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**THE
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE
OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION.
VOL. V.**

**THE
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE
OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION;**

BEING

THE LETTERS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, SILAS DEANE, JOHN
ADAMS, JOHN JAY, ARTHUR LEE, WILLIAM LEE, RALPH
IZARD, FRANCIS DANA, WILLIAM CARMICHAEL, HENRY
LAURENS, JOHN LAURENS, M. DE LAFAYETTE, M.
DUMAS, AND OTHERS, CONCERNING THE FOREIGN
RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES DURING
THE WHOLE REVOLUTION;

TOGETHER WITH

THE LETTERS IN REPLY FROM THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF
CONGRESS, AND THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

ALSO,

THE ENTIRE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE FRENCH MINISTERS,
GERARD AND LUZERNE, WITH CONGRESS.

Published under the Direction of the President of the United States, from
the original Manuscripts in the Department of State, conformably
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THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF

JOHN ADAMS,
ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS TO FRANCE, MINISTER
PLENIPOTENTIARY TO HOLLAND, AND ONE OF THE
COMMISSIONERS FOR NEGOTIATING THE
TREATY OF PEACE.

THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF

JOHN ADAMS.

CORRESPONDENCE CONTINUED.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 17th, 1780.

Sir,

Late letters from Dantzic imply, that commerce was become very languishing there for some time, excepting for ship timber, which bore a very good price there, on account of the English, and which they carried away, as well in their own vessels as those of Dantzic.

The new face, which the affairs of Europe are about to take from the alliance formed between the powers of the North for the maintenance of an exact neutrality, and to which people here are fully persuaded that the Republic of the United Provinces will agree, gives occasion to conjectures, either, that the war will be pushed this year with more vivacity than ever, both by land and sea, or that peace may be made without delay. They say, even that there may have been already negotiations commenced on this subject; that it is by the intervention of the King of Sardinia, who would manage the accommodation between the belligerent powers, and that his present Ambassador in France is so much the better able to labor advantageously towards this great work, that having resided in England in the same quality he has the advantage to know perfectly the Ministers and their system. However this may be, if there are sometimes occasions in which one may judge of future events by an examination of the present, and reflection upon the past, might one be taxed with partiality or temerity, if one ventured to lay it down as a fact, that, from the beginning of the contest in which Great Britain is at present engaged, her situation has never appeared so critical and so dangerous? In fact, as if it was not enough, that she had quarrelled with her Colonies, as if it was not enough, that she is at war with two powers so formidable as France and Spain in consequence of the quarrel with the Colonies, as if her intestine troubles were not enough, which, by dividing the nation, contribute not a little to weaken it; and at the end of the perspective, to see Ireland, at the first moment, make as much of it as the Americans, in declaring herself also independent. In spite of so many alarming considerations, England still seems to seek new enemies, by attacking without distinction the vessels of all the neutral nations, and even of her allies. Thus she has forced them by this proceeding, not less arbitrary than inconceivable, especially in her present circumstances, to make a league with each other for the maintenance of the safety of the navigation of their respective subjects, as well as of the honor of their flags, for which they plainly acknowledge at this day, that they never could have hoped for any safety, if the English, who, embarrassed as they are, treat them nevertheless with so little ceremony, could ever recover that superiority, whereof we cannot deny that they found means to put themselves in possession at the end of the last war.

But such is the fate of all human things; to have a commencement, to acquire successively an augmentation, which ought to be expected up to certain bounds, and beyond which they must necessarily begin to decrease, until they descend again to the same point from whence they began; and no human efforts can disturb this constant and immutable order. After this declaration let us judge whether in fact, this is not the case of England, and we may after this predict very nearly the issue of the present events, or of those which may take place in the course of the year.

By the English papers, Congress will see the state of parties in England, where the stubble is so dry, that the smallest spark thrown into it may set the whole field in a blaze. Opposition have carried triumphantly in the fullest House of Commons ever known, by a majority of eighteen votes against the utmost efforts of the Ministry, the resolution, that it is necessary to declare, that the influence of the Crown has increased, increases, and ought to be diminished; that it is in the power of the House to take cognizance of, and to reform the abuses, which may exist in the employment of the civil list revenues, as well as all other revenues; and that it is the duty of the House to grant effectual redress to the grievances, exposed in the petitions presented to the House by the different cities, counties, and towns of the kingdom. By the speech of Mr Fox, it will be seen to what soaring heights this young statesman aspires.

Since my arrival the last time in Europe, I have had, six and forty times, I think, the honor of writing to Congress; but it seems impossible to get a letter across the Atlantic. Many of my letters have been waiting long at the seaports for a passage, but when they will obtain it, I know not; if they all arrive, and Congress should be able to see at one view the vast chain that is binding almost all mankind every day closer and faster together, in opposition to the dangerous power, and the intolerable possessions of the English, they will see how many of the wisest hands in the world are at work for their safety and glory, and have the utmost cause of gratitude to Heaven for ordering events in the course of his Providence so decidedly in their favor.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 18th, 1780.

Sir,

It is my duty to transmit to Congress, as soon as prudence will admit, everything which deserves consideration, as having either a direct, or an indirect tendency to peace, or even to negotiations for that important object. The enclosed letter has been transmitted to Paris through such a channel, that I have reason to believe, that it was particularly intended for my inspection. It is from a gentleman, who, to do him justice, has long expressed an earnest desire for peace, but who, nevertheless, has never yet reflected maturely enough upon the state of America, of Great Britain, and of all Europe, to get into a right way of thinking, concerning the proper means to his end. Congress will perceive this from the letter itself, in which it is obvious enough.

The first remarkable sentiment is, "We must at all events support our national honor, by the most vigorous exertions, without shrinking; but surely, in such a complicated war as this is, if we can make any equitable offers of a treaty to any of the parties, common prudence calls upon us to use our endeavors to unravel by negotiation, the combination of powers now acting against us." In this paragraph, I see the manifest marks of a mind that has not yet mastered its subject. True policy would have omitted everything in this letter, which should call up to the minds of the people the ideas of national honor. Every man in the world, who is thoroughly acquainted with the subject, knows that Great Britain never can obtain a peace without a diminution of her honor and dignity. It is impossible without miracles, and therefore the Englishman, who undertakes to plan for peace, must be convinced of this and take it into his plan, and consequently should avoid with the utmost caution every word, which should excite these ideas in the minds of the people. They stir passions which make them mad. [7]

He should have avoided with equal solicitude every insinuation of a design to unravel, by negotiation, the combination of powers now acting against Great Britain. This combination is in fact much more extensive, much more universal and formidable, than the letter writer had any idea or suspicion of. But if it had been no more extensive than France, Spain, and America, the impracticability of unravelling it ought to have thrown out this sentiment. By it he proposes by negotiation to bring those to dishonor themselves, who have certainly no occasion for it; at the same time that he stimulates others to cherish and preserve their honor, who have already lost it, and under an absolute necessity, sooner or later, of sacrificing it. By this means he only puts the confederates more upon their guard, and renders the attainment of his professed object, peace, impossible. [8]

The next solecism in politics, which he commits, is undertaking to vindicate America from the charge of having sought and formed this confederacy. America wanted no such vindication; it is folly to suppose it a fault, for all mankind will agree, even his correspondents themselves, that it was wisdom and virtue. Surely another term must be given to popular ideas, before they will be brought to petition for peace.

Nor do I think it was prudent in him to hold up the idea, that America had proceeded with reluctance and regret to the Treaty. That this is true, I know and feel to this very moment; for although I had no such reluctance myself, those gentlemen with whom I had the honor to sit in Congress at the time will remember, that I had very good reasons to be sensible that others had. But how well soever he might be informed of the fact, and from what source soever he might draw his information, it was bad policy in him to hold it up, because he ought to have been equally sure, that America has now no reluctance to the treaty, nor any inclination to violate it. He ought not, therefore, to have held up a hope of this to the people.

Neither ought he to have flattered the people with hopes, that America would not form any perpetual alliance with France, nor that their limited alliance might be satisfied and discharged. The alliance already made is limited, it is true, to a certain number of articles, but not limited in its duration. It is perpetual, and he had no grounds to sooth the people with hopes, either that France would give up any of the articles of the treaty, or that America would violate them.

He ought also to have avoided his insinuations, that America has been so much harassed by the war. This is an idea so refreshing to the present passions of the people of England, that, instead of tending to dispose them to peace, it only revives their hopes of success, and inflames their ardor for war. That America has been harassed by the war is true, and when was any nation at war without being so? Especially, when did any nation undergo a revolution in government, and sustain a war at the same time without it? Yet, after all, America has not been so much harassed, or disastered, or terrified, or panic-struck from the beginning, as Great Britain has been several times in the course of it. [9]

But the most exceptionable passage of all, is this. "It is apparent to all the world, that *France might long ago have put an end to that part of the war, which has been most distressing to America*, if she had chosen so to do. Let the whole system of France be considered, from the very beginning, down to the last retreat from Savannah, and I think it is impossible to put any other construction upon it, but this, viz. that it has always been the deliberate intention and object of France, for purposes of her own, to encourage the continuation of the war in America, *in hopes of exhausting the strength and resources of this country, and of depressing the rising power of America.*"

Upon this paragraph I scarcely know what remarks to make. But after deliberating upon it, as patiently and maturely as I can, I will clearly write my opinion of it; for my obligations to truth and to my country are antecedent to all other ties.

I am clearly and fully of the opinion, then, that the fact is true, that France might put an end to that part of the war, which has been most distressing to Americans; and I certainly know the means were extremely simple and obvious, and that they were repeatedly proposed, and explained, and urged to the Ministry; and I should have had a terrible load of the guilt of negligence of my duty upon my conscience, if it had not been done while I had the honor of a commission to this Court. But, when the letter writer proceeds so far as to say, that it was to *encourage* the continuance of the war, in order to exhaust the strength and resources of Great Britain, I cannot accompany him, much less can I join with him in the opinion, that it was to depress the rising power in America. I believe, on the contrary, that France has not wished the continuance of the war, but that she has wished for peace. The war has been attended with too much loss and danger to France, to suppose, that she wished its continuance, and if she did not wish its continuance at all, she could not wish it to depress the power of America. [10]

She could not wish it, in my opinion, for this reason, because it is not the means to this end. It has a contrary tendency. The longer this war is continued in America, the more will America become habituated to the characters of the soldier and the marine. Military virtues and talents and passions will gain strength, and additional activity, every year while the war lasts; and the more these virtues, talents, and passions are multiplied, the deeper will the foundations of American power be laid, and the more dangerous will it become to some or other of the powers of Europe; to France, as likely as to any other power, because it will be more likely to be ambitious and enterprising, and to aspire at conquests by sea and land.

This idea, however, deserves to be considered with all the attention that Americans can give to it; although I am convinced by everything I see and read and hear, that all the powers of Europe, except, perhaps, the House of Austria, and I am not very clear in that exception, rejoice in the American revolution, and consider the independence of America as for their interest and happiness, in many points of view, both respecting commerce and the balance of Europe; yet I have many reasons to think, that not one of them, not even Spain, nor France, wishes to see America rise very fast to power. We ought, therefore, to be cautious how we magnify our ideas, and exaggerate our expressions of the generosity and magnanimity of any of these powers. Let us treat them with gratitude, but with dignity. Let us remember what is due to ourselves and to our posterity, as well as to them. Let us, above all things, avoid, as much as possible, entangling ourselves with their wars or politics. Our business with them, and theirs with us, is commerce, not politics, much less war. America has been the sport of European wars and politics long enough. [11]

I think, however, that this letter writer was very much mistaken in his judgment, when he threw out this language. It could be meant only to excite a jealousy and a quarrel between France and America, or rather feed the Yorkshire people, and the people of England with a hope of exciting such a quarrel. This is not the way to come at a peace. They will never succeed in such a plan, and every attempt towards it is a false policy.

The next mistake is, the idea of a reconciliation and federal union with America. This must be intended to separate us from our allies, which this gentleman ought, before now, to have known is totally impracticable.

I have very little more relish for the notion of a truce. We are in a safer way at war. We cannot make a truce without France. She will never consent, that we should make a truce, unless she makes a peace; and such alterations may be made in the constitutions of the Courts of France and Spain, and in the other Courts and political connexions in Europe, before the expiration of the term of a truce, that it would be attended with too much hazard to us. Neither France, nor Spain, nor the other powers of Europe, might, after a truce, be ready to go to war again; and unforeseen divisions may be excited among ourselves by artful emissaries from England. We are going on now in a sure and certain road. If we go out of it, we may be lost. [12]

Upon the whole, I think, that this letter writer should have stated the true situation of Europe, of Great Britain, Ireland, and America.

From this statement, his immediate conclusion should have been open conferences for peace; make peace with all the world, upon the best terms you can. This is the only chance you have for salvation. It must come to this very soon; otherwise, there will be a total dissolution of the British Empire.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 24th, 1780.

Sir,

There is intelligence from Stockholm of the 4th of this month, that "the Envoy Extraordinary of

the Empress of Russia has given notice to that Court, of the declaration made by his sovereign, as well to the States-General of the United Provinces as to the powers actually at war, demanding, at the same time, that Sweden would accede to it, and to this end join herself to Russia, by augmenting the Swedish marine, to the end, to concur by this means, in the maintenance of a neutrality. Although this Court appears very well inclined to enter into the views of Russia, nevertheless, it is thought, that before anything will be decided upon this object, she will previously give notice of it to the Court of France. In the meantime, the Minister of Russia at this Court has received orders to treat directly of this affair, as well with the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy Extraordinary of her Imperial Majesty to their High Mightinesses, as with the other Ministers of that Court residing at the neutral Courts."

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There is also intelligence from Ratisbon of the 13th of April, that "M. Struxe, Counsellor of the Legislation from Russia, has communicated there by order of his Court the declaration made by his sovereign to the belligerent powers, to the end to make her flag be respected, and to protect the commerce and navigation of her subjects; and that, in consequence, orders had already been despatched to Cronstadt and Archangel to equip there a sufficient number of ships of the line."

There is a paragraph in the Gazette of Amsterdam, of the 21st, from Paris of the 14th of April. "It is only by conjecture, that we talk of the plan of the next campaign in Europe; and it is also with the same uncertainty, that we lend our ear to the report, which runs, that the Count d'Estaing will command the combined fleet, and even, that the Count du Chaffault, as well as the Spanish Admirals, have offered to serve under him. It is pretended, besides, that there may very well be also some alterations in the progress of our Ministry, if it is true, as they continue to affirm, that the Count de Parades has been arrested as a spy of the English Government, to whom he was, in fact, in a capacity to discover important particulars upon this subject. But there is another piece of news, to which we give more credit, because, really, there is no good citizen, nor genuine friend of humanity, who does not wish to hear it confirmed. It is, that there should be, as it is said, upon the carpet, a plan concerted between all the maritime powers of Europe, to the end to form and digest a universal code for the sea, the laws of which no nation should attempt to infringe, without devoting herself to the indignation, or exposing herself to the vengeance, of all the others; an important project, if it could be executed, which would insure the happiness and tranquillity of nations, and would set bounds, which could not be passed, to the audacity, as well as the avarice of any one, which, without any other right than that of force, should pretend to arrogate to itself the exclusive empire of the sea."

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There is also intelligence from the Hague of the 19th of April, that there was sent on the 14th of the month to the Assembly of the States-General of the United Provinces, a Memorial of the following tenor.

"Their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, the Commissioners of the affairs of commerce and navigation, conjointly with some counsellors of Holland, and Ministers of the College of Admiralty residing in this Province, having, in consequence of a resolution of the 4th of this month, examined the Memorial presented the day before to the Generality, by the Prince Gallitzin, Envoy Extraordinary of her Majesty, the Empress of all the Russias, by which the Minister has communicated a declaration made by his sovereign to the Courts of France, Spain, and England, that the neutral powers may protect by common agreement the commerce and navigation of her subjects respectively, as is more fully explained in the note of the 4th of April.

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"Whereupon having deliberated, their Noble and Grand Mightinesses have thought fit and resolved, that the affairs be proposed to the Generality, and that they answer in turn to the before mentioned Memorial of the Prince de Gallitzin, that their High Mightinesses have received, with much satisfaction, the communication, which it has pleased her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, to give them of her designs, as well as of the declaration, which she has caused to be made to the said Courts; that their High Mightinesses regard this communication as the most convincing proof of the benevolence of her Majesty for this Republic, and holding themselves honored by it, they think themselves, consequently, obliged in all respects to give her a cordial and positive answer; that their High Mightinesses put the highest value on the new proof, which her Imperial Majesty gives on this occasion of her generosity and acknowledged equity, as well as on the project she has conceived, and the means which she has resolved to employ to obtain the most exact neutrality in the present war with the belligerent powers, and protect not only the honor of the Russian flag, as well as the commerce and navigation of her subjects, in not permitting them to be disturbed by any of the powers at war, but also to assure the liberty and repose of Europe upon the solid foundations of the justice of the law of nations and the treaties subsisting, and thus to consolidate the equitable system of navigation and commerce of the neutral powers; that their High Mightinesses having nothing more at heart, than to observe a strict neutrality with her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, in the present war, but instructed by experience, in the losses which the commerce and navigation of the neutral powers have suffered, by the fluctuations and uncertainty of the belligerent powers in the state of the law of nations, from whence have resulted to them many inconveniences and great damages occasioned by the operations of the present war, their High Mightinesses have judged it necessary, in concert with her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, to fix this law upon a solid basis, and to request, for this end, the concurrence of the neutral maritime powers; that, moreover, as to what concerns the extent and limits of this law, their High Mightinesses conform themselves wholly to the five points contained in the declaration of her Imperial Majesty made to the Courts of Versailles, Madrid, and London, communicated to their High Mightinesses by the Prince de Gallitzin the third of April of this year, and are, consequently, ready to make similar declarations

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to the belligerent powers, their High Mightinesses being sincerely disposed to enter into conferences with her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, and other neutral maritime powers, upon the measures which may be unanimously taken, to the end to maintain effectually, both for the present era and for the time to come, the liberty of navigation and commerce, by observing an exact neutrality between the belligerent powers.

"That the extract of the resolution to be taken be sent by the Agent, Van den Burch Spuonings, back to the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy Extraordinary of her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, to the end to inform his sovereign, and to employ his good offices to lay before her this answer in the manner the most favorable; that they ought also to send a similar extract to M. de Swart, Resident of their High Mightinesses at the Court of Petersburg, for his information, with an injunction to co-operate, as far as shall depend upon him, to the success of the salutary intentions of their High Mightinesses; that the same measures be taken with regard to the Ministers of the Republic at the Courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon, with orders to act in concert, and to support the measures of the Russian Ministers at the Courts where they reside."

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Their High Mightinesses having deliberated upon this object, the Deputies of Provinces, which have not as yet declared themselves, have been desired to pronounce as soon as possible the resolutions of the States, their principals. The States of the Province of Groningen have declared themselves authorised, during the suspension of the deliberations, to confer on this subject with the Prince de Gallitzin for a further explanation, saving the free deliberations of their principals.

Amsterdam, 20th of April. The College of Admiralty of West Friesland and of the northern quarter have put in commission, with the participation of His Most Serene Highness, the Prince Stadtholder, the frigates of war, the Medemblick, of thirtysix guns, the Horn, Enkhuisen, of twenty guns, which will be commanded by the Captain Van Regneveld Heckers and Trykenius."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

[18]

Paris, April 25th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform your Excellency, that a small schooner has arrived at Nantes from Baltimore, by which came the enclosed newspapers, which I send to your Excellency without a moment's loss of time. I hope, however, your Excellency has received these and many more, and much fuller intelligence by the same vessel; but as it is possible it may be otherwise, I think it my duty to send them. I have no other news by this vessel as yet, excepting, that General Gates was appointed to command the army in Charleston, an event which I esteem of great importance, because there is in the mind of the American soldier an affection for that officer, and a confidence in him, that will show its effects.

A vessel from Martinique had just arrived, with an account, that the Dean frigate, Captain Nicholson, had sent in there an English frigate sheathed with copper, mounting twentyeight guns, which struck after a severe action.

If I should be so happy as to receive any more news from this vessel, I shall have the honor to transmit it to your Excellency.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 25th, 1780.

Sir,

A letter from Dublin, of the 18th of this month, gives us the following account. "We wait with impatience for the meeting of Parliament; the day approaches when the political destiny of this kingdom will be decided. There is yet some softness in one party of the Parliament, but there is none at all in the body of the people, and especially in that of our brave volunteers, who are at once the admiration and the firm hope of the nation, which seems now to spring up, and out of chaos. One thing very extraordinary is, that among this body of volunteers, exceeding in fact the number of fortysix thousand men, (although in so innocent an army composed of so many discordant parties, commanded by so many chiefs, some more powerful than the others might be

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suspected of entertaining views a little opposite to patriotism,) no ambitious ones, supported by popularity, have undertaken anything, not only against the liberties, but even against the tranquillity of the people; not the least disorder, not even the appearance of disunion, or partial cabals. We contemplate with astonishment, mixed with a joy most intimately felt, an armed multitude proceeding to give, so to express myself, the island to the civil power, and aiding it to protect and facilitate the execution of its laws. Such are the advantages, which we ought always to provide ourselves from an army, the humblest soldier of which finds his interest in good order and good government. Mercenaries fight for money; volunteers, proprietors of one part of the lands, which are proposed to be defended, and of the rights, which are to be recovered or protected, have a direct interest in preserving in all their vigor the laws, which assure to them the property of those lands, and the enjoyment of these rights.

"While the nation busies itself about its political emancipation, and already enjoys it, by anticipation, she does not neglect the advantages already obtained by the firmness and the wisdom of her conduct; all the objects of commerce fix the attendance of various committees; the establishments are multiplied insensibly in proportion to the rising occasions; where there were manufactories they are busied about the means of improving them, where there were none, and it appears convenient to establish them, societies of adventurers are formed. We have a considerable number of woollen stuffs and cloths, we have none of cotton. At this day Limerick proposes to become the rival of Manchester; they are about making the beautiful velvets, and stuffs of cotton. One company have appropriated to this undertaking a capital of sixteen thousand pounds sterling, and they have brought over from England a sufficient number of excellent workmen in this business.

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"In reading over my letter, I remark I have stated at fortysix thousand the number of volunteers actually armed among us; we have not yet an exact return, it is possible there may be four or five thousand more, because at the end of last year we generally reckoned upon fortyfive thousand, and there have been since formed five new corps, commanded by officers as respectable for their personal courage, as for their patriotism. If this martial ardor, which animates all the orders of the community, has any inconvenience, it is, that it takes away from the manufacturers a prodigious number of hands. Independently of the time given to military exercise, you would not be able to conceive how many people are employed in these melancholy but necessary manufactures, which have no other use, end, or object, than the destruction of men. The casting of cannon, the manufacture of arms of every description, of tents, and other articles, which are required for the preparation for a campaign, employ moreover several thousands of hands; it is true, that the two levies divide the labor between them.

[21]

"They say, that the Duke of Leinster, on whom they had so unjustly ventured to publish some offensive reflections, has declared publicly and in the most solemn manner, that he will support the people in the vindication of their rights to a free constitution absolutely independent. If the serenity of our present situation is sometimes interrupted, it is by those unlucky white boys, who, from time to time, renew their atrocities. The 1st instant fifty of these banditti well mounted met upon an eminence at Cloriseu, near to Feathard, where they conducted themselves in an inhuman manner towards two individuals."

In the French Gazette is an article from London with regard to Ireland. "They accuse the Ministry of holding relative to that kingdom the same conduct, which they held in the beginning of the troubles of America, that is to say, to leave the sovereign and the nation in error, concerning all the facts, and endeavor to inspire into the British Parliament the most sinister carelessness and inattention for the most important of affairs. People hired to support among us the blindest confidence write, that the Irish are very well pleased with Lord Hillsborough, that the concessions made to Ireland satisfy all its wishes, that even the associations enjoy in peace the good that has been done to their country. We learn, however, that the city of Dublin declares in her common council, that she cannot any longer suspend her judgment upon the conduct of government, that to destroy the false interpretations, which they have endeavored to give to the joy, which the people of Ireland have testified upon the subject of the act, which gives liberty to their commerce, several counties, and the greatest part of the associations, have thought themselves obliged to explain to the public, that the motive of this momentary joy proceeded principally from this, that they regarded the liberty of commerce as a commencement of the independence of the constitution.

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"The principal creatures of the English Ministry, in the Parliament of Ireland, arrived the beginning of this month to receive instructions relative to the approaching Assembly, but they say, that during their absence the chiefs of the national party have been employed in promoting the meetings of the counties, in cementing the military associations, and encouraging the people to insist upon a declaration of rights, so that nothing is yet finished in that respect. Mr Yelverton proposes to make a motion in the House of Commons, that a sum shall be voted sufficient to build four strong frigates, which shall constantly cruise upon the coasts of this kingdom to protect merchant fleets and convoys. This project announces but too plainly the design of Ireland to separate herself from us as much as she can, and to owe her safety only to herself. With what view should England insist still with the Irish upon the pretension of supremacy? In renouncing the advantages, which the monopoly of commerce procured, she has destroyed the only obstacle, which could oppose itself to the independence of Ireland."

There is in the Leyden Gazette of the 21st another article from London. "The Earl of Bellamont, who arrived here the 5th of this month from Ireland, has had an audience of his Majesty, and several conferences with his Ministers; as this nobleman is one of the principal supporters of the

party of the administration in that country, it is supposed that his journey here was occasioned by the crisis, in which affairs are there at this time. Mr Henry Flood, who has come to Court on the same subject, as well as Mr Seaton Perry, the speaker of the Irish Commons, and Sir Richard Heron, Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, have on the contrary returned to Dublin. As the Parliament was to sit the 10th of this month, we expect immediately interesting advices concerning the turn, which affairs may have taken there, and so much the more as we know, that soon after the meeting, Mr Yelverton intended to propose a bill, declaratory of the rights of Ireland, as far as they respect Poyning's law, and the manner of passing Irish bills in England. In the meantime, the leaders of the two parties endeavored to increase their forces in the two houses, although the preponderance in favor of the Court would scarcely have any effect, in case the party the most considerable of the people remain in the sentiments they appear to be in at this day. This consideration they say, supported by the advice of Sir Richard Heron, Mr Seaton Perry, and Mr Flood, has determined our government to give way to the wishes of the Irish nation, by consenting to the revocation of Poyning's law, if there are no other means of assuaging the fermentation of spirits. It is true, that some cities, counties, and boroughs, have lately assured the government of their attachment, and of their gratitude for the favors granted to Ireland, but there is a great deal wanting before all the people will be equally satisfied. The most enlightened part of the nation regard these same favors as granted to necessity, and purely precarious as long as the British legislature shall have the right to make laws for Ireland. Some magistrates have even already refused to execute the laws passed by the Parliament of Great Britain; those of the county of Mayo, having been among others required to put in force the act against desertions, and to show that they acknowledge no others than those, which have been made by their own legislative body. In general, according to the last accounts received from that country, it appears, that of the four parts of Ireland, the provinces of Leinster and Connaught are the most tranquil, reposing themselves upon the assurances, which have been given them by the respective Colonels of their volunteer associations, the Duke of Leinster, and the Earl of Clanricarde; and that the Court is disposed to grant to the nation all its demands. In the province of Munster, they are less quiet, and they persuade themselves, that there is little dependence upon a momentary benevolence, which is due only to necessity. But the inhabitants of Ulster are, of all Ireland, those who appear the most firmly determined to procure to themselves, at any price, an entire independence of the British legislation, and the formal renunciation of all acts, which are contrary to it. As this province, where they reckon at least thirty thousand families of Protestants, more than all the rest of the kingdom, distinguishes itself by the courage of its inhabitants, they will risk a great deal if they stir up discontents there."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 26th, 1780.

Sir,

At last, even the Morning Post of the 18th of April confesses, that the Memorial from the Empress of Russia to the States-General has dissipated all their golden dreams of an alliance with the Czarina. It was announced to us last week, that a Russian squadron had left Cronstadt to sail to our assistance, nay, some of the public papers went so far as to announce their arrival at Plymouth. How sadly are we now disappointed! Instead of an alliance, we find her *Czarish* Majesty talks of neutrality, so that at present it is pretty clear, that the various powers in Europe seem determined to stand off, and leave us to our fate."

In some confused minutes of a debate in the House of Lords on the 14th of April, it is said, that Lord Camden expressed his astonishment and regret at the Memorial from Russia, in which, contrary to the established law of nations, the Empress insisted upon free ships and free goods. He pointed out how injurious to the country it must be, if neutral vessels were permitted to supply our enemies, whom we might blockade, with everything they might want, and remarked, that the queen of the seas was now deposed, and the Empress had taken possession of her throne. In another paper, Lord Shelburne is represented remarking the very dangerous and alarming situation they stand in, with regard to their wars and foreign alliances. "Of the former," said his Lordship, "we have three, of the latter none, even the Empress of Russia, that great potentate, who was constantly held out by the noble Lord with the green riband, (Lord Stormont,) to be our principal ally, now shows to all Europe by her late maritime manifesto, what sort of an ally she means to be to England. The thought of that manifesto made him shudder when he first read it, particularly, as he knew how this country stood in respect to other powers, when Denmark must follow wherever Russia led, when Sweden was ready at the nod of France; think of having the whole force of the northern powers against us; already engaged in three wars, and striving all we can to make a fourth with our old friends and neutral allies, the States-General."

There have appeared few other reflections as yet, upon this great event, the Russian declaration. Even the opposition seems afraid to lay it open, in all its terrors, to the people. They repeat the

word neutrality, neutrality, but it is as decisive a determination against them, as a declaration of war would have been, perhaps more so, because now there is a probability that the maritime powers will be unanimous, whereas in the other case they might have been divided. It is very surprising, that the peace between Russia and the Turk, and that between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, (in which the Empress of Russia took a part as spirited and decided as she has upon this occasion, in both of which negotiations the British ministry ought to have known that Russia and France acted in perfect concert,) should not have earlier dissipated their golden visions, but so it is, and so it has been; England, as Governor Pownall says, cannot or will not see. The improvement in the law of nations, which the Empress aims at, and will undoubtedly establish, is hurtful to England, it is true, to a very great degree, but it is beneficial to all other nations, and to none more than the United States of America, who will be carriers, and I hope forever neutrals.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, April 28th, 1780.

Sir,

The news from Hamburg of the 11th of April is, that "the Sieur de Geoss, the Minister of the Empress of Russia, near the circle of the Lower Saxony, has communicated to the Magistracy of that city a declaration, which his Sovereign has made to the three Courts at war, for the maintenance of the free navigation of neutrals; and we learn, that the same notification has been made to the Regencies of Lubec and Bremen, on the part of this Sovereign; who, without ceasing to observe a neutrality between the Courts actually at war, considers the liberty of the seas as a common good of all nations, which different particulars ought not to interrupt."

The news from London of the 18th of April is, "the term of three weeks is fixed for receiving an answer to the answer of the Memorial, which Sir Joseph Yorke has presented to their High Mightinesses, the States-General, expired last Thursday; they have published yesterday a Declaration, against the United Provinces, of which here follows the translation."

"The Resolution taken at a Council held at St James the 17th of April, 1780, in presence of his Majesty. Since Great Britain has been brought involuntarily into a war against France and Spain, the Ambassador of the King to the States-General of the United Provinces has presented several Memorials for demanding the succors stipulated by the treaties. These representations, although repeated in the most pressing manner by the Memorial of the 21st of March, have remained without answer, and their High Mightinesses have not manifested an intention to oppose them. By delaying thus to fulfil engagements the most positive, she deserts the alliance, which has subsisted so long between the Crown of Great Britain and the Republic, and places herself on a level with neutral powers, which are not connected with this kingdom by any treaty. The principles of wisdom and equity prescribe, by consequence, to the King no longer to consider the States but in the distant relation in which they have placed themselves; and his Majesty having taken this subject into consideration, has thought fit, by the advice of his privy council, to put in execution immediately the measures, which have been formerly annexed by the Memorial of the 21st of March last, and which had been previously suggested to the Count de Welderen, the Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic, by a verbal declaration of Lord Stormont, one of the Secretaries of State, nearly two months before the presentation of said Memorial. For these causes the King, with the advice of his Council, declares, that the subjects of the United Provinces shall henceforward be considered on the footing of neutral powers, who are not privileged by treaties. His Majesty suspends by these presents, conditionally, and until further order, all the particular stipulations designed to favor in time of war the liberty of the navigation and commerce of the subjects of the States-General, such as they are expressed in the different treaties, which subsist between his Majesty and the Republic, and especially in the Marine Treaty concluded between Great Britain and the United Provinces at London on the 1st day of December, 1674.

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"His Majesty, animated by a sentiment of humanity, and willing to spare the interest of individuals, and not seeking their damage by an act of surprise, declares, moreover, with the advice of his Council, that the execution of the present ordinances shall not take place but at the following epochs, to wit; in the Channel and in the northern seas, twelve days after this date; from the Channel and the northern seas, as far as the Canary Islands, inclusively, both on the ocean and in the Mediterranean; the term shall be six weeks, reckoning from the date of these presents; it shall be of three months from the Canary Islands to the equinoctial line or the equator; and, finally, of six months to the parts situated beyond the equator, and, in general, in all the other parts of the world without exception, and without any more particular determination of time or place."

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Hague, April the 23d. The Report of the Committee of the Province of Groningen, confirmed by

the approbation of the States of the same Province, has been presented to the Assembly of their High Mightinesses. Here follow the contents.

"Noble and Mighty Lords,

"In compliance with the resolution of your Noble Mightinesses of the 31st of March last, in consequence of which was presented into the hands of the Committee of your Noble Mightinesses, the Report presented the 17th of February, by the deputies of their High Mightinesses to their Assembly, who had examined that which passed between Commodore Byland and the English Commodore Fielding, after the relation sent the 5th of January, by the Count de Welderen to Secretary Fagel, and after having heard and collected upon this subject the opinions of the Committees present of the colleges of the Admiralty respectively, purporting, among other things, that for the future, all merchandises, which the treaties do not positively declare to be contraband, ought, without any exception, to be under the convoy and protection of the State; the Committees have the honor to report to your Noble Mightinesses, that,

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"From the commencement of the present troubles, this State has not only done all that which his Britannic Majesty, grounding himself upon the law and the treaties, could require of the Republic, but, at the same time, has relinquished some of the prerogatives, which incontestably belonged to it; that, instead of experiencing on the part of England the reciprocation of a treatment thus friendly, the Republic has seen itself cruelly undeceived, as a great number of ships belonging to its inhabitants have been seized by the privateers, and even by the men-of-war of the King of England; ships with their cargoes, or at least one of them, declared lawful prize; violence having even been employed on many occasions against our crews, without our having been able to obtain the least indemnification or satisfaction for such grievances, notwithstanding all the repeated complaints and representations to that effect; that the expedition of Commodore Fielding appeared to have been made in conformity to positive orders; that thereby the flags of the States had been notoriously insulted, and the ships under the convoy of Commodore Byland had been not only carried into England, but had been also there detained, although it appeared, that their loading did not consist in contraband goods; that this condescension, to which the Republic was by no means obliged, had only had disagreeable and dangerous consequences, both with regard to Great Britain and other powers, as is proved by the considerations drawn up by the colleges of the Admiralty respectively. The Committees of your Noble Mightinesses would be, therefore, of opinion, that from this time forward and for the future, we ought to take under convoy and the protection of the State all the merchandises, which the treaties declare not to be contraband, and that they be so effectually protected, that we may have no further room to fear for the future, that the least insult will be committed against the flag of the States, and that, in one word, as to what remains, we ought, conformably to the treaties subsisting, to observe an exact neutrality."

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The State of Groningen has entirely conformed to the foregoing Report.

Second Report presented by the same Province.

"Noble and Mighty Lords,

"The Committees of your Noble Mightinesses, in compliance with the Resolution of the 26th of November and the 2d of December of the last year, as well as of the 23d of March last, after an examination of the three Memoirs presented by Sir Joseph Yorke, Ambassador Extraordinary of his Britannic Majesty, on the 22d of July and the 26th of November, 1779, and on the 20th of March last, to their High Mightinesses, demanding, by the first, the succors stipulated by the treaty of 1674; insisting, in the second, on a categorical answer; and finally complaining, in the last, of the combat held by Commodore Byland; on occasion of what passed with Commodore Fielding, adding thereto, — instances to the end to obtain before the expiration of three weeks a satisfactory answer concerning the succors demanded, since otherwise, his Majesty would regard this Republic on the footing of neutral powers no ways favored by treaties, and would conditionally suspend all the treaties, and particularly that of 1674, and would treat the Republic according to the ordinary law of nations; after having also examined several letters, and other pieces annexed, successively transmitted by the Count de Welderen, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of their High Mightinesses to His Britannic Majesty, they have the honor to report to your Noble Mightinesses, that after having maturely reflected upon what relates to the points in question, their advice will be, that in answer to the said three Memorials of Sir Joseph Yorke, Ambassador Extraordinary, it ought to be replied,

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"That their High Mightinesses during the troubles subsisting, which undoubtedly drew their origin from America, and from thence, by an ulterior extension of the war, have spread themselves in Europe, have, by observing an exact neutrality, giving to his Britannic Majesty the most unfeigned proofs of their attachment and of their affection, even beyond their obligations, by a condescension, to which they were by no means obliged towards England, but the consequences of which have been, besides the prejudice thereby occasioned to the commerce and navigation of this country, that there has arisen a marked dissatisfaction, although by no means provoked, of the belligerent powers; and, in particular, the preparations made at the same time by land could not but excite the most serious attention of their High Mightinesses, to the end that they might, without interruption, not deprive themselves of the means indispensably necessary, both for their own preservation and defence, by granting the succors demanded; that they ought rather to think of demanding themselves, in consequence of the aforementioned treaties, the succors, which would be so necessary to them, upon the least apprehension of the continuance of the same preparations. That their High Mightinesses, founded upon good reasons,

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as well as upon the favorable declarations of his Majesty so often reiterated, ought to have expected a reciprocal affection and a friendly treatment towards the Republic, at least, that he would not have disputed a right, stipulated clearly by the most solemn treaties, and of which, so soon after the conclusion of the treaty of 1674, even before the war was entirely finished, the subjects of his Majesty, to the detriment of this country, make so free a use.

"Their High Mightinesses, penetrated with the most lively grief, have nevertheless perceived, that so far from their good intentions and proceedings having operated to any happy effect, it has happened, on the contrary, that several acts diametrically opposed to justice, have been authorised and executed by connivance, under the illusory pretext of opposition even to the same connivance, and this, in spite of multiplied efforts employed by the Republic to obviate such abuses; that, moreover, the rencounter between Commodore Fielding and Commodore Byland is of a nature, that according to the law of nations, the flag of a sovereign power being, in fact, everywhere sacred, the declaration made by the Count de Byland, an officer commanding in chief a squadron in the name of the Republic whereof he is a subject, ought to have been regarded as authentic, and to have stopped at once all suspicions, and destroyed the intelligence falsely given; from whence it follows, that the said Commodore Byland has not undertaken anything, but for the maintenance and protection of the honor and respect due to the flag of the State; while the seizure and detention of the ships are equally a part of those objects, concerning which, their High Mightinesses ought also to demand a satisfaction convenient to his Majesty, as well as a declaration unequivocal for the time to come; adding, at the same time, that, after a mature consideration upon the situation in which the Republic is at present, their High Mightinesses are perfectly acquainted with the succors demanded by his Britannic Majesty."

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The States of the Province of Groningen have conformed themselves to the report before mentioned.

Hague, 22d of April. "We learn that the Province of Gueldres has determined to grant unlimited convoys, and, at the same time, to refuse the succors demanded by Great Britain; by means of which, the Seven United Provinces are actually of one unanimous sentiment upon this object."

Hague, 23d of April. "We learn, that the deputies of the Province of Holland have already been instructed to carry to the Assembly of the States-General, the opinion of their high constituents concerning the invitation, which the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy of the Empress of Russia, has made in the name of her Majesty, to their High Mightinesses, to protect in concert the navigation of the neuters; and that this opinion, announced in a resolution of the State of the Province, bearing date the 13th of April, tends to accept the invitation in terms full of attachment and gratitude, declaring, 'that their High Mightinesses regard the communication, which has been made to them, as a signal token of the benevolence of her Majesty towards the Republic; that they honor it, and believe it to be their duty to answer it with sincerity and cordiality; that they consider it also as a new proof of the magnanimity and the justice of her Majesty, which are universally acknowledged, both the end which she proposes and the measures she has projected to maintain in the present war, a neutrality the most rigorous between the belligerent powers, and for protecting, not only the honor of the Russian flag, and the safety of the commerce and navigation of her subjects, in not permitting that any of the belligerent powers should strike at it; but also, by establishing by her cares the liberties and repose of Europe upon foundations the most solid, of equity, the law of nations, and the treaties subsisting, and to give validity to an equitable system of navigation and of commerce in favor of the neutral powers; that their High Mightinesses, desiring to observe with her Imperial Majesty in the present war a scrupulous neutrality, have but too much experienced the losses to which the navigation and commerce of neutral nations are exposed by the uncertain and fluctuating ideas of the belligerent powers with regard to the rights of neuters, in proportion as they are guided by their private interest and by the operations of the war; that their High Mightinesses judge with her Imperial Majesty, that it is of the last necessity that this law should be fixed upon solid principles, and maintained in concert by the neutral maritime powers; that for what concerns the determination of the said right, their High Mightinesses conform themselves entirely to the five points contained in the declaration, which her Majesty has made to the Courts of Versailles, Madrid, and London; that after her example, they are ready to transmit parallel — to the belligerent powers, and that they are very much disposed to enter into conferences with her Majesty and the other neutral powers, upon the measures by which the liberty of navigation and commerce may be maintained in concert, in a manner the most efficacious, both for the future and for the present, observing, at the same time, an exact neutrality among the belligerent powers.'

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"The same opinion tends also to cause to be transmitted the copy of such a resolution, not only to the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy of her Majesty to the Republic, but also to M. de Swart, Resident of their High Mightinesses at Petersburg, and to their Ministers at the Courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon, with orders to these last to second, as far as possible, the proceedings of the Court of Russia, and to act in concert with the Ministers of her Imperial Majesty, &c."

Congress will be able to draw just inferences from these important papers of State.

The principle, which the English contend for, has no other foundation but the insular situation of Great Britain, and the convenience of that nation. The principle, which the neutral powers are contending for, is evidently laid in the common good of nations; in the ease, safety, convenience, happiness, and prosperity of mankind in general. But we shall see, whether obstinacy and fierce passions will, at length, give way in one instance. At present there is no appearance of it. On the contrary, I see no way for the English to escape a war with Holland and Russia, Denmark and

Sweden, and, perhaps, Portugal, unless they should be interrupted in their career by a war with one another at home.

When, where, or in what manner, we shall see the unravelling of the vast plot, which is acting in the world, is known only to Providence. Although my mind has been full twenty years preparing to expect great scenes, yet I confess the wonders of this Revolution exceed all that I ever foresaw, or imagined. That our country, so young as it is, so humble as it is, thinking but lately so meanly of itself, should thus interest the passions, as well as employ the reason of all mankind, in its favor, and effect in so short a space of time, not only thirteen revolutions of government at home, but so completely accomplish a revolution in the system of Europe, and in the sentiments of every nation in it, is what no human wisdom, perhaps, could foresee. [37]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 29th, 1780.

Sir,

Walsingham sailed from St Helens the 8th with the Thunderer, the Ramilies, the Berwick, and the Egmont, of seventyfour guns, the Scarborough, of twenty, and the fire-ships, the Blast and the Salamander; only four ships of the line. On the 11th Admiral Graves followed him, with the London, of ninetyeight guns, the Bedford, the Shrewsbury, the Royal Oak, of seventyfour, the Prudent, and the America, of sixtyfour, and the Amphitrite, of twentyfour; these, with the four of Admiral Rodney, make fourteen ships of the line. Admiral Parker, it is said, has not more than nine fit for service, which will make twentythree, supposing that Graves has the same destination. Many people, however, believe he is going to Canada, in order to be beforehand of the fleet of Brest, which the English suppose has designs upon that Province. My intelligence from London is, however, that Graves is intended for the North American station, perhaps New York or Georgia. But the orders to Graves were so suddenly determined on and given, that there has not yet been time to discover with certainty his destination. [38]

The accounts are, that Walsingham returned on account of contrary winds with his numerous fleet of merchant ships to Plymouth; that he sailed again on the 13th, and after sailing twenty leagues, with a good wind, he returned a second time, imagining that he saw a French fleet of men-of-war. The winds have been generally contrary since, and we have not yet a certain account of his sailing a third time.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, April 29th, 1780.

Sir,

The principal officers named for the command of the English fleet in the English Channel, are Sir Charles Hardy, Admiral of the White, Commander in Chief; Vice Admiral, Admiral Barrington, of the Blue, second; Vice Admiral Darby, of the Blue, third; and Rear Admiral Digby, of the Blue, fourth.

