and of relative political . . . influence, wealth, and power." Westerners in speech after speech declared that the West would experience no security until the British were removed from the Oregon country. Perhaps no Western representative stated the case for his region in more sectional terms than did Andrew Kennedy of Indiana in March 1844.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The inquiry has been made, What are the feelings of the western people on this subject? It is not my intention to detain the committee but a few moments; but, coming from that section, I feel bound to respond to this inquiry. Mr. Chairman, the western people believe that this Oregon country belongs to the United States; and so believing, they expect to occupy it. We were taught to believe that the territory in dispute between this Government and

* Congressional Globe, 28th Congress, 1st Sess., Appendix, 264-5.