

anyhow have been necessary sooner or later. To abandon this road now, under pressure, would ~~xxx~~ invite the whole Soo nation down to the main Platte road, and would, in my judgement, increase our troubles.

The destruction of Col Fetterman's party, that sallied from Ft Kearney in Dec last, was surely one result of the occupation of the road, as stated by the commissioner; but instead of taking with the Ind who did the deed, I would have preferred to have followed the savages to their own

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country, and to have avenged the massacre in such a way that it would not have invited a repetition; but Cong, in its wisdom, with a full knowledge of all the facts, and all its connecting circumstances, has preferred to send out civil peace commissioners to confer with the perpetrators, and during such conferences the military would not have been justified in adopting extreme measures. All that we have done or could do was to strengthen that line so as to form a base from which, in due season, we may avenge the death of Col Fetterman and his command when it becomes necessary; but the Soo have not confined their efforts to resist the opening of that single road. They have carried war down several hundred miles south, and have killed our people and stolen our horses at Brady's Island, at Ash Hollow, on Lodge Pole, and even to the south of the South Platte. Some of these same Soo are at this moment at open war in combination with the Cheyennes and Kiowas, as low down as the Smoky Hill and where I believe they never claimed a right to go. It is barely possible that the Soo nation now desires peace, but the acts of the warriors do not look like it, and we, the military and the people, generally are compelled to take all the ~~xxxentxxx~~ precautions necessary to a state of actual war, all the way from the North Platte to Utah and Mont, as well as on the Smoky Hill and New Mexico roads. But, to show the honorable Sec of War that we, the military, are not disposed to precipitate matters, or to usurp any of the rights and privileges of the officers of the Ind bureau, I refer to my circular of instructions herewith, requiring all officers acting under me to respect all treaties and the rights of the civil agents intrusted with their execution, except when their hostility is undoubted.

The Commissioner Gen Buford also traces the cause of the outbreak this spring to Maj Gen Hancock's expedition to Fort Larned, and to his burning the Ind camp in Pawnee Fork in April last. In this I am sure he is in error, for long before Hancock had started, we had unmistakable signs of trouble and positive ~~xxx~~ threats of warriors well known to us, that as soon as the grass grew, there would be a combined attack on all our roads by the Soo of the north, and the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Kiowas of the south. That such a combination was designed and partially concluded, is to me now demonstrated, and even at the time was clear to Gen Hancock. He was on the spot, and was better qualified to judge than the others at a distance, who performed their opinions on Ind testimony alone. Gen Hancock has made ~~xxx~~ to me a full and satisfactory report, which is now at your headquarters, and I believe his movements so early in the spring prevented a combination that might otherwise have prevailed from Minn to Texas. The cause of this coincidence lies far deeper than I fear Gen Buford has looked. The "report on the condition of the Ind tribes," 1867, by a special committee appointed under joint resolution of March 3, 1869, now before me, in my judgment far better sets forth the causes that have resulted in these troubles, and gives us a foundation of testimony on which we should build. I venture to express a hope that the Cong of the U S will again open this question and make some approximate solution of it, so that in the we may accomplish a definite result. So long as the two distinct races of people, with such ~~diverse interests~~ as subsist between the roving Ind of the plains and our own

*diverse interests*