The next day after the departure of the fleet of Commodore Walsingham, the London, of ninetyeight guns, commanded by Admiral Graves, the Shrewsbury, the Royal Oak, of seventyfour, the America, the Prudent, of sixtyfour, and the Amphitrite, of twentyfour, having set sail from St Helens, and the Resolution as well as the Invincible of seventyfour, intended as part of the squadron, the crews of the two last vessels refused to sail until they should be paid their wages, and have received their shares of the prize of the Protée. The eleventh of the month, the Resolution, Commodore Ogle, set sail to join Admiral Graves, the crew having at length consented to serve, when they saw their ship surrounded by other vessels, ready to fire upon her by order of Lord Longford. The crew of the Invincible had more obstinacy, and Admiral Pye was forced to send on board the Captains Balfour, Duncan, Holt, and Barkner, to persuade them to return to their duty. These officers called up upon deck the mutinous sailors, whom they harangued, and to whom they represented, that the act of Parliament, to regulate the payment of wages on board the men-of-war, did not authorise them to require more than one month's advance. They did not however submit, and the captains having observed, that among them there [39]

were, above all, four more remarkably obstinate, sent them to the Admiral, who put them in irons. The next day the Admiral ordered Captain Faulkner to tell his people, that if they would submit, he would restore the four men whom they had arrested. This proposition was not listened to, and it was not until the 14th, that Rear Admiral Graves set sail from St Helens, without this last vessel.

The Admiralty has sent orders to Portsmouth for a court martial upon the most mutinous of the crew of the *Invincible*, and it is expected, that as examples, some of them must lose their lives.

I have before informed Congress of a resolution of the County of York against the American war. This has been since repeated by the freeholders of the County of Surry, at a meeting held at Epsom the 14th of April. Mr Nicholls, in an able speech, proposed the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted. "That the American war originating from the corrupt influence of the Crown, and the ill founded assertions of the King's Ministers in Parliament, is the cause of the present calamitous situation of this country." This resolution was unanimously adopted. He then recommended a second resolution similar to that of the freeholders of Yorkshire, condemning the continuance of offensive operations in America, which was likewise carried unanimously. [40]

Mr Budgen then moved a third resolution for thanking those members of Parliament, who had uniformly reprobated the American war, which was likewise carried without opposition.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. Since the above was written, I have found a resolution of the County of Hertford, of the 17th of April.

"Resolved unanimously, that the opinion of the present assembly is, that a war against North America is evidently a measure, which, by obliging us to carry all our forces to that quarter, puts us out of a condition to resist with vigor, as we might otherwise do, the united efforts of France and Spain, while the said war produces no other effect upon the Americans than to add to the enmity, which has but too long subsisted between us. An enmity, of which we have felt the fatal effects, and which, by putting an obstacle to our union, threatens England with a ruin as complete as it is inevitable."

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, May 2d, 1780.

Sir,

On the twentysixth of April the Duc de Vauguyon, Ambassador of His Most Christian Majesty to the States-General, presented a Memorial to their High Mightinesses, announcing the abolition of the duty of fifteen per cent, to which the greatest part of Dutch merchandises had been subject on their entering into France, as well as the resolution of the Council of State, taken upon this subject. The following are the contents of the Memoir and the Resolution.

"High and Mighty Lords,

"The political system of the King is essentially founded upon the invariable principles of justice and moderation. His Majesty has given the most unequivocal proofs of it from the beginning of the troubles, which have arisen between him and the King of England, in pre-engaging all the neutral powers, by the display of a disposition the most favorable to their prosperity, and by proposing to them no other conditions than those of the most absolute impartiality. His Majesty saw himself, with the most sincere regret, obliged not to acknowledge this character in the resolution of the States-General, of the 19th of November, 1778, by which your High Mightinesses suspended the effects of your protection, relative to one branch of commerce, the liberty of which was assured to you by the public laws of equity, and the most precise stipulations of treaties. The King then instructed me to announce to your High Mightinesses, that if you determined thus to make the sacrifice of one part of your rights to his enemies, his Majesty could not preserve to your subjects the advantages conditionally promised by his last regulation, nor the ancient favors, which their commerce enjoyed in his States, and which are not the result of any treaty, but of a hereditary benevolence and affection. Your High Mightinesses assured his Majesty with earnestness, that you were decided to observe the most exact neutrality during the continuance of the troubles between France and England. But if you announced, that the act, which suspended the effects of the efficacious protection of the Republic in favor of ships loaded with ship timber, ought to be regarded as in force until it should be afterwards confirmed, you declared at the same time, that all discussion upon this matter ought to be suspended, until after the deliberations which were to ascertain the convoys. [42]

"His Majesty not perceiving in this new disposition, any real alteration of intention, thought that he could not avoid setting bounds to the advantages granted in the different parts of his kingdom to the Dutch commerce, whilst your High Mightinesses continued to suspend, in favor of the enemies of his Crown, the exercise of the rights the most solidly established; but he was pleased

to preserve them to the different members of the Republic in proportion as they adopted a system, which at the same time that it is conformable to his views is essentially just. He has applauded the remonstrances of your High Mightinesses to the Court of London, and the efforts which you have made to recover the means of restoring to the flag of the United Provinces its ancient consideration, as well as the positive order, which you have given to a squadron, to hold itself ready to convoy and protect all vessels loaded with objects not comprehended among merchandises of contraband, from the time that unlimited convoys should be resolved on, and he has constantly desired, that your High Mightinesses would cease to lay obstacles in the way of the testimonies of his affection, by attaching yourselves entirely to the fundamental principles of your interest, informed of your definitive intentions, in this regard, and assured of the explanation, which your High Mightinesses are determined to make of their neutrality, by granting an efficacious and indefinite protection to the commerce and navigation of your subjects. His Majesty has heard with pleasure the several representations, which several members of the Union, and especially the Prince, who is at the head of the Republic, have made to him relative to the restraints, which the commerce of different Provinces experiences in the ports of his kingdom, and his Majesty has ordered me to declare to your High Mightinesses, that he has revoked by a decree of his Council, of the 22d of April, 1780, an authentic copy of which I have the honor to present, those of the 14th of January, the 27th of April, the 5th of June, and the 18th of September, 1779, but he would not confine himself to re-establish thus the subjects of your High Mightinesses, in the enjoyment of favors, which they experienced before the publication of those new laws; in all the advantages conditionally promised by his regulation, concerning the commerce and navigation of neutrals, he would give them a signal proof of his benevolence, and he orders me to declare to your High Mightinesses, that he has ordered the return of all the sums received by the overseers of his Farms, in virtue of the said decrees, he flatters himself, that testimonies so important of his affection, will convince your High Mightinesses, not only that he takes an interest the most sincere in the prosperity of the United Provinces, but also that justice, moderation and beneficence form the essential and invariable basis of his conduct and of his proceedings."

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Decree of the King's Council of State of the 22d of April, mentioned in the foregoing Memorial.

"The King, being informed of the dispositions made by the States-General of the United Provinces for complying with the reciprocity required by his regulation of the 26th of July, 1778, concerning the navigation of neutral vessels, and his Majesty, willing in consequence of these same dispositions to give a new proof of his affection to the said United Provinces, is determined to put an end to the restraints, which the commerce of their subjects have experienced in his States, to which end, the report being heard, the King being in his Council, hath ordained, and ordains as follows.

"ARTICLE I. His Majesty has revoked and revokes the decree of his Council of the 14th January, 1779, which subjected to a duty of freight the vessels of the said subjects of the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries; those of the 27th of April and 5th of June, 1779, which establish a new tariff for the objects proceeding from their growth, fishery, manufacture, and commerce, and that of the 18th of September, 1779, which prohibits the entry of the cheeses of North Holland in the kingdom.

"ARTICLE II. His Majesty confirms, in favor of the said subjects of the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, the advantages conditionally promised by the dispositions of his regulation of the 26th of July, 1778, concerning the navigation of neutral vessels in time of war.

"ARTICLE III. His Majesty, willing to give to the said subjects of the States-General a signal proof of his beneficence, has ordained and ordains a restitution of the sums of money received by the overseers of his Farms, in virtue of the decrees before mentioned.

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"Done in the King's Council of State, the 22d of April, 1780."

The news from the Hague of the 26th of April is, "that the deliberations of the different Provinces, which compose the Republic, have been continued these last weeks without interruption, and all the opinions are unanimously agreed upon three important objects, which make the matter of them, viz. First, the succor demanded by Great Britain; secondly, the convoys to be granted to merchant ships; thirdly, the invitation of the Empress of Russia to accede to an armed neutrality. The respective States of the seven Provinces have all been of opinion, first; to excuse themselves from giving the succors demanded. Secondly; to grant convoys to all merchant ships bearing the flag of the Republic, whatever may be their cargoes, without any other exception than that of contraband regulated by treaties. Thirdly; to accept with gratitude the invitation, and to enter upon this subject into negotiation, with the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy Extraordinary of Her Imperial Majesty.

"We learn, even that the States-General have already taken resolutions conformable to this opinion. The affair of the attack of the convoy, commanded by the Count de Byland, does not less engage the attention of the government of the Republic. The States of the Province of Holland and of West Friesland have already formed upon this subject the instruction, which they have directed their deputies to carry to the Assembly of their High Mightinesses; it tends, in substance, to represent to the Court of London, 'that their High Mightinesses are by no means satisfied with the answer of Lord Stormont, given the 16th of March, to the just representations of their High Mightinesses concerning the violence done to their convoy, inasmuch as this answer only serves to cast upon them, by strained arguments, the blame of that which happened, and to

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represent, against all truth, their officer as having been the aggressor. That their High Mightinesses, as well to justify themselves in the eyes of all Europe, as to convince, if it is possible, Great Britain, have thought it their duty to represent further, that naval stores not being merchandises of contraband according to the express letter of the treaties, their visitation and detention, made by order, especially under the flag of their High Mightinesses, is a direct attack of their flag, as well as of their independence and sovereignty. That, as to the allegation of the treaty of 1674, made by Lord Stormont, concerning the visit of merchandises suspected, the contrary of what he advances appears in a manner the most evident, by the simple reading of the treaty. That the nature of a convoy rendering all visits unnecessary, the articles fifth and sixth of this treaty confine themselves manifestly to single ships, from which, nevertheless, they cannot in this require more than the exhibition of their sea letters, and with regard to vessels detained for an enemy's port, that of their passports; that thus the conduct of Commodore Fielding, approved by his Majesty, implies an open violation of this treaty; by consequence, neither the orders of their High Mightinesses, nor the act of their officer charged with their execution, having done any injury to the treaties, nor any hostilities having been committed on their part, but Commodore Fielding having employed, for the execution of his orders, the force of arms against the convoy of the Republic, there does not exist the least cause of complaint on the part of his Majesty; but on the part of their High Mightinesses, they have had the most just reason of complaint, and that they ought to insist still (as their High Mightinesses do insist, in the manner the most serious,) upon a satisfaction and a suitable reparation, as well as upon the release, without further form of process, of the merchant ships and their cargoes sailing under the convoy of the Republic, detained by force and violence contrary to the tenor of treaties, and condemned by the Judge of the Court of Admiralty with the same injustice, with which they were attacked by Commodore Fielding, taken, and carried into England. That conformably to these principles, the Count de Welderren shall be charged to give a reply to Lord Stormont, and to support it the most effectually, as often as he shall judge it to be further useful, &c.'

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"If, on one side, the desire of the Republic to preserve an exact impartiality in the present troubles of Europe, draws upon her the displeasure of Great Britain, on the other side, she sees an end put to those restraints which France had laid on her commerce.

"The Royal College of the Admiralty of Stockholm, has sent to all the agents and consuls, who reside in foreign countries, an ordinance, by which it is announced to all masters of Swedish ships, that necessary convoys would be given for the protection of the commerce of the subjects of this kingdom."

It is quite unnecessary for me to observe to Congress, that all these political and maritime commotions tend either to peace, or to the full employment of all the forces of our enemy, and, consequently, to our liberty and tranquillity.

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The general run of speculations and of conversation throughout Europe is upon peace. It seems the general opinion, that Great Britain will not venture upon so many dangers as lie all around her. I wish I could bring myself to think so, but I confess I cannot as yet. Signal success on the part of the allies might compel them to it; but signal success in favor of the English would urge them giddily on, no one can say to what lengths.

There is a speculative article from Brussels, the 25th of April, that is worth transmitting to Congress. "The news from Holland speaks of nothing but the sensation, which the declaration of Russia has produced. The greatest part of the Provinces, which have already given their opinions upon the Memorials of Sir Joseph Yorke, to excuse themselves from furnishing England with the succors demanded, have been eager to declare, that the proposition of the Court of Russia could not be more advantageous than in the present circumstances, and that it ought to be accepted. The English party is very much disconcerted by this event, which brings forward a new order of things; this party strives to excite a fear, that the difference of the principles established by particular treaties among the neutral powers respectively and the belligerent powers, will form an obstacle to the execution of a plan so salutary, which may serve forever as a rule in this matter. We know, that among the belligerent powers, France has always thought that it was just to leave a freedom of navigation to neutral powers; it is well known, that she has a long time respected this liberty, and that if she has afterwards made regulations, which restrain that of Holland, it was because she has been forced to it, because it was very natural that she should seek to stop the vessels bound to the ports of England, when this nation made no scruple to stop those which were bound to hers. And it is well known, too, that she never took his part until after she had employed the method of representation to determine the Hollanders to protect their own commerce.

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Spain appears equally determined to use no more methods of rigor and severity towards the vessels of the Republic. There is only England, who appears to oppose the general wish, and she ought to perceive, that it is her own conduct, which has brought forth the events of which she complains. If she had had more moderation and justice, the project of an armed neutrality would not have taken place.

They write from Holland; "We flatter ourselves, that the armed neutrality may contribute to accelerate peace. It appears hitherto, that it is England alone, which puts an obstacle to it, and it is difficult for her to take her part in it. We doubt not that the independence of America, which perhaps is already tacitly acknowledged by all the Courts of Europe, will be the fundamental basis of an accommodation. England at the same time will be forced to announce a pretended pre-eminence of flag, equally contrary to the laws of nations, and to the first notions of common

sense. The general liberty of the seas, the re-establishment of the respective possessions in the State in which there were before hostilities, perhaps the restitution of Gibraltar to its natural masters, and the adoption of the maritime code proposed by Russia, will be most probably the necessary consequences of the peace."

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 3d, 1780.

Sir,

The substance of a cartel for a general exchange of prisoners, made upon the sea between France and England, has been published; it was signed at Versailles the 12th of March last, by M. le Hor, one of the principal clerks of the office of the Marine, authorised to this purpose by the King, and at London the 28th of the same month, by Messrs John Bell, Walter Farquharson, P. Corbett, and Robert Lulman, Commissioners of the King of England. This treaty, equally useful to the two nations, dictated by sentiments, which do honor to the powers at war, and to humanity, will it is said be distinguished by the true philosophers, who prefer a useful operation to folio volumes, which talk of morals and humanity. The most perfect equality and reciprocity is established.

"The prisoners shall be exchanged man for man, according to their rank and qualities, or for a certain number of men as equivalent, or for certain sums of money in form of ransoms. A French Vice Admiral shall be exchanged against an English Admiral, having command; a Lieutenant General against an Admiral carrying his flag at ——. A Vice Admiral, commanding a squadron, against a Rear Admiral; the Captains of ships commanding divisions, or having the rank of Brigadiers against Commodores; the Captains of ships having the rank of Colonels against Post Captains of three years standing, whose rank answers to that of Colonels; the Lieutenants of vessels commanding frigates, from twenty to fifty guns, and having the rank of Lieutenant Colonels against all other Post Captains who have the same rank; the Lieutenants of vessels of the rank of Majors against the Masters and Commanders, or Captains who are not Post Captains; all the other Lieutenants of vessels against Lieutenants without distinction; the Captains of fire ships of the rank of Captains of infantry, Ensigns of vessels of the rank of Captains of infantry, Lieutenants of frigates, or Captains of pinks, on establishment or for a campaign, and having the same rank, against Lieutenants, and in want of these, against Midshipmen; the Gardes du Pavillon against Midshipmen; the Marine officers and subalterns against those of the same denomination or of equal rank; the respective equivalent for all the ranks in men and in money, is from sixty men, or sixty pounds sterling, descending to pence, to two men, or two pounds sterling; the sailors are to be exchanged man for man, and the equivalent is one pound sterling; the same gradation is to be observed for the officers of the Marine, and officers of land forces serving as marines, and land officers not serving on board the vessels, but taken at sea, as well as the common soldiers. Every three months there shall be stated accounts of exchanges, conformable to the foregoing regulations."

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They have also ascertained the price per head of the transportation of prisoners, as well as of their subsistence; they have also regulated the conditions of the exchange of officers and other prisoners made in merchant vessels, privateers, or others, which are not the King's ships. Passengers, not being in the service of land or sea, when they shall have been taken, no matter in what vessel, shall not be regarded as prisoners, but shall be set at liberty, without being put into the accounts of exchanges, when they shall have proved that they are in the case of the exception. All persons, no matter of what denomination, who shall be shipwrecked in any vessel whatsoever, at least, if it is not in attempting to land, or in protecting some depredation upon the coast or in the islands of one or the other of the two kingdoms, shall be immediately set at liberty, and shall be furnished with the means of returning to their respective countries, as well as with clothing, if they have need of it, as soon as their situation shall be known, and the measures necessary for the purpose can be taken.

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I have the honor to be, with respect, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

FROM ELBRIDGE GERRY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, May 5th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

The resolutions of Congress for calling in and cancelling the two hundred millions of dollars emitted by them, have in general been well received. The depreciation is stopped, and specie, which before the passing of the Resolves, was sold for upwards of seventy for one, is now current at sixty, and has been lately at fiftyfive. The advantage of this plan will be greatest to the landholder, inasmuch as the national debt, including certificates and foreign demands, does not now exceed five millions sterling, which is but a trifling sum compared with the £200,000,000 sterling due from Great Britain.

Another benefit resulting from it, is a supply of five millions of dollars, of the new emission, every dollar of which is equal to forty dollars of the old emission. Indeed this must be called in before that can be realised; nevertheless there is a greater demand among all ranks for continental money, than there has been since the commencement of the war, and specie is no longer hoarded by the disaffected or timid. [53]

With respect to our resources, Congress are at present much in want of money, and it is a happy circumstance, for their economy is in proportion to their wants. The demands on the treasury are generally answered by warrants on the several States, which are careful by some means or other to discharge the drafts. The taxes are rendered very heavy, but the collection goes on, and I doubt not the army will be well fed and paid. Military stores and clothing must, however, be procured on credit in Europe, as well as a considerable loan to serve as a fund for drawing on in case of necessity. Trade and privateering are brisk, and there is a plenty of goods of every kind excepting military, but no money to purchase them. This is easily accounted for, since the whole sum in circulation, as Congress have fixed it, is only five million dollars. Our privateers and commerce have nevertheless suffered much by the cruisers of the enemy, who have the command of the seacoast.

It is much to be wished, that the Court of France would order a squadron superior to the enemy, to be stationed in some part of the United States, as the best and only means of putting a speedy end to the war. It is almost impossible to conceive the havoc, that our privateers made of the enemy's cruisers and transports, during the time that the Count d'Estaing was at Rhode Island and Charleston. But our losses at present nearly equal our captures. Indeed that very worthy officer, aware of those and other advantages, ordered the Count de Grasse to be stationed at the Chesapeake, but his plan was defeated by the tempestuousness of the weather. Had the latter arrived with his squadron, Charleston would not have been besieged, and three or four of our frigates, which are now in Ashley's River, and will probably be destroyed, would have been employed in intercepting the enemy's transports. [54]

I forgot to mention a resolution of Congress to pay off the continental certificates, according to the value of money at the time of their being respectively issued. This is but justice, and will undoubtedly be satisfactory to foreigners. Bills of exchange are now at fortyfive for one, and will be higher in consequence of the great risk of sending vessels from the Eastern States to the Southern for produce.

I am, &c.

ELBRIDGE GERRY.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 8th, 1780.

Sir,

The proceedings of the United Provinces of the Low Countries are at this period so much attended to by mankind, and are likely to have such extensive and lasting consequences to us as well as to Europe, that Congress will excuse my troubling them with them in detail, however dry and unentertaining they may be.

Hague, April 30th, 1780. "We learn that their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, the States of Holland and West Friesland, have taken a resolution which had been universally adopted, and that it had been written to the Count de Welderen, Minister of their High Mightinesses at the Court of London, to there represent, [55]

"That their High Mightinesses had been by no means satisfied with the answer given the 16th of March, by Lord Stormont, to the just representations made in the name of their High Mightinesses, by M. de Welderen, their Envoy, relative to the violences committed upon the convoy of the Republic, inasmuch as this answer by arguments destitute of all foundation, endeavors to cast the blame of what happened upon their High Mightinesses, and to make the commandant of their squadron be considered as the aggressor, which is absolutely false; that their High Mightinesses as well for their own justification in the eyes of all Europe, as to convince, as far as in their power, his Britannic Majesty of the insolidity of the answer of Lord Stormont, and with what *incredible contempt of treaties* their convoy has been attacked, without

having on their part provoked so hostile an action, have resolved in substance to represent;— That their High Mightinesses, having always held in high estimation the declaration made by his Britannic Majesty of the sentiments of affection for the Republic, flatter themselves that they have given his Majesty, during the continuance of the present troubles, convincing proofs of their esteem, and of their sincere desire to maintain and strengthen the ties of this friendship, which for so many years had not failed to secure the reciprocal prosperity of the two nations; that still animated with the same sentiments, persisting also in the same principles, and having nothing so much at heart as the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of the rights, assured by the ancient treaties, their High Mightinesses are intimately affected, that his Majesty will consider as a provocation the necessity of that defence to which they found themselves reduced, in consequence of positive orders given by his Majesty himself, and not having been able to make their representations upon this subject attended to, see themselves obliged to declare that they can and ought to order to be convoyed by vessels of war, all the materials for ship building, which shall not be transported to the succor of the enemies of his Britannic Majesty, the said materials forming one of the principal articles of the free navigation and of the commerce stipulated by the treaties; but all the merchandises of contraband being nevertheless to be excepted. That the cargoes of materials for ship building not being considered as contraband by the letter of the treaties, ought not to be subjected to any visit or detention, above all when they are found under the flag of their High Mightinesses; which, nevertheless, has been done in consequence of orders given upon this subject, and cannot but be regarded as a direct and unprovoked attack of their flag, as well as of their independence and sovereignty. That as to what Lord Stormont advances in saying, that in virtue of the treaty of 1674, all merchant vessels loaded with suspected merchandises ought to be visited, to the end to excuse by this assertion the conduct of Mr Fielding, it is but a vain allegation, contradicted by the very words of the said treaty, in which, in truth, there is no mention made of suspected merchandises, but only in the third article of commodities of contraband, which are particularly enumerated. That the convoy, by its nature, rendering useless all visits, the fifth and sixth articles of the said treaty of 1674, relative to rencounters at sea, explain themselves upon the following case. We there find literally,

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'That when any private vessel, subject to one of the contracting powers, shall meet in open sea a vessel of war, or other vessel provided with a commission from the other power, and that the said vessel shall not be under convoy, she shall not be held only barely to the exhibition of her sea letters to justify the property of her cargo, and this in consequence of the 8th article of said treaty, except, nevertheless, when a merchant vessel shall be destined for an enemy's port, she shall be obliged also to show her passport, containing the list of effects which shall be on board, and to show that she is not loaded with any of the articles prohibited by the 3d article of the said treaty.'

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"That, consequently, their High Mightinesses ought to conclude, that the assertion of Lord Stormont concerning the pretended exception of the said treaty, is but an extension of a regulation which he alleges for his justification, and that thus the conduct of Mr Fielding, approved by his Majesty, is a blow direct and manifest struck at the same treaty. That with regard to the property, as well as the nature of the cargo of the vessels, which were under the convoy of the Republic, Mr Fielding would have been able to have abundantly informed himself by the Count de Byland, to whom their High Mightinesses, although by no means obliged to this act of complaisance on their part, had given permission to consent to this demand, provided always, that the maintenance of the rights of the subjects of the Republic should not have suffered by it, and that, moreover, all possible moderation should be previously used. Their High Mightinesses could not do any other, than approve in all its points the conduct of Count de Byland. That thus, in contempt of all law and reason, the vessels under convoy having been taken, and the judgment of the legality of their detention sent to the decision of judges, who, as they ought not to pronounce upon this fact but according to the regulations made by his Majesty, are ready to declare lawful the confiscation of materials of ship building. That notwithstanding this, no breach of treaties having been made, either by the orders of their High Mightinesses, or by the conduct of their officer charged to execute them, nor any hostility committed, but, on the contrary, Mr Fielding, in consequence of orders which he had received, having employed the violence of arms against the convoy of the Republic, it is not certainly on the side of his Majesty that there ought to exist the least right of complaint, but rather on that of their High Mightinesses, who have subjects the most lawful on which to make them, and to insist, in the strongest manner, on obtaining a suitable satisfaction and reparation, as well as the restitution of the merchant vessels and their cargoes, which, being under the convoy of the State, have been, against the faith of treaties, attacked and stopped by Mr Fielding, taken and carried into England, and against all form of justice and equity, so unjustly condemned by the Judges of the Admiralty; and that, finally, M. de Welderen shall be charged to conform himself to the aforesaid instructions, to demand a positive answer upon this subject from Lord Stormont, and to do upon this object all that he shall judge suitable to the circumstances, in employing to this effect his good offices and all the efforts of the strictest duty."

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Their High Mightinesses have also taken the following resolution. "Having received a letter from the representative of His Most Serene Highness, and from the directors of the general and granted Company of the West Indies, committees of the respective chambers to the assembly of ten, sitting at Amsterdam, written from that city the 18th of this month, and whereof the contents are, that in consequence of, and to the end to satisfy the resolution of their High Mightinesses of the 12th precedent, containing their report upon the petition of divers merchants and proprietors of ships residing in this country, and trading with the West Indies; shewing, thereby, to their High Mightinesses, how it was prejudicial to the commerce and navigation of this country;

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'1st. That when the vessels of other European nations transport to the Colonies of this State, situated in the West Indies, and principally at St Eustatia, merchandises, without paying the duties of lest and of recognition, that the petitioners and other inhabitants of the Republic, going from the ports of this country, were, nevertheless, obliged to pay to the West India Company;

'2dly. That if the said foreign vessels should enjoy an advantage so notable, as to transport from America, even the merchandises and productions of the country, in the ports of their habitation or others situated in Europe, and without the limits of this Republic, without paying any duty of lest or of recognition, while, nevertheless, the petitioners see themselves not only obliged in going there and returning to pay these duties to the West India Company, but also to engage themselves under caution, not to return into any port of Europe except those of this State. They pray that a remedy may be provided for this inconvenience;'

"Upon which having deliberated, it has been thought proper, conditionally, and until a final decision of their High Mightinesses, that it should be determined by these presents, that foreign European vessels, importing merchandise of any sort to the islands of this State in the West Indies, without having acquitted the sums due in this country for the duties of lest and of recognition, shall be subjected and obliged, after their arrival, to there pay exactly all the duties, without exception, which the vessels of the Republic are held to discharge before their departure from Europe; finally, that conditionally, and until after an ulterior disposition of their High Mightinesses, it should be seriously forbidden to these foreign European vessels, to load in the Colonies of the State, merchandises, except under the same obligations and restrictions imposed upon ships of the Republic, to wit, to sail only from, and to return to the ports of this country, and paying the same duties of lest, and sale, and recognition, which the ships of the inhabitants of the State are obliged to pay, on returning to the said ports of the Republic."

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Hague, 3d of May. "There has been sent to the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, a resolution of the Province of Gueldres, conforming wholly to that taken by the Province of Holland, touching the memorial of the Prince Gallitzin, and which authorises at the same time their committees to assist at the conferences and negotiations, to continue them, and to transmit the result of them to the deliberations of their Noble Mightinesses, to the end that they in course take a resolution according to the exigence of the case, and the importance of this object.

"There have also been presented three resolutions of the Province of Zealand; the first, concerning the requisition made by the Admiralty of the quarter of the north, soliciting a subsidy of three hundred and seventyfive thousand florins, and to be put in a state to be able afterwards to pay the annual interest of it; in consequence of which, the States of Zealand consent to the borrowing of the said sum upon an interest of two and a half per cent, opposing themselves, nevertheless, to the granting to the said College an annual subsidy, to be divided in quotas on the respective Provinces.

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"The second of these resolutions contains an answer to a letter of the Admiralty on the Meuse, concerning the indemnification of the losses suffered for the transportation of the Ambassador Van Haefton, at Constantinople. Finally the third resolution is relative to the Memoir of the Prince Gallitzin, and has for its object to concur in the opening of conferences, provided, that these do not in anything alter the system of an exact neutrality, adopted by the Republic, nor the treaties subsisting; with a further insinuation to the gentlemen, their ordinary deputies, to abstain from concurring in any final conclusion upon this object, without the consent of their Noble Mightinesses and without having previously informed them of what may be projected in this respect.

"The States of Guilderland, in their resolution relative to the granting of an unlimited convoy, have also declared, that they had believed they had foundation to flatter themselves, that the condescension of this State, upon the representations of the King of Great Britain, to the effect to suspend conditionally the protection due to their subjects, and which was assured to them by the treaty of 1674, would have sufficiently proved the desire, with which the Republic was animated to testify to his Majesty as well as to Great Britain, a deference the most marked, preserving always the observation of an exact neutrality, but that convinced of the contrary, as well by the declarations as by even the hostilities committed against the subjects of the Republic, they have now thought themselves founded in putting an end to the limitation of convoys, in granting a free course to the protection of commerce, according to the treaties and the law of nations. For which reason, the aforesaid States would no more make any difficulty to concur to maintain with the forces of the country, the right of the Republic, lawfully acquired by solemn treaties, but that not being, nevertheless, intimately convinced, that in case of a further opposition the Republic is in a state of defence sufficient upon the sea, it would consequently be to be feared, that such a part would not serve, but to throw the State into still greater embarrassments, and operate an effect contrary to the end proposed. Thus then, supposing that the high confederates should judge it indispensably necessary to grant an unlimited convoy, the intention of their Noble Mightinesses would not be in any degree to retard or suspend such a resolution, but on the contrary, to show their condescension and their desire to contribute to the unanimity of this State, they would take away all reflections, of what importance soever they may appear to them, submitting themselves to the penetration of those of the confederates, who, being more interested in navigation and maritime commerce, have already authorised and instructed their committees, in the generality, to consent with the concurrence of other Provinces to an unlimited convoy."

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We read also in another resolution of the States of Friesland, these remarkable words, "that the Empress of Russia has never given a more shining proof, than in the present conjuncture, of her

attachment to this Republic, which ought to engage the State to correspond by sentiments proportioned to those, which her Majesty has discovered, both for the well being and the safety of her own States and subjects, and to procure to all Europe a perfect tranquillity founded upon motives the most equitable, and upon treaties, and to the end to prevent and hinder for the future the damages, which commerce and navigation have suffered until this time, and to maintain and cause to be observed a perfect neutrality between the belligerent powers."

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I may conclude this letter by observing, that I am informed, they talk in Holland of laying an embargo, to prevent the English from making many prizes, and that there is another rumor of opening the harbor of Antwerp. If there is any serious thought of this, it must be the fruit of English intrigue with Austria.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 8th, 1780.

Sir,

At the same time that the conduct of Great Britain towards the neutral powers is marked by a severity, that is without example, that of France and Spain is distinguished by a moderation and liberality, that deserves to be imitated. I have before transmitted to Congress the declaration of the King of France, and the decree of his Council, abolishing the restrictions on the Holland trade. In this letter I shall give an account of the conduct of Spain.

On the 13th of March, the Count de Florida Blanca wrote a letter to the Marquis Gonzalez de Castigon, the Minister of the Marine, to serve as a regulation for the navigation of neuters, as follows;

"Most Excellent Lord,

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"From the commencement of the present war with Great Britain, the King declared sincerely, and even in a manner that is unexampled, his intentions of blockading Gibraltar, and his Majesty gave by me a formal notification of it to all the foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, to the end that they might be in a capacity to inform their respective nations of it, and that these might avoid in their navigation and in their conduct the consequences and procedures authorised by the right of nations and the general laws of war. The King declared at the same time by his ordinances concerning privateering, published in the sight of all the world, 'that with regard to the merchandises, productions, and effects of the English, loaded on board of vessels bearing the flag of a friend or a neuter, his Majesty would conduct himself according to the procedure, which the English should adopt towards cargoes of the same kind, to the end to avoid by this reciprocity of conduct, the enormous inequality, the prejudice, and even the ruin to which the commerce and the subjects of his Majesty would be otherwise exposed.' In spite of these dispositions so full of equity, of frankness and good faith, the captains and masters of neutral vessels have not ceased to abuse without shame the impunity of their flags, whether by sliding clandestinely into Gibraltar, with cargoes of provisions, even with those which were destined for the fleets and armies of the King, whether by concealing a great part of their loading, consisting in powder and other merchandises of contraband, or by disguising (by double and fictitious papers, which they cast into the sea, when they saw themselves pursued) the property of their vessels and effects, as well as their destination for persons and places different from those to whom they really belonged, and to which they were bound, or whether finally by making a formal resistance against the King's ships or his privateers, when they endeavored to take a view of some vessels, which they supposed neuter.

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"Although these facts are notorious, and have been proved by formal processes, these men, greedy of gain, and perverse, have filled all Europe with the noise of their clamors, propagating falsely, that orders had been given to detain and to seize all neutral vessels, that would pass the Straits, whilst in fact the orders were confined to the detention of vessels suspected by their course, or their papers, and which were loaded with provisions or effects of the enemy, a moderation very different from the conduct which has been held by the navy and the privateers of England, in detaining and declaring good prize neutral vessels, not only when they carried Spanish productions, but of whatever kind the merchandises were, which they had taken on board in the ports of Spain, or although they were only bound to this Peninsula, taking also and carrying to Gibraltar the neutral vessels, which passed in their sight with cargoes of provisions, although the whole was but a feint and a disguised agreement made beforehand with persons interested in these frauds. These clamors have been accompanied with several complaints, which have been made to the King, filled with the exaggerations and falsehoods beforementioned, and the complainants have addressed themselves in the same manner to their respective Courts, without considering, that conformably to all the treaties of peace and of commerce the royal tribunals of the marine of the Admiralty, as well inferior as superior, were open to them to hear their allegations and proofs, pronounce sentence upon the processes, which they should institute,

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and repair the wrongs, which the detained vessels should have suffered, in one case or the other, without sufficient reason, although to this moment this point has never been legally verified. But the captains and masters have always obstinately insisted, that without other proofs than their relations and their applications to the Ministry, they should be released, and the delays and damages of their detention made good to them, and this solely because the clemency, the equity, and even the indulgence of the King recommended to the judges of the marine, had set several vessels at liberty, which had been detained with justice, and which might have been declared good prizes, conformably to law, and to the practice of our enemies.

"To dissipate even the very shadow of such like pretexts the Count de Rechteren, Envoy of the United Provinces, and the other Ministers of foreign Courts, were notified beforehand, that if they proposed any means of preventing frauds, and causes of suspicion, the King, to give a fresh proof of the good correspondence and friendship, which he desired to maintain with these Courts, would adopt such of those means as should be proper to produce such an effect; and as to this day they have not proposed nor regulated any means of this sort, his Majesty has judged proper to take by himself the measures, which are consistent with his sovereignty, uniting to that end the substance of those which have been communicated hitherto, and manifesting in a manner, if possible, still more positive his intentions, so full of justice, of equity, and of moderation, as being founded upon the resolution of making them be observed with punctuality.

"ARTICLE I. That the vessels with a neutral flag, making sail through the Straits, whether on the side of the ocean, or on that of the Mediterranean, may not be molested nor hindered in their navigation, so long as they shall arrange themselves, as much as shall be possible for them, along the coasts of Africa, and keeping as far as they can from those of Europe, during the course of their passage, from their coming into it to their going out, provided always, that their papers and cargoes be regular, and they furnish no just cause to excite suspicions, whether by flying away, or by resistance, or by an irregular course, or other signs of correspondence with the place blocked up, or with the ships of the enemy. [67]

"ARTICLE II. When the aforesaid vessels of a neutral flag shall be destined, with their cargoes, for any ports, situated upon the Spanish coast in the Straits, such as those of Algeziras or Tarifa, they must lie to, and wait the arrival of a Spanish vessel, which making sail towards them shall give them the signal, by firing a gun, and after having received their declaration shall escort them, or will point out to them, according to the circumstances, the way which they ought strictly to pursue, for coming more readily, without any danger, and without giving cause of any suspicion, to the place of their destination.

"ARTICLE III. In case the Spanish vessels cruising in the Straits, at the entrance, or the outlet, according to the exigence of the case or the place, and conformably to the orders, with which they may be charged, should judge it necessary to convoy neutral vessels, which are traversing the Straits, or even those which are coasting along Africa, these neutral vessels shall not make opposition to submit to the convoy, without going away from it, or furnishing reasons of suspicion; nevertheless, as they, may arrive in great numbers, and at different times, in such manner that it may become prejudicial to wait for the time to be convoyed, and that, moreover, it would be extremely embarrassing to escort each ship in particular, they shall direct their course conformably to the first article, towards the coast of Africa, and shall follow it until some Spanish vessel, stationed or cruising in the Straits, presents itself to escort them out of sight of the place of the enemy and its avenues; and to this end the vessels, to which the signal shall be given, shall stop, as it was said above, and shall conform themselves to the dispositions made in respect to them, by producing without the smallest difficulty, or resistance, their papers, and submitting to all that which is prescribed by the treaties, and the common law of nations to the end to prove the property of ships, the legality of their documents, as well as of their cargoes and destination. [68]

"ARTICLE IV. When such vessels, under the appearance of neutrals, shall come out of ports situated on the coast of Africa, in the Straits, they shall be visited, and treated according to the nature of their cargo, or the suspicions which they shall have excited, of intentions to sail to carry succors to Gibraltar, supposing always that the vessels coming out of the said ports with the design of going into Gibraltar, have in fact hoisted, a neutral flag and abused it.

"ARTICLE V. When neutral vessels shall not conform themselves to the said dispositions, in whole or in part, in particular cases, they shall be seized and carried into port, where they shall be declared good prize with all their effects and cargoes, only for being loaded with provisions, or with those sorts of effects specified by the article 15th of the regulation for armed vessels, without there being occasion for any other judicial proof; and, in case that the articles before mentioned should not be found on board of these vessels, the motives of their contravention of these articles shall be juridically examined, and an account of them rendered to his Majesty by the Secretary of State, and of the Department of the Marine, who shall afterwards make known the resolution of his Majesty. [69]

"ARTICLE VI. In case, independently of the contravention of these articles, it should be proved that a vessel under a neutral flag should be entered into the place, or discovered going in (which would manifest a visible and formal design of going there) without having lain to, or waited for the Spanish vessel, which should have pursued her and made her the signal, or should have gone far from the coast of Africa, or finally, shall have separated herself from the convoy, she shall be in all respects both in going in and in coming out treated as an enemy's ship, declared according to the tenor of the laws of war to be good prize, as well as all her cargo, and all the crew shall be made prisoners of war; because that in such a case the flag and documents ought to be supposed

false, the ship and cargo to belong to the enemy, or that one or the other is destined for his service.

"ARTICLE VII. The neutral vessels, which shall be visited by the King's ships, or privateers, upon other seas or coasts of the ocean, and the Mediterranean, which have no communication with the Straits of Gibraltar, shall neither be stopped nor brought into port except in the cases specified by the royal regulation, made the 10th of July, 1779, for privateers; no vexation nor violence shall be exercised against the masters of these ships, nor shall anything be taken away from them, how small soever may be the value of it, under the penalty established by the said regulation, extended even by article nineteenth to that of death, according to the exigency of the case. [70]

"ARTICLE VIII. In case the vessels, stopped by the King's ships or privateers, shall throw their papers into the sea, and this fact shall be juridically proved, they shall, for this reason only, be declared good prize; which has been sufficiently made known by the sixteenth article of the regulation for privateers, which treats of this object.

"ARTICLE IX. If it shall be proved that in the cargoes of vessels stopped, there should be found some effects the property of the enemy, in such case, if the captain shall have declared it freely, the said effects shall be unloaded alone, the freight of them shall be paid, without retaining long the masters or hindering in any manner their navigation, always provided, that as far as possible the said vessels shall not be put in a situation to run any risk by the taking out the effects before mentioned; a receipt shall be given to the captain for the effects discharged, of the condition they were in, as well as the amount of their freight as far as the place of their destination; which shall be proved by their charter parties or documents, to the end to be able to be satisfied, what shall be their due from the Commissary of the Marine of the first port they shall make, that of which they shall give notice by the way of the Ministry, to the end that if the receipt of which they are the bearers has been given them by a privateer, the amount of it may be paid by the owners, and if it has been furnished them by a King's ship, measures the most convenient in this respect shall be taken, that in case it should be judged absolutely necessary to conduct the said vessels into some port there to discharge them, they may be indemnified for that which shall be due to them, by reason of their freight, for so many days as it shall be judged indispensably necessary for them to take up, both in going to the said ports and in returning; but, nevertheless, in case the captains should conceal the effects, the property of the enemy, or deny that they belong to the enemy, they ought to be pursued juridically, and the Judges of the Marine shall examine the case and decide it, with liberty of appeal to a council of war, who, conformably to the usage of the English tribunals, shall declare lawful prize all these effects, which shall appear legally to belong to an enemy, by means of which, considering the concealment and the denial of the said effects, no account shall be made, neither of the freight nor of the days lost to masters of vessels, since they will have been themselves the causes of the delay occasioned to their navigation. [71]

"ARTICLE X. When in the said case, or in others similar, the ships of friends or of neutrals shall be stopped and brought into the ports, other than those of their destination, contrary to the forms prescribed or without having given cause for it by well founded reasons, either by the direction of their course, or by the state of their papers, by some resistance on their part, the nature of their cargo, or by other legal causes, founded either on treaties or the usages of nations universally adopted, the armed vessels, which shall have seized such vessels, shall be condemned to make good the lost days as well as the damages and prejudices caused to a seized ship; this condemnation or justification shall be mentioned in the same sentence, which shall contain the declarations of good or bad prize, and to this end they shall proceed with the utmost despatch without injuring however the privileges or principal points, whereof the nature of the thing requires observance, and the decisions, whether of condemnation or acquittal, ought to be executed under sureties, as it is regulated for the advantage of privateers; and if it happens that the vessels, which should have caused the damage, belong to the King, in that case the tribunals or Judges of the Marine shall give notice of it to the Secretary of your Excellency, sending to him at the same time justifying pieces and their opinion, to the end that his Majesty may ordain convenient damages, and what shall be judged necessary to prevent or remedy like cases; and it is in this sense that the fortieth and other articles of the regulation for privateering ought to be understood. [72]

"ARTICLE XI. The sale of prizes and their cargoes, mentioned by the thirtyseventh, fortyfourth, and other articles of the royal ordinance for privateering, shall be made, not only after having prepared an inventory of them, and in presence of the masters of the interested, or of those who are legally authorised, but also skilful persons shall have previously made a formal estimate, in which the causes of avarice, or others influencing more or less upon the price of effects, shall be examined and juridically proved, in such sort, that at all times one may notoriously prove both the price of merchandises taxed before the sale, and consequently the frauds which might be committed during the said sale, as well as the prejudices that might result from them.

"ARTICLE XII. The intention of his Majesty being, that this royal declaration be observed, as making part of his ordinances imprinted and published in all his ports and maritime places, the King commands me to transmit it to your Excellency, to have it published to this end, and that you see to its punctual execution, while, on my part, I shall communicate it to all the Ambassadors and foreign Ministers residing in this Court, to the end that each one may give notice of it to his respective nation. [73]

"ARTICLE XIII. In the meantime, his Majesty requires your Excellency to give also the necessary orders to the tribunals and counsellors of the Marine, that they may expedite, with the utmost

diligence, the processes begun relative to stopped vessels conformably to the spirit of this royal declaration, which as to the essentials agrees with the precedent ones successively published."

Thus I have gone through these lengthy state papers, but am under fearful apprehensions that Congress will find the translation imperfect in some parts, for I have not time to revise it. I may take this opportunity to observe, that I have sent many state papers to Congress, which were originally in English, but which I have first found in the foreign gazettes and translated from them; which will account to Congress for the difference, which they will see between some papers I have sent and the originals.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 8th, 1780.

Sir,

There is an article of news from the Hague of the 3d of May, that they write from Dort, that the recruits of Anspach and of Hanover, in the pay of England, are embarked there and sailed from that city the day before yesterday, in order to go to their destination.

