Dear General,

I shall try to write this letter in so plain a form that you will not need Buttefield in endeavoring to read it.

This morning I called on Secretary Stanton with Chandler & broke our purpose to have my opinion of your late movement. I thought giving you the great credit which I honestly think due to you for the courage, ability, and prudence you displayed. For subject of increasing your present force was then discussed. In the course of the conversation in this matter the Secretary expressed his perfect readiness & indeed his entire wish to give you all the support possible, but doubting whether adding the miserable column now in front of Washington to immediate common would help you so much as the retaining of it in the present present service. He said most distinctly however, that everything in his view of the Shenandoah Valley is practically the most immediately under your orders and that
you would be joined by whatever portion of the force before Washington or in Pennsylvania or in the vicinity of Harrisburg, you should think necessary to your most effective action; consulting of course as you usually would, the general safety, and success at and after the safety and success of the movement under your immediate personal direction.

After leaving Mr. Stanton saw the President. He read to him the letter you sent him yesterday at Camp. I made, of course, no allusion to the fact that I had heard it before, but listened attentively. Having read it, he said: "you see exactly how the matter is left. At the same time while he seemed to feel the necessity of doing whatever you might desire, strengthening you, he refused to give apprehensions lest in trying to do so, other important points might be too much weakened. He evidently regarded everything as left pretty much to your discretion.

While with the President, Major Buck was announced, and the President remarked that you were sending up the different commands of divisions that he might satisfy himself as to their sentiments.
in relation to which he had intimated some application in his letter to you.

The result of both interviews satisfies me that there remains an open to you,
first section where you are until you join
from the troops of ever second battalion with
the troops you have at one; thirdly, to ask
for your attention for the additional
twenty or thirty thousand men for the
movement you described as possible.

The first is not to be thought of if it can
be avoided.

The second should not be risked except as an alternative
to the first;

The third seems to be the true course. Ask the President for a correct
statement of the troops at Norfolk, the forts at
Fort Monroe and on the Peninsula;

ascertain at nearly as possible what
may be spared without risking Norfolk or the approaches to the forts.

Make the same inquiries as to the troops
before Washington and their work. Then
collect all you need to hold your main
position and more on the enemy with
your main body according to your best
guidance with the utmost possible delay.
in relation to which he had intimated some apprehensions in his letter by you.

The result of both interviews satisfied me that three courses are open to you:

first. to meet them where you are until reinforced from the drafts, if ever, second. to fight with the troops you have at hand; third. to call emanicipation; lastly, for the additional Twenty or Thirty thousand men for the movement you described as possible.

The first is not to be thought of; if it can possibly be avoided, the second should not be risked except as an alternative to the first. The third seems to be the true course. Ask the President for a correct statement of the troops at Norfolk, at Yorktown, and on the Peninsula, ascertain as nearly as possible what may be spared without risking Norfolk or the approaches to the Forts.

Make the same inquiries as to the troops before Washington and their work. Then collect all you need to hold your 

position and more on the enemy with your main body according to your best judgment with the utmost possible 

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To General Joseph Hooker
May 25, 1863

I am writing to urge you to consider some aspects of the situation as outlined in my previous letter.

The result of both interviews satisfied me that three courses are open to you:

1. The first is to act immediately and seize the enemy's stores from the enemy's lines if not already engaged. This will give you control of the area, thereby breaking communication with the enemy. It is essential to act promptly.

2. The second is to use the forces you have at hand to act against the enemy's lines of communication. This will place you in a position to prevent the enemy from reinforcing their forces in the area.

3. The third is to use the forces you have at hand to prevent the enemy from reinforcing their forces in the area.

I understand that you have written to the President on the correct statement of the troops at Forts Henry, Donelson, and on the Peninsula. It is important to act promptly and effectively. I have included a map of the area for your reference.

Please consider these options and make a decision based on your best judgment.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

P.S. It is imperative that you act immediately to prevent the enemy from reinforcing their forces in the area.
and decision. It really seems to me that it is possible to make a great improvement in this way, without seriously endangering the vast store of accumulated know-how and important traditions which must be held elsewhere.

This must indeed be no disappointment. Better for many new generals of the best captains and lieutenants. I fear it is a mistake to have chief of staff come up here to tell their different stories. Though it may be for the best, we all like to hear heroes and every story, no matter what he himself is done or how much better everything else could have been done if his course or his ideas had been followed!

Under this letter dear General, let it have not a bit of consideration, but submit to be improved or rejected by your better judgment.

Cordially yours,

N.J. Davis