

# 1893 Cleveland—Lili`uokalani Agreement to Restore the Hawaiian Kingdom government

December 18<sup>th</sup> 1893

## ABSTRACT

On October 18<sup>th</sup> 1893, the U.S. government concluded an investigation of its role in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government, and negotiation for settlement with Queen Lili`uokalani began on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1893 at the U.S. Legation in Honolulu. At this meeting, U.S. Minister Albert Willis notified the Queen of the *“President’s sincere regret that, through the unauthorized intervention of the United States, she had been obliged to surrender her sovereignty, and his hope that, with her consent and cooperation, the wrong done to her and to her people might be redressed.”* Willis then asked, by direction of the President, *“Should you be restored to the throne, would you grant full amnesty as to life and property to all those persons who have been or who are now in the Provisional Government, or who may have been instrumental in the overthrow of your government.”* In this initial meeting, the Queen refused to grant amnesty, but after several additional meetings with Willis she accepted the conditions of restoration and she signed a declaration on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1893, which was forwarded to Secretary of State Walter Gresham on December 20<sup>th</sup>. The Congress was notified of this agreement on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1894 by Presidential message. Therefore, by virtue of this executive agreement, the President, and his successors in office, remain legally bound to restore the Hawaiian Kingdom government and to return the executive power to Hawai`i’s chief executive.

APPENDIX II

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

OF THE

UNITED STATES

1894

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AFFAIRS IN HAWAII



WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1895

*Mr. Willis to Mr. Gresham.*

[Confidential.]

No. 16.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, December 20, 1893.*

SIR: On Monday afternoon at 6 p. m., before the report of the Washington Place interview, referred to in my dispatch, No. 15, of December 19, had been written from the stenographic notes, Mr. Carter called at the legation and read to me a note to him, just received from the Queen, in which she unreservedly consented, when restored as the constitutional sovereign, to grant amnesty and assume all obligations of the Provisional Government.

On yesterday (Tuesday) morning at 9 o'clock Mr. Carter brought a letter from the Queen, a copy of which I inclose, and an agreement signed by her, binding herself, if restored, to grant full amnesty, a copy of which I inclose.

Very respectfully,

ALBERT S. WILLIS.

[Inclosure 1 with No 16.]

WASHINGTON PLACE,  
*Honolulu, December 18, 1893*

His Excellency ALBERT WILLIS,  
*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, U. S. A. :*

SIR: Since I had the interview with you this morning I have given the most careful and conscientious thought as to my duty, and I now of my own free will give my conclusions.

I must not feel vengeful to any of my people. If I am restored by the United States I must forget myself and remember only my dear people and my country. I must forgive and forget the past, permitting no proscription or punishment of any one, but trusting that all will hereafter work together in peace and friendship for the good and for the glory of our beautiful and once happy land.

Asking you to bear to the President and to the Government he represents a message of gratitude from me and from my people, and promising, with God's grace, to prove worthy of the confidence and friendship of your people,

I am, etc.,

LILIUOKALANI.

[Inclosure 2 with No. 16.]

I, Liliuokalani, in recognition of the high sense of justice which has actuated the President of the United States, and desiring to put aside all feelings of personal hatred or revenge and to do what is best for all the people of these Islands, both native and foreign born, do hereby and herein solemnly declare and pledge myself that, if reinstated as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands, that I will immediately proclaim and declare, unconditionally and without reservation, to every person who directly or indirectly participated in the revolution of January 17, 1893, a full pardon and amnesty for their offenses, with restoration of all rights, privileges, and immunities under the constitution and the laws which have been made in pursuance thereof, and that I will forbid and prevent the adoption of any measures of proscription or punishment for what has been done in the past by those setting up or supporting the Provisional Government.

I further solemnly agree to accept the restoration under the constitution existing at the time of said revolution and that I will abide by and fully execute that constitution with all the guaranties as to person and property therein contained.

I furthermore solemnly pledge myself and my Government, if restored, to assume all the obligations created by the Provisional Government, in the proper course of

administration, including all expenditures for military or police services, it being my purpose, if restored, to assume the Government precisely as it existed on the day when it was unlawfully overthrown.

Witness my hand this 18th of December, 1893.

LILIUOKALANI.

Attest:

J. O. CARTER.

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*Mr. Willis to Mr. Gresham.*

[Confidential.]

No. 17.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Honolulu, December 20, 1893.*

SIR: On Monday, December 18, the interview with the Queen at her residence, Washington Place, was held, lasting until 1 p. m.

At 5:30 p. m. of the same day I received a communication from the Provisional Government, through the Hon. S. B. Dole, minister of foreign affairs, referring to my visit to the Queen. He asked to be informed whether I was "acting in any way hostile to this (his) Government," and pressed for "an immediate answer." I inclose a copy of the communication.