There is news also from Stockholm of the 18th of April, that the ordinance, which the College of the Admiralty has expedited to all the agents and consuls, who reside in foreign countries, relating to the convoys necessary to the protection of the commerce of the subjects of this kingdom, is as follows, dated Stockholm, April 1st. [74]

"His Majesty having found it necessary to equip a certain number of vessels of war and frigates, during this year, to the end to protect the navigation of Swedish merchants, the College of the Admiralty, in consequence, makes known, that besides the vessels of war, which are to protect the vessels of other nations destined for the ports of this kingdom, to the end, that no hostilities may be committed upon the coasts of Sweden, the said College has further judged it necessary, that some frigates ought to serve as convoys to the Swedish ships, which go to navigate without the Baltic sea. To this purpose, the Royal College of the Admiralty has judged proper to give notice, that the Road of Elsinore will be the rendezvous of all the vessels, which would take advantage of the convoys, and which will sail at four different times, to wit;

"The first convoy will sail the 29th of May, with the merchant vessels, which may be ready, under the escort of the frigate the Zwarte Orn, commanded by the Major Harald Christiernin, who has orders to conduct them by the Canal, [?] as far as Cape Finisterre, and take all possible care that the vessels arrive in safety in the ports of their destinations, and afterwards to conduct under his convoy, destined for the Mediterranean, with the same vigilance, through the Strait of Gibraltar, as far as the latitude of Malaga. The second convoy will sail the 14th of July, with the frigate Höken, under the command of the Major and Chevalier Samuel Orrskiold, who is to convoy with the same care the merchant ships as far as Cape Finisterre. [75]

"The third will put to sea the 31st of August under the protection of the frigate Upland, commanded by the Major and Baron Solomon Christian Von Kokler. Finally, the fourth convoy will sail on the 30th of September, escorted by the frigates Sodermanland and the Jaramas, commanded by the Majors and Chevaliers C. M. Wagenfelt and Herns Frederic Watchmeister, who are to convoy with the same care the merchant ships as far as Cape Finisterre, and afterwards those which are destined for Portugal, Spain, and the Mediterranean, as well as along the coast of Europe, as far as Leghorn; the commandant being to consult with the consuls of their nation where they cruise during the winter months, to the end to protect the ships of Swedish subjects, which trade in the Mediterranean; after which, the said frigates are to repair towards the middle of February to Malaga, and make in the latitude of that port their cruises until the end of that month, to return after that, taking under their convoy the vessels from thence, and those coming from the Mediterranean, to reconduct them through the channel into their country.

"It ought not, however, to be forgotten, that no merchant ships will be taken under convoy, but those only which shall conform themselves to the ordinance Royal of the 18th of February, 1779, as well as to the neutrality, which his Majesty would maintain with the strictest exactness. Thus the masters of Swedish ships are advertised by these presents, and it is even enjoined upon them not to carry any succors into the places or ports, which may be blocked by one or another of the powers now at war.

"Nevertheless, notwithstanding this arrangement, his Majesty will permit, to the end that commerce may have its course and not be retarded, that liberty be given to merchant ships to sail without the said convoys, according to the circumstances in which they may find themselves, as well as the facility to separate themselves at sea from the King's ships, if their advantage requires it, in which case the masters of ships shall be obliged to give notice of it beforehand to the commanders of frigates. In one word, the masters of ships shall be held to conform [76]

themselves to the orders, which the chiefs of the convoy shall give them, and, consequently, to the instructions which shall be delivered them."

Copies are circulated in London, of the answer which the Court has made to the declaration of the Empress of Russia, presented the first of April to the Ministry by M. de Simolin, Minister Plenipotentiary. This piece, which was despatched the 13th of April to the Chevalier Harris, Envoy Extraordinary of his Britannic Majesty to the Court of Petersburg, is of the following tenor.

"During the whole course of the war, in which the King of Great Britain finds himself engaged by the aggression of France and Spain, he has manifested those sentiments of justice, of equity, and moderation, which govern all his proceedings. His Majesty has regulated his conduct towards friendly and neutral powers according to theirs towards him, conforming it to principles the most clear, and the most generally acknowledged of the law of nations, which is the only law between nations who have no treaties, and to the tenor of his different engagements with other powers; which engagements have varied this primitive law by mutual stipulations, and have varied it in a great variety of different manners, according to the will and the convenience of the contracting parties. Strongly attached to her Majesty, the Empress of all the Russias, by the ties of a reciprocal friendship and a common interest, the King, from the commencement of the troubles, gave the most determinate orders to respect the flag of her Imperial Majesty and the commerce of her subjects, according to the law of nations and the tenor which he has contracted in this treaty of commerce with her, and which he will fulfil with the most scrupulous exactness. The orders on this subject have been renewed, and the execution of them shall be strictly attended to. It is to be presumed, that they will prevent all irregularity; but if it should happen, that there should be the smallest violation of these repeated orders, the tribunals of the Admiralty, which in this country, as in all others, are established to take cognizance of such matters, and which in all cases judge solely by the general law of nations, and by the particular stipulations of different treaties, would redress the injury in a manner so equitable, that her Imperial Majesty would be satisfied entirely with their decisions, and would acknowledge in them the same spirit of justice which animates herself."

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This is said to be the answer to the Empress, and to be sure it is complaisant enough; but still there is a great question between the King and the Empress to be decided. The King says, that all the ports of France and Spain are blocked by his fleet. The Empress says, that none of them are or will be, but such before which the King may send a number of ships to guard the entrance into them, and make it manifestly dangerous. She adds, that she has armed and will arm to maintain this construction of the word, and invites all the other maritime powers to make a league with her in support of this interpretation; and Holland has already answered that she agrees to it with gratitude, and all the other powers will answer the same. If the King gives up his interpretation of the word, there is an end forever to the naval superiority of Great Britain. If he maintains it, it must be by a war against all the nations that use the seas.

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But the government and nation are not yet forsaken by their infatuation. They do not see in the declaration of the Empress, that she has taken a decided part against them. But all the rest of the world sees, that a declaration of war against them would not have been a more decisive indication of the Empress' judgment or affections.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. There is an article in the Amsterdam Gazette of the 2d of May, taken from the Hague of the 30th of April, that "Mr Faucet, General in the service of the King of England, has set off from his residence, and we learn from Dort, that the English vessels are at last arrived there, and that the recruits of Anspach and Hanau will be embarked in a little time to go to America."

This Mr Faucet is the officer (they call him General in the papers, but I believe he is not more than a Major or Lieutenant Colonel) whose whole time and service are devoted to picking up the recruits for the German regiments in the British service. He constantly fills all the newspapers of Europe with his motions from place to place, and gives his accounts an air of mystery, which leaves the world, both in Europe and America, to magnify the numbers he raises at discretion, or rather according to their imaginations. But Congress may rely upon this, that the service is very unpopular and odious in Germany; that they are put to great trouble and expense, annually, to raise the recruits whom they have sent, who have never been enough to repair the breaches, and that this year they have not been able to get more than last, and these will arrive as late as those last year, and in all probability as sickly.

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J. A.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 8th, 1780.

Sir,

The English have a faculty of deceiving themselves, which has lost them thirteen colonies, has brought them into a war, first with France and then with Spain, has nearly lost them Ireland, and has at last put them in a fair way of uniting all the other maritime powers of Europe against them. Yet they are still able to deceive themselves.

There is an example of this in the Hague Gazette of the 1st of May, in the article Great Britain.

"They make here a thousand conjectures concerning the declaration of this Court of the 17th of this month, and the consequences which may result from it. The declaration of Russia does not afford less matter of speculation. It is agreed that it will render the three belligerent powers very circumspect in their conduct relative to the commerce of neutral powers, but the more moderate politicians cannot persuade themselves, that this declaration is more hostile towards England than towards the other powers at war, although our patriots, as they call themselves, exert themselves to give it a turn, as if Russia had it in view to break with England. [80]

"Since the unfortunate contest between Great Britain and her colonies of America, the balance of commerce between Russia and England has been, one year with another, more than five hundred thousand pounds in favor of Russia, and there is also a very considerable balance in favor of the other northern powers. But these moderate English politicians ought to consider, whether this balance of commerce is enough to prevent a great and able princess from seizing an opportunity of distinguishing her character with the world and in history, for wisdom, equity, and magnanimity, by rendering to mankind a most essential service, by introducing into the law and practice of nations a reformation of those errors, which the English chiefly had attempted to establish; a reformation which the interest and rights of humanity so loudly and manifestly call for, and by assisting in the separation of the new world from the domination and monopoly of England, which is also so obviously for the honor, the prosperity, and the happiness of mankind in general. The English should further consider, whether this balance of trade is likely to be less in favor of Russia, for the independence of America, and for the security which is aimed at for neutral powers. All the world out of England sees that it will not."

I will conclude this letter, by adding the letter of Lord Stormont, of the 17th of April, to the Count de Welden, Envoy Extraordinary of their High Mightinesses.

"The King has always hoped, that the faith of treaties and the ties of an alliance, which has subsisted for more than a century, as well as those of a reciprocal friendship, and a common interest joined to the evidence of the danger, which threatens the Republic herself, if France and Spain accomplish their ambitious designs, would have induced their High Mightinesses to assist his Majesty to frustrate these designs by furnishing him the succors stipulated by treaties the most solemn. [81]

"But since their High Mightinesses have adopted another system, as contrary to the interests of the Republic as to those of Great Britain, since they have not made any answer to the repeated demand of these succors, and have not even shown the least intention to fulfil engagements so clear and so formal, his Majesty has found himself necessitated to execute his intentions, which have been so clearly announced in the Memorial, which his ambassador presented the 21st of March last, and in the verbal declaration, which I had the honor to make to you, by express order of the King. As you are perfectly informed, Sir, of the sentiments of his Majesty, it only remains for me to communicate to you, ministerially, the order which the King has given in his Council, and to pray you to inform their High Mightinesses of it. In reading this order, you will there see, Sir, a particular attention to the interests of the commercial subjects of their High Mightinesses. The publication of the memorial presented by the Ambassador of the King, as well as that of the verbal declaration, will, without doubt, render all further advertisements unnecessary. But the King desires, that individuals should suffer as little as possible from the consequences of a system, which their High Mightinesses have adopted, and which appears as opposite to the sentiments of the Dutch nation as it is to the interests of the Republic."

How confident these people are, that no other nation of Europe understands its own interest. According to them, France, Spain, Holland, Russia, and the other maritime powers and the United States of America, are all acting, shedding their blood, and spending their money for objects directly opposite to their proper interests. But it is much to be wished that the English, for the sake of their own preservation, as well as the report of mankind, could be brought to think, that other nations understand their own interests very well. [82]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO AN UNKNOWN PERSON.^[1]

Paris, May 9th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your note of yesterday, and the papers enclosed.

The proposals for a general pacification, by the Dean of Gloucester, whether they were written by him, or by another, were probably intended to feel the pulse of France, or Spain, or America. Nay, it is not impossible, that they might be intended to sound even so inconsiderable a portion of existence as Mr John Adams. But it must be something rather more plausibly written; something a little more consonant to reason, and to common sense, which will draw out of Mr Adams his sentiments on the great work of pacification, if ever he should enter into any detail upon this subject, before general conferences take place, which he at present believes he shall not do.

Concealing, however, my name, you may take these few observations upon these proposals.

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1. England may be heartily sick of the imprudent part she has taken. This point I shall not dispute with the Dean of Gloucester. Yet I wish she would give some better proof of it, than she has done hitherto. But of Americans I can speak with confidence and certainty; and so far from being sick of the part they have taken, they look upon the past madness of Great Britain, which has compelled them to overcome all the prejudices and weak passions, which heretofore bound them to her, and to become independent, as the greatest blessing which Providence ever bestowed upon them, from the first plantation in the new world. They look upon it, that a council of the wisest statesmen and legislators, consulting together on the best means of rendering America happy, free, and great, could not have discovered and digested a system so perfectly adapted to that end, as this one, which the folly and wickedness of Great Britain has contrived for them. They not only see, and feel, and rejoice in the amelioration of their forms of government, but in the improvement of their agriculture and their manufactures, and in the discovery, that all the omnipotence of British fleets has not been able to prevent their commerce, which is opening and extending every year, as their population is increasing in the midst of the war.

2. To suppose that France is sick of the part she has taken, is to suppose her to be sick of that conduct, which has procured her more respect and consideration in Europe, than any step she ever took. It is to suppose her sick of that system, which enabled her to negotiate the peace between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, as well as the peace of Teschen; that system, which has enabled her to unite, in sentiment and affection, all the maritime powers, even the United Provinces, in her favor, and against England. It is to suppose her sick of that system, which has broken off from her rival and natural enemy the most solid part of his strength, a strength that had become so terrible to France, and would have been so fatal to her. I do not mean to enlarge.

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As to the propositions themselves, it would be wasting time to consider them. Of all the malicious plans of the English against America, none has ever been more so than this. It is calculated only to make America the sport of Britain in future; to put it in her power to be forever fomenting quarrels and wars; and, I am well persuaded, that America would sooner vote for a hundred years' war.

I may be thought again too sanguine. I have been too sanguine these twenty years, constantly too sanguine; yet eternally right.

Adieu,

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. I do not see Captain Waters's engagement yet in any of the papers. I would have sent it to England and Holland for publication, if I had known it could not be printed here.

J. A.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 9th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose to Congress proposals for a general pacification, by the Dean of Gloucester.

"Proposals to the English, Americans, French, and Spaniards, now at war.

[85]

"First. That Great Britain shall retain Newfoundland, with the desert coasts of Labradore; also Canada, Nova Scotia, and the country bordering on the Bay of Fundy, as far as the bay and river of Penobscot.

"Secondly. That all the country from the Penobscot river to the river Connecticut, containing almost all the four populous Provinces of New England, shall be ceded to the Americans.

"Thirdly. That all the country from the Connecticut to the river Delaware, containing the whole of New York, Long Island, and the Jerseys, with some parts of two other Provinces indenting with them, shall return to Great Britain.

"Fourthly. That all the country from the Delaware to the northern boundary of South Carolina, containing the greatest part of Pennsylvania, all Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, shall be

ceded to the Americans.

"Fifthly. That all the country from the northern boundary of South Carolina to the extreme point of the eastern Florida, containing three whole Provinces, shall be retained by Great Britain.

"Sixthly. That West Florida, chiefly barren sand, and the Fortress of Gibraltar (totally useless,) shall be ceded to Spain, in order to satisfy the punctilio of that nation, and that the Spaniards shall give Porto Rico in exchange, an island on which they seem to set no value and which indeed is of no use to them, though large in itself, stored with good ports, well situated, and capable (in the hands of the English) of great improvements.

"Seventhly. Lastly, that the English shall give up the conquests they have made on the French in the East Indies, who shall do the like to the English in the West Indies." [86]

I shall make no remarks upon this plan, but there is no Englishman who thinks of a wiser, or at least who dares propose one. All, who talk of propositions, throw out something as absurd and idle as this, which will convince Congress that we shall have no peace for some time.

The French armament, which sailed from Brest the 2d of May, under the command of M. de Rochambeau, of the troops, and M. de Ternay, of the fleet, and the armament from Cadiz, of twelve ships of the line, besides frigates and other armed vessels, with eleven thousand five hundred land forces, with a fine train of artillery, which were to sail about the same time, or earlier, both destined for America, as it is supposed, will I hope bring the English to think of some plan a little more rational.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 10th, 1780

Sir,

On the 19th of April, Mr Grattan, in the House of Commons of Ireland, moved a resolution, "That the King's Most Excellent Majesty, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only powers competent to make laws to bind this Kingdom." Mr Stewart seconded the motion.

The Attorney General moved an amendment to adjourn the question until the 1st day of September next.

Mr Burgh moved another amendment, "That there being an equal resolution on the books (in the journals in the month of July, 1641) with the one now moved, the same may be, for that reason, adjourned to the 1st day of September next." [87]

The House divided at a late hour on the original amendment, when there appeared, ayes, ninetyseven; noes, one hundred and thirtysix; majority, thirtynine.

Thus the House of Commons have refused to pursue the sense of the people, but these are so unanimous and so determined, that no magistrate will venture to execute any act of the English Parliament.

Philip and Mary, 4. chap. 4th, thus explains Poyning's law. "And this act of the 10th of Henry the Seventh, shall be expounded and taken as followeth, that is to say, that no Parliament be holden or summoned within this realm of Ireland, until the Lieutenant, Chief Governor, or Governors, and the Council of Ireland, shall have certified the King and Queen's Majesties, her heirs and successors under the great seal of the realm, the considerations, causes, and articles of such acts, as by them shall be thought meet to be enacted and passed here by Parliament, and shall also have received again their Majesties' answer under the great seal of England, declaring their pleasure, either for the passing of the said acts in such form as they should be sent into England, or else for the alteration of them, or any part of the same."

"Section 2d. After such return made, and after license and authority to summon a Parliament within the said realm of Ireland, granted under the great seal of England unto the said lieutenant, or chief governors of the same realm, the same lieutenant, chief governor or governors, may summon and hold a Parliament for passing and agreeing upon such acts, and no other, as shall be so returned under the great seal of England."

"6 of George 1, chap. 5, sec. 1. The kingdom of Ireland has been, is, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, as being inseparably united and annexed thereunto; and the King, with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament, hath power to make laws of sufficient force to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland." [88]

"Section 2d. The House of Lords of Ireland have not, nor of right ought to have, any jurisdiction to judge of, affirm, or reverse any judgment or decree made in any court within the said kingdom;

and all proceedings before the said House of Lords upon any such judgment or decree are void."

These are the political shackles, which the people of Ireland are endeavoring to shake off; and if the war continues long, they will succeed; otherwise, not entirely, although the authority of the British Parliament will, undoubtedly, be much weakened.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Translation.

Versailles, May 10th, 1780.

Sir,

I owe you thanks for the different communications, which you have been so good as to make to me. If the views contained in the letter, which you have confided to me, are exact, you ought not to delay in obtaining a proof; and in such case, it would be expedient for you to ascertain what overtures it is expected you will make. I think you should not refuse to listen to them.

[89]

I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 11th, 1780.

Sir,

On Monday, the first of May, Mr David Hartley explained what was the substance of his intended motion for Friday, respecting the state of the war. In the course of his speech, he moved for a copy of the French Memorial, entitled *Observations on the justifying Memorial of Great Britain*, which contains many points of serious information respecting France, Spain and America. He then read to the House the three following motions; the first of which, originating in the county of York, is to be made jointly by Mr Hartley and his friend Sir George Saville.

"1st. That it is the opinion of this House, that the prosecution of an offensive war in America is most evidently a measure, which, by employing our great and enormously expensive military operations against the inhabitants of that country, prevents this from exerting its united, vigorous, and firm efforts against the powers of France and Spain, and has no other effect upon America, than to continue, and thereby increase the enmity, which has so long subsisted between the arms of both, can be productive of no good whatever, but by preventing conciliation, threatens the accomplishment of the final ruin of the British Empire.

"2dly. That an address be presented to his Majesty, stating the matter of the foregoing resolution, and entreating him to concur therewith; representing, at the same time, that they think that they should betray his Majesty and their constituents, if they did not distinctly state to his Majesty, that nothing less than a total change of councils, proceeding from the conviction of past errors, can prevent the consummation of public ruin; but, at the same time, to express their fullest confidence, that with a speedy and fundamental reformation of councils, under a prudent and vigilant administration, they shall be enabled to maintain the honor and dignity of this country against any confederacy of France and Spain, and to effect a reconciliation with America, upon beneficial, just, and honorable terms.

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"3dly. That leave be given to bring in a bill, to enable his Majesty to appoint Commissioners with sufficient power to treat, consult, and finally agree upon the means of restoring peace with the Provinces in North America."

After which, General Conway rose to declare, that he had a bill to propose on the subject of the American war, which he would lay before the House tomorrow. He gave a general hint of the ideas he entertained on this subject. He thought that Parliament ought to come to some resolutions to agree on certain propositions, which should be held out to the Americans as the foundation of a treaty of peace and reconciliation.

I shall give an account of the debates and decisions on the motions when the papers arrive.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

[91]

Paris, May 9th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me, on the 10th of this month.

Although the writer of the letter, an extract of which I had the honor to enclose to you, may be right in his conjectures, that the British administration wish to know more than they do at present of my sentiments upon the great subject of a pacification, yet I have had too long experience of their principles, views, and tempers, and I know that they are too well acquainted with mine, for me to expect, that they will directly convey any proposition to me. When we hear them affirm in Parliament, that America is upon the point of returning to an allegiance to the King of England, and that they seriously believe, that America will return to such an allegiance; when the members of the opposition, even those who are the most inclined to peace, such as Mr Hartley, General Conway, &c. discover plainly, by their motions and arguments, that their object is a separate peace with America, in order to be the better able to gratify their revenge against France and Spain, I can have no expectations, that they think of applying to me, because I think they must be convinced of this, at least, that I shall make no separate peace. I thank your Excellency, however, for your sentiments, that I ought to hear them, in case any overtures should be made to me. I should, in such a case, endeavor to hear them with decency and respect; but it would require much philosophy to hear, with patience, such absurd and extravagant propositions, as are published in pamphlets and newspapers, and made in Parliament, even by the members of the opposition, who profess to be most zealous for peace. [92]

Our alliance with France is an honor and a security, which have ever been near to my heart. After reflecting long upon the geographical situation of the old world and the new, the agriculture, commerce, and political relations of both, upon the connexions and oppositions among the nations of the former, and the mutual wants and interests of both, according to such imperfect lights as I was able to obtain, the result has long since been this, that my country, in case she should be compelled to break off from Great Britain, would have more just reasons to depend upon a reciprocity of the good offices of friendship from France, Spain, and the other sovereigns, who are usually in their system, than upon those in the opposite scale of the balance of power. I have ever thought it, therefore, a natural alliance, and contended for it as a rock of defence.

This object I pursued in Congress, with persevering assiduity for more than a year, in opposition to other gentlemen of much greater name and abilities than mine, and I had at length the satisfaction to find my countrymen very generally fall in with the same sentiment, and the honor to be appointed to draw the first treaty, which was sent to this Court. These facts have been well known in America, even to the tories, and the utility and importance of this alliance being known to be deeply imprinted in my mind and heart, I suppose was a principal cause why the present trust was confided to me by my countrymen. These facts, although they may have been unknown in France, yet having been known to the tories in America, I cannot suppose they are ignorant of them at the Court of St James; I therefore think, that neither the administration nor opposition in England will ever think of applying to me, until they are brought into such a situation as shall compel them to sue for peace with all the powers at war, which, to be sure, does not appear to be the case at present, nor likely to be, at least before the end of this campaign; nor then either, without some notable good fortune on the part of the allies in the progress of the war. [93]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, May 13th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I had two days ago the pleasure of yours of the 26th of April, and am very happy to have at last received from your hand an account of your safe arrival in Madrid.

The Count de Florida Blanca is allowed to be a man of abilities, but somehow or other there is something in the European understanding different from those we have been used to. Men of the greatest abilities and the most experience are with great difficulty brought to see what appears to us as clear as day. It is habit, it is education, prejudice, what you will, but so it is.

I can state a very short argument, that appears to me a demonstration upon French and Spanish principles alone, that it is more for their interest to employ their naval force in America than in Europe; yet it is in vain, that you state this to a Minister of State. He cannot see it or feel it, at least, in its full force, until the proper point of time is past and it is too late. So I think it may be demonstrated, that it is the interest of France and Spain to furnish America with a handsome loan of money, or even to grant her subsidies; because a sum of money thus expended would advance the common cause, and even their particular interests, by enabling the Americans to make greater exertions than the same sums employed in any other way. But it is in vain to reason in this manner with a European Minister of State. He cannot understand you. It is not within the compass of those ideas, which he has been accustomed to.

[94]

I am happy, however, that at length we have a Minister at Madrid; I am persuaded, that this will contribute vastly to opening the eyes both of France and Spain. I shall be always obliged to you for intelligence, especially concerning your progress in your affair.

I am, with much esteem, dear Sir, your servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 13th, 1780.

Sir,

The answer of the King of France to the declaration of the Empress of Russia is as follows, dated April 25th, 1780.

"The war in which the King finds himself engaged, having no other object than the attachment of his Majesty to the principles of the liberty of the seas, he could not but see with a true satisfaction the Empress of Russia adopt this same principle, and show herself resolved to maintain it. That which her Imperial Majesty requires of the belligerent powers, is nothing more than the rules already prescribed to the French marine, the execution of which is supported with an exactness that is known and applauded by all Europe.

[95]

"The liberty of neutral vessels, restrained in a small number of cases only, is a direct consequence of the law of nature, the safeguard of nations, the solace even of those, who are afflicted with the scourge of war; thus the King has desired to procure, not only to the subjects of the Empress of Russia, but to those of all the States who have embraced a neutrality, the liberty of navigating upon the same conditions, which are announced in the declaration to which his Majesty answers this day.

"He thinks he has made a great step towards the general good, and prepared an epoch glorious to his reign, in fixing by his example, the rights, which every belligerent power may and ought to acknowledge to be acquired to neutral vessels. His hope has not deceived him, since the Empress, in determining on the most exact neutrality, has declared herself for the system which the King supports, at the expense of the blood of his people, and since she demands the rights, which his Majesty would make the basis of the maritime code. If there were occasions for fresh orders, whereby the vessels of her Imperial Majesty should have no room to fear being disturbed in their negotiation, by the subjects of the King, his Majesty would make haste to give them; but the Empress will, no doubt, repose herself upon the dispositions of his Majesty, contained in the regulations, which he has published. They are not accommodated to present circumstances, they are founded upon the law of nations, and they are consistent with the character of a Prince, sufficiently happy to find always in the general prosperity the measure of that of his own kingdom. The King wishes that her Imperial Majesty would add to the means, which she may take to fix the nature of merchandises, the commerce of which is reputed contraband in time of war, precise rules concerning the form of sea papers, with which the Russian vessels shall be furnished.

[96]

"With this precaution, his Majesty is assured, that no incident will arise, which will occasion any regret in any of the parties concerned, at the measures taken for rendering the condition of Russian vessels as advantageous as possible in time of war. Happy circumstances have already more than once put the two Courts in a situation to experience of how much importance it was, that they should explain themselves with openness upon their interests respectively.

"His Majesty felicitates himself, upon having an opportunity to express to her Imperial Majesty his manner of thinking upon a point interesting to Russia, and the commercial powers of Europe. His Majesty applauds so much the more sincerely the principles and views which direct the Empress, as his Majesty enjoys in common with her the same sentiment, which has prompted this Princess to measures, from whence must result equal advantages to their subjects and to all nations."

No state paper, that I have seen this war, has struck me more forcibly than this. The simplicity, openness, sincerity, and truth of it, form a striking contrast to the dissimulation and insincerity,

which are so grossly remarkable in the answer of the Court of St James to the same declaration. The one is perfectly becoming the character of an august King, the other is what I shall leave others to name.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. Copenhagen, 29th of April. "There have arrived here, within a little time, several couriers from Petersburg, some of whom have been sent back, and others have continued their route for Holland, France, &c. Since the arrival of the last, it is thought that our Court has acceded to the project of an armed neutrality, and that it has already agreed with that of Russia, upon the equipments to be made for this purpose; at least orders have been given to arm as soon as possible two ships of the line, the Princess Sophia Frederica, of seventyfour guns, and the Danebrog, of sixty. These ships, commanded by Krieger and Ellebracht, will go out into the Road immediately. The government have determined not to keep the fleet stationed at Fredericksham, as it has been for five years past; and the Vice Admiral Fischer, who commanded there, having been recalled, will be relieved only by a Captain." [97]

The following orders have been given by the King of England.

"Whereas, after our Order in Council of the 17th of April, 1780, the several treaties, which granted particular privileges to the subjects of the States-General of the United Provinces, relative to their commerce and navigation in time of war, are suspended, and the subjects of the States-General ought to be considered upon the same footing with other neutral States not privileged by treaties, until it shall please us formally to signify the contrary; the commanders of our vessels of war, and those of all ships and vessels of war, which have letters of marque and reprisals, are authorised by these presents and required to seize and detain all ships and vessels, belonging to the subjects of the States-General, when they shall be found to have on board any effects belonging to the enemies of his Majesty, or effects which are considered as contraband, by the general law of nations." [98]

The declaration made to the States-General of the United Provinces by the Court of St James has been followed by prompt effects. The privateer, the Neptune, has carried into Margate, the Grede Vizwagten, going from Amsterdam to Nantes with a load of pitch and tar. This is the fifth vessel taken from the Hollanders by the 5th of May, in consequence of this declaration, which makes so much noise.

J. A.

TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, May 15th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I shall not always stand upon ceremonies, nor wait for answers to letters, because useful hints may be given, which would be lost if one were to wait returns of posts.

The British Channel fleet is reckoned this year at from thirtyfour to thirtyseven ships of the line; but it is well known, that they depend upon seamen to be pressed from their first West India fleet, in order to make up this computation, without which they cannot make thirty. It is, therefore, of great importance that this first West India fleet should be intercepted. It will come home the latter end of June, or the beginning of July; certainly not before the middle of June. A ship or two of the line, with a fifty gun ship or two and five or six frigates, would have a great probability of intercepting this fleet. Is there any service upon which such a number of vessels could be better employed, than in cruising pretty far in the Bay of Biscay, and somewhat north of Cape Clear with this view? It is really astonishing that France and Spain should be so inattentive to the English convoys. The safest, easiest, and surest way of reducing the power and the spirits of the English is to intercept their trade. It is every year exposed, yet every year escapes; by which means they get spirits to indulge their passions, money to raise millions, and men to man their ships. [99]

Pray is it not necessary to think a little of Portugal? Should not Spain, France, and America too, use their influence with Portugal, to shut her ports against the armed vessels of all nations at war, or else admit freely the armed vessels of all? Under her present system of neutrality, as they call it, the ports of Portugal are as advantageous to England as any of her own, and more injurious to the trade of Spain and America if not of France, while they are of no use at all to France, Spain, or America. This little impotent morsel of a State ought not to do so much mischief so unjustly. If she is neutral, let her be neutral; not say she is neutral, and be otherwise.

Would it not be proper for Congress to discover some sensibility to the injuries, which the United States receive from these States, such as Denmark and Portugal? I think they should remonstrate coolly and with dignity; not go to war, nor be in a passion about it; but show that they understand their behavior. Denmark restored Jones' and Landais' prizes to England, without knowing why.

Why would it not do to remonstrate; then prohibit any of the productions of Portugal from being consumed in America?

The prospect brightens in the West Indies. De Guichen has arrived. De la Motte Piquet has defended himself very well, secured his convoys, fought the English, even with inferior force, and got the better. De Guichen's appearance dissipated all thoughts of their expedition, and threw the English Islands into great consternation; but you will see in the public prints all the news. [100]

The force from Brest, which sailed on the 2d, and that from Cadiz, which I hope sailed as soon or sooner, will not diminish the terror and confusion of the English in America and the islands.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 16th, 1780.

Sir,

I have delivered to the Chevalier de la Colombe, formerly aid-de-camp to the Marquis de Lafayette, and afterwards to the Baron de Kalb, and one of my fellow passengers in the leaky *Sensible* to Ferrol, a number of letters and three packets of newspapers. He goes in the *Alliance*.

In a private letter, which I have received from Brussels, I am informed there is a talk of opening the navigation of Antwerp. This is a hint. And in the *Gazette of France* of this day, is a paragraph from Vienna of the 14th of April, which is another. This Court (Vienna) not having yet made any maritime treaty with the States of Barbary, and as its commerce in the Mediterranean may be exposed to their corsairs, their Imperial and Royal Majesties have resolved in their Council, that there shall be this year equipped at Trieste and at Fiume one ship and two frigates of war, for the protection of the commerce of their subjects.

Time will discover whether there is any English politics in either of them. Two and twenty millions a year is enough, without sending additional millions in subsidies. [101]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO M. GENET, AT VERSAILLES.

Paris, May 17th, 1780.

Sir,

General Conway, in his speech in the House of Commons, on the 6th of May, affirms, that the alliance between France and the United States is not natural. Whether it is or not, is no doubt a great question. In order to determine whether it is or not, one should consider what is meant by a natural alliance; and I know of no better rule than this; when two nations have the same interests in general, they are natural allies; when they have opposite interests, they are natural enemies. The General observes, first, that nature has raised a barrier between France and America; but nature has raised no other barrier than the ocean; and the distance and this barrier are equally great between England and America. The General will not pretend that nature, in the constitution of American minds or bodies, has laid any foundation for friendship or enmity towards one nation more than another. The General observes, further, that habit has raised another barrier between France and America. But he should have considered, that the habits of affection or enmity between nations are easily changed, as circumstances vary, and as essential interests alter. Besides, the fact is, that the horrible perfidy and cruelty of the English towards the Americans, which they have taken care to make universally felt in that country for a long course of years past, have alienated the American mind and heart from the English; and it is now much to be doubted, whether any nation of Europe is so universally and heartily detested by them. On the contrary, most of the other nations of Europe have treated them with civility, and France and Spain with esteem, confidence, and affection, which has greatly changed the habits of the Americans in this respect. [102]

The third material, of which the general barrier is created, is language. This, no doubt, occasions many difficulties in the communication between the allies; but it is lessening every day. Perhaps no language was ever studied at once by so many persons at a time, in proportion, as the French is now studied in America. And it is certain, that English was never so much studied in France as since the revolution; so that the difficulties of understanding one another are lessening every

day.

Religion is the fourth part of the barrier. But let it be considered, first, that there is not enough of religion of any kind among the great in England to make the Americans very fond of them. Secondly, that what religion there is in England, is as far from being the religion of America as that of France. The hierarchy of England is quite as disagreeable to America as that of any other country. Besides, the Americans know very well, that the spirit of propagating any religion by conquest, and of making proselytes by force or by intrigue, is fled from all other countries of the world, in a great measure, and that there is more of this spirit remaining in England than anywhere else. And the Americans had, and have still, more reason to fear the introduction of a religion that is disagreeable to them, at least as far as bishops and hierarchy go, from a connexion with England, than with any other nation of Europe. [103]

The alliance with France has no article respecting religion. France neither claims nor desires any authority or influence over America in this respect; whereas, England claimed and intended to exercise authority and force over the Americans; at least, so far as to introduce bishops; and the English Society for Propagating Religion in Foreign Parts, has, in fact, for a century, sent large sums of money to America to support their religion there, which really operated as a bribe upon many minds, and was the principal source of toriyism. So that upon the whole, the alliance with France is in fact more natural, as far as religion is concerned, than the former connexion with Great Britain, or any other connexion that can be formed.

Indeed, whoever considers attentively this subject, will see, that these three circumstances of habit, language, and religion, will for the future operate as natural causes of animosity between England and America, because they will facilitate migration. The loss of liberty, the decay of religion, the horrible national debt, the decline of commerce, and of political importance in Europe, and of maritime power, which cannot but take place in England, will tempt numbers of their best people to emigrate to America; and to this, fashion, language, and religion will contribute. The British government will, therefore, see themselves obliged to restrain this by many ways; and among others, by cultivating an animosity and hatred in the minds of their people against the Americans. Nature has already sufficiently discovered itself, and all the world sees, that the British government have for many years, not only indulged in themselves the most unsocial and bitter passions against Americans, but have systematically encouraged them in the people. [104]

After all, the circumstances of modes, language, and religion, have much less influence in determining the friendship and enmity of nations, than other more essential interests. Commerce is more than all these and many more such circumstances. Now it is easy to see, that the commercial interests of England and America will forever hereafter be incompatible. America will take away, or at least diminish, the trade of the English in ship building, in freight, in the whale fisheries, in the cod fisheries, in furs and skins, and in other particulars, too many to enumerate. In this respect, America will not interfere with France, but on the contrary, will facilitate and benefit the French commerce and marine, to a very great degree. Here, then, will be a perpetual rivalry and competition between England and America, and a continual source of animosity and war. America will have occasion for the alliance of France, to defend her against this ill will of England, as France will stand in need of that of America, to aid her against the natural and continual jealousies and hostility of England.

The boundaries of territory will also be another constant source of disputes. If a peace should unhappily be made, leaving England in possession of Canada, Nova Scotia, the Floridas, or any one spot of ground in America, they will be perpetually encroaching upon the States of America; whereas, France, having renounced all territorial jurisdiction in America, will have no room for controversy.

The people of America, therefore, whose very farmers appear to have considered the interests of nations more profoundly than General Conway, are universally of the opinion, that from the time they declared themselves independent, England became their natural enemy and as she has been for centuries, and will be the natural enemy of France, and the natural ally of other natural enemies of France, America became the natural friend of France, and she the natural friend of the United States; Powers naturally united against a common enemy, whose interests will long continue to be reciprocally secured and promoted by mutual friendship. [105]

It is very strange, that the English should thus dogmatically judge of the interests of all other nations. According to them, the Americans are, and have been for many years, acting directly against their own interest; France and Spain have been acting against their own interests; Holland is acting against her own interest; Russia and the Northern Powers are all acting against their own interests; Ireland is acting against hers, &c.; so that there is only that little island of the whole world, that understands their own interest; and of the inhabitants of that, the committees, and associations, and assemblies, are all in the same error with the rest of the world; so that there remains only the Ministry and their equivocal and undulating majority, among all the people upon the face of the earth, who act naturally, and according to their own interests. The rest of the world, however, think that they understand themselves very well, and that it is the English or Scottish majority who are mistaken.

Your friend, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

[106]

Paris, May 19th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose a few newspapers, received by the last post from Boston, by the way of Bilboa. There is very little news. I have letters as late as the 27th of March.

The most remarkable thing in the Pennsylvania Gazette is, that the great seal of the Province of Pennsylvania was brought into the House of the Assembly of that State, and by order of the House defaced and cut to pieces, which, to be sure, is no proof of a desire to go back to their old government. I do not see how they could have expressed a stronger contempt of it.

In the Independent Chronicle of the 9th of March is a list of prizes, made by the privateers of the middle district of the Massachusetts Bay, only since the last session of the Court of Admiralty. They amount to nineteen vessels; which shows that privateering flourishes in those seas, and also shows what havoc may, and probably will be made among the English transports, provision vessels, and merchant-men, when the superiority of the French and Spanish fleets comes to be as clear, as it soon will be; perhaps, as it is now, and has been, since the arrival of M. de Guichen.

In a private letter of the 27th of March I am told, that two prizes had just then arrived, one with four hundred hogsheads of rum, and another with four thousand barrels of flour, pork, and beef, articles much wanted by the enemy, and not at all amiss in Boston.

The convention had gone through the constitution of government, and had accepted the report of the committee with some few unessential amendments.

[107]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 19th, 1780.

Sir,

The answer of the King of Spain to the declaration of the Empress of Russia, is said to be in substance,

"That the King has received with pleasure the overtures, which have been made to him on the part of her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, relative to the measures which this Princess proposes to follow, both with regard to the Courts actually at war and the neutral powers; that these principles are precisely the same which have governed the King heretofore, and which he has endeavored to recommend to Great Britain; that from the beginning of the troubles, his Catholic Majesty has not departed from the system of equity and of moderation, of which he has given proofs to all the powers of Europe, and that he is solely upon the arbitrary proceedings of England, that he determined upon more vigorous measures; that since the English, far from respecting the neutral flags, have even allowed themselves to attack vessels, the cargoes of which are authorised by treaties, it became necessary, that Spain on her part should take care of her interests; that the King, not content to confine himself to the frequent marks which he has given of his equity, declares, moreover, that he is ready to show all possible deference for those of the neutral powers, who shall determine to protect their flags, and that he will continue faithful to his engagement, until England shall put an end to those exactions, which her ships do not cease to commit; that in fine, his Catholic Majesty accedes to the other articles of the declaration presented the 15th of April, by the Sieur de Sinovief, but flatters himself at the same time, that for what concerns the blockade of Gibraltar, her Imperial Majesty will prescribe to her subjects to conform themselves to the restrictions proposed by the ordinance issued at Madrid the 13th of March last."

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It is said, that in conformity to the resolutions taken by their High Mightinesses the 25th of last month, the Count de Welderen has presented a Memorial to Lord Stormont, who after having run it over answered, "that he would lay it before his Majesty, and request his orders upon the subject; although beforehand he could assure him, that the King highly approved the conduct held by Mr Fielding, as well as the manner in which he had executed his orders," adding, "that at London we think that Mr Fielding conducted himself according to the tenor of treaties, and that it was the Count de Byland that violated them."

This answer having given rise to an animated conversation between the Count de Welderen and Lord Stormont, the latter employed all possible arguments to prove, that it was the Count de Byland who had been the aggressor, while, on the contrary, the Minister of their High

Mightinesses had asserted, and incontestably proved, "that their High Mightinesses had never consented, that any ship found under the convoy of one of their vessels of war should be visited; and that, consequently, Commodore Fielding, who ought not to have been ignorant of the treaties, and who, nevertheless, had so manifestly infringed them, had been truly the aggressor, in sending out his armed boat."

That as to the last point of the said Memorial, relative to the liberation, without any form of process, of the vessels seized sailing under convoy of the Count de Byland, Lord Stormont answered, "the way of appeal lay open to the parties interested, but that it was not in the power of his Majesty to transgress the ordinary forms, by making any alteration in the decrees pronounced upon this occasion." [109]

Ireland, although her Parliament has discovered symptoms of timidity or diffidence in postponing the great question to September, has not yet finished her roll upon the stage. It should be remembered, first, that she has postponed, not determined, the controversy. Secondly, that all parties in the House united in declaring their sentiments, that Ireland was not subject to any foreign legislation. In this, even Mr Foster, who is reputed the Ministerial agent in the House of Commons, and the Attorney General himself, concurred. Thirdly, that it is still in contemplation to pass a mutiny act through the Irish Parliament, which must be grounded upon the supposition, that the English mutiny act is not binding; and whether such a bill shall pass or not, many magistrates will not execute the English act. Fourthly, the volunteers of the liberty of Dublin have resolved unanimously, on the 26th of April, that it is inexpedient to remain any longer under the command of his Grace the Duke of Leinster. Fifthly, the body of lawyers, on the 30th of April, admitted Mr Grattan as an honorary member of their society, and unanimously voted an address to him, which, with his answer, Congress will see.

I am very sorry it is not in my power to enclose to Congress the English papers later than the 5th, because they contain intelligence of importance, which is favorable to us from the West Indies. But the packet from London to Ostend was taken by a French privateer and carried into Dunkirk, after the mail had been cast into the sea. [110]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 20th, 1780.

Sir,

In the House of Commons on the 6th of May, General Conway read the title, and explained the clauses, of his proposed bill for reconciliation or peace with America. It consisted in the repeal of all the acts, which have revolted America. He desired, that the House would receive it, add to it, subtract from it, modify and alter it, as they pleased.

Lord Nugent agreed to the necessity of doing something, which should give Great Britain a hope of reconciliation with America; he did not approve the tenor of the bill, although he seconded the motion, but invited the House to prepare one.

"It is certain," said Lord Nugent, "that in the alarming situation we are in, it is of decisive importance to make peace with America, for in fact we having nothing but her, there does not remain to us one power in Europe, and what is worse, an armed neutrality against the spirit of treaties, speaking the language of neutral powers, seconds efficaciously the powers who are our enemies. It is about twenty years, that the state of affairs is considerably changed in Europe; it is the King of Prussia, who has effected this revolution. Considering the turn, which affairs have taken under his reign, Prussia gives actually as much umbrage to the House of Austria, as the House of Bourbon gave it heretofore; so that on one hand the difference of interests, on the other the influence of certain Courts, and in several other Cabinets a profound indifference, have totally turned what is called the balance of power; nevertheless, if those of the Princes of Europe, who ought to sustain us, contemplate coldly our fall, they have not only renounced the principles of honor, but they have even lost out of sight their proper interests; for if they suffer the House of Bourbon to become the first maritime power of Europe, their States must in their turn partake of our fall; but they occupy themselves with momentary interests, and sacrifice to transient considerations those solid and permanent interests, which wise men never lose sight of." [111]

By comparing this speech with the declaration of Lord Nugent's repentance for having called us rebels, and the Ode to Mankind, and altogether with the true state of facts and political interests of the world at present, we shall see, that his Lordship is more of a poet and an honest man, than he is of a great statesman; for in the first place the armed neutrality is not against the spirit of treaties. In the next place, it is not in fact the King of Prussia, but the United States of America, who have effected the revolution in the political system and the variation in the balance of power. Thirdly, it is not because certain powers contemplate coldly the fall of England, but because they see England is unable to stand in the rank she once held, and that there is a new power arising in

the West, in which they are all interested, who will not only maintain her ground, but advance with a rapidity, that has no example, and that it is the interest of all the powers, that no one of them should have an exclusive monopoly of the commerce or political weight of this rising State, that stimulates them to favor it.

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But it is really surprising to observe how few persons there are in England, who have reflected upon the present state of the world, and have had sagacity enough to penetrate the true principles of its policy.

Mr Eden followed Lord Nugent in the debate, and indulged himself in sporting with the flowers of rhetoric, and pleasantries of wit, without many solid observations that deserve notice. It may not be improper to remark two or three things however. "In general," says he, "the object of the honorable member, General Conway, is extremely praiseworthy; but the present moment is not proper for the pursuit of it; it is not at present, that Parliament can say, we will grant this, or will refuse that, because they ask nothing of us. Every unsolicited offer will be regarded as a tacit confession of our weakness; a useless instrument in the hands of the well intentioned inhabitants, it will become an offensive and dangerous arm in the hands of Congress. It is important for the present, to leave the scales in the equilibrium where they are. The return of the Americans to the suggestions of duty and loyalty now divides the Continent, by diminishing the number of the supporters of rebellion, now shaken to its centre. In such circumstances a manly confidence, wisdom, and moderation may make the balance incline to our side. Precipitation in our councils, superfluous discussions, domestic divisions, premature and imprudent overtures, may draw it over to the other forever. I say superfluous discussions, this is the most dangerous of all those that I comprehend in the number, and consequently to put an end to it, I demand the order of the day."

