

**Ulysses S. Grant to Stephen A. Hurlbut**

s.1., May 31, 1863.

Autograph letter signed, 4 pages + docket.

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Head Quarters, Dept. of the Tenn.  
Near Vicksburg, May 31<sup>st</sup> 1863,

Maj: Gen. S. A. Hurlbut,  
Cmd<sup>g</sup>. 16<sup>th</sup> Army Corps,  
Gen.

I send this by Col. Hillyer of my Staff to insure it reaching you speedily and that he may urge upon you the necessity of the very prompts action.

Vicksburg is so strong by nature and so well fortified that sufficient force cannot be brought to bear against it to carry it by storm against the present Garrison. It must be taken by a regular siege or by starving out the Garrison. I have all the force necessary for this if my rear [2] was not threatened.

It is now certain that Jo Johnston has already collected a force from twenty to twenty-five thousand strong at Jackson & Canton and is using every effort to increase it to forty thousand. With this he will undoubtedly attack Harris Bluff and compell me to abandon the investment of the City if not reinforced before he can get here. I want your District striped to the very lowest possible standard. You can be in no possible danger for the time it will be necessary to keep their troops away. All points in West Tennessee North of the Memphis & Charleston road, if necessary, can be abandoned entirely. West Kentucky may be reduced to a small Garrison at Paducah and [3] Columbus.

If you have not already brought forward the troops to Memphis to send me bring Smith's, formerly Denver's, Division. Add to this all other force you can possibly spare. Send two regiments of Cavalry also. If you have not received the Cavalry last ordered from Helena divert them to this place instead of sending two [*inserted*: other] regiments.

No boat will be permitted to leave Memphis going North until transportation is fully provided for all the troops coming this way. The Quartermaster in charge of transportation and Col. W.S. Hillyer are specially instructed to see that this direction is fully enforced. The entire

rebel force heretofore against me are completely at my mercy. I do [4] not want to see them escape by being reinforced from elsewhere.

I hope before this reaches you troops will be already in the way from your command.

Gen. Dodge can spare enough from his force to garrison La grange & Grand Junction.

Very respectfully

U. S. Grant

Maj: Gen.

[*docket*]

Rec<sup>d</sup>. H<sup>d</sup> Qrs 16thA.C.

June 3<sup>d</sup>. 1 ½ P.US.