As I had two days before notified a member of the cabinet, Hon. W. O. Smith, attorney-general, that I would be ready in forty-eight hours to make known to the Provisional Government the President's decision, and as the tone of the communication—doubtless without intention—was somewhat mandatory, I thought it best not to make any reply to it. Moreover, at that hour I had not received the written pledge and agreement of the Queen, without which I could take no step.

This morning at 9:30 o'clock I received the letter and agreement of the Queen, as set forth in my No. 16 of this date. I immediately addressed a note to the minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Dole, informing him that I had a communication from my Government, which I desired to submit in person to the president and ministers of his Government at any hour during the day that it might please him to designate. I inclose a copy of my letter. This note was delivered to the minister of foreign affairs by Mr. Mills, and the hour of 1:30 p. m. was verbally designated for the interview.

At the hour appointed I went to the executive building and met the President and his associate ministers, to whom I submitted the decision of the President of the United States.

A memorandum of what I said upon the occasion was left with them after delivery, a copy of which I inclose.

It may be proper at this time briefly to state my course of action since arriving here on Saturday the 4th day of November last. My baggage containing credentials did not come to hand until 4 o'clock, before which time the offices of the Provisional Government were closed.

On Monday morning following, Mr. Mills, our consul-general, bore a note to the minister of foreign affairs asking that he designate a time for the presentation of Mr. Blount's letter of recall and my letter of credence. Mr. Mills was authorized to say, and did say to him, that I was ready on that day (Monday) to present my credentials. The Provisional Government, however, appointed the following day (Tuesday) at 11 o'clock, at which time I was formally presented.

As our Government had for fifty years held the friendliest relations with the people of these islands—native as well as foreign born—in

WILLIS,

WASHINGTON, *January 12, 1894.**Minister, Honolulu:*

Your numbers 14 to 18, inclusive, show that you have rightly comprehended the scope of your instructions, and have, as far as was in your power, discharged the onerous task confided to you.

The President sincerely regrets that the Provisional Government refuses to acquiesce in the conclusion which his sense of right and duty and a due regard for our national honor constrained him to reach and submit as a measure of justice to the people of the Hawaiian Islands and their deposed sovereign. While it is true that the Provisional Government was created to exist only until the islands were annexed to the United States, that the Queen finally, but reluctantly, surrendered to an armed force of this Government illegally quartered in Honolulu, and representatives of the Provisional Government (which realized its impotency and was anxious to get control of the Queen's means of defense) assured her that, if she would surrender, her case would be subsequently considered by the United States, the President has never claimed that such action constituted him an arbitrator in the technical sense, or authorized him to act in that capacity between the Constitutional Government and the Provisional Government. You made no such claim when you acquainted that Government with the President's decision.

The solemn assurance given to the Queen has been referred to, not as authority for the President to act as arbitrator, but as a fact material to a just determination of the President's duty in the premises.

In the note which the minister of foreign affairs addressed to you on the 23d ultimo it is stated in effect that even if the Constitutional Government was subverted by the action of the American minister and an invasion by a military force of the United States, the President's authority is limited to dealing with our own unfaithful officials, and that he can take no steps looking to the correction of the wrong done. The President entertains a different view of his responsibility and duty. The subversion of the Hawaiian Government by an abuse of the authority of the United States was in plain violation of international law and required the President to disavow and condemn the act of our offending officials, and, within the limits of his constitutional power, to endeavor to restore the lawful authority.

On the 18th ultimo the President sent a special message to Congress communicating copies of Mr. Blount's reports and the instructions given to him and to you. On the same day, answering a resolution of the House of Representatives, he sent copies of all correspondence since March 4, 1889, on the political affairs and relations of Hawaii, withholding, for sufficient reasons, only Mr. Stevens' No. 70 of October 8, 1892, and your No. 3 of November 16, 1893. The President therein announced that the conditions of restoration suggested by him to the Queen had not proved acceptable to her, and that since the instructions sent to you to insist upon those conditions he had not learned that the Queen was willing to assent to them. The President thereupon submitted the subject to the more extended powers and wider discretion of Congress, adding the assurance that he would be gratified to cooperate in any legitimate plan which might be devised for a solution of the problem consistent with American honor, integrity, and morality.

Your reports show that on further reflection the Queen gave her unqualified assent in writing to the conditions suggested, but that the

Provisional Government refuses to acquiesce in the President's decision.

The matter now being in the hands of Congress the President will keep that body fully advised of the situation, and will lay before it from time to time the reports received from you, including your No. 3, heretofore withheld, and all instructions sent to you. In the meantime, while keeping the Department fully informed of the course of events, you will, until further notice, consider that your special instructions upon this subject have been fully complied with.

GRESHAM.