Lord George Gordon seconded the motion of Mr Eden, not because he was of his opinion, for he ridiculed it with all the wit imaginable, but because the General's bill appeared to him to announce a commission as ridiculous as that of 1780,^[2] since probably they would not begin by acknowledging the independence of America. Mr Cruger said, that if peace with America could not be obtained without acknowledging her independence, they ought not to hesitate a moment. Mr W. Pitt said, that neither conciliatory bills, nor peace making commissioners, would make peace with America. The Ministry must retire. The Americans will never listen to any propositions until the present Ministers resign their places to men, who have not lost the confidence of America by deceiving them, and the confidence of the nation by imposing upon Parliament.

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Here is another proof among many, that are given every day by the opposition themselves, of their hunger for the loaves and fishes, and that they do not mean with good faith to make peace, America would as readily make peace upon proper terms with the present Ministry as any other, and she would not make peace upon improper terms—with any other Ministry sooner than with the present.

Lord George Germain said, "If our reconciliation with America depended upon the resignation of the present Ministers, and they were convinced of the efficacy of this measure, I am persuaded they would take it unanimously forthwith. Most certainly all good men in the kingdom ought to wish, that peace may be made upon honorable and advantageous terms. This is the wish of my heart, and I flatter myself, that its accomplishment is not far off. This is not speculation, my opinion is founded upon fresh advices. I firmly believe, that the moment of reconciliation is not far distant. The state of profound distress, to which the Americans find themselves reduced, has brought them back, if not to duty in general, at least to reflection, and to a knowledge of their true interests; and I can assure the House, that the greatest number not only desire to return to their allegiance, but express the desire of it, and testify that they are ready to seize a favorable opportunity, and would not wait for any opportunity, if they were not held in by the tyranny of those, who have made themselves masters of power. I do not think, that the Congress will ever appear disposed to enter into treaty, but the misery of the people, but the depreciation of the paper money, but the burden of debt, under which the community staggers, but the repugnance, which all orders of the people testify for the alliance, which they have made them contract with France, the little utility, which this alliance has been of to America, all announce in time, that the different assemblies of that Continent will not be long before they come to terms."

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It is really difficult to say what epithets ought to be given to this speech. When a Minister of a great nation can rise in its great Council, and with so much cold blood, so much solemnity, and such appearance of reflection and deliberation affirm such things, what shall we say?

The absurdity of his distinctions is not less remarkable, than the grossness of his misinformation respecting facts, that Congress will not treat, but the several Assemblies will. Is not Congress the creature of the Assemblies? Do not the Assemblies create the members of Congress every year? Cannot they annihilate them every moment? Cannot the Assemblies instruct their members of Congress? Cannot the people instruct their members of Assembly? But it is endless to remark. The same system of fraud and misrepresentation, which first deceived Great Britain into this controversy and war with America, still deceives them into the continuance of it, and will deceive them to their ruin. This should be the less afflicting to America, as, since there is every reason to think, that Great Britain will be hereafter our natural and habitual enemy, disposed to war with us whenever she can, the more completely she is exhausted, humbled, and abased before the peace, the securer we shall be forever after.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

P. S. The Chargé des Affaires of Denmark has notified to the Ministry at Stockholm, the 28th of April, that this Court had acceded to the armed neutrality, to which the Empress of Russia had invited it, and he has requested, in consequence, in the name of his sovereign, his Swedish Majesty, to enter into the same confederation. Although no positive answer has as yet been given him, it is nevertheless not at all doubted, that Sweden will concur with the other neutral maritime powers, to restrain the excesses of the armed ships and cruisers of the belligerent powers; an excess of which the rencounter of the frigate Illerim, with a cruiser from Mahon, furnished a new example, as was remarked at the head of the relation, which the Court has published of it.

J. A.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, May 20th, 1780.

Sir,

As my English papers, containing the debates on the 6th of this month on General Conway's motion, are lost in the sea, I shall give Congress the several accounts of them from the foreign gazettes. That of the Hague gives the following account of the General's discourse.

"Two powerful motives have induced me to undertake the formation of this bill; the indispensable necessity in which we find ourselves to make peace with America, and the favorable disposition in which I suppose America to be.

"To show the nature of the horrible war, which I propose to put an end to, it is necessary to go back to its origin. I find it in that committee of darkness, which met in this house fifteen years ago at midnight. This company of black conspirators, who plotted in their conventicle the destruction of the British empire, and sowed the seed of all the evils, of all the disgraces, and of all the insults under which England and America have groaned, from the fatal moment in which this senseless committee conceived the extravagant idea of drawing a revenue from the colonies, by taxing subjects in a house where they had no representatives. Thank heaven I have no reproach to make to myself. I opposed, in the time of it, this horrible measure, and predicted the fatal effects, and I have the chagrin to see all my predictions accomplished; from error to error, from one false measure to another, we are arrived to the brink of a precipice, down to the bottom of which we feel ourselves irresistibly hurried by the weight of our debts.

"From the time that the word independence, coming from America, resounded in this house, we have endeavored to evince that the Americans had originally this independence in view. Nevertheless, the events have demonstrated that nothing was further from their idea. When I express myself thus, I speak of Americans in general. I pretend not to insinuate, that there were not among them some men of inferior rank, who have thought that they saw their present interest in the independence of their country. In so vast a country it is impossible, that there should not be found some such senseless men, and I should be more senseless, more absurd, than the absurdest of them all, if I could doubt of it a moment. But again, once more; the mass of the nation did not aim at independence; when we had forced this peaceable people to a just resistance, what happened here? Our lawyers opened the road of error; we never inquired how we could appease these rising troubles. Grave men, distinguished by the most eminent talents, and by the most influential offices, talked of conquest and submission; 'The Rubicon is passed,' said they, 'the sword is drawn, if you do not kill them they will kill you.' The lawyers were powerfully seconded by the reverend ministers of a religion, which teaches peace and recommends brotherly love. The robe and the mitre, animating us in concert to massacre, we plunged ourselves into rivers of blood, spreading terror, devastation, and death over the whole continent of America, exhausting ourselves at home both of men and money, dishonoring forever our annals, we became the objects of horror in the eyes of indignant Europe! It was our reverend prelates who led on this dance, which may be justly styled the dance of death! These reverend prelates have a terrible account to give to their country and to their consciences; they have opened upon them the eyes of the nation, who have justly styled them the rotten part of the constitution.

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"Such is the horrid war, which we have maintained for five years. What have been its horrible fruits! a ruinous war to sustain against the two branches of the House of Bourbon; we are crushed under the burden of an immense debt; at war with America; at war with France; at war with Spain, without having a single ally or a single power for our friend. On the contrary, seeing distinctly and without doubt, that all foreign powers act directly or indirectly, in a manner absolutely contrary to our interests, not to say in a hostile manner, there are none, even down to the little inhabitants of Lubeck, of Dantzic, and of Hamburg, who are not against us! This is not all. What is much worse still, we see Holland, our natural ally, opposed to our interests, and refusing us the slightest succor. We are precisely at this moment the deer marked out for the chase, detached by the blood hounds from the rest of the flock which abandons us! If our situation is terrible, we need not believe, that the Americans repose themselves upon beds of

roses; far from it, and it is from the bosom of their distress that the ray of hope issues, which in my opinion shines upon us at this day. We have forced them to contract an alliance with France; this alliance was not natural; nature, habit, language, and religion, all conspire to raise a barrier between France and America; all tend to bind again, between England and America, the natural ties heretofore fortunate and happy. The Americans have not found in their great and good ally, the friend that they sought in him; they have a natural aversion even for the title of a King. They prefer the republican institutions to absolute monarchy; they are overloaded with an immense debt, the burden of which France has not appeared forward to lighten for them. Their paper money is fallen to such a degree of depreciation, that they have given forty dollars in paper for one dollar in silver, worth four shillings and sixpence. The greatest part among them, groan under the tyranny of those, who have made themselves masters of power, desiring ardently the restoration of the ancient form of government; their troops ill paid, and still worse clothed, have been reduced to such dreadful extremities, that the last summer, in the course of a fatiguing march, they saw themselves reduced to the ration of a handful of pease a day; as for the rest, their allies know as much upon this point as we. A Frenchman, distinguished by his talents, sent some years ago by his Court to America to observe the disposition of the people and the state of things, &c. in a letter, which he wrote from the place of his destination, serves himself of these remarkable expressions; 'one shall find in a coffee-house of Paris a great deal more enthusiasm for the cause of liberty, than in any part of America.'

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"Let us take advantage of these circumstances. Let us put an end to the war of America, to the end that we may unite more efficaciously all our efforts against the House of Bourbon. I believe we shall not find much hostility. France has not gained, Spain has considerably lost, let us strike both the one and the other more decisive blows. We cannot do this without making peace with America. We cannot obtain this peace but by offering reasonable terms of reconciliation. I have maturely examined all which has been proposed before me. I have come as near as possible to the plan of conciliation, drawn by the Earl of Chatham. I may say, indeed, that I have taken it for my model. But I have departed from it in the most essential point. The Earl of Chatham's bill had for its foundation this express condition, that America should acknowledge the sovereignty of Great Britain, and that each assembly should furnish to the mass of the public revenue a certain quota. Certainly, if we were to make at this day to America a similar proposition, they would laugh in our faces, and would treat those who should dare to make it, as smartly as they treated the Commissioners, who visited her in 1778. The great object of my bill is, that something certain should be done, which may be proper to convince America of the sincerity of those views, with which we invite her to enter into some conciliatory convention with his Majesty. In one word, the title of my bill is an analysis of it;—*A Bill to appease the Troubles, which have sometime subsisted between Great Britain and America, and to authorise his Majesty to send Commissioners, clothed with full Powers to treat with America.*"^[3]

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, May 23d, 1780.

Sir,

The public papers announce, that all the maritime powers have acceded to the proposition of Russia respecting an armed neutrality.

The following article from Stockholm is of the 2d of May. "Our Court has accepted the plan of an armed neutrality, which the Empress of all the Russias has proposed to it; and in consequence has given orders to equip six more ships of the line; so that our naval force will consist, like that of Denmark, of six ships of the line and six frigates, whereof six vessels of war will remain in the port of Carlserona, equipped and ready to be employed, on the first order."

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The article from Copenhagen is of the 9th of May. "The Court has acceded to the proposition of her Majesty the Empress of Russia, in regard to an armed neutrality, and in consequence, they are busy in taking measures for the armament. Besides the four vessels of the line and the two frigates, which they equipped, the Court have further put in commission two other ships of the line, the Jylland of ten guns, and the Mars of sixty, and they are taking all possible pains both here and in Norway, and in the other Provinces of this kingdom, to recruit the number of men necessary for this armament. Two of our ships of the line, the Wagrien and the Infods, passed into the Road last Saturday. The same day Captain Ziervogel, commanding a frigate, set sail with the officers and crews necessary to bring here the two frigates, which are at Fredericksham in Norway. The Russian ships of war, Captain Spendof, who has wintered here, and the frigate of the same nation, which was upon its return from Norway, set sail yesterday for Petersburg."

There is another article from Paris of the 12th of May. "The Court of Portugal," they say, "has given assurance to ours of arming if necessary to maintain the neutrality, and by means of the accession of this Power to the system it appears, that there can remain little hope to England of

finding an ally, who will make a common cause with her, and aid her to preserve the empire of the seas, of which she flattered herself she would never be dispossessed."

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Another article from Hamburg of the 12th of May. "At a time, when there is an extraordinary dearth of news, our politicians occupy themselves about the declaration of the Court of Russia to the belligerent Powers, and the proposition of this same Court to the neutral Powers. Already, they say, it is no longer doubtful, that the Courts of Sweden, of Denmark, and the States-General of the United Provinces, have acceded to the proposition of the Empress of Russia, and that they arm themselves. It is now the problem, to know if the Court of Portugal will follow their example. In the meantime, our speculators appear in general very curious to know, what will be the measures, which the neutral Powers will take for the execution of their designs, and at what time the plan of this armed neutrality can have its effect."

Another is an article from London of the 12th of May. "The day before yesterday, the Court received despatches from its Ministers in the Northern Courts, which confirm the news of a plan of confederation formed by the Powers of that part of Europe, for the protection of their respective subjects against the attacks of the belligerent Powers. The despatches of Sir Joseph Yorke announce, they say, an approaching negotiation between the Court of London and the States-General, to the end to adjust amicably the difference arisen between the two nations, relative to the capture of some Dutch vessels, and the insult offered to the flag of the Republic, by Commodore Fielding. It is believed, that this affair will be terminated to the mutual satisfaction of the two parties, and that this negotiation may well serve to pave the way to a reconciliation among the Powers at war, to which there is no doubt England would sincerely agree, upon honorable conditions."

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. A second division is said to be preparing at Brest, of several ships of the line and several thousand men.

J. A.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Translation.

Versailles, May 24th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the two letters, which you have done me the honor to write to me on the 12th and 19th of the present month. I had no need of your apology to induce me to render justice to the patriotic sentiments with which you are animated. You understand the interests and engagements of your country, and I am persuaded you will never have any other object, than to consolidate both the one and the other. You can judge by this, Sir, what confidence we place in your principles, and what security we feel beforehand, as to the conduct you will hold, in case the Court of London should propose to you overtures of conciliation.

I offer you many thanks for the American gazettes, which you have been so kind as to send me. I will take care that they shall all be returned.

I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, May 26th, 1780.

Sir,

At a numerous assembly of gentlemen of the law in Dublin, held the 30th of April, Captain Henry Hewart in the chair, after having collected the votes, Henry Grattan was unanimously admitted an honorary member; and it was agreed with the same unanimity, that the following address should be presented to him.

"Sir;—The body of the gentlemen of the law, ambitious of associating to themselves a man, whom they consider as an ornament of his country, and as the firm support of her rights, unanimously prays you to accept the title of honorary member of the society, as an unequivocal testimony of

their admiration of vast talents when they are displayed in the cause of liberty and virtue. They request you, particularly, to accept of their most affectionate thanks for the noble effort, that in concurrence with several of the most respectable persons in the kingdom, you made on Wednesday, the 19th current, in defence of the rights of the people, and in endeavoring to unite the British Empire; they assure you, that although the event has not entirely answered, either to their expectations or to the nobleness of your efforts, they are firmly determined to sustain their rights, such as they are laid down in the resolutions, which you have proposed. They esteem it happy to see, that without excepting even the servants of the Crown, all the members of the House have acknowledged the truth of the principle upon which those resolutions stood, although the majority has not accepted them, alleging, that at this critical time it was not necessary to renew the declarations already standing on the journals of the House and subsisting in full force."

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To this address, Mr Grattan made the following reply.

"Gentlemen;—I esteem myself infinitely honored to be a member of an association, which has merited for a long time my attention and my admiration. By declaring that there is no power capable of subjecting this country, but the King, the Peers, and Commons of Ireland, you render a great service to this nation, because you give to all the other corps of volunteers the great example, to make the same declaration of their rights under the sanction of your corps, who not only protect the nation in arms, but by your knowledge and authority, propagate the great principles of law and liberty.

"In a country which possesses laws like ours, and men of your merit agitate the great question of liberty, it is to be free. I rejoice then that the rights of Ireland have been discussed. This discussion has opened the eyes of a people, who had slept during the course of a century, and forced almost all the representatives of this people, who are susceptible of principle, to deny that any foreign legislature has rights over Ireland; and makes this declaration circulate through all the great associations of the kingdom, and will finally extirpate all that remains of authority usurped by the British Parliament.

"I observe, with satisfaction, that you think like me, that liberty is the tie which preserves the union of Great Britain and Ireland. We are attached to Great Britain, but not to its yoke. Common privileges formed originally our connexion with Great Britain; these same privileges will render this connexion indissoluble. If Ireland acknowledged as a slave the supremacy of the British Parliament, she would be the enemy of British liberty, because in that case she would league herself with the Ministers to annihilate the system of government, and precipitate all the subjects of his Majesty into a state of equality.

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"I regard the liberty of Ireland as adding to the safety of that of Great Britain, which, instead of protestations of loyalty extorted from a Province devoted to pillage, will actually receive a tribute of affection sensibly felt on the part of a free people. As a friend of the constitutions of the two kingdoms, as desirous of an honorable and permanent union, I esteem myself happy to see myself enrolled among men, who have your courage and your principles."

On the 13th of April, the British frigate the *Hyæna*, Captain Thompson, arrived at Gibraltar at midnight, having escaped the fire of three batteries, three chebecs of twentyeight guns each, and a frigate of thirtytwo. Don Barcelo, in the Spanish Admiral, pursued him in a fifty gun ship. The Don's squadron consists of six ships of the line, one frigate of thirtytwo guns, three chebecs of twentyeight guns each, and a number of fire-ships and gallies, which intercept all which pass the Gut, and completely blockade Gibraltar, and the squadron of Commodore Elliot, reduced to the Panther, the Enterprise, and three smaller vessels. The garrison is said to be in good spirits, although a malignant fever brought in by the Spanish prisoners has carried off a great many men, particularly in the regiment of Highlanders. The wants of the garrison, however, will soon be very great, particularly of fuel. Captain Thompson carried the news, that they are soon to have a powerful succor from Admiral Graves. It is very probable, that the Ministry may send Graves to attempt to act over again the part of Admiral Rodney, and after throwing assistance into Gibraltar, pass on to America. It is to be hoped, that Graves will not have Rodney's luck. It is pretty certain he has not all his dexterity. Yet I cannot but think the Spaniards are imprudently exposed in that part. The English have filled all the newspapers of Europe for three weeks, with lists of ships of the line to compose the grand fleet in the channel, which they have made amount to forty. But at last comes out a frank and honest confession in the *Courier de l'Europe*, that they can muster but twenty.

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On the 16th, Admiral Edwards hoisted his flag at Portsmouth, on board the *Portland*, of fifty guns, and made the signal of departure for all the merchant ships which he is to convey to the Banks of Newfoundland. Sir Charles Hardy, commander-in-chief of the channel fleet, Governor of Greenwich hospital, and a representative of Plymouth, is dead. Rivingston is next in command, but it is said the place of commander-in-chief will be offered to Admiral — who refused it before Hardy was appointed.

We read from Hamburg, 19th of May. "Conversation here turns wholly upon the plan of an armed neutrality, proposed by the Empress of Russia, and the more we examine, the more we are convinced of the great advantages, which this plan will procure, not only for the present, but the future. In the meantime we learn, that the neutral powers will not delay to put to sea strong squadrons to protect their commerce, and it is even pretended, that if the English continue to molest neutral ships, it may well happen in a little time, that they may form against them some enterprise of consequence. It is assured, that the Hanseatic towns have acceded to the armed neutrality proposed. It is reported, that conferences between the maritime powers will be held at

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the Hague, and that they will be opened as soon as the Baron d'Erensworth, the new Minister of the King of Sweden to their High Mightinesses, shall arrive there. They say in London, that the Baron de Nolker, Minister of Sweden, has presented to the Court a memorial containing very lively complaints, touching the hostilities committed by an English vessel against the Swedish vessel the Illerim, commanded by the Chevalier d'Ankerlo, in which this Minister demands satisfaction for the violences committed against the said ship. They add, that his Excellency at the same time declared, that the King, his master, was resolved to defend and maintain with his arms in his hand the system of neutrality adopted by his Majesty."

They say too, in London 16th of May, that government have had the satisfaction to learn, that the convoy from Cork and from Plymouth, consisting in merchant ships, and a considerable reinforcement of troops, although dispersed after their departure, had arrived in the West India Islands.

Paris, 16th of May. "Divers advices announce, that the English, since the declaration made to the States-General of the United Provinces, have already stopped several Dutch ships, loaded only with innocent merchandises, and whereof the transportation has never been prohibited to neutrals by the treaties. This arbitrary proceeding will appear, without doubt, so much the more surprising to the maritime powers of the North, as at the same time his Majesty, always guided by the principles of wisdom and the most exact equity, has sent the strictest orders to all the commandants and captains of his vessels of war, and privateers of his kingdom, to let pass freely and without any hinderance all the neutral vessels, without distinction, even although bound to an enemy's port, provided they are not loaded with any arms, or warlike stores, whereof the transportation is forbidden by the treaties. Of this we may be assured more authentically by a letter written by M. de Sartine to M. de Mistral, Commissary General of the ports and arsenals of the Marine of the King, and Ordonnateur of the port of Havre, which is of the following tenor.

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'You know, Sir, that the war undertaken by the King has no other end but the desire, with which his Majesty feels himself animated for the maintenance of the liberty of navigation. In consequence, he has seen with a great deal of pleasure, that the greatest part of the powers of the North incline, and have taken the resolution to co-operate in it already, by regulations relative to it, as his Majesty has made known to the commanders of his squadrons, his intentions relative to the measures and precautions, which the captains of his vessels of war, and other vessels ought to observe towards ships belonging to the subjects of the neutral powers, and which the former may meet at sea.

'His Majesty then has charged me to repeat his orders given in this regard, and to order you to exhort the captains and other officers of vessels armed as privateers to conform themselves with more attention than ever to the tenor of the regulations relative to neutral vessels, and in particular to those belonging to the Russians. To this end, his Majesty orders the captains of vessels armed for privateering, and others, to use the greatest circumspection toward all neutral vessels, and according to the exigence of the case, to afford them all the assistance of which they may stand in need, not to give the least hinderance to their navigation, although their cargoes may be destined for the enemy's ports, nor to stop them, except in cases in which the captains of French armed vessels shall have well founded reasons to believe, that the said vessels navigate for the subjects of the King of England, under the shelter of the flag of a neutral power, to the end to avoid by this way the being visited according to the usages established in such cases, or in which they shall attempt to transport to the enemy the effects of contraband, such as arms of all kinds, and other warlike stores.

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'The intention of the King is, that you give notice of these presents to the Commissaries of the Department of Havre de Grace, ordering them, at the same time, to send copies to all the captains of vessels armed as privateers, and other vessels ready to go out, or who come in, to the end that they conform themselves with the greatest circumspection to what is here prescribed in regard to neutral vessels, and in particular to those belonging to Russia."

They write from Brest the 8th of this month, that they expected a fleet from Bordeaux, loaded with stores, provisions, and wine, the arrival of which was very necessary for the prompt equipment of a squadron destined to transport a second division of troops, of four or five thousand men. They add, that they expect also, with no less impatience in the same port, the convoy, which went out from St Malo, the 23d of March, which is still detained at Cherbourg, which consists in a great measure in cast cannon and artillery stores, which are to serve, they say, for a descent, which is projected in England, and which it is strongly asserted the government has by no means renounced. The latter part is probably only what we call a scarecrow.

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Hague, 21st of May. "We see here a copy of a letter written by his Excellency the Count de Florida Blanca, Secretary of State of his Catholic Majesty, to the Count de Rechteren, Minister of their High Mightinesses at the Court of Spain, dated at Aranjues, the 1st of May, 1780, which is of the following tenor.

"Sir;—His Majesty has learned, that the boat of a chebeck, commanded by Don Barthelemi Rosello, having seized a Dutch vessel, named the Spaar, Captain John Tierds Wagenaar, coming out of Gibraltar, where he had unloaded a cargo of flour, which he was carrying from Ferrol to Cadiz; on account of the purveyors of our Marine the said vessel has been set at liberty, upon the declaration which he made, that he had been taken under Cape Espartel, by the English privateer, the Maidstone, who had conducted him to that place. Nevertheless, we have proofs that the vessel has been met at the entrance of the port of Cadiz, having at that time her cargo;

that by consequence, her pretended capture by the English privateer is a pure fiction, and the introduction into Gibraltar of a load of five thousand one hundred and sixtytwo and a quarter quintals of castile of flour, a manifest theft committed upon the provisions of the Marine of the King; and to the end that such villanies may be punished and prevented hereafter, his Majesty has ordained, that a prosecution be commenced against the said Wagenaar, and that I give you notice of it, to the end, that you may inform their High Mightinesses, to whom his Minister at the Hague has orders to complain highly of a theft, which ought not to have been the fruit of the complaisance, which the King has used towards the flag of the Republic. I shall add, that his Majesty hopes that their High Mightinesses by the remedy, which they shall provide, and by the severe punishment of the guilty, will spare him the pain of taking himself the precautions necessary to suppress such crying excesses."

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In the Hague Gazette of the 24th of May, is the following article from London, of the 19th of May. "On the 17th, the King returned from Windsor to St James, and assisted at a great council. The conduct of several Courts of Europe, in the present conjuncture, excites all the attention of our Ministry; we foresee here what will be the effects of an armed neutrality, and we fear that there will result from it consequences dangerous to the general repose of Europe. There are persons, nevertheless, who pretend to foresee, that this decision of the neutral powers will produce events, which will facilitate an accommodation between the belligerent powers, but that there will be no question about it, until after that France and Spain shall have made all their efforts to take away from England the empire of the seas, and procure to Europe an entire liberty of commerce, two points on which they found their present hostilities, and which serve as attractions to excite other powers to enter into their views. England, on her part, will employ all her forces to maintain her superiority at sea, on which depends the prosperity of this country, and the safety of its detached dominions; and although her enemies are numerous and formidable, she is not without hopes, that the present campaign will bring back the Colonies of America to their ancient relations of interest, and dispose the powers at war to hearken to conditions of accommodation."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

[133]

Paris, May 27th, 1780.

Sir,

In the beginning of this controversy with Great Britain, the Americans made such extensive researches into the principles of the British constitution, and into those controversies which had taken place in former ages, concerning their application to external dominions in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Gascoine, Guienne, Jersey, Guernsy, Man, &c. and published the result of their inquiries to the world, which were read with avidity everywhere, that I consider those publications as having laid the foundation of most of the events that have happened since. The proceedings of Ireland in 1779 and 1780 may be read in some publications made in America in 1774 or 1775. I have long expected to see something produced by the same principles in the East Indies, and at last I find I am not disappointed. In the General Advertiser of May 13th is this paragraph.

"We are authorised to correct the account, that appeared in this paper on last Thursday, concerning the petitions lately arrived from the East Indies. It is not true, that the British inhabitants of Bengal have sent over a petition to his Majesty to abolish the Court of Judicature established there. Their petition is addressed, and will shortly be presented to Parliament; and so far from wishing to abolish the court of justice, they only pray that its constitutional powers may be restrained. The grand object of their petition is, to obtain 'a trial by jury in all cases, where it is by law established in England,' which they conceive is one of those inherent, unalienable, and indefeasible rights, of which neither time nor circumstance can deprive a British subject, living, under British laws, and which the Judges in Bengal have lately ventured to declare they are not entitled to, except in criminal cases."

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"The prayer of the Persian petitions already presented to one of the Secretaries of State, from the natives of different districts in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, is, we understand, to be relieved from the hardships they suffer by the establishment of the English Court of Judicature. They express, in the strongest language, their distress and terror at the extraordinary powers assumed and exercised by the judges. They pray to be exempted from the jurisdiction of a court, to whose rules they are utter strangers, and from the control of laws, which they consider as calculated for a different state of society, and which are abhorrent to the manners, institutions, and religion of their forefathers."

If this war continues, we shall hear more of the East Indies and their claims. Great Britain holds them by a slender thread, and by the good will only of a few individuals.

Among the English papers, which I enclose to Congress, will be found a Dialogue in the Shades

between the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Chatham, and Mr Charles York. It was written by Edward Jennings, of Maryland, now residing at Brussels, a gentleman of great merit.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, June 1st, 1780.

Sir,

This morning a friend at Versailles sent me two English papers of the 26th and 27th of May, containing Rodney's account of an action between the French and English fleets on the 17th of April. At the conclusion of the battle, says Rodney, the enemy might be said to be completely beat. How easy it is to say and write this! Much easier than to find a sufficient number of persons ready to believe it. Such was the distance of the van and the rear from the centre, and the crippled condition of several ships, particularly the Sandwich, which for twentyfour hours was with difficulty kept above water, that it was impossible to pursue them that night without the greatest disadvantage. He found it in vain to follow them with his Majesty's fleet, in the condition they were in, to Guadaloupe, and accordingly put away to Fort Royal Bay, Martinique, there to wait for them.

The French Admiral appeared to Rodney a brave and gallant officer, and was nobly supported during the whole action. The killed on board the English fleet were one hundred and twenty, the wounded, three hundred and fiftythree; four hundred and seventythree in all. These circumstances are very far from giving authenticity to the idea, that the French were beaten. It has every appearance of a third general drawn battle, in which the English have ultimately the worst. Drawn battles do not maintain the empire, the dominion, the sovereignty, the mastership of the seas. To all these they pretend, and they must make good their pretensions by clear victories, or they are undone. The French Court has not yet received any account.

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ENGLISH LINE OF BATTLE.

The Sterling Castle to lead with the starboard tack, the Magnificent with the larboard tack.

Rear Admiral Parker's Division.

| | | Guns. | Men |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|-----|
| Sterling Castle, | Captain Caskett, | 64 | 500 |
| Ajax, | Uvedale, | 74 | 600 |
| Elizabeth, | Maitland, | 74 | 600 |
| Princess Royal, | {R. A. Parker, } | | |
| | {C. Hammond, } | 90 | 770 |
| Albion, | Bawyer, | 74 | 600 |
| Terrible, | Douglas, | 74 | 600 |
| Trident, | Malloy, | 64 | 500 |
| Greyhound frigate. | | | |

Sir G. Rodney's Division.

| | | Guns. | Men |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|-----|
| Grafton, | Com. Collingwood, | | |
| | Capt. Newnham, | 74 | 617 |
| Yarmouth, | Bateman, | 64 | 500 |
| Cornwall, | Edwards, | 74 | 600 |
| Sandwich, Sir G. Rodney, | C. Young, | 90 | 732 |
| Suffolk, | Crespin, | 74 | 600 |
| Boyne, | Cotton, | 68 | 520 |
| Vigilant, | Home, | 64 | 500 |

Venus, to repeat signals, Deal Castle, Pegasus, frigates.

Rear Admiral Rowley's Division.

| | | Guns. | Men |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|-----|
| Vengeance, Com. Hotham, | Capt. Holloway, | 74 | 617 |
| Medway, | Capt. Affleck, | 60 | 420 |
| Montague, | Houlton, | 74 | 600 |
| Conqueror, R. A. Rowley, | Watson, | 74 | 617 |
| Intrepid, | St John, | 64 | 500 |
| Magnificent, | Elphinstone, | 74 | 600 |

Andromeda frigate. Centurion to assist the rear in case of need.

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On the 24th of May, Governor Pownal moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in a bill, "to enable the King to make a Convention or Truce, or to conclude a Peace with the Colonies, on Terms convenient and necessary." This motion was seconded by Mr Dunning, and after debate the order of the day was moved, which was carried by 113 against 52.

It is said, that Johnstone despatched C. Maclawrin from Lisbon to S. G. Rodney with advice, that fourteen sail of the line, with ten thousand troops, sailed from Cadiz to the westward the 28th of April.

The Hudson's Bay fleet, consisting of the Beaver, Captain Moore, the Sea Horse, Christopher, the Prince Rupert, Prichards, and the King George, Fowler, have completed their lading at Gravesend, and will soon sail.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 1st, 1780.

Sir,

In consequence of an advertisement published to this effect, the corporation of the citizens of Dublin, having assembled on the 11th of May, at Thalsel, the committee named the 29th of February last, to prepare and present resolutions relative to the affairs of the times, made the following report, which was unanimously approved.

"We, members of the committee appointed at a general meeting of the citizens; held the 29th of last February, having taken into consideration the objects, the examination of which was committed to us, submit to our fellow citizens the following resolution.

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"That we think, that it is the absolute duty of every virtuous citizen to declare, in the most explicit manner, what he thinks relatively to the great constitutional objects, which have been suspended in the moment when we expected it the least, as well as to co-operate with courage and unanimity in everything which can tend to the acquisition of these same objects. That our sincere desire is, to maintain an inviolable connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, to establish and fix this connexion upon the only basis which can render it stable and permanent; that of a royalty inseparable from the common rights of an equal liberty. That it is at this time necessary to declare, that the King, the Peers, and Commons of Ireland, are the only powers to which it belongs to make laws for binding this kingdom.

"That in putting in use all the constitutional means, whatever be the public or private character with which we may be clothed, whether we are magistrates, jurors, or simple individuals, we will maintain and propagate these principles, and we will adhere invariably to the great and important objects of our instructions, those of establishing the independence of the Parliament of Ireland, and of obtaining a modification of Poyning's law.

"That all the plans of reformation, which may be proposed, are necessarily vain and of no effect, while the influence of the Crown, arising from the profusion with which the people bestow their grants, and from the imprudent prodigality of Ministers, shall not be diminished; and that we ought constantly to employ our efforts to obtain a system of retrenchment and economy, to the end the better to diminish the means of corruption.

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"That the independent electors of Ireland, are particularly called upon to make their efforts to procure for the nation more virtuous representatives, more equality in the representation of the people in Parliament, and to study the most effectual measures to obtain these desirable ends. We think that the said electors cannot better succeed, than by refusing with firmness to vote for any man, provided either with places or pensions, or who shall have acted in any manner contrary to the inherent rights or manifest sentiments of the people; and by giving for instructions to their representatives to make all their exertions to obtain an augmentation in the number of members, who represent the counties, the populous cities, and the independent towns.

"That we pledge ourselves to each other, and all to our country, by all which men know that is sacred, to take the foregoing resolutions for the rule of our conduct, and that at all opportunities, and by all constitutional means, we will support the spirit and principles of them. In testimony of this solemn declaration, we have all signed the said resolutions.

"*Resolved unanimously*, That the said resolutions thus signed by the members of the committee, shall be deposited in the coffee-house, at the Royal Exchange, there to receive the signatures of the citizens."

Continuation of said Report.

"We, members of the committee, &c. propose further to our fellow-citizens the following resolutions.

"That our sincere thanks be presented, in the most respectful manner to Henry Grattan, for the motion, excellently well conceived, which he has made in Parliament the 19th of April last, tending to a declaration, that his most excellent Majesty the King, the Peers, and Commons of Ireland, are the only power to which it belongs to make laws capable of binding this kingdom. [140]

"That thanks also be presented to the ninetyeight members, which supported this great constitutional assertion; passed unanimously.

"That our sincere thanks be presented, in the most respectful manner, to Barry Yelverton, for the patriotic motion which he made in Parliament the 25th of last April, to the end to introduce regulations concerning the manner in which bills are transmitted from this kingdom to England. The object of this motion being to hinder the unconstitutional interposition of the privy council, in obtaining the modification so much desired of Poyning's law.

"That thanks be given also to the one hundred and six members who seconded this manly effort; passed unanimously.

"That our sincere thanks be presented to our worthy representatives, Doctor William Clement and Sir Samuel Bradstreet, Baronet, on account of the uniformity of their conduct in Parliament, and particularly for the zeal with which they have supported the two important motions aforesaid; conforming themselves in this to the late instructions, which they have received from us, and seconding the general wish of this kingdom; passed unanimously.

"That our sincere thanks, and full of gratitude, be presented in the most respectful manner to the noble Lords who have opposed, and to those who had the courage to protest against the last paragraph of the address, which the House of Peers presented to the throne, the 2d of March, last. The said paragraph containing insinuations, which were neither founded upon facts nor authorised by actions, implying reproaches, which the people of Ireland have not merited, and contained in these words; 'that they would use all possible endeavors to discourage and disappoint all endeavors, which ill advised men may employ to the end to excite ill founded fears in the minds of the people of his Majesty, or to divert their attention from those advantages relative to commerce, which have been granted to us in so great an extent;' passed with three negatives. [141]

"That we earnestly request our magistrates not to give, in any manner nor on any occasion, any effect to any law, which does not proceed from, or has not received the sanction of the King, the Peers, and Commons of Ireland. That while they conduct themselves thus, they shall receive from us the most constant and the most firm support, to the end to annihilate the ill founded hope, which may have been conceived, of subjecting Ireland in any case to a foreign legislation; passed unanimously.

"That it is the opinion of this committee, that the two great and favorite objects of the people, viz. a declaration of its rights and a modification of Poyning's law, having been suspended in Parliament in a manner so unexpected, it appears at this time of absolute necessity to form a committee of correspondence, to the end to co-operate with such other committees of the same nature as may be formed in the kingdom, in the measures the most proper to give extension and safety to the advantages relative to commerce, which we have at last obtained; to restore still further our rights and liberties, and to preserve the constitution of Ireland free and independent; passed with one negative." [142]

The committee of correspondence was named upon the spot, and formed of fifteen members.

Thus a new epoch is formed in the politics of Ireland; hitherto they had left the supreme direction of affairs in the hands of Parliament. The people have now taken it into their own hands. The committee of Dublin, by communicating with other committees through the kingdom, will be able to conduct the body of the kingdom, and unite the various parts of it in certain principles, which will by degrees work themselves into a system, and complete the independence of Irish legislation. This will depend, however, upon the continuance of the war; for if England should be wise enough to make peace, of which there is little probability, the spirit of Ireland will evaporate, and their beautiful edifice dissolve, like the fabric of a vision.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 2d, 1780.

Sir,

We are informed from the Hague, of the 28th of May, that the merchants of the Republic have

presented two petitions, one to their High Mightinesses, and the other to their Noble and Grand Mightinesses. The tenor of the first is as follows.

"To their High Mightinesses, our Lords, the States-General of the United Provinces.

"The undersigned, merchants, assurers, and owners of vessels, and freighters, established in these Provinces, give respectfully to understand, that it is with sentiments of the most sensible gratitude, that the Commerce has been informed of the affectionate resolution taken by your High Mightinesses to equip a number of vessels of war to the end to protect the free navigation of the subjects of this State. But as the petitioners were ignorant, that the activity of the progress of the said equipment has to this time been retarded, both by the sickness, which prevails among the crews of the vessels ready to put to sea, and by the want of experienced seamen, necessary to the equipment of vessels put into commission, and by other causes; while in this interval the most favorable season for navigation slips away, many ships loaded with merchandises dare not set sail from the ports of this country, for want of the necessary protection; while they cannot find means here, nor elsewhere, of insuring but a small portion of those vessels and their cargoes, and that, even at enormous premiums, such as have never before been demanded, being from twenty to thirty per cent, which occasions an interruption and an inactivity to their navigation so excessive as well as to their commerce, that their total ruin must necessarily result from it; all the commissions for merchandises passing elsewhere, without a hope of being able ever to see them return here, which an unfortunate experience has already many times proved. For these causes, the petitioners humbly pray, that it may please your High Mightinesses, to grant and effectuate as soon as possible the protection necessary; as the commercial interest on their part are ready to co-operate effectually, to complete the crews, and to submit to all prompt and convenient measures, which, according to the exigence of the case, and the urgent circumstances your High Mightinesses, according to your enlightened wisdom, shall judge to be the most proper for the preservation of the commerce and the navigation of your subjects."

The second petition is as follows.

"To their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, our Lords, the States of Holland and West Friesland.

"The subscribing merchants, assurers, owners of ships, and freighters, all living in these Provinces, give respectfully to understand, that the petitioners pressed by the urgent necessity, and to the end to ward off the total ruin of commerce and navigation, without which neither they nor the greater part of the inhabitants of the Republic can subsist, have addressed themselves to your High Mightinesses, our Lords, the States-General of the United Provinces, to solicit a prompt protection, by the way of petition, of which the petitioners have the honor to annex a copy.

"Nevertheless, although the petitioners have every reason to flatter themselves, that an arrangement equally ready and efficacious, will soon fulfil their wishes; nevertheless, the better to complete their views, and for the preservation of commerce and navigation, the soul and the nerve of the prosperity of the Republic, and to the end to prevent its inaction, as well as the total ruin of the petitioners, which would infallibly follow, they think that it would be very necessary, that it may please your Noble and Grand Mightinesses, to second in this the petitioners, as in your high wisdom you shall judge expedient and convenient."

I have before sent a copy of what was published for the answer of the Court of Madrid to the Russian Declaration. But, as that Court has now published an authentic copy, which is a little different from that, although more clear and better, I beg leave to trouble Congress with a translation of it.

"The King has been informed of the fashion of thinking of the Empress of Russia, in regard to the powers, both belligerent and neuter, by a Memorial, which M. Stephen de Zinowioff, Minister of that sovereign, has presented on the 15th of this month, to the Count de Florida Blanca, first Secretary of State. The King considers this act of the Empress, as an effect of the just confidence, which his Majesty has merited on his part; and it is to him so much the more agreeable, as the principles adopted by this sovereign are those which have ever governed the King, and which his Majesty endeavored, by all possible means, although without effect, to induce England to observe, during the time that Spain herself was neuter. These principles are those of justice, of equity, and of moderation; these same principles in fine, Russia, and all the powers have acknowledged in the resolutions of his Majesty; and it is only by the conduct, which the English navy has established, both in the last and present war, (a conduct, which subverts the rules the most constantly observed in regard to neutral powers) that his Majesty has seen himself under the necessity of imitating it; because the English not respecting the neutral flag, when it had on board the effects of an enemy, although they were not contraband, and this flag not defending itself against these violences, they could not, with justice, hinder Spain from using equal reprisals, to secure herself from the enormous prejudice, which would result from an inequality in this respect.

"The neutral powers, on their side, have also given occasion to the inconveniences, which they have suffered, by having served themselves with double papers, and other artifices, to the end to prevent the capture of their vessels. From this have followed the numerous captures and detentions, as well as the consequences, which have resulted from them; although in truth, these have not been so prejudicial as has been pretended. On the contrary, we know, that some of these detentions have turned to the advantage of the owners of the cargoes; the provisions, of which they were composed, having been sold in the port where the ships were tried, at a price

higher than the price current at the place of their destination.

"The King, nevertheless, not content with these proofs of his justification, manifested to the eyes of all Europe, would at this day have the glory of being the first to give the example of respecting the neutral flag of all the Courts, which have consented, or which shall consent, to defend it, until his Majesty shall see the part, which the English navy shall take, and until he shall discover, by experience, whether this navy will restrain itself or not, as well as the English privateers. And to this end to make it appear to all the powers how ready Spain is to observe, now she is at war, the same rules, which she desired while she was neuter, his Majesty conforms himself to the other points contained in the declaration of Russia, it being well understood, that what concerns the place blockaded, of Gibraltar, the danger of entering into that subsists in the manner in which this point is ascertained by the fourth article of the said declaration, by the means of the number of vessels stationed there to form the blockade; a danger, however, which the neutral vessels may avoid, by conforming to the rules of precaution established in the declaration of his Majesty, of the 13th of March last, which has been communicated to the Court of Petersburg by the means of its Minister.

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"Aranjuez, the 18th of April, 1780.

DE FLORIDA BLANCA."

There are two articles worth translating from the foreign gazettes, if it were only as specimens of the art, which is employed to keep the enemy in uncertainty about the designs of this Court, and the destinations of their fleets, whether successfully or not.

The first is, Amsterdam, 29th of May. A letter from Toulon, of the 8th of this month, contains the following details. "Orders have arrived here from Court, to send out into the Road, as soon as may be, the ships of the line, the Zélé and the Marseillois; but as the destination of these two ships is kept extremely secret, we exhaust ourselves in conjectures concerning the object of the operations, which they are ordered to execute. Some will have it, that they have orders to go and join the squadron of Don Solano, which sailed from Cadiz the 28th of last month, which it is pretended is bound to Brest. Others presume, that they have no other commission, than to go and cruise in the neighborhood of Mahon, to keep in the privateers, which frequently come out from thence, and which give extreme trouble to the navigation of the ports of the Mediterranean; in fine, there are some who believe that these vessels are to co-operate in an important enterprise, which is to be attempted in that sea. However this may be, as we know that a number of vessels have been taken up upon freight, on account of the King, and that they may easily embark in our port eleven or twelve thousand men; as moreover, it is more than probable that on the one hand, the entrance of the Straits of Gibraltar being sufficiently guarded by the Spaniards, so that there will not be occasion for a strong squadron to protect the transport vessels, which may be employed in an expedition against Mahon; and that on the other hand, the English being sufficiently occupied on diverse sides, may not be able easily to send to the relief of this island, we conclude from the combination of these different circumstances, that it may very well happen, that they may attempt this conquest, the success of which does not appear in effect to present any very insurmountable difficulties, and which would procure, after all, an advantage sufficiently important to the good of our commerce in general to merit that at least we should make the essay."

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The other article is in the Amsterdam Gazette of the 30th of May, and from Paris the 23d of May, 1780.

"We are of opinion here, that M. de Ternay is ordered to conduct the division of M. de Rochambeau to Canada, and that with so much the more foundation, as we see everywhere what M. de Sartine has published of the despatches of the Count de Guichen, that the arrival of his squadron in the seas of the Antilles, was sufficient to give us there a decided superiority. We cannot, moreover, but applaud the prudence of M. de Guichen and M. de Bouillé, in not sacrificing, perhaps in vain, a great many lives, to expel the English from the island of St Lucia, these two Generals having, without doubt, designs more important, and the success of which appears to them more certain, which naturally raises conjectures, that M. de Guichen proposed very soon to put to sea. However this may be, there are, nevertheless, other people who presume, that if the Count de Rochambeau does not go directly to Canada, he may very well go and disembark at Rhode Island, where he may make a place of arms, in order to go from thence, and join himself to General Washington, and attack New York together, while it is unfurnished with a strong garrison."

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In this manner it is, that some person or other is employed to give scope to the speculations and conjectures of the public, while the Courts of Europe flatter themselves, that their real Councils are kept secret. There is reason, however, to believe that, in fact, the Councils of all the Courts of Europe are penetrated by their enemies. The Councils of Congress, in many striking and important instances, although necessarily confided to such numbers, have been much more inviolably kept, without the aid of hired paragraph writers to disguise them. Our character and interest depend upon improving this fidelity, as well as upon discountenancing both by manners and authority, that base art so prevalent in Europe, that of political lying.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 2d, 1780.

Sir,

When a Minister of an ancient nation, which has been renowned for its wisdom and virtue, as well as power, rises in a popular assembly, which is the most conspicuous theatre in Europe, and declares, as it were, in the face of all the world, and with an air of reflection, of deliberation, and of solemnity, that such and such are his own opinions, concerning the truth of facts, and the probability of future events, one cannot call in question his good faith, although we may know his information to be false, and his judgment erroneous.

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Lord George Germain, in the debate in the House of Commons, on the 6th of May, declared, that "he flattered himself the completion of the chief wish of his heart, peace with America, on what he thought good and honorable terms for Great Britain, was not far off. He verily believed, and his belief was not merely speculative, but founded on recent information, that the moment of conciliation was near. His Lordship described the misery, which the Americans felt at this time, and stated, that the greatest majority of the people there were ready and desirous to return to their allegiance, but that they were prevented by the tyranny of those, who had got the power of government into their own hands. He did not believe the Congress would ever treat for peace, but from the condition of affairs in America, from the depreciation of their paper currency, from the poverty and distress of the country, from the great debt it groaned under, from the dissatisfaction, which all ranks of people expressed at the alliance with France, from the little benefit America had derived from that alliance; from all these considerations he did believe, that the people of America and the Assemblies of America would soon come to terms."

There may be some ambiguity in the phrase, "good and honorable terms for Great Britain;" but there can be no reasonable doubt, that his Lordship meant either to return to their allegiance to Great Britain, or at least to make a peace with her, separate from France. Whether the Americans ever will agree to such terms or not, being a question concerning a future event, cannot be decided by witnesses, nor any other way, but by probable arguments. There is one argument, which his Lordship does not appear to have considered. It is of some weight. It is this, that in order to return to their allegiance to the King of England, or make a peace with him, separate from France, they must involve themselves in a certain war with France and Spain, at least, and indeed, according to present appearances, with Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Portugal, for every one of these powers appear to be as decided against the claims, pretensions, and usurpations of Great Britain upon the seas, as France and Spain are. There is not an American merchant, yeoman, tradesman, or seaman, but knows this, or will know it very soon. Americans must therefore be destitute of that common share of reason, which God has given to men, to exchange the friendship of all the nations of the world for their enmity, merely for the sake of returning to a connexion with Great Britain, which could not protect them, and which they have the best reasons to dread as the greatest evil that could befall them, from the unheard of tyrannies and cruelties they have already experienced from her. His Lordship is desired to consider this, and to ask himself if he was an American, whether he would wish to run under the broken fragments of an empire, that is dashed in pieces, like a china vase, and commence a fresh war against a combination of all the nations of the world, who discover a degree of esteem and regard for America.

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If the Americans are as miserable as his Lordship represents them, will they be likely to increase that misery tenfold, and make it perpetual, by exposing the cause of a ruined empire, and going to war with half a dozen that are not ruined?

If we believe the testimonies of witnesses, who come from all parts of America, we shall be convinced, that his Lordship deceives himself. Every man from that country, who knows the principles and opinions of the people, declares, that they are, with an unanimity, that is unexampled in any other revolution, firmly determined to maintain their sovereignty and their alliances, and that there is nobody there who utters a wish of returning to the government of Great Britain, or even of making a separate peace.

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But if his Lordship was a candid inquirer after truth, and had a mind sufficiently enlightened to discover the means, that are in the power of all men, of obtaining it, he might have seen his error. There are certain marks, by which the opinions, principles, inclinations, and wishes of a people, may be discovered with infallible certainty, without recurring to witnesses, or to far fetched arguments.

The press, the towns, the juries, and the Assemblies, are four sources, from whence an unerring demonstration of the true sentiments of the people of America may be drawn. There is not in any nation of the world so unlimited a freedom of the press as is now established in every State of America, both by law and practice. Every man in Europe, who reads their newspapers, must see

it. There is nothing that the people dislike, that they do not attack. They attack officers of every rank in the militia, and in the army; they attack judges, governors, and magistrates, of every denomination. They attack Assemblies, and Councils, members of Congress, and Congress itself, whenever they dislike their conduct. But I appeal to every newspaper upon the Continent, whether one paragraph, one wish, or hint of returning to the government of Great Britain, or of making a separate peace, has ever appeared.

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The towns in many parts of America are small districts of territory, on an average perhaps six miles square. By the ancient laws of the country, which are still in force, any seven inhabitants of one of these towns have a right to demand of the magistrates a public assembly of all. There are necessarily several of these town meetings every year, and generally a great number of them. In these assemblies, every man, high and low, every yeoman, tradesman, and even day laborer, as well as every gentleman and public magistrate, has a right to vote, and to speak his sentiments upon public affairs, to propose measures, to instruct their representatives in the Legislature, &c. This right was constantly and frequently used under the former government, and is now much more frequently used under the new. The world has seen some hundreds of sets of instructions to representatives under the former government, wherein they enjoined an open opposition to judges, governors, acts of Parliament, King, Lords, and Commons of Great Britain. What is there now to prevent them from opposing Congress? Nothing. Has a single vote of any one of these towns been read, or one speech heard, proposing, or uttering a wish to return to the government of Great Britain? Not one. Is not this a demonstration of the sentiments of the people?

Juries in America were formerly another organ, by which the sentiments of the people were conveyed to the public. Both Grand Juries and Petit Juries, have expressed themselves in language sufficiently bold and free, against acts of Parliament, and the conduct of Great Britain. But has any one ever uttered a word against Congress, or the Assemblies, or the judges, under their new governments? or a wish to return to the obedience of England? Not one. But it is said, the paper money embarrasses Congress. What then? Does this tend to make them dissolve their union? To violate their alliances? Would the paper money embarrass Congress less if they had a war to maintain against France and Spain, than it does now? Would not the embarrassment be much greater? Does the paper money prevent the increase and the population of the States? No. Does the war prevent it? No. Both the population and the property of the States have increased every year, since this war began. And all the efforts of Great Britain cannot prevent it. On the contrary, has the wealth and population of Great Britain increased? Has her commerce increased? Has the political weight of the nation in the scales of Europe increased? Let a melancholy Briton tell.

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His Lordship talks about the misery of the people in America. Let him look at home, and then say, where is misery! where the hideous prospect of an internal civil war is added to a war with all the world. The truth is, that agriculture and manufactures, not of luxuries, but of necessaries, have been so much increased by this war, that it is much to be doubted, whether they ever fed or clothed themselves more easily or more comfortably. But, besides this, the immense depredations they have made upon the British trade, have introduced vast quantities of British merchandises of every sort. And in spite of all the exertions of the British fleet, their trade is opening and extending with various countries every year, and Britain herself is forced to aid it, and will be more and more; a recent proof of which, is the permission to import American tobacco into the kingdom from any part of the world in neutral bottoms.

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The great debt is also mentioned. Do they pay an interest for this debt? Is every necessary and convenience of life taxed to perpetuity, to pay this interest? Is the whole equal in proportion to their abilities to the debt of England? Would the debt be rendered less, by joining Great Britain against France and Spain? Would the war against France and Spain be shorter, less expensive, or less bloody, than the war against England? By returning to England, would not their debt be ten times more burdensome? This debt is as nothing to America, once give her peace, let the Americans trade freely with one another, and with all other nations, and this debt would be but a feather. Let them come under Great Britain again, and have the communication between one Colony and another obstructed, as heretofore, and their trade confined to Great Britain, as heretofore, and this debt would be a heavier millstone about their necks, than that of England is about theirs.

A general repugnance to the alliance with France, is mentioned. A greater mistake was never made. On the contrary, every step of Congress, every proceeding of every Assembly upon the continent, every prayer that is made in the pulpit, and every speculation in the newspapers, demonstrates the high sense they have of the importance of this alliance. It is said, that this alliance has been of little utility. Has it not employed the British army? has it not cut out work enough for the British navy? has it not wasted for England her annual twenty millions? has it not prevented these from being employed against America? has it not given scope to American privateers? has it not protected the American trade? has it not hurt that of Great Britain? has it not engaged Russia, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal, at least to a neutrality? at least has it not contributed much to these vast advantages to America? has it not taken away from Great Britain the dominion of the sea, so far as to allow liberty of navigation to others? It is true, the alliance might have been of more utility to all the allies with the same expense, if France and Spain had sooner adopted the policy of sending more of their forces to America. But they are now so well convinced of it, that unless miracles are wrought to prevent it, America and England too will soon see more of the effects of this alliance. Let Britain tremble at the consequences of her own folly and her own crime.

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His Lordship says, that the people would return to their allegiance, if they were not restrained by the tyranny of those who have got the powers of government. These are the Assemblies, Senates, Governors, and Congress. Now what power have any of these, but what the people please to allow them? By what engine is this tyranny exercised? Is it by the militia? In order to judge of this, let us consider the constitution of the militia. The militia, is in fact the whole people, for by the laws of every State, every man from sixteen to sixty years of age, belongs to the militia, is obliged to be armed, to train and march upon occasion, or find a substitute. The officers are chosen by the men, except the General officers, who are appointed by the Assemblies. It is this very militia which forms the body of voters, who annually choose the members of the Assembly, and the senators, and governors. Is it possible these men should tyrannise over men upon whom they are so entirely dependent? As well might it be reproached to his Lordship and his colleagues in administration, that they tyrannised over their royal master, who can displace them at his pleasure. The Assemblies thus annually chosen by the people, or militia, annually choose the delegates in Congress, and have power to recall them at pleasure. Will the militia then obey either Assemblies or Congress in the execution of tyrannical orders, or any orders that are not generally agreeable to them? The thing speaks for itself. Is it the Continental army then, that is the instrument of their own servitude and that of their country? Every officer holds his commission at the pleasure of Congress. But his Lordship and his colleagues often represent the Continental army as so small and feeble, as to be unable to make head against the British troops, and it is true that they are constantly employed in that service, and it is true that they are nothing in comparison with the militia. What would become of them then, if the militia or any considerable number of them were to join the British troops? [157]

There has never been any part of the Continental army in more than three or four of the thirteen States at a time, watching the motions of the British army and confining them to the protection of their men-of-war. What has there been then in the remaining nine or ten States for an instrument of tyranny? This is too ridiculous to need many words.

His Lordship concludes, with a distinction, if possible, less grounded than his assertions. He says, that Congress will never treat, but that the people and the Assemblies will. Where does his Lordship find the ground of his difference between the Congress and the Assemblies? Are not the members of Congress made of the same clay? Are they not themselves members of the Assemblies? Are they not the creatures of the Assemblies? Are they not annually created? Are they not dependent every moment upon the Assemblies for their existence? Have not the Assemblies a right to recall them when they please, and appoint others by law and the constitution? Have not the Assemblies a right to instruct them how to act? If they do not obey these instructions, cannot the Assemblies displace them and appoint others who will be more obedient? If the Assemblies desired a reconciliation with England, would not they appoint a Congress who desired it too? If the people desired it, could not they appoint Assemblies who would soon make a Congress suitable for their purpose? But I have been too long; his Lordship betrays such misinformation of facts, such an inattention to those obvious marks of the feelings of a people, as are infallible indications of their designs, and such a want of knowledge of the laws and constitution of the United States, as excite astonishment in an impartial examiner, and a real commiseration for the unhappy nation, who are devoted to destruction from his errors and delusions.^[4] [158]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, June 4th, 1780.

Sir,

We learn from the Hague, the 30th of May, that their Noble and Grand Mightinesses have resolved since the offer of the Commerce, to take for the equipment of the vessels of war put into commission a certain portion of the crews of merchant ships.

As I wish to inform Congress at some time or other of all the conspicuous characters in Europe, who have penetrated enough of the system of events, that compose the present great epoch, and have had sufficient firmness to resist the unnatural efforts and solicitations, which Great Britain has made to disturb it, I think it is proper to take notice, that the Count de Panin, who has been very ill of a chronical disorder, was on the 2d of May much better, and made his appearance at the Court of St Petersburg. This Minister, I fancy, will have great merit with posterity, for the part he has acted for several years in the politics of Europe.

Extract of a letter from Cadiz, 2d of May. "The convoy under the escort of Messrs de Thomasco and de Solano, continued in sight all day, the 28th of April; the 29th it went off with a fair wind, which continues to this time. We expect the division of Toulon in fifteen days. Then Don Gaston will go out with a squadron of twelve ships, and all the French vessels, which may be collected in Cadiz. If the thirteen vessels, which are ready at Ferrol, join this commander, his fleet will be [160]

very respectable, and will not fear that the enemy should oppose his junction with that of Brest."

Toulon, 10th of May. "The order, which the King's ships, the Zélé and the Marseillois, of seventyfour guns, have received unexpectedly to sail, gives place to several conjectures. The most probable is, that they are to join the division of French vessels, which are in the bay of Cadiz; and that after they shall be united, they will go in concert with a Spanish squadron to Brest, to form a part of the fleet destined to cruise in the English Channel. There have been taken up in our port, several merchant vessels on account of the King, to the end to go and carry to Cadiz the provisions of the French division, commanded by the Chevalier Beausset. It is confirmed, that the Experiment, commanded by M. de Martelly Chautard, is arrived at Marseilles, to escort from thence in concert with the frigate the Graciente, and the cutter the Naiade, a considerable convoy of vessels, bound for the islands in America."

Brest, 15th of May. "The convoy, which was coming here from Bordeaux, to form the second division of the expedition under the command of Messrs de Ternay and de Rochambeau, escaped the gale of wind by taking shelter in L'Orient. The Magnanime, which was coming here from Rochfort, having lost an anchor, was obliged to return thither."

Paris, 25th of May. "Letters from Cadiz, dated the 5th of this month, announce the departure of the French squadron, which was in the Road, under the command of M. de Beausset. It was furnished with provisions for six months, and before it put to sea it took in more, for six weeks; it was to have sailed the 6th. We are absolutely ignorant of the object of his expedition. M. Beausset has despatches, which he is not to open until he arrives at a certain latitude. This squadron, composed of five ships of the line, and loaded with provisions for seven and a half months, is it bound to the Indies? We do not believe that it is. But to combine with M. de Ternay at a certain latitude? Some persons presume so. Others maintain, that this squadron is to make part of the fleet of observation in the Channel, and that the circumstance of seven and a half months' provision is a falsity, which ought not to be believed."

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They write from Rochfort, that the Invincible, a new ship, of one hundred and four guns, is actually in the Road. The command of this vessel has been given to M. de la Cary. The following article shows, that some foreign merchants are enterprising a trade towards America.

Ostend, 23d of May. "The ship, the City of Brussels, Captain Peter Voughen, of five hundred tons, belonging to merchants of Brussels, who had loaded her for St Eustatia, has had the misfortune to strike, the 20th of this month, in going out of the basin. In spite of the alacrity with which they labor to get her afloat, and repair the damage she has sustained on the occasion, we think she cannot again be put in a condition to proceed to her destination."

Leyden, 30th of May, 1780. "The convoy of troops, which has arrived so apropos, at Barbadoes, and from thence to St Lucia, at the very instant that the Count de Guichen conducted to the Antilles a considerable reinforcement for the French troops, is that which sailed from Portsmouth the 27th, and from Plymouth the 30th of January, under convoy of the Intrepid, of sixtyfour guns, with some frigates, and which was dispersed upon the coast of Ireland. An officer of the sixtyeighth regiment, (one of the four regiments embarked upon this convoy,) writes from Antigua, the 19th of March. 'We have been arrived here two days; we sailed from Plymouth the 30th of January, in concert with the eightyseventh, ninetieth, and ninetyfirst regiments, under convoy of the Intrepid, of sixtyfour guns. The next day we were separated from the convoy by a great storm, which lasted six days, and we saw nothing more of any vessel. Having no orders concerning our destination, as we were not to receive them till we had doubled Cape Lizard, we were in great pain concerning the part we should take. Commanding eighty soldiers on board this vessel, it fell to me to direct their route. I ordered the master to conduct us to the first of our West India Islands, which we could gain, and in consequence we arrived here safe and sound. God knows what is become of the rest of the convoy; I hope that it will join us soon.'"

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The following article I add, from the Mercury of France, of the 3d of June. I cannot answer for the truth of it, nor do I know that it is false.

"They write from London the 11th of May, that a courier despatched from the Hague, by Sir Joseph Yorke, had arrived with the following news. In consequence of the permission granted by the States-General for the passage of the recruits from Brunswick, Hesse, Hanau, &c. in the pay of Great Britain, through the territory of the Republic, and for their embarkation in one of their ports, one ship of war and transports have sailed from England, to take on board these recruits destined for the army in Canada. But scarcely were the troops and their baggage embarked, when there arrived an order of the States-General to stop their departure. They attribute this conduct of the States-General to the formal demand, which they have made upon Great Britain, of the restitution of the Dutch vessels taken by Commodore Fielding. In consequence, the transports and recruits would remain in Holland, until entire satisfaction should be given to the States-General upon this object."

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Brussels, 30th of May. "The arrival of extraordinary couriers continually from Versailles and Madrid to Lisbon, gives rise to conjectures, that the good intelligence, which reigns between this Court and that of London, may very well change in part, and that at least his Most Faithful Majesty is not far from adopting the system of Holland and the Northern powers, the effect of which must be the maintenance of the liberty of the navigation and of the commerce of their respective subjects, against the continual depredations of privateers."

Paris, 30th of May. "We learn by letters from Ferrol, that the Intendant of the Marine in that port

had received orders to send out without delay, eight ships of the line and four frigates, and to deliver them packets, which are sent him, not to be opened but in a certain latitude. They write from Brest, that they continue to work at the armament of the vessels intended for the fleet; there are several of them already in the Road. The Actif of seventyfour guns came in on the 17th. They expected in that port the fleet from Bordeaux, loaded with stores, provisions, and wine. Their arrival is necessary to equip completely the squadron destined to transport a second division of troops of four or five thousand men. The convoy, which sailed from St Malo on Good Friday, was still at Cherbourg. It is so much the more valuable, as it consists partly of cast cannons, and other pieces of artillery, brought in wagons from the arsenals, for the descent which was to have been made last year. The English who know its value, do not lose sight of it, as they say. And it is said, if they were not restrained by a calculation of the expense, they would bombard Cherbourg, if they could not come at the vessels in port to burn them. It is believed that a few ships of the line may soon go out of Brest, to give chase to the English and scatter them from Cherbourg.

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London, 20th of May. "The despatches, which the Court has received from its Ministers in the Northern Courts, confirm the plan of confederation of the powers of this part of Europe to protect the commerce of their subjects against the attacks of the belligerent powers, and we cannot dissemble that more moderation on our part would have hindered this event, which is about to strike the last blow to our maritime supremacy, and snatch from us forever the empire of the seas, which are about to become again free as they ought to be."

Cadiz, 5th of May. "The fleet which sailed from this port the 28th of last month, has been met in the latitude of Lagos, by a vessel which arrived yesterday. Since that time, the progress of it has not been retarded. The wind is changed, and is favorable. It is composed of twelve ships of the line, five frigates, seven privateers armed by the trade, sixtyfour transport vessels, with twelve thousand land forces, artillery, and warlike stores, and fifty-nine merchant vessels, three of which are French and three American. There remain in this port fifteen ships of the line, whereof ten are ready to go to sea, the five others will be immediately. There are eight at Corunna, five frigates and one cutter, in condition to sail at the first orders. The convoy which sailed from Brest on the 14th is arrived there with the frigate, the Leocadia. We have seen come to anchor in this bay, the flag of truce, the Sartine, which brings from the Indies M. de Bellecombe, formerly governor of Pondicherry, and the other officers. This vessel being off St Vincent, had the misfortune to meet the squadron of Commodore Johnstone. He made the signals of a flag of truce, and seeking to fly, when in contempt of the law of nations, Commodore Johnstone who was in the Romney, sent him two broadsides, which killed and wounded twentyfive persons on board the Sartine. The Captain and two officers are in the number of the slain. They expected so little such an attack, that the people were all upon the tillace, and one bullet fell dead at the feet of M. de Bellecombe. Johnstone, knowing his error, or at least pretending to have been mistaken, ceased firing, and wrote a letter of excuse. One would think he should not come off so easily, and that his nation should not even content herself to disavow his conduct.

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"M. de Beausset set sail yesterday with his five vessels; he goes to cruise in the latitude of Lisbon, and he may very well combine himself with the seven vessels, which were to go out of Ferrol. It is believed he will return here as soon as the squadron of Toulon shall arrive."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, June 5th, 1780.

Sir,

The fleets of Graves and Walsingham are real objects of humor. All Europe was amused with Walsingham's squadron, and assured that it was to sail as long ago as last January or February. There has scarcely a newspaper appeared in Europe since that time but has had some article respecting it, all tending to show that it was ready, or nearly ready, to sail. This is in order to keep up the spirits of friends, and at the same time play upon the fears of enemies. The last Courier de l'Europe has the following article.

Torbay, 20th of May. "Although the wind had been favorable for ten days past, Walsingham's fleet could not have taken advantage of them, the Commodore having received, on the 10th, orders from the Admiralty to wait for the rest of the transports bound to Quebec, and the East India ships, which now lie at Portsmouth. He will escort them without altering his course as far as Madeira."

Plymouth, 9th of May. "The squadron of Admiral Graves, sailed from hence this morning, is destined for Jamaica. It consists of four ships of the line, two frigates, and transports, having on board three thousand land forces. This fleet is the reinforcement which the armament, which was in preparation at Jamaica for an expedition, waited for the sixth of April last, when the packet boat sailed. The passage of such a fleet cannot take less than two months; so that it cannot arrive

at Jamaica until the end of July. Never was there such confusion and timidity, and irresolution and unsteadiness in the naval and maritime affairs of England. Witness the following paragraph."

Portsmouth, 22d of May. "The following vessels of war had come to sail with their respective convoys, but they have returned here again. The *Endymion*, of fortyfour guns, Captain Cartaret; the *Beaver's* prize of sixteen, Captain Drummond, and the *Zephyr*, of fourteen, Captain Inglis, for the coast of Guinea. The frigate *Aurora* for Plymouth, the sloops *Swallow* and *Wasp*. [167]

May 25th. "It is said, the regiment of Colonel Rainsford passed through London to go to Portsmouth, destined to Jamaica. It will be escorted out of the Channel by the Grand Fleet, then it will make a common course up to a certain latitude, with the fleet destined for the East Indies."

Petersburg, 9th of May. "Our fleet, destined to maintain the neutrality at sea, is ready to sail from Cronstadt. They say, that after having passed the Sound, it will clear off all cruisers whatsoever, not only in the Baltic Sea, but those which are in the neighborhood of Norway, as far as Archangel. The report prevails, even that we shall equip immediately a second squadron, destined to reinforce the first."

Hague, 31st of May. "The corn merchants living in Amsterdam, presented last Friday two petitions, the first of which is of the following tenor.

"To their High Mightinesses, our Lords the States-General of the United Provinces.

"The subscribing merchants, trading chiefly in grain, at the Exchange of the Corn Merchants of the city of Amsterdam, respectfully make known, that the scarcity of grain among foreigners having been the cause that they have been charged, for sometime, and from all parts with very considerable commissions for sending off theirs, which cannot but give a new activity to this important branch of commerce; the difficulties, which in the present situation of affairs embarrass navigation, have raised the price of freight to such a degree, that several masters of ships have entirely refused to navigate towards the south, considering that they could not expose themselves to execute the commissions of the said merchants in grain, without running the risk of being seized and taken, which became extremely prejudicial to the corn, which is liable to take hurt and to corrupt; from whence it must necessarily result, that for want of sales the petitioners see themselves on one hand deprived of a reasonable profit, and on the other find themselves forced to keep their grain in their magazines for a longer space of time, while, moreover, the importation by the Baltic, which diminishes by this means considerably, cannot fail also to give to this branch of commerce, so interesting for the Republic, a most sensible blow, to the great prejudice of the petitioners, as well as to the agriculture of these provinces, the advantage of which increases in proportion to the augmentation of the export of corn. [168]

"For these causes, the petitioners address themselves in all humanity to your High Mightinesses, respectfully praying, that according to your known wisdom and foresight, it may please your High Mightinesses to grant them a remedy, and grant them a protection as prompt as convenient to commerce and to the navigation of the petitioners, to the end, that their vessels loaded with corn may, without any impediment, make sail toward all places that are free. The petitioners, on their part, will be zealous to second vigorously all the measures, which in this respect your High Mightinesses may judge convenient and necessary."

The second of the petitions contains as follows.

"To their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, our Lords, the States of the Province of Holland and of West Friesland, [169]

"The undersigned, merchants dealing chiefly in grain, at the exchange of the corn merchants of the city of Amsterdam, give respectfully to understand, that to the end to preserve and maintain this branch of commerce so important for them, they had found it of the last necessity to address themselves by the way of a petition, to their High Mightinesses the States-General of the United Provinces, tending to request a prompt, convenient, and sufficient protection in favor of their navigation, for the reasons more fully particularised in the said petition, of which they take the liberty to annex a copy; humbly requesting your Noble and Grand Mightinesses to cast a propitious eye upon the address of the petitioners, and to be so good as to favor it with your powerful protection, that they may be at length remedied against the unjust vexations, and the ruinous seizure of their ships, and against all the shackles, which have been put upon their commerce, while the petitioners on their part offer to concur with all their hearts, and with zeal, in all convenient measures, which, in this respect your Noble and Grand Mightinesses shall judge to be necessary, to come at the end proposed."

Hamburg, 26th of May. "They write from Stockholm, that the Court of Sweden had positively accepted the plan of an armed neutrality, proposed by Russia, and given orders to equip six more ships of the line, so that at present the naval forces of Sweden, like those of Denmark, consist in ten ships of the line and six frigates, whereof six ships of the line are ready to make sail from the port of Carlsroon.

"We learn from the Sound, that the 21st of this month the English ship the *Chatham*, of fifty guns, commanded by Captain G. Altan, was arrived there, as well as the frigates the *Siren*, the *Lizard*, and the *Lynx*, under the command of the Captains Dodde, Parry, and Britton, of twentyfour and twenty guns. The cutters, the *Bussy*, Captain Coaths, of twelve guns, and the *Frederick*, C. Pasechall, of eight. These two last have sustained in the North Sea a brisk action with two French cutters, one of which was named the *Alexander*, of fourteen guns, which they have conducted to [170]

the Sound. It is not known what is become of the other prize, which they think is sunk, or carried to Norway."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 10th, 1780.

Sir,

We read, under the head of Hamburg, of the 20th of May, that the project of a confederation, armed for the maintenance of the navigation of the neutral powers, appears every day to assume more consistency. The fleet armed in Russia for the protection of her neutrality, and of her commerce, is composed of fifteen ships of the line, four frigates, and a large number of smaller vessels. Their orders are to sweep, not only the Baltic Sea, but the Swedish Sea, and the neighborhood of Archangel, of all the corsairs of the belligerent powers. They assure us at the same time, that orders are given to equip at Revel and at Archangel a second fleet of twenty ships of the line; Sweden arms ten, and six frigates. She will send out at first but four of the former, the six others will remain at Carslscoon, but in a condition to sail at the first signal. They are busy in Denmark in arming a like number. They assure us even that there are orders to augment it. [171]

The opinion the most general is, that the powers, which are to enter into the armed neutrality, will confine themselves at first to make their navigation to be respected, and will not appear as mediators, but when they shall see that the fate of arms shall make the balance incline too much to one side, to the disadvantage of the other. It will be then, that they will intervene for a re-establishment of the equilibrium, by moderating the too excessive pretensions of some, and by repairing the losses, which the misfortune, the negligence, or the unskilfulness of others shall have occasioned them. One does not know, which we ought to admire most, the immutability of the English, in the midst of all the movements, which they excite, or the movements themselves, which they are no doubt themselves astonished to have excited. This recalls the saying of an Englishman, who seeing a magnificent chapel built for the accomplishment of a vow, made in the midst of a battle, cried, "When the Emperor made this great vow, he had great fear." Is it not astonishing, that the most formidable maritime powers of Europe should have believed their rights so much in danger, as to make it their duty to confederate against the arbitrary pretensions of England? It would be much more astonishing, if she should be able to realise them, but this is not to be presumed.

Under the head of Italy, Genoa, the 10th of May, we read, "They write from Trieste, that they are actively employed there in arming a company of commerce for the East Indies. The grant (charter, patent, octroi) is very soon to appear in print, that every one may have shares in it, and have a part in the advantages that shall result from it. As it is of importance to our Court, that the productions of the country should be transported to foreigners, this company will obtain all the privileges necessary to put it upon a flourishing footing. They are taking all possible measures, that the funds advanced should produce to the proprietors a considerable interest. Austria proposes to observe the most exact neutrality with all the maritime powers, and to form alliances with the States of Barbary. In the meantime, that we may have nothing to fear from these last, our vessels will be partly armed for war, and partly loaded with merchandises." [172]

A sensible letter from London (real or fictitious I know not) says, "The armed neutrality engages still the attention of our Court. We do not cease to dread here, that it will have melancholy consequences. If some persons flatter themselves, that it may lead to peace, others think that we cannot make an advantageous one. France and Spain appear determined not to lay down their arms until they shall have taken away from us the empire of the seas, and rendered commerce and navigation free. We are not ignorant, that the wish of Europe is in their favor, and the armed neutrality has sufficiently demonstrated it. Our Ministry well convinced, that it is upon a superiority at sea, that depends the safety of our possessions in the four quarters of the world, will neglect nothing to preserve it. But it is at least necessary, that by a prudent conduct towards the neutral powers, we should engage them to permit us to enjoy it. The part which we act cannot but alienate them. Far from retracting, we go directly on."

According to the account of the officers arrived in the cartel ship, the Sartine, the squadron of Admiral Hughes, in its passage from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope, has suffered considerable losses, which have very much diminished it. They are persuaded, that it has not suffered less in its route to the Indies, during which it has had constantly contrary winds, and that it has been scarcely able to land in Asia a number of troops sufficient to put the English forces there in the condition they were in before the war. Admiral Hughes had said to the Governor of the Cape, that his orders were to go and attack Manilla. But it is most probable, that at his arrival at Madras, he found himself in an impossibility of undertaking anything this year. He has not a sufficient number of troops with him, and far from being able to take any in India, those already there are [173]

sufficiently occupied with the chiefs of the country, and have occasion for reinforcements. Nadgiskan, General of the Emperor of Mogul, threatens them in Bengal. The Marattas disturb them at Bombay; and Hyder Aly Khan upon the coast of Coromandel. The English, troubled in their own possessions, have more cause to think of preserving them than of attempting elsewhere expeditions, that would weaken them.

The last letters from the gold coast of Africa contain the following details. "One of our out-forts, called Succondée, has been attacked sometime since by a French frigate, of forty guns. She cast anchor in the Bay within cannon-shot of the fort, which was falling in ruins, defended solely by some pieces of artillery, almost out of a condition for service, and in which was a garrison of four men, to wit; the commandant, one sergeant, and two soldiers, which in such a situation could not make a long resistance. Nevertheless, before they surrendered, they killed six Frenchmen, and wounded twelve. The sergeant of the fort was killed; and the commandant, seeing that the enemy had effected their landing with two hundred men, saved himself by retreating back into the country. The French have derived neither honor nor profit from the expedition; they have found nothing but the effects of the commandant, valued at eight hundred pounds sterling, which they destroyed. The fort contained nothing valuable. They spiked the cannon, which they found upon carriages, and broke off the trunnions; after which they went off without attempting anything against the other forts. The same letters add, that the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and those of the other forts, were preparing to quit a service, in which they could not long remain, the company having stopped the arrearages which were due to them, as well as to those in general who have been employed since the month of December, 1778, and having refused to reimburse them the sums, which they have advanced out of their pockets for the maintenance of the forts of the government, and which amount to half of their private fortunes. By a conduct so unjust, and without example, the principal officers find themselves ruined, and the inferior officers and soldiers are dying with hunger. There was scarcely an English vessel upon the coast, and the price of all the necessaries of life were raised more than an hundred per hundred. What defence could be made by people in such a situation, if attacked by the French, who burn with a desire of forming an establishment upon that coast."

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The losses in Africa are considerable, and the English are threatened with more considerable in India, where the natives of the country begin to be weary of the vexation of foreigners, who come from Europe to subject them to the yoke. The Emperor of Mogul threatens them in Bengal, the Marattas at Bombay, and the famous Hyder Aly upon the coast of Coromandel, and the domestic troubles which have arisen in the bosom of their establishments, may put them out of a condition to defend them. All Europe prays for the liberty of the seas, and waits with impatience the effects of the union of the maritime powers, which must put a bridle upon the violent and arbitrary proceedings of the English.

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On the 18th and 19th of May there were warm debates in the House of Commons of Ireland, where the patriotic party carried a duty of twelve shillings per quintal on sugars imported from England. On the 22d, it was resolved by an hundred and forty voices against eighteen, that a bill should be brought in for the punishment of mutiny and desertion, and to establish better regulations for the land forces. This is a decisive measure, and if it is admitted, it concedes the principle, that the British Parliament has no authority over Ireland.

Hague, 4th of June. "M. de Nowicoff, Secretary of the Prince de Gallitzin, Envoy Extraordinary of the Empress of Russia, being returned here the first of this month at night, from Petersburg, where he has been as express some weeks ago, the Prince de Gallitzin had the next day a conference with some members of government. A second express, sent to Petersburg by the same Minister about the middle of April, returned last night. We flatter ourselves, that the despatches which they bring will contribute to accelerate the execution of the project of an armed neutrality, for which her Imperial Majesty continues to testify the most favorable dispositions, provided that the other neutral powers act readily in concert with her. The merchants of Dort and Rotterdam have followed the example of those of Amsterdam, by presenting on the 2d a petition to the States-General, to the end to supplicate them to hasten the equipment of the vessels, which it has been resolved to arm, and to give to commerce the effectual enjoyment of the protection of the State. According to the ordinance projected to accelerate this equipment, 'no merchant vessel belonging to the subjects of the Republic can put to sea, without voluntarily delivering to the college of the Admiralty at least the third man of her crew, under penalty of six hundred florins per head, upon the captains and freighters of the vessel, which shall attempt to go out without having made the said delivery.' It will not, however, take place but twice a year, viz. the two first voyages which a vessel shall make, and from this will be excepted those upon which there shall be but two men besides the master, the vessels employed in the different fisheries, the ships of the East India Company, and those of the West Indies; in fine, the foreign vessels manned with crews of their own nation, &c."

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April 21st, 1780. "It happened that the French privateer, the Spring, commanded by Captain John Huë, and mounted with four guns, which had anchored in the Road of Helvoetsluys, put to sea in company with some Dutch vessels, bound to the Greenland Fishery. Three Scotch coal vessels put to sea at the same time, and soon after two others, somewhat larger. The three largest having come just opposite the point of Westland, the French privateer, which was not at the distance of more than four yards from the shore, opposite the Cape of the Isle of Goree, wore round to return into port; the three coal vessels perceiving it, made the same manœuvre, and bore down upon the French privateer, upon which the latter approaching nearer and nearer the coast, and passing along very near it under the city of Goree, to enter into the port, they began to fire upon him with

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ball, and they continued to cannonade him incessantly, although this little vessel, which in truth carried French colors, did not answer them with more than one gun. They pursued him quite up to the lighthouse of Goree, only at the distance of about six yards (I suppose ship's yards) west of the place, where they forced her to run ashore. The vessel was there stopped upon the sand, and the crew crawling along upon the bowsprit in the sea, saved themselves at land. Meantime, the three coalmen did not cease to fire upon the little privateer, without regarding even a large number of workmen who were about their business on shore. So that the bullets passed through the midst of these people, and just over their heads, and they were very happy to run off and save themselves in the Downs. The three coalmen, not content to have pushed thus far their enterprise, continued not only to fire upon the privateer stopped in the sand, without any crew, but in fine, they came to anchor at the distance of about forty yards from this vessel, while the two smaller coalmen were come out of the Bay of Helvoetsluys, and were under sail near and round it, firing upon it until noon, when the tide began to set afloat the privateer, which had been stopped for two hours. Then the English went on board with their boats, took down the French flag, took the vessel off the shore, and attached her broadside and broadside to the largest of the coalmen. They took away from her many effects, under the eyes of the Dutch coasting pilots, who having asked in English, what was their design in regard to the privateer, and having cautioned them to take care what they did, the captain of the largest of the coalmen answered, "We will take her, we are also privateers."

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Their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, the States of Holland and West Friesland, after having stated these circumstances to the States-General, have adopted in their report; "that they considered this excessive audacity of the English or Scotch coalmen, as a manifest and voluntary violation of the territory of the Republic, accompanied with circumstances the most aggravated, as having been committed in going out of a harbor of this country, and in a place where it could not be doubtful that they were within reach of the cannon of the shore, since their own balls reached the land, without the least provocation from the French privateer, which did not fire a single gun. So that this action of the coalmen, has had no other cause than a premeditated hostility, whilst there was not the least reason to fear that the privateer, after having got to sea, would interrupt one of them, considering that the attack was begun on their part, in the very moment when the privateer had tacked about to quit the open sea and return into port, besides, that he was pursued for two hours after that he was indubitably aground upon the shore, and that the enterprise was finished by taking away the French privateer from the Dutch shore, contrary to the exhortation and warnings of the coasting pilots. That in the judgment of their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, the States-General had not only a right to complain of the insolence so excessive on the part of the English or Scotch masters, which their High Mightinesses admit into the ports of the Republic, but that they cannot even suffer them without wounding the neutrality, which they have embraced in the present troubles, and without prejudicing the dignity, the sovereignty, and the independence of the State; and having been under obligation effectually to have opposed and hindered them, even by force, if they could have been informed in time of these violences, they cannot excuse themselves from demanding, in a manner the most serious, the vessel which was taken, and from demanding of his Britannic Majesty, a suitable satisfaction for this conduct of his subjects."

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After this report, the States-General have resolved, the 13th of May, "that advice of these facts should be sent to the Count de Welderen, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of their High Mightinesses at the British Court, by sending him copies of the depositions joined to the letter of the Receiver-General of the Customs of their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, in the country of Voorne, dated the 4th day of May last, by which he has informed of the facts the Lords, the Deputy Counsellors of Holland, as the said depositions are annexed to the letter, which the said counsellors have addressed to their Noble and Grand Mightinesses the 5th of the same month, concerning this affair; and at the same time, the Count de Welderen should be instructed to give notice, in the manner that he shall judge the most convenient and the most effectual, of the said insolences committed by the masters of the English or Scotch coal vessels, and to complain, in the name of their High Mightinesses, of a violation so incontestible of their territory and of the law of nations, by the way of open force; that their High Mightinesses cannot think, that his Britannic Majesty can or will suffer that his subjects should allow themselves in such excesses; that in consequence, the Count de Welderen should demand a suitable satisfaction; that the masters of the coal vessels should undergo a correction, and that the French vessel taken should be brought back to the place from whence she has been taken, or at least, that she should be restored to their High Mightinesses, to the end that they may dispose of her in the manner they shall judge proper; and that the damages caused to this vessel, directly upon the territory of their High Mightinesses, where she ought to have enjoyed the same safety as the coal vessels in the Road of Helvoetsluys, and through all the extent of the territory of their High Mightinesses, should be made good."

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The English frigate, the Ambuscade, Captain Phipps, has taken, on the 24th of April last, in the Bay of Biscay, four Dutch ships, which have made some resistance, so that there were some men killed and wounded on both sides. One of the Dutch captains was killed. They were bound, it is said, from Helvoetsluys to Spain. They have been carried into Plymouth, where arrived at the same time a Spanish frigate of thirty guns, taken, they say, by the English frigate, the Medea, off the port of Brest, where she was going with despatches from the Court of Madrid, relative to the junction of the French and Spanish fleets. This is not likely, since the despatches go by land from Court to Court.

I shall finish this tedious letter, by enclosing a letter from the Count d'Urre Molans, proposing to

raise some horse at the expense of himself and his officers. I promised to enclose it to Congress, which was all I could do. But I hope, before an answer can come, the American States will have no more occasion for cavalry.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, June 12th, 1780.

Sir,

I cannot omit to request the attention of Congress to a debate in the House of Peers on the 1st of June, upon Lord Shelburne's motion for a variety of State papers to be laid before the House. I have had the honor to transmit these papers to Congress before. His Lordship in his speech upon this occasion has displayed more knowledge of the affairs of Europe, than all the debates in the two Houses, and all the newspapers and pamphlets have contained for a long time. I will translate from a French translation, not having the original before me, what he says of Russia.

"With regard to the papers, which concern Russia, I see in the first place, in the declaration made by that Court in 1779, that under pretence of some disorders committed in the Baltic Sea by an American privateer, (Captain McNeal, I suppose,) the Empress announces to Great Britain, that she is about to form a league with the Kings of Sweden and Denmark, for the protection of commerce in that sea. This Princess must have known our Ministers perfectly well, to hope that they would fall into the snare. Yes, she knew that they would bite at the hook, when it was covered with the bait of some appearance of hostility against the Americans. While they were running after the dainty worm, all Europe saw clearly that this exclusion from the Baltic Sea was general for all armed vessels, whether American or English; but Russia was too wise to begin by speaking of English vessels. It is, nevertheless, curious to consider the nature of the right alleged by the Courts of Petersburg, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, to arrogate to themselves the dominion of the Baltic; a dominion no mention of which is made in any treaty existing, and of which no one ever heard any mention made. They say to you, that God Almighty intended that these three powers should govern exclusively over this vast sea. The terms of the declaration say expressly, that nature has given them this right; if this declaration is extraordinary, and without example, the last declaration of the Empress of Russia is much more astonishing. This Princess dares to announce a maritime code, which will serve as a rule for all Europe. I will acknowledge, that when this Imperial decree for the first time fell into my hands, I was confounded; I felt in a moment, that Russia, this Empire coming out of the cradle, scarcely reckoned a few years ago in the number of maritime powers, this Russia, which the Ministers declared to us was our friend and our ally, was disposed not only to refuse us assistance, but moreover to contribute to the annihilation of the maritime power of Great Britain. The Empress declares in this Manifesto, that free ships render the effects free, that they have on board; she does not confine herself to establish this principle in favor of the vessels of her nation, she makes it general, she invites all the States of Europe, whether neutral or belligerent, to unite with her to maintain it, and to set them an example she informs them, that to maintain it effectually she equips a powerful squadron. What has given occasion to this astonishing measure? The infraction of treaties on the part of Great Britain. By the treaties of 1673 and 1674, Holland had a right to carry all, which was not expressly declared contraband; in spite of the existence of these treaties, Commodore Fielding received the extravagant orders to seize a Dutch convoy. This act of madness alarmed Russia, who forthwith published her Manifesto, which Holland, France, and Spain have received, with all the marks of the most perfect satisfaction. France has not failed to seize this opportunity to press the completion of the maritime code announced by the Empress, promising to adopt it, and to unite with her to support it.

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"Such is the situation in which we find ourselves; not a single ally! there did remain to us one friend; Administration has found the secret to break with him. Is it not the most consummate madness not to have sought to insure a single ally? Opportunities have presented themselves more than once, more than twice, more than four times. If at the end of the war Administration was weary of the connexion with the King of Prussia; if they preferred the friendship, or even the alliance of the House of Austria, the opportunity of making sure of it presented itself a few years ago. In 1773, the epocha of the troubles in Poland, Great Britain would have made a friend of this House, by interposing its authority; this measure would have been agreeable to more than one power of Europe. If we had preferred the alliance of the King of Prussia, an opportunity has presented more recently of procuring it, that of the death of the Elector of Bavaria; sometime before this event, France foresaw it with terror. She perceived how much it might turn to the advantage of Great Britain, and how much the war, that it would infallibly occasion between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, would be contrary to her interests. What parts have our Ministers acted in this circumstance? They let it escape like the first; instead of conciliating the friendship of Austria, or renewing that of Prussia, they have discovered the secret of disgusting these two powers, as well as nearly all those of Europe; they have suffered that France should be the

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mediator between them, and make their peace.

Their conduct in regard to the Court of Petersburg, has been equally chargeable with negligence; they have let slip one or two occasions of conciliating the friendship of that Court. At the time of her rupture with the Porte, what part have they acted? They did not enter into the negotiation; but, which they will perhaps have cause to repent, they sent vessels to the Russians to teach them how they might obtain and preserve that domination of the seas, to which they pretend at this day. Such are the fruits of the prudence and wisdom of our Ministers. They have lost America, the most beautiful half of the Empire, and against the half that remains to us, they have excited all the powers of Europe. I say decidedly, that they have lost America, because, after what has passed in Holland and in Russia, one must be very short sighted not to see, that in fine, and at present, the independence of America is consummated. The maritime code confirms the rest. France and the other maritime powers, whose interest it is, that America should never return to the domination of England, will take care to comprehend her in the code; but I forewarn the Administration, that this code will soon be in force; that if they do not speedily make arrangements with Holland, there will be soon held at the Hague a Congress, to the effect to give the sanction of maritime Europe to the law which establishes, that free ships shall make free goods."

I cannot say that his Lordship is perfectly fair in this speech, nor that he has been much wiser than the Minister. The true cause why the Minister suffered France to make the peace between Russia and the Turk, and between Austria and Prussia, was the American war. While they pursued that phantom, all their men, all their ships, and all their money were necessary, and the whole not enough; so that they had not the power to lend troops, ships, or guineas to the Emperor, the King of Prussia, the Grand Seignior, nor the Empress of Russia. If they had been wise, made peace with America, acknowledged her equal station with the powers of the earth, and conciliated as much as they then might have done, her affection and her commerce, they might have preserved their importance in Europe at the peace of Teschen and the other peace. But my Lord Shelburne should have remembered, that he was at that time as much against acknowledging American independence, and as much for prosecuting the war against America as the Ministers; so that it does not appear, that his wisdom was so much greater than theirs. I am glad, however, that his Lordship is convinced, and I hope some time or other the Minister will be; but they have all called us rebels, till they have turned their own heads. This word rebellion makes Englishmen mad; they still continue to use it, and by this means as well as many others, to nourish and cherish the most rancorous and malignant passions in their own bosoms against us, and they will continue to do so a long time to come.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, June 12th, 1780.

Sir,

The following is given in the public papers; as a copy of the bill proposed by Governor Pownal, on the 24th of May, for putting Great Britain in a situation for making peace with America.

"In order to remove all doubts or disabilities, which may prevent, obstruct, or delay the happy work of peace, may it please your Majesty, that it may be declared and enacted, and it is hereby declared and enacted, &c. &c.

"That his Majesty is empowered to make a convention or truce, or to conclude a peace with the inhabitants of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three Delaware Counties, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in North America, convened in Congress, or in any other Assembly or Assemblies, or with any person or persons authorised to act for, and in behalf of the same, in such form and manner as he, by virtue of the prerogative of his Crown hath power to do in all other cases, and on such terms and conditions, as in the course of events shall become convenient and necessary for the honor and welfare of his Majesty and his people. And in order thereto, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the passing of this act, it shall, and may be lawful, for his Majesty to appoint such person or persons (subjects of Great Britain) as his Majesty in his wisdom shall think fit, and fully to authorise and empower the same to treat, consult, and agree with the said Americans, or with any part of them, or with any person or persons acting for and in their behalf to the said purpose of convention, truce, or peace. And be it further enacted, that from and after the passing of this act, it shall, and may be lawful, for his Majesty to grant safe conduct to any such person or persons whatsoever, as his Majesty shall see cause and judge proper to receive on the ground of treaty for such convention, truce, or peace, in like manner as he is by divers ancient statutes empowered to do in the cases therein specified."

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On the 19th of May, at a meeting of the wholesale merchants of Dublin, and several merchants of

the out-ports, convened by the committee of merchants, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to.

"Resolved, That this kingdom cannot possibly derive any material advantages from a free trade with the British Islands in the West Indies, without securing a market here for raw sugar; that being the capital article here of the produce of those Islands, and the principal return to be obtained for any manufactures of Ireland, which may be exported to the British Colonies.

"Resolved, That a market here for our raw sugar, can only be secured in a tolerable degree, by laying an additional duty on refined sugar, of sixteen shillings and seven pence half penny per hundred weight, being three times the additional duty to which the raw material is intended to be subjected.

"Resolved, That we view with the utmost concern and astonishment, a measure likely to be adopted, not only destructive of the sugar refinery of this kingdom, but, consequently, frustrating the professed benefits held out to Ireland on laying open to her the Colony trade.

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"Resolved, That we verily believe this to be the insidious intention of those in Great Britain who have suggested the measure.

"Resolved, That we cannot but hold in the utmost contempt and detestation, every Irishman of whatever rank or station, who, from private and selfish considerations, shall prove base enough to be subservient to the insidious purpose of those, who aim at baffling and defeating the commercial interests of this too long oppressed and unkindly treated country.

"Resolved, That if we find the commercial interests of our country deserted, where we have and ought to expect guardianship, whether from ignorance of the subject, misrepresentations received and too easily listened to, or any other cause, it will then be incumbent on us, as the only remedy for self preservation, to enter along with our fellow-citizens and countrymen, of whose general concurrence on such a necessary occasion we entertain no doubt, into such an effectual association against the importation and use of the manufactures of this kingdom, as may secure to the industry of Irishmen, the benefits at least of their own consumption.

"Resolved, That a committee be appointed to transmit copies of these resolutions to the merchants of the principal trading towns in this kingdom, and that the said committee do consist of Mr Hartley, &c.

"Resolved, That the committee be empowered to convene a general meeting when they shall think fit."

On the 15th of May, Mr. Martin, in the House of Commons of Ireland, after having laid open in great detail, the increase which had crept in by degrees upon the civil establishment of Ireland, proposed that a committee should be appointed, and especially instructed to examine into this alarming augmentation, and to propose a plan of economy, by means of which they might lighten the burden of the civil establishment of Ireland of the useless weight, which overloaded it; but he withdrew his motion on account of the shortness of the time and the assurance that was given him, that this object should be one of the first attended to next session.

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On the 17th, the House in a committee of ways and means, resolved upon a duty of five shillings and tenpence per hundred weight to be laid on refined sugar, imported from England.

On the 18th, they were about to confirm the resolution, when an opposition arose, and Mr Yelverton spoke with so much energy, that the next day, the 19th, the House resolved upon a duty of twelve shillings, to the great detriment of the refiners of sugar at London. Mr Yelverton's oratory was neither more nor less, than that he would head the people, the only argument which carries any decisive weight in that House, and this very seldom fails.

Nothing which is now, or will soon be interesting to the commerce and navigation of the United States, is improper for me to send to Congress.

The port Vendres, situated in Roussillon, twenty leagues from Barcelona and four from Roses, upon the coast of the Mediterranean, having been a long time filled up and abandoned, the King has ordered the reparation of it, and it is now in a condition to receive not only merchant vessels of any size, but frigates, and will very soon be fit for ships of the line. This port, the position of which forms the centre of the coast of the Mediterranean, receives by its right all that comes out of the Straits, and by its left what comes from the Levant and the coast of Italy, at the passage of the Gulf of Lyon; and it presents to all the commercial nations, not only a center of union, the most advantageous for reciprocal commerce, but at the same time a mart, and an asylum so much the more safe, as this port is sheltered from all the winds by the mountains, which surround it, and as vessels are there as quiet as in a canal, and as it is not yet known but to those who within a year past have taken refuge in bad weather, and have owed their safety to it, several having perished for want of knowing it, they have given two points by which to know it, by painting white the fort St Elme, and the tower of Massane, placed upon the highest mountain of the Pyrenees, which are seen at the distance of fifteen or twenty leagues at sea, and they have placed at the entrance of the port a lighthouse, which throws its light more than five leagues in the night. Roussillon, moreover, can furnish by itself wines of the first quality, oils, iron, silks, and wools, almost as beautiful as those of Spain, and many other productions.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 16th 1780.

Sir,

I have lately obtained a sight of a number of pamphlets, published in London, which are given out as written by Mr Galloway, but there are many circumstances in them which convince me they are written in concert by the refugees. I see many traces, which appear unequivocal, of the hand of Governor Hutchinson in some of them. I have read them with pleasure and surprise, because it seems to me, that if their professed intention had been to convince America, that it is both her interest and duty to support her sovereignty and her alliance, they could not have taken a method so effectual.

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"Such treaties" says he, (that is an offensive and defensive alliance between France and America) "will naturally coincide with their several views and interests, as soon as American Independence shall be acknowledged by the powers of Europe. America will naturally wish, while she is rising from her infant state into opulence and power, to cover her dominions under the protection of France, and France will find new resources of strength in American commerce, armies and naval force.

"The recovery of America from the disasters and distresses of war will be rapid and sudden. Very unlike an old country whose population is full, and whose cultivation, commerce and strength, have arrived at their height, the multiplication of her numbers, and the increase of her power will surpass all expectation. If her sudden growth has already exceeded the most sanguine ideas, it is certain, that the increase of her strength, when supported and assisted by France, and pushed forward by the powerful motives arising from her separate interest, her own preservation, and the prospect of her own arising glory and importance among nations, will far outrun any idea we have had of her late population. Nor will it be the interest of America to check the ambition of France, while confined to Europe. Her distance, and the safety arising from it, will render her regardless of the fate of nations on this side of the Atlantic, as soon as her own strength shall be established. The prosperity or ruin of kingdoms, from whose power she can have nothing to fear, and whose assistance she can never want, will be matters of equal indifference. She can wish for no other connexion with Europe than that of commerce, and this will be better secured in the hands of an ally than in those with whom she holds *no* other connexion. (The word *no* is an evident error in the press.) So that it will be of little concern to her whether Great Britain, Spain, Holland, Germany, or Russia, shall be ruled by one or more monarchs. The new States are and will continue the allies of France, our natural enemy, unless reduced, and although at this time by far the greater part of the people wish and hope for an union with this country, and are ready to unite with us in reducing the power of their tyrants, in the moment the least encouragement shall be given for that purpose, which the infatuated policy of every commander has hitherto withheld, yet should they be disappointed in their hope, it will compel them to unite with the enemies of this kingdom.

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"The mode of carrying on the war, more cruel to friends than to foes, added to the inhumanity and treachery of this country, in not exerting its powers for their relief, will not fail to create permanent enmity and resentment, and the obligations of gratitude to the nation, which shall save them from our ravages, will stamp impressions never to be effaced. Advantage will be taken of these dispositions by the policy of France, to establish treaties of alliance and commerce with them, which will be founded on two great principles, their own mutual interest and the subduing the power of Great Britain; and if she should be permitted to trade with them at all, it will only be to share with other nations in the worthless remains, after their own and the purposes of their allies are served."

Here Congress will see the extreme ignorance or deception of the writer, in affirming, that the "far greater part of the people wish and hope for a union with Great Britain, and are ready to unite in reducing," &c. But notwithstanding the bad faith of the writer, we see that such is the force of truth, that he cannot adduce an argument to persuade the English to continue the war, without producing at the same time a much stronger argument to persuade the Americans to adhere to the last to their sovereignty and their alliances. Of this nature are all his other arguments.

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"With the Independence of America," says he, "we must give up our fisheries on the Bank of Newfoundland, and in the American seas." Supposing this to be true, which it is in part, but not in the whole, if Great Britain loses her fisheries, does not America gain them? Are they not an object then to America, as important and desirable as to Great Britain? Has not America then at least as strong and pressing a motive to fight for them as Great Britain? The question then is reduced to another, which has the best prospect of contending for them successfully? America, favored by all the world, or Great Britain thwarted and opposed by all the world. And to whom did God and nature give them? The English lay great stress upon the gifts of God and nature, as they call the advantage of their insular situation, to justify their injustice and hostilities against

all the maritime powers of the world. Why should the Americans hold the blessings of Providence in a lower estimation, which they can enjoy, without doing injury to any nation or individual whatsoever?

"With American independence, we must give up thirtyfive thousand American seamen, and twentyeight thousand more bred and maintained in those excellent nurseries the fisheries. Our valuable trade, carried on from thence with the Roman Catholic States, will be in the hands of America. These nurseries and this trade will ever remain the natural right of the people who inhabit that country. A trade so profitable, and a nursery of seamen so excellent and so necessary for the support of her naval force, will never be given up, or even divided by America with any power whatsoever."

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If Great Britain loses sixtythree thousand seamen by our independence, and I believe she will not lose much less, I mean in the course of a few years, will not America gain them? Are sixtythree thousand seamen a feebler bulwark for America than Great Britain? Are they weaker instruments of wealth and strength, of power and glory, in the hands of Americans, than in those of the English; at the command of Congress than at the command of the King of England? Are they not then as strong a temptation to us to continue the war, as to them? The question then recurs again, which has the fairest prospect of success? America, which grows stronger every year, or England, which grows weaker?

"The British islands," he adds, "in the West Indies must fall of course. The same power that can compel Great Britain to yield up America, will compel her to give up the West Indies. They are evidently the immediate objects of France."

The true political consequence from this is to stop short, make peace, and save the British islands while you can; once taken, it will be more difficult to get them back. The whole returns again to the question, are you able to keep peace at home and in Ireland, and the East Indies, to settle matters with the maritime powers, and go on with the war long enough to beat France and Spain, make them renounce the war, and after that reduce the United States of America to submission? Will your soldiers, your seamen, and your revenues hold out till this is done, and after it shall be done, be sufficient to keep up a force sufficient to keep down France, Spain, and America?

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"France," he subjoins, "expects from the independence of America, and the acquisition of the West India Islands, the sovereignty of the British seas, if not of Great Britain itself."

Is not this the strongest of all arguments for putting an end to the war? Now you may make peace, and keep the West India Islands, and secure the neutrality at least of America for the future; and in this case you may at least maintain your own sovereignty, and the freedom of the British seas. France at present claims no more than freedom on any seas. If you make peace at present, you may have more of American trade in future than France, and derive more support to your navy than she will to her marine from that country, and consequently may preserve your liberty upon all seas; but by pushing the war you will weaken yourselves and strengthen France and Spain to such a degree, that they will have in the end such a superiority as may endanger your liberty. But if Great Britain is to lose the West India Islands, and the sovereignty of the seas, by the independence of America, surely France, Spain, or America, or all three together are to gain them. And are not these advantages as tempting to these powers as to England, and as urgent motives to pursue the war?

So that we come again to the old question, which is likely to hold it out longest? The immense inexhaustible resources of France, Spain, and America together, or the ruined, exhausted, or distracted kingdom of Great Britain. The writer goes on. "France has long struggled to rival us in our manufactures in vain; this will enable her to do it with effect." If England were to make peace now, it is very doubtful whether France would be able to rival her in manufactures, those I mean which are most wanted in America, of wool and iron. But if she continues the war, France will be very likely to rival her, to effect, as it is certain she is taking measures for the purpose and the longer the war continues, the more opportunity she will have of pursuing those measures to effect.

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"We receive," says he, "from the West India Islands, certain commodities absolutely necessary to carry on our manufactures to any advantage and extent, and which we can procure from no other country. We must take the remains from France or America, after they have supplied themselves and fulfilled their contracts with their allies, at their own prices, and loaded with the expense of foreign transportation, if we are permitted to trade for them at all." Is it possible to demonstrate the necessity of making peace, now while we may, more clearly? We may now preserve the West India Islands, but continuing the war we lose them infallibly.

"But this is not all we shall lose with the West Indies," says the writer. "We must add to our loss of seamen sustained by the independence of America, at least twenty thousand more, who have been bred and maintained in the trade from Great Britain to the West Indies, and in the West India trade among themselves, and with other parts, amounting in the whole to upwards of eighty thousand; a loss, which cannot fail to affect the sensibility of every man who loves this country, and knows that its safety can only be secured by its navy."

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Is not this full proof of the necessity of making peace? These seamen may now be saved, with the islands whose commerce supports them. But if we continue the war, will France and Spain be less zealous to conquer your islands? Because, by this means they will certainly take away from you, and divide among themselves, twenty thousand seamen. Taking these islands from you, and

annexing them to France and Spain, will in fact increase the trade of France, Spain, the United Provinces of the Low Countries, the United States of America, and Denmark; and the twenty thousand seamen will be divided in some proportion among all these powers. The Dutch and the Americans will have the carriage of a good deal of this trade, in consequence of their dismemberment from you, and annexion to France and Spain; do you expect to save these things by continuing the war? Or that these powers will be less zealous to continue it, by your holding out to them such temptations?

"Will not Great Britain lose much of her independence in the present state of Europe," continues the writer, "while she is obliged to other countries for her naval stores? In the time of Queen Anne, we paid at Stockholm three pounds per barrel for pitch and tar, to the extortionate Swede; and such was the small demand of those countries for the manufactures of this, that the balance of trade was greatly in their favor. The gold which we obtained in our other commerce, was continually pouring into their laps. But we have reduced that balance, by our importation of large quantities of those supplies from America."

But what is there to hinder Great Britain from importing pitch, tar, and turpentine from America, after her independence? She may be obliged to give a somewhat higher price, because France, Spain, Holland, and all other nations will import them too. But will this higher price induce America to give up her independence? Will the prospect which is opened to the other maritime powers of drawing these supplies from America, in exchange for their productions, make them less zealous to support American independence? Will the increase of the demand upon the northern powers for these articles, in consequence of the destruction of the British monopoly in America, make these powers less inclined to American independency? The British monopoly and British bounties, it was in fact, which reduced the price of these articles in the northern markets. The ceasing of that monopoly and those bounties, will rather raise the price in the Baltic, because those States in America in which pitch and tar chiefly grow, have so many articles of more profitable cultivation, that without bounties it is not probable that trade will flourish to a degree, to reduce the prices in the north of Europe. Should a war take place between us and the northern powers, where are we to procure our naval stores? inquires the pamphleteer.

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I answer, make peace with America, and procure them from her. But if you go to war with America and the Northern Powers at once, you will get them nowhere. This writer appears to have had no suspicion of the real intentions of the Northern Powers, when he wrote his book. What he will say now after the confederation of all of them against Great Britain, for I can call it no otherwise, I am at a loss to conjecture.

"Timber of every kind, iron, saltpetre, tar, pitch, turpentine, and hemp, are raised and manufactured in America. Fields, of a hundred thousand acres, of hemp, are to be seen spontaneously growing between the Ohio and the Mississippi, and of a quality little inferior to the European."

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Are not these articles as precious to France, Spain, and Holland as to England? Will not these powers be proportionably active to procure a share of them, or a liberty to trade in them, as England will be to defend her monopoly of them? And will not America be as alert to obtain the freedom of selling them to the best advantage in a variety of markets as other nations will for that of purchasing them?

Will the coasting trade, and that of the Baltic and Mediterranean, with the small intercourse we have in our bottoms with other nations, furnish seamen sufficient for a navy necessary for the protection of Great Britain and its trade? Will our mariners continue as they are, when our manufactures are laboring under the disadvantage of receiving their materials at higher and exorbitant prices, and selling at foreign markets at a certain loss. Will these nurseries of seamen, thus weakened, supply the loss of eighty thousand, sustained by the independence of America, and the conquest of the West Indies?

But what is the tendency of this? If it serves to convince Britain that she should continue the war, does it not serve to convince the allies that they ought to continue it too? For they are to get all that Britain is to lose, and America is to be the greatest gainer of all; whereas she is not only to lose these objects, but her liberties too, if she is subdued. France, Spain, and all the other maritime powers, are to gain a share of these objects, if Britain loses them; whereas they not only lose all share in them, but even the safety and existence of their flags upon the ocean may be lost, if America is reduced, and the British monopoly of American trade, fisheries, and seamen is revived.

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"It does not require the spirit of divination to perceive that Great Britain, robbed of her foreign dominions and commerce, her nurseries of seamen lost, her navy weakened, and the power of her ambitious neighbors thus strengthened and increased, will not be able to maintain her independence among the nations."

If she would now make peace, she might preserve not only her independence, but a great share of her present importance. If she continues this war but a year or two longer, she will be reduced to the government of her own island, in two independent kingdoms, Scotland and England probably. As to conquest and subordination to some neighboring power, none that has common sense would accept the government of that island, because it would cost infinitely more to maintain it than it would be worth.

Thus I have given some account of these "cool thoughts on the consequences of American

independence," which I consider as the result of all the consultations and deliberations of the refugees upon the subject.

I think it might as well have been entitled, an Essay towards demonstrating that it is the clear interest and the indispensable duty of America, to maintain her sovereignty and her alliances at all events, and of France, Spain, Holland, and all the maritime powers to support her in the possession of them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

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Paris, June 16th, 1780.

Sir,

I have just received a letter from Nantes, brought in a ship from New London. I enclose your Excellency a newspaper enclosed in it, and an extract of the letter, which is from a gentleman who is a member of the assembly, and one of the judges of Boston. This is all the news I have. I hope your Excellency has more by the same vessel.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. I have mislaid the letter from Boston. The extract informed, that a bill had passed the two Houses of Assembly, adopting the resolution of Congress of the 18th of March, and establishing an annual tax for seven years, for the redemption of their part of the bills payable in silver and gold, or in produce at the market price, in hard money.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 17th, 1780.

Sir,

The refugees in England are so great an obstacle to peace, that it seems not improper for me to take notice of them to Congress. Governor Hutchinson is dead. Whether the late popular insurrections, or whether the resolutions of Congress of the 18th of March, respecting their finances, by suddenly extinguishing the last rays of his hopes, put a sudden end to his life, or whether it was owing to any other cause, I know not. He was born to be the cause and the victim of popular fury, outrage, and conflagrations. Descended from an ancient and honorable family, born and educated in America, professing all the zeal of the congregational religion, affecting to honor the characters of the first planters of the new world, and to vindicate the character of America, and especially of New England, early initiated into public business, industrious and indefatigable in it, beloved and esteemed by the people, elected and trusted by them and their representatives, his views opened and extended by repeated travels in Europe, engaged in extensive correspondence in Europe as well as in America, favored by the Crown of Great Britain, and possessed of its honors and emoluments; possessed of all these advantages and surrounded by all these circumstances, he was perhaps the only man in the world who could have brought on the controversy between Great Britain and America, in the manner and at the time it was done, and involved the two countries in an enmity, which must end in their everlasting separation. Yet this was the character of the man, and these his memorable actions. An inextinguishable ambition and avarice, that were ever seen among his other qualities, and which grew with his growth and strengthened with his age and experience, and at last predominated over every other principle of his heart, rendered him credulous to a childish degree, of everything that favored his ruling passion, and blind and deaf to everything that thwarted it, to such a degree, that his representations, with those of his fellow-laborer, Bernard, drew on the King, Ministry, Parliament, and nation, to concert measures, which will end in their reduction and the exaltation of America.

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I think I see visible traces of his councils in a number of pamphlets, not long since published in London, and ascribed to Mr Galloway. It is most probable, that they were concerted between the Ministry and the refugees in general, and that Mr Galloway was to be given out as the ostensible, as he probably was the principal author.

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"The cool thoughts on the consequences of American independence," although calculated to inflame a hasty warlike nation to pursue the conquest of America, are sober reasons for

defending our independence and our alliances, and therefore proper for me to lay before my countrymen. The pamphlet says, "it has been often asserted, that Great Britain has expended in settling and defending America, more than she will ever be able to repay, and that it will be more to the profit of this kingdom to give her independence, and to lose what we have expended, than to retain her as a part of her dominions." To this he answers, "that the bounties on articles of commerce, and the expense of the last war, ought not to be charged to America, and that the sums expended in support of Colonial governments, have been confined to New York, the Carolinas, Georgia, Nova Scotia, and East and West Florida. That New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia, have not cost Great Britain a farthing, and that the whole expense of the former is no more than £1,700,000, and when we deduct the £700,000, extravagantly expended in building a key at Halifax, we can only call it one million." He concludes, "that posterity will feel that America was not only worth all that was spent upon her, but that a just, firm, and constitutional subordination of the Colonies, was absolutely necessary to the independence and existence of Great Britain." Here I think I see the traces of Mr Hutchinson.

Another argument, he says, much relied on by the advocates for American independence is, "that a similarity of laws, religion, and manners, has formed an attachment between the people of Great Britain and America, which will ensure to Great Britain a preference in the commerce of America." He agrees, "that a uniformity of laws and religion, united with a subordination to the same supreme authority, in a great measure forms and fixes the national attachment. But when the laws and the supreme authority are abolished, the manners, habits, and customs derived from them will soon be effaced. When different systems of laws and governments shall be established, other habits and manners must take place. The fact is, that the Americans have already instituted governments, as opposite to the principles upon which the British government is established as human invention could possibly devise. New laws are made, and will be made in conformity to, and in support of their new political systems, and of course destructive to this national attachment. Their new States being altogether popular, their essential laws do already, and will continue to bear a greater resemblance to those of the democratical Cantons of Switzerland, than to the laws and policy of Great Britain. Thus we find, in their first acts, the strongest of all proofs of an aversion in their rulers to our national policy, and a sure foundation laid to obliterate all affection and attachment to this country among the people. How long then can we expect that their attachment, arising from a similarity of laws, habits, and manners, if any such should remain, will continue? No longer than between the United Provinces and Spain, or the Corsicans and the Genoese, which was changed, from the moment of their separation, into an enmity, which is not worn out to this day."

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How it is possible for these rulers, who are the creatures of the people, and constantly dependent upon them for their political existence, to have the strongest aversion to the national policy of Great Britain, and at the same time the far greater part of the people wish and hope for a union with that country, and are ready to unite in reducing the powers of those rulers, as this author asserts, I know not. I leave him to reconcile it. If he had been candid, and confessed that the attachment in American minds in general is not very strong to the laws and government of England, and that they rather prefer a different form of government, I should have agreed with him, as I certainly shall agree, that no attachment between nations arising merely from a similarity of laws and government, is ever very strong, or sufficient to bind nations together, who have opposite or even different interests.

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"As to attachments," says he, "arising from a similarity of religion, they will appear still more groundless and ridiculous. America has no predominant religion. There is not a religious society in Europe, which is not to be found in America. If we wish to visit the churches of England, or the meetings of the Lutherans, Methodists, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Moravians, Menonists, Swinfielders, Dumplers, or Roman Catholics, we shall find them all in America.

"What a motley, or rather how many different and opposite attachments, will this jumble of religions make.

"Should there be any remains of this kind of national attachment, we may conclude, that the Lutherans, Calvinists, Menonists, Swinfielders, Dumplers, and Moravians, will be attached to Germany, the country from whence they emigrated, and where their religions are best tolerated; the Presbyterians and Puritans to Ireland, and the Roman Catholics to France, Spain, and the Pope, and the small number of the Church of England to Great Britain.

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"Do we not daily see, Monarchies at war with Monarchies, Infidels with Infidels, Christians with Christians, Catholics with Catholics, and Dissenters with Dissenters? What stress then can be justly laid on an attachment arising from a similarity of laws, government, or religion?

"It has also been asserted, that America will be led from motives of interest, to give the preference in trade to this country, because we can supply her with manufactures cheaper than she can raise them or purchase them from others.

"But a commercial alliance is already ratified, greatly injurious to the trade of Great Britain, and should France succeed in supporting American independence, no one can doubt but other treaties, yet more injurious, will be added; and as to the ability of America to manufacture, she possesses, or can produce a greater variety of raw materials, than any other country on the globe. When she shall have a separate and distinct interest of her own to pursue, her views will be enlarged, her policy exerted to her own benefit, and her interest instead of being united with, will become not only different from, but opposite to that of Great Britain. She will readily perceive, that manufactures are the great foundation of commerce, that commerce is the great

means of acquiring wealth, and that wealth is necessary to her own safety. With these interesting prospects before her, it is impossible to conceive, that she will not exert her capacity to promote manufactures and commerce. She will see it to be clearly her interest not only to manufacture for herself but others. Laws will be made granting bounties to encourage it, and duties will be laid to discourage or prohibit foreign importations. By these measures her manufactures will increase, her commerce will be extended; and feeling the benefits of them as they rise, her industry will be excited, until she shall not only supply her own wants, but those of Great Britain herself, with all the manufactures made with her own materials. The nature of commerce is roving; she has been at different periods in possession of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and the Venetians; Germany and France lately enjoyed her, and supplied Great Britain with their manufactures. Great Britain at present folds her in her arms."

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Surely it was never intended that any American should read this pamphlet, it contains so many arguments and motives for perseverance in our righteous and glorious cause. It is astonishing, however, that, instead of stimulating England to pursue their unjust and inglorious enterprise, it does not convince all of the impracticability of it, and induce them to make peace.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, June 20th, 1780.

Sir,

Last evening I received the letter, an extract of which I have the honor to enclose. It is from Mr Gerry, a member of Congress, who has been a member of their Treasury Board from the beginning of the year 1776.^[5]

It is much to be regretted, that the Congress did not publish their resolution to pay off the loan office certificates, according to the value of money, at the time of their being respectively issued, with their resolutions of the 18th of March; because this I think would have prevented the alarm, that has been spread in Europe. It will be found, that almost all the interest that European merchants or others have in our funds, lies in these certificates, and that almost all the paper bills now in possession of their factors in America, have been received within a few months; immediately before the 18th of March, and consequently received at a depreciation of forty for one, at least, perhaps at a much greater.

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Although some Europeans may have considerable sums in loan office certificates, yet I have reason to believe, that the whole will be found much less than is imagined. They have realized their property generally as they went along. Some may have purchased land, others have purchased bills of exchange, others have purchased the produce of the country, which they have exported to St Eustatia, to the French West India Islands, and to Europe.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Translation.

Versailles, June 21st, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 16th of this month, and also the extract of the letter addressed to you from Boston, dated the 26th of April.

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From this it appears, that the Assembly of Massachusetts has determined to adopt the resolution of Congress, fixing the value of the paper money at forty for one in specie. On reading that resolution, I was persuaded, that it had no other object than that of restoring the value of the paper money by lessening its quantity, and that in consequence of that operation the paper not brought in would take its course according to the circumstances, that would give it a greater or less degree of credit. What confirmed me in this opinion, was the liberty given to the possessors of the paper money to carry it to the treasury of their State, or to keep it in their own possession. But from the information I have since received, and the letter, which you have been pleased to communicate to me, I have reason to believe, that it is the intention of Congress to maintain the

paper money invariably at the exchange of forty for one, and to settle on that footing all the paper money, which has been thrown into circulation, in order to reduce insensibly the two hundred millions of dollars, for which it is indebted, to five millions.

I will not presume, Sir, to criticise upon this operation, because I have no right to examine or comment upon the internal arrangements, which Congress may consider as just and profitable; and moreover I readily agree, that there may be some situations so critical as to force the best regulated and best established governments to adopt extraordinary measures to repair their finances, and put them in a condition to answer the public expenses; and this I am persuaded has been the principal reason, that induced Congress to depreciate the money, which they themselves have emitted. [210]

But while I admit, Sir, that that Assembly might have recourse to the expedient abovementioned in order to remove their load of debt, I am far from agreeing, that it is just, or agreeable to the ordinary course of things to extend the effect to strangers, as well as to citizens of the United States. On the contrary, I think it ought to be confined to Americans, and that an exception ought to be made in favor of strangers, or at least, that some means ought to be devised to indemnify them, for the losses they may suffer by the general laws.

In order to make you sensible of the truth of this observation, I will only remark, Sir, that the Americans alone ought to support the expense, which is occasioned by the defence of their liberty, and that they ought to consider the depreciation of their paper money, only as an impost which ought to fall upon themselves, as the paper money was at first established only to relieve them from the necessity of paying taxes. I will only add, that the French, if they are obliged to submit to the reduction proposed by Congress, will find themselves victims of their zeal, and I may say of the rashness, with which they exposed themselves in furnishing the Americans with arms, ammunition, and clothing; and in a word, with all things of the first necessity, of which the Americans at the time stood in need. You will agree with me, Sir, that this is not what the subjects of the King ought to expect, and that after escaping the dangers of the sea, the vigilance of the English, instead of dreading to see themselves plundered in America, they ought on the contrary, to expect the thanks of Congress, and of all the Americans, and believe, that their property will be as secure and sacred in America as in France itself. [211]

It was with this persuasion, and in a reliance on public faith, that they received paper money in exchange for their merchandise, and kept that paper with a view to employ it in new speculations of commerce. The unexpected reduction of this paper overturns all their calculations at the same time that it ruins their fortune. I ask, Sir, if these consequences can induce you to believe, that this act of Congress is proper to advance the credit of the United States, to inspire a confidence in their promises, to invite the European nations to run the same risks, to which the subjects of his Majesty have exposed themselves?

These, Sir, are the principal reflections occasioned by the resolution of Congress of the 18th of March. I thought it my duty to communicate them to you with an entire confidence, because you are too enlightened not to feel their force and justice, and too much attached to your country, not to use all your endeavors to engage it to take steps to do justice to the subjects of the King.

I will not conceal from you, that the Chevalier de la Luzerne has received orders to make the strongest representations on this subject, and that the King is firmly persuaded, that the United States will be forward to give to him, on this occasion, a mark of their attachment by granting to his subjects the just satisfaction, which they solicit and expect, from the wisdom and justice of the United States.

I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES. [212]

Paris, June 22d, 1780.

Sir,

I received this day the letter, which your Excellency did me the honor to write me on the 21st of this month.

I thank your Excellency for the confidence, which induced you to communicate this letter to me, and the continuance of which I shall ever study to deserve.

When your Excellency says, that his Majesty's Minister at Congress has already received orders to make representations against the resolutions of Congress of the 18th of March, as far as they effect his subjects, I am at a loss to know with certainty, whether your Excellency means only, that such orders have lately passed, and are sent off to go to America, or whether you mean, that such orders were sent so long ago as to have reached the hand of the Chevalier de la Luzerne.

If the latter is your Excellency's meaning, there is no remedy; if the former, I would submit it to

your Excellency's consideration, whether those orders may not be stopped and delayed a little time, until his Excellency Mr Franklin may have opportunity to make his representations to his Majesty's Ministers, to the end, that if it should appear, that those orders were issued in consequence of misinformation, they may be revoked, otherwise sent on.

I will do myself the honor to write fully to your Excellency upon this subject without loss of time, and although it is a subject on which I pretend not to an accurate knowledge in the detail, yet I flatter myself I am so far master of the principles as to demonstrate, that the plan of Congress is not only wise, but just.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

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Paris, June 22d, 1780.

Sir,

I this day acknowledge the receipt of the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 21st.

I have the honor to agree with your Excellency in opinion, that it is the intention of Congress to redeem all their paper bills which are extant, at an exchange of forty for one, by which means, the two hundred millions of dollars, which are out, will be reduced to about five millions.

I apprehend, with your Excellency, that it was necessary for the Congress to put themselves in a condition to defray the public expenses. They found their currency to be so depreciated, and so rapidly depreciating, that a further emission sufficient to discharge the public expenses another year, would have, probably, depreciated it to two hundred for one; perhaps, would have so totally discredited it, that nobody would have taken it at any rate. It was absolutely necessary, then, to stop emitting. Yet it was absolutely necessary to have an army to save their cities from the fire, and their citizens from the sword. That army must be fed, clothed, paid, and armed, and other expenses must be defrayed. It had become necessary, therefore, at this time, to call in their paper; for there is no nation that is able to carry on war by the taxes, which can be raised within the year. But I am far from thinking, that this necessity was the cause of their calling it in at a depreciated value, because I am well convinced that they would have called it in at a depreciated value, if the British fleet and army had been withdrawn from the United States, and a general peace had been concluded. My reason for this belief is, the evident injustice of calling it in at its nominal value, a silver dollar for a paper one. The public has its rights as well as individuals; and every individual has a share in the rights of the public. Justice is due to the body politic, as well as to the possessor of the bills; and to have paid off the bills at their nominal value, would have wronged the body politic of thirtynine dollars in every forty, as really as if forty dollars had been paid for one, at the first emission in 1775, when each paper dollar was worth, and would fetch a silver one.

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I beg leave to ask your Excellency, whether you judge that the Congress ought to pay two hundred millions of silver dollars, for the two hundred millions of paper dollars which are abroad? I presume your Excellency will not think that they ought; because I have never met with any man in America or in Europe, that was of that opinion. All agree, that Congress ought to redeem it at a depreciated value. The only question then, is, at what depreciation? Shall it be at seventyfive, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or five, for one? After it is once admitted, that it ought to be redeemed at a less value than the nominal, the question arises, at what value? What rule? I answer, there is no other rule of justice than the current value, the value at which it generally passes from man to man. The Congress have set it at forty for one; and they are the best judges of this, as they represent all parts of the continent where the paper circulates.

I think there can be little need of illustration; but two or three examples may make my meaning more obvious. A farmer has now four thousand dollars for a pair of oxen, which he sells to a commissary to subsist the army. When the money was issued in 1775, he would have been glad to have taken one hundred. A laborer has now twenty dollars a day for his work; five years ago, he would have been rejoiced to have received half a dollar. The same with the artisan, merchant, and all others, but those who have fixed salaries, or money at interest. Most of these persons would be willing to take hard money for his work and his produce, at the rate he did six years ago. Where is the reason, then, that Congress should pay them forty times as much as they take of their neighbors in private life?

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The amount of an ordinary commerce, external and internal, of a society, may be computed at a fixed sum. A certain sum of money is necessary to circulate among the society, in order to carry on their business. This precise sum is discoverable by calculation, and reducible to certainty. You may emit paper, or any other currency for this purpose, until you reach this rule, and it will not depreciate. After you exceed this rule, it will depreciate; and no power, or act of legislation hitherto invented, will prevent it. In the case of paper, if you go on emitting forever, the whole

mass will be worth no more than that was, which was emitted within the rule. When the paper, therefore, comes to be redeemed, this is the only rule of justice for the redemption of it. The Congress have fixed five millions for this rule. Whether this is mathematically exact, I am not able to say; whether it is a million too little, or too much, I know not. But they are the best judges; and by the accounts of the money being at seventy for one, and bills of exchange at fiftyfive for one, it looks as if five millions was too high a sum, rather than too small.

It will be said, that the faith of society ought to be sacred, and that the Congress have pledged the public faith for the redemption of the bills, at the value on the face of them. I agree that the public faith ought to be sacred. But who is it that has violated this faith? Is it not every man, who has demanded more paper money for his labor or his goods than they were worth in silver? The public faith, in the sense these words are here used, would require that Congress should make up to every man, who for five years past has paid more in paper money for anything he has purchased, than he could have had it for in silver. The public faith is no more pledged to the present possessor of the bills, than it is to every man, through whose hands they may have passed, at a less value than the nominal value. So that according to this doctrine, Congress would have two hundred millions of dollars to pay to the present possessors of the bills, and to make up to every man, through whose hands they may have passed, the difference at which they passed between them and silver. [216]

It should be considered, that every man, whether native or foreigner, who receives or pays this money at a less value than the nominal value, breaks this faith. For the social compact being between the whole and every individual, and between every individual and the whole, every individual, native or foreigner, who uses this paper, is as much bound by the public faith to use it according to the terms of its emission as the Congress is. And Congress have as good a right to reproach every individual, who now demands more paper for his goods than silver, with a breach of the public faith, as he has to reproach the public or their representatives.

I must beg your Excellency's excuse for calling your attention a little longer to this head of public faith, because I cannot rest easy, while my country is supposed to be guilty of a breach of their faith, and in a case where I am clear they have not been so, especially by your Excellency, whose good opinion they and I value so much. This public faith is in the nature of a mutual covenant, and he who would claim a benefit under it, ought to be careful in first fulfilling his part of it. When Congress issued their bills, declaring them, in effect, to be equal to silver, they unquestionably intended that they should be so considered, and that they should be received accordingly. The people, or individuals covenanted, in effect, to receive them at their nominal value; and Congress, in such case, agreed on their part to redeem them at the same rate. This seems to be a fair and plain construction of this covenant, or public faith; and none other I think can be made, that will not degenerate into an unconscionable contract, and so destroy itself. [217]

Can it be supposed, that Congress ever intended, that if the time should come when the individual refused to accept and receive their bills at their nominal value, and demanded, and actually received them at a less value, that, in that case, the individual should be entitled to demand, and receive of the public, for those very bills, silver equal to their nominal value? The consideration is, in fact, made by the public at the very instant the individual receives the bills at a discount; and there is a tacit and implied agreement springing from the principles of natural justice or equity, between the public and the individual; that as the latter has not given to the former a consideration equal to the nominal value of the bills, so in fact, the public shall not be held to pay the nominal value in silver to the individual. Suppose it otherwise, and how will the matter stand? The public offers to an individual a bill, whose nominal value is, for example, forty dollars, in lieu of forty silver dollars; the individual says, I esteem it of no more value than one silver dollar, and the public pays it to him at that value; yet he comes the next day, when the bill may be payable, and demands of the public forty silver dollars in exchange for it. And why? Because the bill purports on the face of it, to be equal to forty silver dollars. The answer is equally obvious with the injustice of the demand. Upon the whole, as the depreciation crept in gradually, and was unavoidable, all reproaches of a breach of public faith ought to be laid aside; and the only proper inquiry now really is, what is paper honestly worth? What will it fetch at market? And this is the only just rule of redemption. [218]

It becomes me to express myself with deference, when I am obliged to differ in opinion from your Excellency; but this being a subject peculiar to America, no example entirely similar to it, that I know of, having been in Europe, I may be excused, therefore, in explaining my sentiments upon it.

I have the misfortune to differ from your Excellency, so far as to think, that no general distinction can be made between natives and foreigners. For, not to mention that this would open a door to numberless frauds, I think, that foreigners when they come to trade with a nation, make themselves temporary citizens, and tacitly consent to be bound by the same laws. And it will be found, that foreigners have had quite as much to do, in depreciating this money, in proportion, as natives, and that they have been in proportion much less sufferers by it. I might go further and say, that they have been in proportion greater gainers by it, without suffering any considerable share of the loss. [219]

The paper bills out of America, are next to nothing. I have no reason to think, that there are ten thousand dollars in all Europe; indeed, I do not know of one thousand. The agents in America of merchants in Europe, have laid out their paper bills in lands, or in indigo, rice, tobacco, wheat, flour, &c.; in short, in the produce of the country. This produce they have shipped to Europe, sold

to the King's ships, and received bills of exchange, or shipped to the West India Islands, where they have procured cash, or bills of exchange. The surplus they have put into the loan offices from time to time, for loan offices have been open all along, from 1776, I believe, to this time. Whenever any person lent paper bills to the public, and took loan office certificates, he would have been glad to have taken silver in exchange for the bills, at their then depreciated value. Why should he not be willing now? Those who lent paper, when two paper dollars were worth one in silver, will have one for two; those who lent, when forty were worth one, will have one for forty; and those who lent, when paper was as good as silver, will have dollar for dollar.

Your Excellency thinks it would be hard, that those who have escaped the perils of the seas and of enemies, should be spoiled by their friends. But Congress have not spoiled any; they have only prevented themselves and the public from being spoiled. No agent of any European merchant, in making his calculations of profit and loss, ever estimated the depreciated bills at the nominal value; they all put a profit upon their goods sufficient to defray all expenses of insurance, freight, and everything else, and had a great profit besides, receiving the bills at the current, not the nominal value. [220]

It may not be amiss to state a few prices current at Boston the last and the present year, in order to show the profits which have been made. Bohea tea, forty sous a pound at L'Orient and Nantes, fortyfive dollars; salt, which costs very little in Europe, and used to be sold for a shilling a bushel, forty dollars a bushel, and in some of the other States, two hundred dollars, at times; linens, which cost two livres a yard in France, forty dollars a yard; broadcloths, a louis d'or a yard here, two hundred dollars a yard; ironmongery of all sorts, one hundred and twenty for one; millinary of all sorts, at an advance far exceeding. These were the prices at Boston. At Philadelphia, and in all the other States, they were much higher. These prices, I think, must convince your Excellency that allowing one half, or even two thirds of the vessels to be taken, there is room enough for a handsome profit, deducting all charges, and computing the value of bills at the rate of silver at the time.

There are two other sources from which foreigners have made great profits. The difference between bills of exchange and silver. During the whole of our history, when a man could readily get twentyfive paper dollars for one in silver, he could not get more than twelve paper dollars for one, in a bill of exchange. Nearly this proportion was observed all along, as I have been informed. The Agent of a foreign merchant had only to sell his goods for paper, or buy paper with silver at twentyfive for one, and immediately go and buy bills at twelve for one. So that he doubled his money in a moment.

Another source was this; the paper money was not alike depreciated in all places at the same time. It was forty for one at Philadelphia, sometimes, when it was only twenty at Boston. The agent of a foreign merchant had only to sell his goods, or send silver to Philadelphia, and exchange it for paper, which he could lay out at Boston for twice what it cost him, and in this way again double his property. [221]

This depreciating paper currency being, therefore, such a fruitful source for men of penetration to make large profits, it is not to be wondered that some have written alarming letters to their correspondents.

No man is more ready than I am to acknowledge the obligations we are under to France; but the flourishing state of her marine and commerce, and the decisive influence of her councils and negotiations in Europe, which all the world will allow to be owing in a great measure to the separation of America from her inveterate enemy, and to her new connexions with the United States, show that the obligations are mutual. And no foreign merchant ought to expect to be treated in America better than her native merchants, who have hazarded their property through the same perils of the seas and of enemies.

In the late Province of the Massachusetts Bay, from the years 1745 to 1750, we had full experience of the operation of paper money. The Province engaged in expensive expeditions against Louisburg and Canada, which occasioned a too plentiful emission of paper money, in consequence of which, it depreciated to seven and a half for one. In 1750, the British Parliament granted a sum of money to the Province to reimburse it, for what it had expended more than its proportion in the general expense of the empire. This sum was brought over to Boston in silver and gold, and the Legislature determined to redeem all their paper with it at the depreciated value. There was a similar alarm at first, and before the matter was understood, but after the people had time to think upon it, all were satisfied to receive silver at fifty shillings an ounce, although the face of the bills promised an ounce of silver for every six shillings and eight pence. At that time, the British merchants were more interested in our paper money, in proportion, than any Europeans now are; yet they did not charge the Province with a breach of faith, or stigmatise this as an act of bankruptcy. On the contrary, they were satisfied with it. [222]

I beg leave to remind your Excellency, that at that time, the laws of Massachusetts were subject not only to the negative of the King's Governor, but to a revision by the King in Council, and were there liable to be affirmed or annulled. And from the partial preference, which your Excellency well knows, was uniformly given to the subjects of the King, within the realm, when they came in competition with those of the subjects of the Colonies, there is no reason to doubt, that if that measure, when thoroughly considered, had been unjust in itself, but the merchants in England would have taken an alarm, and procured the act to be disallowed by the King in Council. Yet the merchants in England, who well understood their own interests, were quite silent upon this occasion, and the law was confirmed in the Council; nor can it be supposed to have been

confirmed there in a manner unnoticed. It had met with too much opposition among a certain set of interested speculators in the then Province, for that supposition to be made. And the case of the British merchants, at that time, differed in no respect from the present case of the French, or other foreign merchants, except that the credits of the former were vastly greater, and they must have, consequently, been more deeply interested in that measure of government, than the latter are in the present one. Their acquiescence in the measure, and the confirmation of that act, must have rested upon the full conviction of the British administration and of the merchants, of the justice of it. Your Excellency will agree, in the difficulty of making any distinction between the French merchant and the Spanish or Dutch merchant, by any general rule; for all these are interested in this business.

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Your Excellency is pleased to ask, whether I think these proceedings of Congress proper to give credit to the United States; to inspire confidence in their promises, and to invite the European nations to partake of the same risks, to which the subjects of his Majesty have exposed themselves?

I have the honor to answer your Excellency, directly and candidly, that I do think them proper for these ends, and I do further think them to be the only measures that ever could acquire credit and confidence to the United States. I know of no other just foundation of confidence in men, or bodies of men, than their understanding and integrity; and Congress have manifested to all the world by this plan, that they understand the nature of their paper currency, that its fluctuation has been the grand obstacle to their credit; and that it was necessary to draw it to a conclusion, in order to introduce a more steady standard of commerce; that, to this end, the repeal of their laws, which made the paper a tender, and giving a free circulation to silver and gold, were necessary. They have further manifested by these resolutions, that they are fully possessed of the only principle there is in the nature of things for doing justice in this business, to the public and to individuals, to natives and foreigners, and that they are sufficiently possessed of the confidence of the people; and there is sufficient vigor in their government to carry it into execution.

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Notwithstanding all, if any European merchant can show any good reason for excepting his particular case from the general rule, upon a representation of it to Congress, I have no doubt they will do him justice.

Moreover, if his Excellency the Chevalier de la Luzerne can show, that the sum of five millions of dollars is not the real worth of all the paper money that is abroad, and that ten millions of dollars is the true sum, I doubt not Congress would alter their rule, and redeem it at twenty for one. But I doubt very much whether this can be shown. But I cannot see that any distinction could be made between French merchants and those of other nations, but what would be very invidious and founded upon no principle. I cannot see that any distinction can be made between natives and foreigners, but what would have a most unhappy effect upon the minds of the people in America, and be a partiality quite unwarrantable; and, therefore, your Excellency will see, that it is impossible for me to take any steps to persuade Congress to retract, because it would be acting in direct repugnance to the clearest dictates of my understanding and judgment, of what is right and fit.

I cannot excuse myself from adding, that most of the arms, ammunition, and clothing for the army, have been contracted for here, by the Ministers of Congress, and paid for, or agreed to be paid for here, in silver and gold. Very little of these articles have been shipped by private adventurers. They have much more commonly shipped articles of luxury, of which the country did not stand in need, and upon which they must have made vast profits.

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Thus have I communicated to your Excellency my sentiments, with that freedom, which becomes a citizen of the United States, intrusted by the public with some of its interests. I intreat your Excellency to consider them as springing from no other motive, than a strong attachment to the union of the States, and a desire to prevent all unnecessary causes of parties and disputes; and from a desire not only to preserve the alliance in all its vigor, but to prevent everything, which may unnecessarily oppose itself to the affection and confidence between the two nations, which I wish to see increased every day; as every day convinces me more and more of the necessity, that France and America will be under, of cherishing their mutual connexions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Paris, June 22d, 1780.

Sir,

I have this day the honor of a letter from his Excellency the Count de Vergennes, on the subject of the resolutions of Congress, of the 18th of March, concerning the paper bills, in which his Excellency informs me, that the Chevalier de la Luzerne has orders to make the strongest

representations upon the subject. I am not certain whether his Excellency means, that such orders were sent so long ago as to have reached the hand of the Minister at Congress, or whether they have been lately expected. If the latter, I submit to your Excellency, whether it would not be expedient to request, that those orders may be stopped until proper representations can be made at Court, to the end, that if it can be made to appear, as I firmly believe that it may, that those orders were given upon misinformation, they may be revoked, otherwise sent on.

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Your Excellency will excuse this, because it appears to me a matter of very great importance. The affair of our paper is sufficiently dangerous and critical, and if a representation from his Majesty should be made, advantages will not fail to be taken of it by the Tories, and by interested and disappointed speculators, who may spread an alarm among many uninformed people, so as to endanger the public peace.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 26th, 1780.

Sir,

The resolutions of Congress, of the 18th of March, respecting the paper bills, appeared first in Europe, as recited in the act of the Assembly of Pennsylvania; they were next published in the English newspapers, as taken from a Boston paper published by the Council; at last the resolutions appeared in the Journals of Congress.

A great clamor was raised, and spread, that the United States had violated their faith, and had declared themselves bankrupts, unable to pay more than two and a half per cent. A gentleman soon after called on me, and told me, that the Court was alarmed, and that the Count de Vergennes would be glad to consult me upon the subject. I then received a letter from Boston, acquainting me, that the Legislature of Massachusetts had adopted the plan. Of this letter I sent an extract immediately to the Count, and waited on him at Versailles, where I had the honor of a long conversation with his Excellency on the subject. He desired me to converse with his first Secretary, which I did particularly.

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His Excellency told me he had written to me on the subject, and that I should receive the letter the next day. On my return from Versailles, I received a letter from Mr Gerry, informing me of the resolutions to pay the Loan Office certificates, at the value of money at the time when they were issued. I had before told the Count, that I was persuaded this was a part of the plan. I sent an extract of this letter also to the Count, without loss of time. The next day I received the letter from his Excellency, the copy of which, and of my answer, are enclosed. Yesterday, Mr Trumbull of Connecticut, favored me with a law of the State, respecting this matter, and an estimate of the gradual progress of depreciation. These papers I forthwith transmitted to his Excellency. I am determined to give my sentiments to his Majesty's Ministers whenever they shall see cause to ask them, although it is not within my department, until I shall be forbidden by Congress; and to this end I shall go to Court often enough to give them an opportunity to ask them, if they wish to know them.

The clamor that has been raised, has been so industriously spread, that I cannot but suspect, that the motive at bottom has either been a wish to have an opportunity of continuing the profitable speculations, which artful men are able to make in a depreciating currency, or else by spreading a diffidence in American credit, to discourage many from engaging in American trade, that the profits of it may still continue to be confined to a few.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, June 29th, 1780.

Sir,

The disputes about the Alliance, have been so critical and disagreeable, that Congress will pardon me for making a few observations upon our arrangements here.

I apprehend, that many of the disputes, delays, and other inconveniences, that have attended our affairs in this kingdom, have arisen from blending the offices of political Minister, Board of

Admiralty, Chamber of Commerce, and Commercial Agent together. The business of the Minister is to negotiate with the Court, to propose and consult upon plans for the conduct of the war, to collect and transmit intelligence from other parts, especially concerning the designs and the forces of the enemy. This is business enough for the wisest and most industrious man the United States have in their service, aided by an active, intelligent, and laborious secretary. But added to all this, our Ministers at the Court of Versailles, have ever been overloaded with commercial and Admiralty business, complicated and perplexed in its nature, and endless in its details. But for this, I am persuaded much more might have been done in the conduct of the war, and the United States might have had more effectual assistance, and France and Spain too fewer misfortunes to bewail. [229]

I would, therefore, beg leave to propose, to appoint a consul without loss of time to reside at Nantes, and to him consign all vessels from the United States. I think it should be an American, some merchant of known character, abilities, and industry, who would consent to serve his country for moderate emoluments. Such persons are to be found in great numbers in the United States. There are many applications from French gentlemen. But I think that a want of knowledge of our language, our laws, customs, and even the humors of our people, for even these must be considered, would prevent them from giving satisfaction, or doing justice. Besides, if it is an honor, a profit, or only an opportunity to travel and see the world for improvement, I think the native Americans have a right to expect it; and further, that the public have a right to expect that whatever advantages are honestly to be made in this way, should return sometime or other to America; together with the knowledge and experience gained at the same time.

These consuls, as well as the foreign Ministers, should all be instructed to transmit to Congress, written accounts of the civil and military constitutions of the places where they are, as well as all the advantages for commerce with the whole world, especially with the United States. These letters preserved, will be a repository of political and commercial knowledge, that in future times may be a rich treasure to the United States. To these consuls, the commercial concerns of the public should be committed, and the vessels of war. It will be necessary sometimes to send a frigate to Europe to bring intelligence, to bring passengers, even, perhaps, to bring commodities, or fetch stores. But I hope no frigate will ever again be sent to cruise, or be put under the command of anybody in Europe, consul or Minister. They may receive their orders from the Navy Board in America, and be obliged to obey them. I have had a great deal of experience in the government of these frigates, when I had the honor to be one of the Ministers Plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles, and afterwards at Nantes, L'Orient, and Brest, when I was seeking a passage home. Disputes were perpetually arising between officers and their crews, between captains and their officers, and between the officers of one ship and another. There were never officers enough to compose a court martial, and nobody had authority to remove or suspend officers without their consent; so that in short, there was little order, discipline, subordination, or decency. [230]

Another thing, when frigates are under the direction of an authority at a distance of three or four hundred miles, so much time is lost in writing and sending letters and waiting for answers, it has been found an intolerable embarrassment to the service. It is now two years since consuls were expected, and a secretary to this mission. It is a great misfortune to the United States that they have not arrived. Every man can see that it has been a great misfortune, but none can tell how great. There is much reason to believe, that if our establishments here had been upon a well digested plan and completed, and if our affairs had been urged with as much skill and industry as they might in that case have been, that we should at this moment have been blessed with peace, or at least with tranquillity and security, which would have resulted from a total expulsion of the English from the United States and the West India Islands. [231]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Paris, June 29th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter of the Count de Vergennes to me, of the 21st of this month, and a copy of my answer to his Excellency, of the 22d.

This correspondence is upon a subject that has lain much out of the way of my particular pursuits, and, therefore, I may be inaccurate in some things; but, in the principles, I am well persuaded I am right. I hope that things are explained so as to be intelligible, and that there is nothing inconsistent with that decency, which ought in such a case to be observed.

If your Excellency thinks me materially wrong in anything, I should be much obliged to you to point it out to me, for I am open to conviction.

This affair, in America, is a very tender and dangerous business, and requires all the address, as

well as all the firmness of Congress, to extricate the country out of the embarrassment arising from it; and there is no possible system, I believe, that could give universal satisfaction to all; but this appears to me, to promise to give more general satisfaction, than any other that I have ever heard suggested. I have added copies of the whole correspondence.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

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Translation.

Versailles, June 30th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 22d inst. on the subject of the resolution of Congress of the 18th of March last. I have already informed you, that it was by no means my intention to analyse this resolution, as it respects the citizens of the United States, nor examine whether circumstances authorise the arrangement or not. I had but one object in writing to you with the confidence I thought due to your knowledge and your attachment to the alliance, which was to convince you that the French ought not to be confounded with the Americans, and that there would be a manifest injustice in making them sustain the loss with which they are threatened.

The details into which you have thought proper to enter have not changed my sentiments; but I think that all further discussion on this subject will be needless, and I shall only observe, that if the King's Council considers, as you pretend, the resolution of Congress in a wrong point of view, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who is on the spot, will not fail to elucidate the matter; and if Congress on their part shall not adopt the representations, which that Minister is charged to make to them, they will undoubtedly communicate to us their reasons to justify their refusal.

Should they be well founded the King will take them into consideration, his Majesty demanding nothing but the most exact justice. But should they be otherwise, he will renew his instances to the United States, and will confidently expect from their penetration and wisdom a decision conformable to his demand. His Majesty is the more persuaded that Congress will give their whole attention to this business, as this Assembly, which has frequently renewed the assurance, values, as well as yourself, Sir, the union which subsists between France and the United States, and that they will assuredly perceive that the French deserve a preference before other nations, who have no treaty with America, and who even have not, as yet, acknowledged her Independence.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, July 1st, 1780.

Sir,

I had this morning the honor of your letter of the 30th of June.

It is very certain, that the representations from his Majesty, which may be made by his Minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, will be attended to by Congress with all possible respect; and its due weight will be given to every fact and argument, that he may adduce; and I am well persuaded, that Congress will be able to give such reasons for their final result, as will give entire satisfaction to his Majesty, and remove every color of just complaint from his subjects.

As in my letter of the 22d of last month, I urged such reasons as appeared to me incontestible, to show that the resolution of Congress of the 18th of March, connected with the other resolution, to pay the loan office certificates, according to the value of money at the time they were emitted, being a determination to pay the full value of all the bills and certificates, which were out; and the depreciation of both being more the act and fault of their possessors than of government, was neither a violation of the public faith, nor an act of bankruptcy. I have the honor to agree with your Excellency in opinion, that any further discussion of these questions is unnecessary.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 6th, 1780.

Sir,

In the public papers of the latter end of June, are lists of the vessels of war and privateers taken and destroyed by the powers at war.

VESSELS TAKEN FROM FRANCE.

| Vessels. | Guns. | |
|------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Protée, | 64 | Taken by Admiral Digby, |
| Fortune, | 42 | Taken by Admiral Rowley, |
| Blanche, | 36 | Taken by Admiral Rowley, |
| Prudente, | 36 | Ruby, Everett, |
| Danaë, | 34 | Experiment, Wallace, |
| Sartine, | 32 | Admiral Vernon, |
| Licorne, | 32 | Admiral Vernon, |
| Alcmène, | 30 | Proserpine, Sutton, |
| Oiseau, | 26 | Apollo, Pownal, |
| Adventure, | 26 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Pilote, | 14 | Commodore Reynolds, |
| Mutin, | 14 | Commodore Reynolds, |
| Coureur, | 14 | Admiral Keppel. |

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Destroyed.

| | | |
|----------|----|----------------------|
| Valeur, | 26 | Experiment, Wallace, |
| Recluse, | 24 | Experiment, Wallace. |

VESSELS TAKEN BY FRANCE.

| | | |
|---------------|----|---------------|
| Ardent, | 64 | D'Orvilliers, |
| Experiment, | 50 | D'Estaing, |
| Minerva, | 32 | |
| Montreal, | 32 | Le Bourgoyne, |
| Fox, | 28 | La Junon, |
| Active, | 28 | |
| Ariel, | 20 | D'Estaing, |
| Lively, | 20 | D'Orvilliers, |
| Ceres, | 18 | D'Estaing, |
| Weazel, | 16 | |
| Senegal, | 16 | |
| Zephyr, | 14 | |
| Alert, | 10 | D'Orvilliers, |
| Thunder Bomb, | 8 | D'Estaing. |

Destroyed.

| | | |
|--------------|----|----------------------|
| Juno, | 32 | At Rhode Island, |
| Flora, | 32 | |
| Lark, | 32 | |
| Orpheus, | 32 | |
| Quebec, | 32 | By the Surveillante, |
| Cerberus, | 28 | At Rhode Island, |
| Rose, | 20 | At Savannah, |
| Falcon, | 18 | At Rhode Island, |
| King Fisher, | 16 | At Rhode Island. |

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PRIVATEERS TAKEN FROM FRANCE.

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Lion, | 40 |
| Monsieur, | 40 |
| Duc de Cogny, | 36 |
| Belhune, | 30 |
| Ménagère, | 30 |
| Hercule, | 30 |

| | | |
|-----------------|----|------------------------|
| Comte d'Artois, | 28 | |
| Lis, | 28 | |
| Sphinx, | 20 | Retaken by the French, |
| Helena, | 16 | Retaken by the French, |
| Jackall, | 10 | Retaken by the French. |

VESSELS TAKEN FROM SPAIN.

| | | |
|------------|----|--------------------|
| Phoenix, | 80 | By Admiral Rodney, |
| Monarca, | 70 | |
| Princessa, | 70 | |
| Ammonica, | 32 | Pearl, Montagu, |
| Margarita, | 28 | Johnstone. |

Destroyed.

| | | |
|-------------|----|--------------------|
| S. Domingo, | 70 | By Admiral Rodney, |
| S. Eugenio, | 70 | |
| S. Julian, | 70 | |

PRIVATEERS TAKEN FROM THE SPANIARDS.

| | | | |
|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| Guipuscoa, | 64 | Sta Teresa, | 28 |
| San Carlos, | 52 | Sta Bruna, | 26 |
| San Carlos, | 32 | Solidad, | 26 |
| San Rafael, | 30 | | |

VESSELS OF WAR TAKEN FROM CONGRESS.

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| | | |
|------------------|----|------------------------------|
| Hancock, | 32 | Rainbow, Sir George Collier, |
| Raleigh, | 32 | Experiment, Wallace, |
| Providence, | 32 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Boston, | 32 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Delaware, | 30 | Lord Howe, |
| Virginia, | 30 | St Albans, Onslow, |
| Oliver Cromwell, | 24 | Beaver Sloop, Jones, |
| Hampden, | 20 | Sir George Collier, |
| Trumbull, | 20 | Venus, Ferguson, |
| Cumberland, | 20 | Pomona, Waldgrove, |
| Ranger, | 20 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Alfred, | 20 | Ariadne, Pringle, |
| Hunter, | 18 | Sir George Collier, |
| Cabot, | 18 | Hope, Dawson, |
| Lexington, | 16 | Alert, Bazeley. |

Destroyed.

| | | |
|----------------------|----|---------------------|
| Bricole, pierced for | | |
| 60, mounting | 40 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Bon Homme Richard, | 44 | Serapis, Pearson, |
| Randolph, | 36 | Yarmouth, Vincent, |
| Warren, | 32 | Sir George Collier, |
| Washington, | 32 | Captain Henry, |
| Effingham, | 28 | Captain Henry, |
| Queen of France, | 28 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Fruit, | 26 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| General Moultrie, | 20 | Admiral Arbuthnot, |
| Notre Dame, | 16 | Admiral Arbuthnot. |

N. B. Seventeen armed ships, from fourteen to twentyfour guns, destroyed by Sir George Collier, at Penobscot; three frigates, and two sloops destroyed by the same, upon the stocks at Portsmouth, the gallies destroyed upon Lake Champlain, in Georgia, &c., the ships destroyed in Egg Harbor, at Bedford, &c.

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VESSELS OF WAR TAKEN BY CONGRESS.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Vessels. | Guns. | |
| Serapis, | 44 | Paul Jones, |
| Drake, | 18 | Ranger, Paul Jones, |
| Thorn, | 16 | Boston, Tucker, |
| Countess of Scarborough, | 22 | Paul Jones. |

Destroyed.

| | | |
|----------|----|--------------------|
| Augusta, | 64 | At Mud Fort, |
| Acteon, | 28 | At Fort Sullivan, |
| Mermaid, | 21 | Off Cape Henlopen, |
| Merlin, | 18 | At Mud Fort. |

VESSELS OF WAR DESTROYED BY ACCIDENT.

English.

| Vessels | Guns | Vessels | Guns |
|------------|------|----------|------|
| Somerset, | 64 | Cruiser, | 16 |
| Repulse, | 32 | Otter, | 16 |
| Arethusa, | 32 | Pomona, | 16 |
| Liverpool, | 28 | Zebra, | 16 |
| Syren, | 28 | Cupid, | 16 |
| Leviathan, | 26 | Savage, | 16 |
| Grampus, | 26 | Pegasus, | 14 |
| Tortoise, | 26 | Spy, | 14 |
| Glasgow, | 24 | Swallow, | 14 |
| Vestal, | 20 | Viper, | 14 |
| Mercury, | 20 | | |

French.

| | | | |
|---------|----|-----------|----|
| Roland, | 64 | Monarque, | 64 |
| Zephyr, | 32 | Fox, | 28 |

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Spanish.

| | | | |
|-------------|----|----------|----|
| Pondersoso, | 70 | Rosa, | 30 |
| Notre Dame, | | Congres, | |
| St Joseph, | 70 | Carmes, | 36 |

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 6th, 1780.

Sir,

In looking over the long list of vessels belonging to the United States, taken and destroyed, and recollecting the whole history of the rise and progress of our navy, it is very difficult to avoid tears. Nevertheless, what we have done and lost, shows what we can do. Our resources of materials, artists, and seamen, are not exhausted. But it is impossible not to inquire, whether we have not committed errors in the destination of our vessels? Whether our navy is equal to the attack or defence of places? Whether our articles of war for the government of the marine, are adequate to the introduction of that obedience and discipline that are necessary? Whether cruising for the protection of our own trade, against the depredations of privateers and smaller vessels of war of our enemies, and for the purpose of making prizes of transports and merchant ships, is not the object fittest in the present stage of our naval history, to encourage seamen to engage in our service, to form officers, to supply the United States with many things, and to weaken and distress our foes? Officers who have a thirst for glory, and wish to distinguish themselves by brilliant battles, ought not to be discouraged, but I cannot but think, that at this period they would do more essential service to their country, by a line of conduct leading to fewer laurels, but more wealth.

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In all events, however, it is to be hoped and presumed, that Congress will give great attention to their navy, to the augmentation of ships, the multiplication of seamen, the improvement of discipline, and the formation of officers. Americans, I see, must cherish their own navy. I fear that no other nation would grieve very much at the total destruction of it, before the conclusion of a peace. I am sorry to say this; but I have heard such hints as convince me, that it is my duty to put Congress on their guard, and to entreat them to leave nothing unattempted to put their marine upon the best footing in their power.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 7th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 27th of June Mr Hartley, after a speech of an hour long, moved, that the House would give him leave to bring in a bill, to the end to empower the Court, to adopt the most proper means to make peace with America. After a short debate, the question being put, the majority was for the negative. This motion is said to have had the less success, because it is founded on a principle absolutely false and derogatory to the royal prerogative. The King of England, to make peace, wants nothing but the will. It is in this case only that he is absolute. The American war was commenced without the participation of Parliament. Why should they give the King new powers to bring it to a conclusion? There is but one means of forcing him to it, and that is by refusing him the necessary subsidies; and they are now further from this than ever. But it is ridiculous to labor to clothe the King with powers, which are inherent in his title. It is, in other words, to permit him to be a King. [241]

The bill is of the following tenor. "Whereas for some years there have arisen unfortunate disputes between Great Britain and several Provinces of North America, which have occasioned the calamities of war; to the end to prevent a greater effusion of blood, and to re-establish peace, be it enacted, that his Majesty be permitted by virtue of letters patent, to nominate Commissioners with power to treat, consult, and agree upon the means of restoring peace, in concert with persons authorised for this purpose by the said Provinces of North America. That, to facilitate the good intentions of this bill, be it enacted, that the King give power to the said Commissioners, to cause to be suspended all hostilities by land and by sea, for so long a time and under such conditions and restrictions as they shall judge proper. That, to the end to establish upon a good foundation, a cordial reconciliation and a durable peace between Great Britain and the said Provinces, by reinstating them in their ancient friendship, his Majesty may legally permit his said Commissioners to grant and to ratify, from time to time, any article of pacification, which thus granted and ratified, shall have its full and entire effect for ten years, to be dated from the 1st of August of the present year. That, for removing every obstacle, which may oppose itself, to the full execution of any article of pacification, his Majesty shall be at liberty, by any order in writing, signed with his hand and countersigned by one or more Secretaries of State, to authorise the said Commissioners to suspend, during ten years, to be dated from the 1st of August of the present year, the execution of any act of Parliament, which concerns the said Provinces, so far as the said acts, their clauses or conditions, may put any obstacle to the full effect, and to the execution of any article of pacification between Great Britain and the said Provinces. That, to the end to establish a durable reconciliation, and a perpetual peace between Great Britain and the said Provinces, be it enacted, that all and every article of pacification, resolved and ratified for ten years as aforesaid, shall be from time to time communicated to both Houses of Parliament, to be by them examined, as forming the base of a sincere and durable union; and that every one of the said articles having been once approved in Parliament, shall have forever its full and entire effect. That the present act shall remain in force until the 31st of December." [242]

Having been disappointed, by another accident, of my English papers, I have been obliged to translate this bill from the *Courier de l'Europe*, I hope to transmit the original in a few days. It is however of so little consequence, that it is scarce worth transcribing. Other grounds must be taken than that of General Conway, Governor Pownal, or Mr Hartley, before anything will be done in earnest towards peace. The history of Charleston, and the numberless fictions with which the stockjobbers have decorated it, have raised the stocks three and a half per cent, and have given such a temporary intoxication to the people, that scarce anything is talked of but unconditional submission. [243]

The affair of Mobile, the dispersion of both the outward and homeward bound Quebec fleet, the indecisive battles between de Guichen and Rodney, and the anxiety for Walsingham's fleet, and twenty other fears, begin now to sink their spirits again.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

N. B. Sir George Saville moved on the same day a resolution, that the American war was unconstitutional, expensive, and ruinous, but this motion was rejected by nearly the same majority.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 7th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 21st of last month, the merchants of the city of Amsterdam arrived at the Hague, and presented to their High Mightinesses a petition, conceived in these terms.

"To their High Mightinesses, our Lords, the States-General of the United Provinces.

"The subscribers, all merchants, trading to the West Indies, and established under the jurisdiction of this State, give respectfully to understand, that, to their great regret, the petitioners have learned, by the way of a ship, lately arrived from Curaçoa, the unheard of ill treatment exercised by the English in taking the barques belonging to the subjects of their High Mightinesses, which trade with the French possessions in the said countries, and which, loaded with the productions of the said countries, purchased or consigned, make sail to return to the islands or places which belong to the dominions of their High Mightinesses, without having even to this time, that your petitioners know of, returned either the barques or cargoes; but so far from it, that the cargoes of some of them have been already condemned, and the barques restored empty; a fate which the petitioners fear to see others undergo likewise. And as by these vexations and unparalleled ill treatment, the subjects of your High Mightinesses, contrary to all kinds of right, are deprived of their property and effects embarked, as well as of the liberty which is assured to them by the treaties subsisting between the Crown of England and this State, and by these means see themselves reduced to an impossibility of being able to procure for the ships sent from home to the West Indies, the cargoes necessary for their return, all expeditions and adventures of merchandises from our countries to these places must absolutely cease, and draw after it the inevitable ruin of this branch of commerce, so important as well as that of many of the subjects of your High Mightinesses, both in this country and in the West Indies."

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"For these causes, the petitioners pray, in all humility, that your High Mightinesses would be pleased to take this navigation and commerce, forming an object so considerable, under your effectual protection, in the first place, by granting the necessary convoy to ships which go to the West Indies, or which return from thence, and in the next place, to order to cruise in those seas a sufficient number of vessels of war, or even to order them to escort the barques in question, and other trading ships, loaded with productions and effects permitted by the treaties, and making sail for the French Colonies, or returning from them, to the end to secure them from all further insult; which will preserve at the same time the petitioners, as well as many other subjects of the Republic from total ruin. That it may, moreover, please your High Mightinesses to charge the Count de Welderen, your Envoy Extraordinary to the British Court, to make the necessary representations touching the seizure of these barques, to seek to obtain of the English Ministry, that the requisite orders may be sent to the Colonies of his Britannic Majesty, for releasing the aforesaid barques with their cargoes, paying, at the same time, the expenses occasioned by their seizure; in fine, that by the good and efficacious offices of his Excellency, things may be directed in such a manner, that on the part of the Court of St James, they may write to Jamaica and elsewhere, and not interrupt for the future, the subjects of their High Mightinesses in the exercise of this lawful commerce, but to permit them to enjoy a free navigation and commerce, such as have been solemnly accorded and guaranteed to them by the treaty of 1674."

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

B. FRANKLIN TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, July 10th, 1780.

Sir,

I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, dated June 30th, together with the papers accompanying it, containing the correspondence of Mr Adams.^[6] I have taken some pains to understand the subject, and obtain information of facts from persons recently arrived, having received no letters myself that explain it. I cannot say, that I yet perfectly understand it, but in this I am clear, that if the operation directed by Congress in their resolution of March the 18th occasions, from the necessity of the case, some inequality of justice, that inconvenience ought to fall wholly on the inhabitants of the States, who reap with it the advantages obtained by the measure; and that the greatest care should be taken that foreign merchants, particularly the French, who are our creditors, do not suffer by it. This I am so confident the Congress will do, that I do not think any representations of mine necessary to persuade them to it.

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I shall not fail, however, to lay the whole before them; and I beg that the King may be assured that their sentiments, and those of the Americans in general, with regard to the alliance, as far as I have been able to learn them, not only from private letters but from authentic public facts, differ widely from those that seem to be expressed by Mr Adams in his letter to your Excellency, and are filled with the strongest impressions of the friendship of France, of the generous manner in which his Majesty was pleased to enter into an equal treaty with us, and of the great obligations our country is under for the important aids he has since afforded us.

I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

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Paris, July 13th, 1780.

Sir,

By the treaty of alliance of the 6th of February, 1778, his Majesty and the United States agreed, in case of war, to join their councils and efforts against the enterprises of the common enemy; to make it a common cause, and aid each other mutually with their good offices, their councils, and their forces, according to the exigencies of conjunctures; and each of the contracting parties, in the manner it may judge most proper, is to make all the efforts in its power against the common enemy.

I have cited these clauses from the treaty, not as foundations of any demand that I have to make, because they are neither proper to support any demand, nor have I authority to make any if they were, but as an apology for the liberty I take of requesting your Excellency's attention to a few observations upon the present conjuncture of affairs.

It is certain, from the best intelligence from London, as well as from the debates in Parliament, on the several motions which have been made for a pacification, that the British Ministry are inflexibly determined to pursue the war another campaign in America, to send more troops and ships there, if they possibly can obtain them, and to put to the hazard not only the national credit, but their maritime power, and even their political existence, rather than give up their designs of domination over America; and indeed this is not at all to be wondered at, that the Ministers and the nation, who have so far lost their justice, their humanity, and policy, as to deliberately form and pursue the plan of changing the foundations of the laws and governments of thirteen Colonies, and reducing them to slavery, and who have pursued this object with such sanguinary fury for so many years, should persist so as to bury themselves in the ruins of their empire, rather than to fail of their purpose, when it is plain they consider, and that not without reason, the same ruin in the independence of America, and her connexion with France.

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The conduct of Count de Guichen, on the 17th of April, and the 15th and 19th of May, in the West Indies, does great honor to the national bravery, as well as to their science in naval tactics, and shows that there is no cause to fear that the enemy will obtain any advantage there. Yet nothing has yet been done on either side that seems decisive.

The advantages, which Spain has gained in West Florida, and particularly of late at Mobile, and the probability that she will succeed in gaining both the Floridas, show that the English are on the losing hand in that quarter; but it is not the loss of both the Floridas, nor of all the West India Islands, in my opinion, that will induce them to make peace, and acknowledge the independence of America in alliance with France. They will see every possession they have beyond the island lopped off, one after another, before they will do this.

I pretend not to know, to what part of America M. de Ternay and M. de Rochambeau are destined, but to whatever part it is, whether Canada, Nova Scotia, New York, Carolina, or Georgia, I have no hopes of anything decisive from their operations, although they should be instructed to co-operate with General Washington. If they should be destined against Canada or Nova Scotia, they may succeed; but this success will not be decisive. If they are intended against New York, I have no hopes of their success. The naval force is not sufficient to command the seas. Admiral Graves, added to the ships before at New York, will be superior; and I shall venture to give my opinion, that without a superiority of naval force, clear and indisputable, New York will never be taken. It is so situated, so fortified, it is garrisoned with troops so accustomed to war, and so embittered and inflamed by cruel passions, carefully nursed up in their breasts by their King and their Generals, and it is universally regarded by them a port of such essential importance, that I confess I should despair of success against it, with an army twice as numerous as that of the Generals Washington and Rochambeau united, while the English are masters of the seas, or even while they have there an equality of naval power.

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Most people in Europe have wondered at the inactivity of the American army, for these two years past; but it is merely from want of knowledge and attention. The true cause of it is, the English have confined themselves to their strong holds in seaport towns, and have been sheltered from all attacks and insults by the guns of their men-of-war, and forever will be so, while they have the superiority at sea. If our army had been three times as numerous as it was, it must have remained inactive, without a fleet to co-operate with it; for an attack upon New York without a fleet, would have been only sacrificing the lives of thousands of brave men, without a possibility of succeeding.

Had the English two years ago marched into the country from Philadelphia, instead of retreating back with precipitation to New York, Europe would have heard more of the exertions of the American army, so much more, that in my serious opinion, you would have heard of their total destruction. As it was, they were closely pursued, attacked, and if not beaten, they had much the worst of the action, for besides their loss in killed and wounded, and in those who perished under the fatigue and heat of the day, not less than five hundred deserted from them, and their desertions would have been multiplied in every unsuccessful engagement within the country.

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If in the last year the British army had marched out into the country, instead of remaining under cover of their men-of-war, I am equally clear, that they would have been ruined. The English, ever since the alliance, have been fearfully apprehensive of an attack upon their strong holds upon the coast by the French. This it was that induced them to retreat from Philadelphia to New York, and this has kept them almost wholly confined to that garrison the last year. I mention this, merely to wipe off the imputations said to result from the inactivity of our army, since the alliance, by showing the true cause of it, that it proceeds not from any change of sentiments in the Americans, but from the change of the mode of prosecuting the war on the part of our enemies.

I am, however, clearly of opinion, and I know it to be the general sense of America, that the English, both in North America and in the West India Islands, have been for these two years past absolutely in the power of their enemies; and that they are so now, and will continue to be so, in such a degree, that nothing will be wanting but attention to their situation, and a judicious application of the forces of the allies to accomplish the entire reduction of their power in America. In order to show this, let me beg your Excellency's attention to a few remarks upon the situation of the English, and upon the method of applying the force of the allies so as to reduce them.

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The English are in possession of Canada, a province vastly extensive, and in which there is a great number of ports, at a great distance from each other, necessary to be maintained among a people too, who are by no means attached to them, but who would readily afford all the assistance in their power to the united forces of France and the United States, and who would join them in considerable numbers. In this whole province, the English have not, comprehending the garrisons of all their ports, more than four thousand men.

The English are in possession of Nova Scotia; they have in Halifax and the other parts of the province, and at Penobscot, about three thousand men. But the people of this province being descendants and emigrants from New England, chiefly, are discontented with the British government, and desirous of joining the United States. They are in possession of New York Island, Staten Island, and Long Island, where they have in all of regular British troops, — thousand men. The militia, volunteers, &c. of whom they make such an ostentatious display in the despatches of their Generals, and in the gazette of St James, are of very little consideration; their numbers are much exaggerated; it is force, fear, and policy, that enrol the greater part of them; there are perhaps fifteen thousand inhabitants of the city. These, together with the army and navy, are fed and supplied with provisions, and stores, and fuel, and their cattle and horses with forage, brought by sea from Quebec, Halifax, Ireland, and the West Indies, except the small quantity, which they draw from Long Island and Staten Island.

They are now in possession of Charleston, in South Carolina, and Savannah, in Georgia. Their armies and navies in these places, as well as the inhabitants, must be chiefly supplied by sea in the same manner. They are still perhaps in possession of St Augustine, in East Florida, and Pensacola, in the west. From these places, they have drawn of late years great supplies of lumber and provisions for their West India Islands. The number of troops in Georgia and Carolina may amount to — thousands. They are in possession of Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, St Christophers, and St Lucia, and other islands. These draw supplies of provisions and lumber, &c. from Quebec, Halifax, Pensacola, and Augustine, that is from the Floridas. The number of troops they have in each island, I am not able to ascertain; but certainly they are not strong in any of them; and the climate in the West Indies, and in Georgia and Carolina, is making a rapid consumption of their men.

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From this sketch, it will be easily seen, what a great number of posts they have to sustain; how these are mutually connected with, and dependent on each other, and that their existence in all of them depends upon their superiority at sea, and that to carry on the intercourse and communication between these various places, a vast number of transports, provision vessels and merchant ships are necessary. This is so much the fact, that the English nation has now little navigation left, but what is employed in maintaining the communication of these places with one another and with Europe. Here then it is, that the English commerce and navy is vulnerable; and this it is, which clearly points out to their enemies the only sure and certain way of reducing their power in that quarter of the world; and if it is reduced there, it is brought into a narrow compass everywhere.

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The policy and necessity of keeping always a superior fleet both in the West India Islands and on the coast of the continent of North America, is from all this very obvious. The English are so sensible of this, that they dread it as the greatest evil that can befall them. The appearance of the Count d'Estaing upon the coast of North America, never failed to throw the English into the utmost terror and consternation.

The appearance of a French fleet upon our coasts has repeatedly compelled, and ever must compel, the English to call off from their cruises all their frigates and other ships, and to assemble them at New York, for their security and the defence of that place. These are among the happy effects of such a measure, the communication of the United States not only with each other but with the West Indies, with France, and all other parts of Europe, with which they have any concern, is immediately opened, and they are thereby easily furnished, in all parts, with everything fitting and necessary to carry on the war with the greatest vigor. His Majesty's fleets and armies will be amply and much more cheaply supplied, and his subjects will reap, in common with the inhabitants of the United States, the benefits of this free commerce. It will give free sea-

room to the few frigates belonging to Congress and the several States to cruise for the merchant ships, provision vessels, and transports of the enemy. It gives opportunity also to the privateers to do the same. There are at this day, notwithstanding the dreadful sacrifices made at Charleston and Penobscot, sacrifices, the necessity of which would have been entirely prevented by a few ships of the line, the Continental frigates, the Confederacy, which is arrived at Philadelphia, the Alliance which will soon be there, the Trumbull, the Deane, the Bourbon, and also a ship of fiftysix guns which is nearly ready for sea. The State of Massachusetts has two frigates and smaller vessels. There are besides these, now in being, belonging to Newburyport, Beverly, Salem, Marblehead, Portsmouth, Boston and Rhode Island, about forty privateers. There are several belonging to Philadelphia.

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If a French fleet should constantly remain upon that coast, the number of these privateers would be doubled in a very few months. What havoc then must these armed vessels make, especially if a few French frigates should be also ordered to cruise for prizes among the provision vessels, merchant ships, and transports, passing and repassing to and from America and the West India Islands to Europe, and to and from America and the West Indies, and to and from Quebec, Nova Scotia, New York, Charleston, Savannah, and the Floridas. Such depredations have several times been made by our cruisers alone, as to reduce the English at New York to very great distress, and it would be very easy in this way to reduce them to such misery as to oblige them to surrender at discretion.

I therefore beg leave to submit it to your Excellency's consideration, whether there is any possible way that a marine force can be employed against the English, so much to the advantage of France and the disadvantage of England, as in this way, and whether upon the principles of French interest and policy alone, even without taking into consideration that of the United States, a fleet ought not to be constantly kept in North America. The advantages they will there have in artists, supplies, accommodations, &c. above the English, are obvious.

But the question will arise, where shall they winter? I answer, they can winter with perfect security and advantage, either at Boston, Rhode Island, Delaware, or Chesapeake Bays.

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Another question will arise, whether they should all winter together in one port, or be separated to several ports? I apprehend, however, that it would be most prudent to leave it to the discretion of the commander-in-chief of the squadron, to keep the squadron together, or to detach parts of it, according to the exigencies of the service, advising with Congress, or with the Chevalier de la Luzerne, from time to time.

Two ships of the line, with three frigates, stationed at Boston, with orders to cruise occasionally for the protection of French and American trade, and the annoyance of the enemy, the same number at Rhode Island with the same orders, the same number at Delaware river, with similar orders, and a like number in Chesapeake bay, with like orders, which would make eight ships of the line and twelve frigates, I have a moral certainty would, in one year, reduce the power of the English in North America, to absolute annihilation, without striking a blow on land. These ships would make a diversion of an equal force of the English, from the West India Islands, so that they would be in that respect as usefully employed for his Majesty there as anywhere. Eight ships of the line, and twelve frigates, stationed together at Rhode Island, with orders to cruise for the same purposes, would do the same thing.

Which plan would do best, I dare not undertake to say, but until further informed and instructed by Congress I should think however that the best plan would be to station the fleet for the winter, either in Delaware or Chesapeake Bay; and as the war has lately turned to the southward, I am inclined to think that Chesapeake Bay would be the most proper.

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But in all events, I beg leave to entreat in the most earnest manner, that a powerful fleet may be ordered to winter somewhere in North America. By this means I think there is a moral certainty, the English will be ruined there, whereas if dependence is had upon the assault and attack of their strong holds, without the most absolute command of the sea, I fear it will end in disappointment and disgrace.

There is the more urgent reasons for laying these considerations before your Excellency, because there is a portion of the people in America who wish to return to the domination of Great Britain, many of whom are artful and sensible men. They take notice of every circumstance of the conduct of France, and represent it in such a light as they think will throw a prejudice against the alliance into the minds of the people. They represent the affair of Rhode Island and of Savannah, and of some other things, as proofs that the Court of France do not mean to give any effectual aid to America, but only to play off her strength against that of Britain, and thus exhaust both. The refugees in England concur with them in these representations, and the Ministry and the members of Parliament in their public speeches represent the same thing.

Even Mr Hartley, who is more for peace than any man in that kingdom, in a printed letter to the inhabitants of the county of York, says, "It is our duty to unravel by negotiation, the combination of powers now acting against us;" and he says further, in express words, that "It is apparent to all the world, that France might long ago have put an end to that part of the war, which has been most distressing to America, if they had chosen so to do." He must mean here the war of their frigates and privateers upon our trade. "Let the whole system of France be considered," says he, "from the beginning down to the late retreat from Savannah, and I think it is impossible to put any other construction upon it but this, viz. that it has always been the deliberate intention and object of France, for purposes of their own, to encourage the continuation of the war in America,

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in hopes of exhausting the strength and resources of this country, and of depressing the rising power of America." This is not only the language of Mr Hartley, but the general language of newspapers and pamphlets, and, I am well informed, of conversation in England. These are very industriously sent to America, through various channels, which cannot be stopped by laws, art, or power.

The body of the people have great confidence in the sincerity of France; but if these contrary opinions should be suffered to gain ground, as they most assuredly will if something is not done to prevent it, when all the world sees and declares as they do, that it is the best policy of France, if she considered her own interest alone in the conduct of the war, to keep a superior naval force upon the coast of the continent of North America, I leave your Excellency to judge what a melancholy effect it will have upon our affairs. There is no event, in my opinion, which would have so direct a tendency to give force and extent to opinions so dangerous to both nations, as the calling off from the continent your naval force, during the winter, and not keeping a superiority there through the year. I scruple not to give it as my opinion, that it will disunite, weaken, and distress us more than we should have been, disunited, weakened, or distressed, if the alliance had never been made. [258]

The United States of America are a great and powerful people, whatever European statesmen may think of them. If we take into our estimate the numbers and the characters of her people, the extent, variety, and fertility of her soil, her commerce, and her skill, and materials for shipbuilding, and her seamen, excepting France, Spain, England, Germany, and Russia, there is not a state in Europe so powerful. Breaking off such a nation as this from the English so suddenly, and uniting it so closely with France, is one of the most extraordinary events that ever happened among mankind. The prejudices of nations in favor of themselves, and against all other nations, which spring from self-love, and are often nurtured by policy for unworthy purposes, and which have been ever certainly cultivated by the English with the utmost care in the minds of the Americans, as well as of the people of every other part of their dominions, certainly deserve the attention of the wisest statesmen, and as they are not to be eradicated in a moment, they require to be managed with some delicacy.

It is too often said in France, where the prejudice against the English has not been fostered into so much rancor, because France never had so much to fear from England, as England has from France, "That the Americans and the English are the same thing," not to make it appear, that there are some remnants of prejudices against the Americans among the French, and it must be confessed there are some in America against France. It is really astonishing, however, that there are so few, and it is the interest and duty of both to lessen them as fast as possible, and to avoid with the nicest care, every colorable cause of reviving any part of them.

I beg your Excellency to excuse this trouble, because the state of things in North America has really become alarming, and this merely for the want of a few French men-of-war upon that coast. [259]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 14th, 1780.

Sir,

The advices from the Hague of the 9th of this month are, that the talk had been of a Congress to be held in that place; but as her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, had given to understand, that she desired that the conferences should be held at Petersburg, the States-General have consequently named, upon the proposition of his Serene Highness, the Prince Stadtholder, the Baron de Waassenaar Starrenburg, and the Baron Van Heckeren de Brantzenburg, Deputies to the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, on the part of the Provinces of Holland, West Friesland, and Utrecht, Ministers Plenipotentiaries to go to Petersburg, to the end to assist there at the conferences, which are to be held for the protection of the commerce of neutrals.

And that the Chevalier Llano, now Minister Plenipotentiary of his Catholic Majesty to their High Mightinesses, had arrived at that residence.

The English continue to fill all the newspapers of Europe with the despatches of Clinton, Cornwallis, Tarleton, &c. of their triumphant progress in Carolina, and we are unable to obtain a syllable from any part of America to contradict it, or explain it. It is devoutly to be wished, that Congress would appoint some active and intelligent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and make it his duty to transmit the journals, newspapers, and other intelligence, and duplicates and triplicates of them, to their servants abroad. Vessel after vessel arrives, even directly from Philadelphia, and we cannot get the journals, papers, and scarcely a private letter by them. Surely, the department of foreign affairs is of some importance to the United States, and their most important officers abroad ought not to be less informed, than every private merchant. The successes of the English [260]

in Carolina have filled them with the most ridiculous exultations. They have thrown off the mask entirely, and talk now almost universally of nothing but unconditional submission; not an idea of peace is entertained. They are perfectly confident the Congress will not maintain their authority three months. They have filled the world with histories of insurrections at Philadelphia, which drove the Congress to Lancaster, killed the French Minister, &c. &c. &c. The stocks rose three and threefourths per cent. This is the wise nation, that is to govern America, as they think, at their pleasure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 15th, 1780.

Sir,

The news from Petersburg of the 13th of June is, that the last advices received from Mohilew have confirmed the news, that the Empress would return sooner than was at first expected, and that the Emperor, under the name of the Count de Falckenstein, would arrive at the same time, at Petersburg. That the fleet of Cronstadt had been eight or ten days in the road, waiting only for their final instructions to put to sea. It will be separated into three divisions, each of five ships of the line, under the command of the Rear Admirals Barisson, Cruse, and Polibin. Since the departure of a courier, which Mr Harris, the British Envoy, has expedited to his Court, the 26th of last month, a report has been spread, that he has demanded his recall.

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The ordinance, which the Empress has passed at Czarsko-Zelo, on the 19th of May, to the end to ascertain the rights and duties of her subjects relative to the neutrality, is too remarkable, in the present conjuncture, not to be given entire to the public. The following is the preamble.

"The maritime war, subsisting for some time between Great Britain, on the one part, and France and Spain on the other, has begun lately to do equal injury to the commerce and the navigation of our faithful subjects. We have not in consequence failed to employ for their protection and indemnification from all the losses, which have been occasioned to them, our most efficacious intercession; in consequence of which several merchants have already obtained, in proportion to their demands, a considerable indemnification. Nevertheless, although we doubt not, that all the others will be equally indemnified by the belligerent powers, yet we cannot regard the particular compensation of individuals, as a sufficient pledge of the safety upon which neutral nations may hereafter depend. From this motive, we have resolved not only to take measures the most effectual for the maintenance of the maritime commerce of our subjects, but to put them in execution, in case of need. They have already been announced to all Europe, by a declaration delivered in the same terms to the three belligerent powers, by which we fix expressly and with precision, the rights and prerogatives of a commercial neutral flag. The one and the other are founded either upon the proper terms of our Treaty of Commerce with the Crown of Great Britain, or upon the evident and immutable principles of the law of nature and nations. But while we require of other nations, for our proper utility the entire and unlimited accomplishment of their duties, we are not less fixed in the intention on our part to observe inviolably, in regard to them, the obligations of the strictest neutrality. Thus it is necessary, that all our subjects should conform themselves vigorously in their maritime commerce, and in the enterprises relative to it, to this our will. In default of which, they will render themselves unworthy of our protection and of our succor. But to the end, that no man may fall into error by ignorance, we order our College of Commerce to notify the Russian merchants trading in our ports, that while they enjoy an entire liberty of trading and sending their vessels to all parts of Europe, they are bound to observe, conformably to our treaties with different powers, and to the ordinances of each place, that which follows."

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This is the preamble; the purview shall be sent to Congress as soon as it appears.

It seems that the Empress, as well as the Ottoman Porte, has not a little resented the indecent and groundless assertions, with which England has filled Europe and America, that the Empress would take part with them, and that there were misunderstandings subsisting between Petersburg and Constantinople. I think it can be no longer doubted, that Russia will never take part with England, and that while she is determined upon a neutrality, every other maritime power of Europe must do the same, or join against England. It is equally plain, that England must come into the system of rights preparing for neutrals, or go to war with all the maritime powers of the world. This is too decisively and obviously advantageous to North America, to need any comments.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 15th, 1780.

Sir,

The news from Constantinople is, "that upon the advice, that a fleet of French merchant-men from Marseilles, was blocked up by the English cruisers in the port of Milo, the Count de St Priest, Ambassador of France, presented a Memoir to the Porte, complaining of this last violation of the last agreement made between the Ottoman government and the Ambassadors of the belligerent powers, for the maintenance of the neutrality. In consequence, the Reis Effendi requested Mr Ainslie, the British Ambassador, to give orders conformably to the said agreement, to the cruisers of his nation, to respect the coasts, forts, and havens of the Ottoman Empire, and not to commit hostilities but in open sea. The Ambassador answered, "that he approved the requisitions of the Porte too much, not to contribute all that lay in his power, to make the English cruisers observe the orders which had been before given them." Nevertheless, the Count de St Priest judged proper, by way of further precaution, to send the consul of his nation, who resides at the Dardanelles, to the Capitan Pacha, who is now in the Archipelago with his fleet, to desire him to have a care that the French fleet should suffer no insult. The Ottoman Admiral immediately complied with this requisition; and we learn by the French consul, who is returned here, that having found this commandant at Metelin, he had no sooner learned the object of his commission, than he detached some to go to the succor of the fleet blocked at Milo. But his assistance will not have been necessary, because, according to letters from Smyrna, the six English cruisers, which held the French fleet shut up, having had the audacity to attack this convoy even in the port, the Chevalier d'Entrecasteux, who commanded it, had shattered them, after an engagement of several hours, in such a manner, that he had put them out of a condition to keep the sea, and that they must have retired to Paros."

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Stockholm, 27th of June. "The King having judged proper to name an Admiral General of his fleet, has chosen for this eminent post, the Major-General and Commander of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Sword, Henry de Trolle. M. de Moussin Puschkin, Envoy from Russia, is arrived here from Petersburg."

Hague, 10th of July. "The Admiralty of Amsterdam has put in commission, with the advice of the Prince Stadtholder, the vessels, the Admiral de Reister, of sixtyeight guns, and the Hereditary Prince, of fiftysix."

Hamburg, 23d of June. The Mars, a Danish man-of-war of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Luken, and three frigates, with seventyeight merchant ships of different nations, under convoy, sailed from the Sound the 18th of this month."

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It thus appears, that Russia, Holland, Sweden, and Denmark, are proceeding in earnest to convoy their trade, and increase their naval force, to protect the confederacy in favor of the rights of neutrality.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 15th, 1780.

Sir,

It is worth while to lay before Congress the following statement, which is lately published in the papers.

English Ships of the Line.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Now under Rodney, including the Triumph of seventyfour guns, arrived from Cork, the beginning of May, | 22 |
| N. B. The Fame, of seventyfour guns, was taken to pieces last winter, to repair the other vessels of Jamaica. The Sultan from St Lucia, and the Hector from Europe joined, in March, the two sixtyfours which were at that station. Jamaica, | 4 |
| They say that Arbuthnot has sent to Jamaica the Russell and Robust, | 2 |
| The 15th of May, sailed with Graves, | 7 |
| The 3d of June, sailed with Walsingham, | 4 |
| | — |
| | 39 |

French and Spaniards.

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|
| With De Guichen, | 23 | |
| Left at Martinique, the Dauphin Royal, of seventyfour guns, to protect the port, | 1 | [266] |
| At the Havana, under D. Bonnet, | 8 | |
| At St Domingo, under De la Motte Piquet, | 5 | |
| Sailed from Cadiz, the 28th of April, under D. Solano, | 12 | |
| M. de Ternay, the 3d of May, | 7 | |
| | — | |
| | 56 | |

A superiority, against which, all the events of the war evidently show that it is impossible to resist. But the ministerial people have made Rodney take Don Solano with his twelve ships, which shifts the balance to—English, fiftyone, French and Spaniards, fortyfour.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, July 17th, 1780.

Sir,

In your Excellency's letter to me of the 24th of February last, I was honored with your opinion in the following words.

"With regard to the full powers, which authorise you to negotiate a treaty of commerce with the Court of London, I think it will be prudent not to communicate them to any body whatever, and to take every necessary precaution, that the British Ministry may not have a premature knowledge of them. You will no doubt readily feel the motives, which induce me to advise you to take this precaution, and it would be needless to explain them."

1. I should have been very happy if your Excellency had hinted at the reasons, which were then in your mind, because after reflecting upon this subject, as maturely as I can, I am not able to collect any reasons, which appear to me sufficient for concealing the nature of my powers in their full extent, from the Court of London. On the contrary, many arguments have occurred to me, which seem to show it to be both the policy of the United States, and my particular duty, to communicate them. [267]

2. Your Excellency will recollect that my commissions empower me to join with the Ministers of the belligerent powers in making peace; to make a treaty of commerce with the Ministers of his Britannic Majesty, and to represent the Congress as their Minister Plenipotentiary, at the Court of London. It seems to me then, inconsistent with the design and nature of my appointments, to conceal them from the Court of London.

3. I think also, that announcing my powers to the Court of London, would have a tendency to draw out from them some proofs of their present designs, and it is always important to discover early the intentions of the enemy, that the people may be prepared, both with councils and forces, to resist them if hostile.

4. The English nation would expect of the Ministers, that some answer should be given to me. If it should be an insolent one, as there is too much cause to expect, it will prepare the minds of the Americans, and of the other belligerent powers, for what they are to expect, and it will alarm and arouse, if anything can, the people of England.

5. At this particular time, when an election approaches, it would throw the Ministry into some embarrassment, for the people of England sigh for peace.

6. Another consideration has weight with me; a great part of Europe, as well as the people of England, are amused by the English Ministers and their emissaries, with reports that there is some secret treaty between France and the United States, by which the former has secured to themselves exclusive privileges in some branches of the American commerce, which misrepresentations, as they are at present an obstruction to peace, would be cleared up by the communication of my powers. [268]

7. There are at present many persons of consideration in England, who have long followed the Ministry in the war against America, who begin to see the impracticability of succeeding, and now vote for peace, and will lay hold of every occurrence that favors its accomplishment.

8. At this moment, under the wild impression, that the surrender of Charleston has made, it might be improper to make the communication, but upon the news coming of M. de Ternay's arrival, of Don Solano's, or both, or upon the receipt of some intelligence, which may take off a part of this impression, I submit it to your Excellency's consideration, whether it would not be proper to communicate my appointments to Lord George Germain. It seems to be most proper that it should be done, so that the nation may consider them before the meeting of Parliament,

and that those who are for peace may digest their plans accordingly.

9. Notwithstanding the suppression of the late riots, and the consequent temporary relaxation of the committees and associations, the nation is in a most critical situation. Those disturbances were not simply the effect of fanaticism and bigotry, but of deep and general discontent and distress among the people; and although the Ministry may at present be confident they have suppressed them forever, they will surely find themselves mistaken if they pursue this war. I know of no measure, that will be more likely to increase the opposition against Administration than communicating my powers. It will at least show all the world, that the continuance of the war and the consequent ruin of England is their own fault, not that of the Americans, who are ready to make peace upon terms honorable and advantageous to Great Britain. [269]

10. I am the more confirmed in those opinions, by the communication your Excellency made to me yesterday of the message sent by the Court of London to the Court of Madrid. I am convinced in my own mind, that that message is insidious in the last degree, and that it is intended to answer two ends only; first, to spy out what they can of the political and military plans of Spain; secondly, and principally, to amuse France, Spain, and America too, with false ideas of pacific inclinations, simply in order to slacken and enervate their preparations for the next campaign.

11. Sincere intentions of making peace upon any terms, which France or America can agree to, consistent with subsisting treaties, I am as sure they have not, as I am of their existence. Now I think there is no way of counteracting this insidious policy so honorably and so effectually, as by a frank and decent communication of my full powers. This will necessitate them to come to an explanation of their real intentions concerning America; for there, Sir, lies the obstacle to peace; all other questions would be soon arranged if that was settled.

I hope your Excellency will pardon the long letters I write you, because it is really a voluminous subject we have in contemplation, and mankind in general are little less interested in it, than our particular countries. I shall hope for the honor of your Excellency's answer upon these subjects. [270]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, July 19th, 1780.

Sir,

The news from Petersburg of the 16th of June, is, that the fleet destined for the protection of the commerce of that empire was ready to sail. Of the three squadrons of which it is composed, one is to cruise, as they learn, in the North Sea, the other upon the coast of Portugal, and the third in the Mediterranean. This last will winter at Leghorn, and the two first in some port of a friendly power, upon the North Sea, or in the Baltic.

The news from Copenhagen of the 4th of July, is, that "the maritime forces of the northern powers begin to put themselves in motion for the protection of their commerce, in regard to the belligerent powers. The vessels, the King of Jutland, and the Prince Frederick, of seventy guns, commanded by the Captains de Kaas, and Lous, have put into the Road, the 30th of June. The better to man them, as well as the other vessels of our squadron, we have embarked several detachments of the regiments of infantry of Holstein, Falster, and Jutland. The first of July we saw pass by here, towards the Sound, three Swedish ships of the line, coming from the Baltic; and the next day the Russian fleet, composed of fifteen ships of the line, and of several frigates, came to anchor in our Road, separated into three divisions under the command of Vice Admirals de Borislow, de Kruse, and de Polibin. They say, that is to be followed by the Admiral's vessel, commanded by Vice Admiral Greigh, in quality of Commander-in-Chief of all the fleet." [271]

The following are the articles of the Ordinance of the Empress of Russia, concerning the navigation of the merchant flag of Russia.

"ARTICLE I. They may not take any part in the war, directly nor indirectly, or under any pretext whatsoever; and they may not even give succor to any of the powers at war by carrying them merchandises of contraband under the Russian flag. These consist namely, in cannon, mortars, muskets, pistols, bombs, grenades, bullets, or balls, proper to fire, fusils, flints, matches, powder, saltpetre, sulphur, cutlasses, pikes, swords, scabbards, gibernes, saddles, and bridles. They ought also to take special care, that there be not found on board of any vessel more of these warlike stores, than they have occasion for, for their own use, and so much that each sailor or passenger may be sufficiently provided.

"ARTICLE II. All other merchandises, whoever may be the owners, and even although they belong to the subjects of one or another of the belligerent powers, may be freely embarked upon Russian vessels, and shall enjoy on board of them equally with the merchandises of our subjects, the protection of the Russian flag, excepting those, which are contained in the first article, under the name of contraband, as in fact they are declared such in the eleventh article of our Treaty of

Commerce with England. By means of this safety of merchandises permitted in neutral vessels, our subjects ought also to have a care not to embark effects which belong to them, upon vessels of nations engaged in the war, to the end to avoid thus all disagreements and disagreeable rencontres.

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"ARTICLE III. Every vessel going out of the port of this city, or of any other of our empire, ought to be furnished with sufficient proofs, that she belongs to Russian subjects; to wit, with sea-letters, as is the usage, and with a certificate of the custom-house, in which it may be declared first, with what merchandises she is loaded, and how much; secondly, on the account of whom they have been purchased, and to whom the vessel and the cargo are addressed. For the greater safety, the certificates sent by the custom-house shall be inspected by the Admiralty, or in his default by the magistrate of the place.

"ARTICLE IV. Not only our native subjects shall enjoy these prerogatives, but also strangers who are settled in our dominions, and who bear like them the public burdens; that is to say, during the time that they shall sojourn in our country, since, in no other case can it be permitted them to employ the merchant flag of Russia.

"ARTICLE V. Each Russian vessel, even in case one single owner expedites two or three vessels at a time for the same place, ought to be provided in particular with the documents mentioned in the third article, which may serve to justify their property in case that these ships should separate during the voyage, or be obliged to pursue different routes.

"ARTICLE VI. It is forbidden to every Russian vessel to have connoisements, charter parties, or other sea papers double, or doubtful, much less false declarations, inasmuch as these always expose to an inevitable danger. Thus they should give their principal attention, that their documents be in good order and prove clearly, as it is said before, the true destination of the vessel, and the nature of her cargo. It is also necessary, that the contract between the owner of the merchandises and the master of the vessel, or the agreement known under the name of charter party, be always on board. But as it happens very often, that the owner of merchandises, in making his adventure, whether in his own vessel, or whether in a neutral vessel freighted by him, fixes the sale of them solely by speculation, by preference in some port, and in case the price in this port is too low, in some port more distant; in this case they ought not to fail to name and settle the two ports, according to the order of the route and their situation in one single connoissement, and not in two. They ought also to observe the same precautions in regard to the charter parties, to the end, that there may be no difference between them and the connoisements; and in case that any one of our subjects, in contempt of these dispositions, shall allow himself in artifice and duplicity, he may assure himself, that he shall never enjoy our protection, which is granted only to lawful and innocent commerce, and by no means to illicit and fraudulent traffic.

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"ARTICLE VII. Every Russian vessel, which, after having unloaded her cargo in any foreign port, has a design to return into her country, or to proceed further in another foreign place, ought to provide herself in this port and in every other, at which she may stop to trade, with the documents required by the usages of the country, to the end, that they may prove at all times the nation to which the ship belongs, the port from which she comes, that to which she is bound, and the merchandises with which she has been loaded anew.

"ARTICLE VIII. Forasmuch as the aforesaid documents are indispensably necessary to prove the neutral property of effects, which are found on board the ship, they ought particularly to take care not to throw them into the sea, no more than any other writings or papers, without any exception upon any occasion whatever, especially on the rencontre of any other vessel, inasmuch as by such a step one might expose himself to well founded suspicions, and to disagreeable consequences.

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"ARTICLE IX. It is necessary to have a scrupulous attention, that there be not on board of any Russian vessel any merchant, clerk, and never more than one third of the seamen, subjects of the belligerent powers, because by conducting differently such vessel might expose herself to sustain disagreeable disappointments. But as a similar inconvenience may easily happen to those sorts of ships, which in time of war are purchased of the subjects of the belligerent powers, for this reason, from this time, and as long as the present maritime war shall last, the said vessels may not be purchased, unless under condition, that they shall be solely employed in the Baltic, or the Black Sea.

"ARTICLE X. The carriage of all merchandise whatsoever, into places blocked or besieged by sea and by land, is entirely prohibited, in consequence of which, if any of the merchants of this empire, engaged by the hope of gain, shall intermeddle in any such traffic, whatever loss he may sustain, he cannot ever have the right of demanding our protection.

"ARTICLE XI. All our subjects who, by reason of their commerce, find themselves in foreign countries, ought to conform themselves exactly to the civil and mercantile laws, which shall there subsist, as well as to the ordinances of every place where they live, or to which they may send their vessels. Nevertheless, to the end that they may, as much as possible, be instructed in those laws and ordinances, the College of Foreign Affairs will communicate to that of Commerce, all the writings that have relation thereto, that they may be able to give notice of them to the merchants by the means of the public papers.

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"ARTICLE XII. Although our intention is, to protect efficaciously and vigorously the navigation and

the commerce of our faithful subjects, nevertheless, we intend not by any means to permit that there result from it the least prejudice to one or the other of the belligerent powers, or that individual merchants should profit of it to make unlawful gain. To this effect, we forbid expressly any of our merchants and trading subjects to permit strangers to negotiate, or send ships to sea, under his name. Every person who shall in this respect transgress our will, shall be deprived forever of our imperial protection for his vessels, as well as of the right of fitting them out in future. If our subjects, interested in maritime commerce, follow exactly this ordinance in all its points, they may be assured of our entire and unlimited protection concerning their affairs in foreign countries, as well as of a zealous and affectionate intervention on the part of the Ministers, Agents, and Consuls, who reside there on our part. To this end, our College of Foreign Affairs will communicate to them in sufficient season the most precise instructions. But those among our subjects who shall depart from these regulations, ought not to expect the least protection on our part, whatever unfortunate accidents and other damages they may sustain, by their voluntary transgression of the orders which they shall have received, and not to depart from the requisite circumspection recommended to them. The College of Commerce, in notifying this ordinance to the body of Russian merchants trading in our ports, shall at the same time be held to furnish the custom-houses with the necessary instructions relative to this order, as well as to communicate our will to the Governors of Provinces where there are ports, that at the same time they may be observed in all the tribunals which may concern them."

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Czarsko-Selole, 19th of May, 1780. The original is thus subscribed by the hand of her Imperial Majesty, Catherine.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Paris, July 19th, 1780.

Sir,

There is an article of news from Copenhagen of the 4th of July. "The vessels of war, the Prince Frederick and the Jutland, each of seventy guns, and the frigates, the Pearl and the Alsen, are in the Road. The Admiral's flag will be hoisted on the 6th on board the Justitia, of seventyfour guns, and all the Dutch fleet will consist, this year, of ten ships of the line, from seventyfour to fifty guns, and six frigates, thirtysix to thirty. There has already sailed of this fleet, one ship of sixty guns, for the coast of Guinea; one of fifty is in the north sea; another is in the Road of Elsinore, for a guard ship, and three frigates have sailed for America. Thus the squadron will remain composed of seven ships of the line and three frigates, which are to join the Russian fleet. Yesterday and the day before, arrived in the Road of this city a Russian fleet, consisting of fifteen ships of the line and four frigates, under the command of Admiral Borislow, of Vice Admiral Kruse, and of the commandant, Polibin; and on the 1st of this month, there passed before the port of this city, the Swedish ships of war, coming from the Baltic Sea, and making sail toward the Sound."

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Elsinore, 27th of June. "There has sailed from this port a convoy of eighteen merchant ships, destined for the North Sea, under the convoy of a Swedish ship of the line and a frigate."

There is a paragraph in the Amsterdam Gazette of the 14th, which is worth translating, because these paragraphs oftentimes betray a great deal of politics. It is this; "the conquest of Mobile, made by the Spaniards, the news of which has lately arrived here, appears so much the more important, as it leads infallibly to that of Pensacola, by which the Spaniards may cut off one of the principal avenues of Jamaica, and may, in time, intercept the commerce and the provisions of this Island, from whence they are much annoyed at Mexico by the English, who sufficiently incline to extend themselves when they can, and had made since the peace so great progress in this part of the world, that to stop them, the war was become almost indispensable to Spain." It might have been added, that it was become indispensable to France too; for the English have ever made it a maxim to go to war with France, as she had a fine fleet and a flourishing commerce. Burn, sink, and destroy, were the words with England whenever a formidable navy appeared upon the ocean, belonging to any other nation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

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Versailles, July 20th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 13th of this month. I am very sensible of the confidence with which you have communicated your ideas on the present situation of the United States, and the need they have of the immediate assistance of some ships of the line and some frigates. The Chevalier de Ternay and the Count de Rochambeau, are sent with the express design, which is the subject of your letter. They will concert their operations with Congress and with General Washington. And as the King has given them no precise orders with regard to their return to Europe, but has left them at liberty to act as they shall judge proper for the relief of America, there is every reason to believe, that they will take their station during next winter in North America, if that shall be agreeable to Congress, and that they will employ the ships and troops under their command, according to the plan that shall be settled between them and the American Generals.

You will perceive, Sir, by this detail, that the King is far from abandoning the cause of America, and that his Majesty, without having been solicited by Congress, has taken effectual measures to support the cause of America. I flatter myself, Sir, that these generous proceedings will excite suitable sensations in America, and that they will prevail over the falsehoods, which the common enemy and their wicked adherents propagate there, in order to raise suspicions of France, and to induce the Americans to take resolutions, which will terminate in their slavery and dishonor.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, July 21st, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me yesterday, and am extremely sensible of your Excellency's confidence in communicating to me the destination of the armament under M. de Ternay and the Count de Rochambeau, and the probability that the ships will winter in North America.

I assure your Excellency, that scarcely any news I ever heard, gave me more satisfaction; and nothing, in my opinion, can afford a more effectual assistance to America, or make deeper or more grateful impression on the minds of her inhabitants.

I am infinitely mistaken, if the service of the King in the conduct of the war, both in the West Indies and North America, does not derive such essential advantages from this measure, as will demonstrate its wisdom to all the world, as well as to the English and Americans the King's determined benevolence to the American cause.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, July 22d, 1780.

Sir,

The King of England's speech at the prorogation of Parliament, contains nothing remarkable, worth the attention of America, except compliments to the two Houses upon their magnanimity and perseverance in the pursuits of this just and necessary war, which he says, has put it in his power to make such efforts, that he dares hope, with the aid of Divine Providence, to disconcert the violent and unjust designs of his enemies, and induce them to listen to equitable and honorable terms of peace. These efforts have already been followed by success both by sea and land, and the happy and important turn, which affairs have lately taken in North America, makes me conceive the best founded hopes of the return of the affection and loyalty of my subjects of the Colonies, and of their happy reunion with their mother country.

There is one more sentence, which deserves attention. "Exert yourselves to inculcate this important truth, that rebellious insurrections to resist or reform the laws, cannot fail to terminate

in the destruction of those who have made the attempt, or by the subversion of our happy and free constitution." Americans will make their own reflections on this speech. It is very certain, that it has not the air nor the spirit of peace.

Madrid, the 27th of June. "We expect to learn in a few days, the formation of the combined fleet in the Bay of Cadiz. The following is the state of the Spanish vessels which are now there, ready to go out under the command of Lieutenant General Don Louis de Cordova; La Tres Sainte Trinite, of one hundred and twenty guns; the Foudre and S. Ferdinand of eighty; the Sainte Isabelle, the Ange Gardien, the Serieux, the Atlas, the St Pierre Apotre, the Orient, the St Raphael, the St Joachim, the St Damase, the St Isidore, the St Eugene, and the St Laurent of seventy; the Mino of fiftysix; the frigates, the Ste Lucie of thirtysix, the Ste Rufine of twentyeight, the Ste Barbe, and the Assomption of twentysix; the chebecs, the Majorquais, and the Murcien of thirtysix; the St Sebastian of twentyfour, and the corvette, the Ste Catharine of eighteen. To these vessels must be added the squadron of Ferrol, which entered on the 23d of May in the Bay of Cadiz, under the command of Don Athanasio Baranda, and composed of the vessels, the Conception of ninety; the St Charles and the St Vincent of eighty; the Ferme, the Galice, the St Paschal, and the Brilliant of seventy; the Septentrion of sixtyfour; the frigates, El Carmen and the Perpetua of thirtysix; as well as the corvette, the Ste Helene of twentytwo guns; making thus a total of twentyfour ships of the line, six frigates, four chebecs, and two cutters."

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Cadiz, the 24th of June. "The squadron of M. de Beausset, composed of seven ships of the line, anchored on the 18th in this Bay. His frigates brought in two small ships loaded with corn and flour, and a cutter of twelve guns. The cruise of this squadron has served very much to keep the enemy's cruisers at a distance; and the neutrals not fearing to be disturbed, have come here in great numbers. The 19th, the Protector, commanded by M. D. Achen, arrived here; she fell into the midst of the Quebec fleet; but as she sailed ill and had no frigate, (the Galatea having been separated from her) she was not able to take more than two vessels, the cargoes of which were rich enough, and which she sent into Lisbon."

Thus the French and Spanish ships at Cadiz amount to thirty of the line. This fleet, combined with that of Brest, and with the Active, the Guerrier and the Cæsar, gone to convoy merchantmen to a certain latitude, and to a ship of one hundred and ten guns, from Rochfort, and all commanded by the Count d'Estaing, would give a good account of the English.

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Petersburg, 23d of June. "The squadron equipped at Cronstadt, having received its last orders, sailed from thence the 19th of this month. As the service to which it is destined will not permit it to return before winter in the ports of this empire, the Court has sent to its Ministers in Holland, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Denmark, orders to request of those respective powers, that there may be granted to this squadron a free entry into their ports, and all the succor of which they may have occasion, in case they should be obliged to put in there by any accident," &c.

Copenhagen, 4th of July. "The arrival of the fleet of fifteen Russian ships of the line in our port, is soon to be followed by the departure of the Danish fleet. The Justice, of seventyfour guns, the last of the vessels that we have armed to form it, will go tomorrow into the Road; and the day after, the Vice Admiral de Schindel will hoist his flag on board of her. We shall then have in service eight ships of the line, two of fifty guns, and six frigates, to wit, the Justice, and the Princess Sophia Frederick, commandant Krieger, of seventyfour; the Jutland, and the Prince Frederick, Commandants de Kaas and Lous, of seventy; the Droit d'Indigénat and the Wagrie, Captains Gormar and Bille, of sixtyfour; the Dannebrog and the Holstein, Captains Ellebracht and U. C. Kaas, of sixty; the Mars and the Greenland, Captains Lutken and Knudsen, of fifty; the Bornholm and the Riel, Captains Schaning and Tender, of thirtysix; the Moen, Captain Budde, of thirtyfour; the Cronberg, Captain Ziervogel, of thirtytwo; the Alsen, Captain Count de Reventlau, of twentyfour, and the Christian, Captain Stockflelk, of twenty guns. Of these, nevertheless, the Holstein sailed the 30th for Guinea; the Bornholm, the Moen, and the Christian, are in the islands of America, and the Greenland serves as a guard ship in the Road of Helsingore."

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Whatever may be the part that either powers will take in regard to the project of an armed neutrality, the three Crowns of the North appear uniform in their measures for the protection of the commerce of their subjects, and these measures have already the effect, that their ships, particularly the Swedish and Danish, are already sought for freight in the Baltic, in preference to all others, while on the other side there arrives no neutral vessels from the North Sea, in the Sound, which does not make the most bitter complaints concerning the ill treatment received from English privateers. A Dutch ship has had nineteen of them on board of him since his departure from the coast of France, and a Russian ship has been robbed of all his victuals by these pirates, who had left him nothing but Gruau-Water, and eighteen pounds of bread, upon which eight men were to subsist during three weeks.

Hague, 17th of July. "Affairs between our Republic and the Court of London are still in the same state of indecision. We learn, that the latter has answered, by the Viscount Stormont to the different Memoirs presented during some weeks, by the Envoy, the Count de Welderen, in which, he insisted upon the stipulations of the treaty of 1674. "That in answer to these Memorials, and to all those, which could be presented of the same nature, he, Lord Stormont, observed that the Count de Welderen insisted upon that, which at this time no longer existed; that it would be superfluous to repeat what had passed upon this subject, that he should confine himself, therefore, to remind him of the order, which the King had given in his Council, on the 17th of last April, and of which he had had the honor to give him official information."

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I am thus particular in laying before Congress a state of the navies of Europe, because they show the unanimity and ardor, with which all the maritime powers are intent upon their commercial and naval interests, upon the freedom of commerce and navigation, and upon the rights of neutral nations, and to show, that America is universally considered by them as such a magazine of raw materials for manufactures, such a source of commerce, and such a nursery of seamen, and naval power, that they are determined, that no one power in Europe shall ever again monopolise it. We must, however, fight our own battles, and bear our own expenses; for the slow march of those powers, their maxims of dignity and systems of etiquette are such, that they must have their own way, and operate in their own time. England has hints and warnings enough, but she will not take them. These events, however, all show the wisdom of Congress, in planning the first treaty, which was first sent to the Court of Versailles, upon the principle of perfect equality and reciprocity, granting no exclusive privileges, and binding herself to no obligation not to admit any other, and all other nations to the same; principles from which it is to be presumed we shall not depart.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Paris, July 23d, 1780.

Sir,

I have been amused some time with dark and unintelligible hints in letters from London, of some messenger sent from Lord North to Madrid.

Three weeks ago I waited on the Count de Vergennes, at Versailles, to acquaint him, that I had an intention of making a journey to Amsterdam for a few weeks, as I flattered myself I might form some acquaintances, or correspondences there, and collect some intelligence, that might be useful to the United States. His Excellency desired me to wait some time, for that in eight or ten days he believed he should have something to communicate to me. I assured him, that I would not go till I saw him again, or heard further from him. This day sevensnight, his Excellency informed me, that he was ready to let me know, that a messenger from the Court of London had arrived at Madrid, that the Spanish Ministry had demanded the sentiments of the British Court concerning America. He said he was not instructed. He was told he must previously explain himself upon that subject. He determined to send an express to London for instructions. This the Count de Vergennes said would take up two months, and consequently leave me time enough to go to Holland, but if anything should happen in the meantime, he would give me the earliest information of it.

In the Courier de l'Europe of the 14th of July, is this paragraph.

"The report runs, that a person who has been Secretary of the Marquis d'Almodavar, during his embassy from the Court of Madrid to that of London, arrived here, (London,) some weeks ago, on board the Milford, coming from Oporto, that after a stay of eight days, this frigate had orders to transport to Lisbon this person, accompanied by Mr Cumberland, Secretary of Lord George Germain, whose instructions imply, that if at the end of twenty days he is not called to Madrid, he is to return here immediately. As soon as this person arrived at Lisbon, he set out for Madrid, where fifteen days after, Mr Cumberland was invited to go, and where he is at present."

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There is a body of people in England who are zealous and clamorous for peace, and the Ministry find their account in amusing and silencing them by equivocal appearances of negotiations. They have ever made it a part of their political system, to hold out to America some false hopes of reconciliation and peace, in order to slacken our nerves and retard our preparations. They think also, that they can amuse the Courts of France and Spain, with a talk about conferences and negotiations, while they are secretly concerting measures to succor Gibraltar, and carry on their operations the next campaign. But serious thoughts of peace upon any terms that we can agree to, I am persuaded they never had; but if they ever did entertain any thoughts of negotiation, it must have been at the time of their consternation for Sir Henry Clinton, and their despair of his success.

The total and absolute suppression of the tumults in London, and the triumphant success of Clinton, beyond their most sanguine expectations, has now given them such confidence and exaltation that the people of America will dethrone Congress, and, like the Israelites of old, demand a king, that they now think of nothing but unconditional submission, or at least of delusive proffers of terms, which they know the majesty of the people in America will not agree to, in order to divide us, to make a few gentlemen apostates, and some soldiers deserters.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Translation.

Versailles, July 25th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you have done me the honor to write to me on the 17th of this month. I have read it with the most serious attention, and in order to give you an answer with greater exactness, I have placed in the margin every paragraph which seemed to require observations on my part. You will there see, Sir, that I continue to be of opinion, that the time to communicate your Plenipotentiary power to Lord Germain is not yet come, and you will there find the reasons on which I ground my opinion. I have no doubt you will feel the force of them, and that they will determine you to think as I do. But if that should not be the case, I pray you, and in the name of the King request you, to communicate your letter and my answer to the United States, and to suspend until you shall receive orders from them, all measures with regard to the English Ministry. I shall on my part, transmit my observations to America, that M. de la Luzerne may communicate them to the members of Congress, and I am persuaded that that assembly will think the opinion of the Ministry of France worthy some attention, and that they will not be afraid of neglecting or betraying the interests of the United States, by adopting it as a rule of their conduct.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

Observations on Mr Adams's Letter of July 17th, 1780.

Translation.

I. The reasons, which determined the Count de Vergennes to give Mr Adams that advice are so plain, that they must appear at first view.

1st. To be solicitous about a Treaty of Commerce, before peace is established, is like being busy about furnishing a house, before the foundation is laid.

2d. In the situation in which America stands at present with regard to England, to announce to that power that they have forgotten her system of tyranny, her cruelties, and her perfidy, is discovering too great a degree of weakness, or at least too much good nature, and inviting her to believe, that the Americans have an irresistible predilection for her, and to fortify her in the opinion she entertains, that the American patriots will submit through weariness, or the preponderating influence of the Tories.

3d. To propose a Treaty of Commerce, which must be founded on confidence, and on a union equivalent to an alliance, at a time when the war is raging in all its fury, when the Court of London is wishing to ruin or to subjugate America, what is it but to give credit to the opinion, which all Europe entertains, conformable to the assertions of the English Ministers, that the United States incline towards a defection, and that they will be faithful to their engagements with France, only till such time as Great Britain shall furnish a pretext for breaking them.

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II. A person may be furnished eventually with plenipotentiary powers, without being under the necessity of publishing them, until circumstances permit him to use them. This happens every day. Mr Adams is charged with three distinct commissions. 1. To take a share in the future negotiations for peace. 2. To conclude a treaty of commerce with Great Britain. 3. To represent the United States at the Court of London. It requires no great effort of genius to show, that these three objects cannot be accomplished at the same moment of time, nor that the two last cannot serve as an introduction to the first. It is necessary first of all to obtain from England an acknowledgment of the Independence of America, and that acknowledgment must serve as a foundation for a treaty of peace. Until this is obtained, Mr Adams cannot talk of a treaty of commerce. To propose one while the Court of London is flattering itself with the hopes of subduing America, and while with that view it is making the most strenuous efforts, would in the view of that Court be to propose what was chimerical, and would be taking a step which it would hold in derision.

The case would be the same, were one at this time to talk of a Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States appointed to reside at the Court of his Britannic Majesty. The only powers, therefore, which circumstances permit Mr Adams to announce, are those which authorise him to take a part in the negotiations for peace. The two other powers can be of no avail until the conclusion of that peace, so that it would be at least useless to produce them at present; and

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consequently Mr Adams will not act inconsistent with the design and nature of his appointment by concealing them from the Court of London. Although the Count de Vergennes is unacquainted with the instructions of Mr Adams, yet he is persuaded that they are conformable to the foregoing reflections, and that they do not direct him to make an immediate communication of his powers relative to a treaty of commerce, any more than they order him to make a separate peace with Great Britain. This opinion is founded on that which the King's Ministry entertain of the wisdom, prudence and fidelity of Congress.

III. It is to be observed, that the English Ministry would consider that communication as ridiculous; so that it is deceiving one's self to suppose, that it will engage them to enter into any conference, or so say anything more than what is contained in the resolutions of Parliament, namely, that they will listen to the Americans and receive them into favor, when they return to their former allegiance. It can answer no good purpose to draw from them such an answer, nor can the United States want such an answer, to inform them of the present sentiments of the Court of London, and much less to prepare with councils and arms to resist them. It is astonishing to talk of preparations of councils and arms, when the war is raging in all its fury, when it has now lasted six years, and England has not yet made one overture to the Americans, that can authorise them to believe that she would agree to their independence.

IV. The English Ministry would either return no answer, or if they did it would be an insolent one. In case of the latter, why should a man needlessly expose himself to insult, and thereby make himself the laughing-stock of all the nations who have not yet acknowledged the independence of the United States? But there is reason to believe that Mr Adams would receive no answer, because the British Ministry would not think themselves bound to return one to a man who assumes a character, which the Court of London must consider as an insult. It should not be forgotten, that that Court always considers the Americans as rebellious subjects. With such an opinion, how could Lord Germain receive a letter from Mr Adams, taking upon himself the character of Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of North America? How could that Minister bear the mention of a treaty of commerce, which can only take place between independent nations? These observations will convince Mr Adams, that France has no occasion for the expedient which he proposes, to discover the sentiments and dispositions of the Court of London, and that we are already perfectly acquainted with what we ought and may expect from it, in the present situation of affairs.

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V. The silence, or the answer of the English Ministry, let which will happen, will neither alarm nor arouse the people of England. That people, without doubt, desire peace and an accommodation with America. But we find that only some individuals talk of independence, and these, more from a spirit of opposition than from conviction. There never has been a single motion made in Parliament tending to grant that independence. Yet the people have friends and protectors in Parliament. From this, Mr Adams may judge into what embarrassment the announcing his powers would throw the Ministry.

VI. England, as well as the rest of Europe, is perfectly acquainted with the nature of the engagements, which subsist between France and the United States. The King caused a declaration to be made by his Ministry on the 13th of March, 1778, that he had not secured to himself any exclusive privilege by the treaty of commerce of the 6th of February of the same year, and his Majesty has confirmed that declaration in a writing published by his order. So that the plenipotentiary powers of Mr Adams can disclose nothing new, either to England or to the other powers of Europe, and the false opinion of the Court of London in this matter can be no obstacle to a peace. If any such obstacle existed, the English Ministry would themselves find means to remove it, if they were determined to make peace; depend upon that.

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VII. It is certain that the whole English nation, and even the Ministers themselves, wish for peace. But it has been observed, that there has not been a single motion made in favor of the independence of America. Certainly the plenipotentiary powers of Mr Adams will not change the present dispositions of the people in that respect, and consequently the communication that might be made of them, will neither facilitate nor accelerate the conclusion of peace.

VIII. This is a sensible reflection. It proves that Mr Adams is himself convinced that there are circumstances, which may induce him to conceal his powers. The King's Ministry think that such circumstances will continue till the English nation shall show a disposition to acknowledge the independence of the United States. That acknowledgment will not be facilitated by proposing a treaty of commerce. For the English are at present well persuaded, that they will have such a treaty with America when they shall judge it proper. They have besides, as Mr Adams has himself mentioned in his letter of the 19th of February last, a full knowledge of his commission, so that the communication of his full powers will teach them nothing new in this respect.

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IX. In answer to this paragraph it may be observed, that there is not an Englishman who is not persuaded that the United States are disposed to grant the advantages of commerce to their ancient metropolis; but it would be a very difficult task to persuade an Englishman or any thinking being, that by granting independence in exchange for these advantages, the Court of London would make an honorable and advantageous peace. If this was the real sentiment of the people of England, why have they for these six years past, without murmuring, furnished ruinous supplies for subduing America?

X. The English Ministry either have sincere intentions of making peace, or they mean to amuse and penetrate the designs of Spain. In the first case, they will express the conditions on which they desire to treat; they will then be obliged to explain their views and their demands with

regard to America. They assuredly forget nothing which they think will forward peace, and upon agreeing to her independence, their first care will be to demand equal privileges with France in regard to commerce. On the contrary, if the English Ministry only means to amuse Spain, to penetrate her designs and to slacken her preparations for war, Mr Adams should do the Ministry of Madrid justice to believe that they will have sagacity enough to discover their views, and have understanding and prudence sufficient to determine on the conduct they ought to pursue.

XI. If Mr Adams is as sure as he is of his existence, that the English Ministry have no intention of making peace on terms which France and America can agree to, to what purpose communicate to them at present powers, which cannot be made use of until after the peace. How can Mr Adams persuade himself, that the Court of London will be seduced by the bait of a treaty of commerce, while it still manifests an invincible repugnance to acknowledge the independence of America. Whenever it shall be disposed to acknowledge that independence, it will of itself propose the conditions on which it will be then proper to grant it, and Mr Adams may rest assured, that it will not forget the article of commerce. Then will be the proper time for him to produce his plenipotentiary powers. In the meantime, it is necessary to pursue measures for the establishing the foundation of that negotiation, namely, the independence of America, and that can only be effected by carrying on the war with vigor and success.

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TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, July 26th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which your Excellency did me the honor to write me on the 25th of this month.

The sincere respect I entertain for your Excellency's sentiments would have determined me, upon the least intimation, to have communicated my letter and your answer to Congress, and to suspend, until I should receive orders on their part, all measures towards the British Ministry, without your Excellency's requisition in the name of the King.

I shall transmit these papers to Congress, and I doubt not the reasons your Excellency has adduced will be sufficient to induce them to suspend any communication to the British Ministry, as it is undoubtedly their wisdom to conduct all such measures in concert with their allies.

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There is a great body of people in America, as determined as any to support their independence, and their alliances, who notwithstanding wish that no measure may be left unattempted by Congress, or their servants, to manifest their readiness for peace, upon such terms as they think honorable and advantageous to all parties. Your Excellency's arguments, or indeed your authority, will probably be sufficient to satisfy these people, and to justify me, whereas without them I might have been liable to the censure of numbers. For it is most certain, that all due deference will be shown by the people of the United States and their servants, both in and out of Congress, to the sentiments of the Ministry of France.

This deference, however, by no means extends so far as to agree in all cases to those sentiments without examination. I cannot, therefore, agree in the sentiment, that proposing a treaty of peace and commerce, is discovering a great deal of weakness, or that the Americans have forgotten the British system of tyranny, cruelty, or perfidy, or to invite her to believe the Americans have an irresistible predilection for England, or to fortify her in the opinion that the American patriots will submit through weariness, or through fear of the preponderant influence of the tories.

And so far from thinking it would give credit to the opinion, if there be such a one in all Europe, that the United States incline towards a defection, and that they will not be faithful to their engagements, it seems to me on the contrary, it would discredit the opinion which prevails too much in Europe, that there is some secret treaty between France and the United States, by which the former is entitled to exclusive privileges in the American trade.

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It is very true, that the independence of America must be acknowledged before a treaty of peace can be made. But a prospect of a free trade with America, upon principles of perfect equality and reciprocity, like that between France and the United States, might be a powerful inducement with the people of England, to acknowledge American independence. Indeed I do not see any other considerable motive, that England can ever have to make that acknowledgment. The Congress have given no positive instructions respecting the time or manner of making these powers known to one Court or another. All this is left at discretion, and to a construction of the Commissioners themselves. It is very certain, that all the belligerent powers are busily occupied every winter in their councils, and preparations for the ensuing campaign. And it is also certain, that the artifice of the British Ministry, in holding up to view every winter some semblance of a design of reconciliation formerly, and of peace latterly, has been a real engine of hostility against America, equal to a considerable part of the British army. Neither the people of America, nor Mr Adams, have the least dread upon their minds, of an insolent answer from one of the British Ministers, nor of the ridicule of those nations who have not yet acknowledged the independence of America. No man of any knowledge, justice, or humanity, in any of those nations, would laugh

upon such an occasion, on the contrary, he would feel a just indignation against a Minister who should insult a message so obviously calculated for the good of England, and of all Europe, in the present circumstances of affairs.

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I am very much mistaken, for I speak upon memory, if the Duke of Richmond did not make a motion two years ago in the House of Lords, and if Mr Hartley did not make another about a year ago, which was seconded by Lord North himself, in the House of Commons, tending to grant independence to America. And it is very certain, that a great part of the people of England think that peace can be had upon no other terms. It is most clear, that the present Ministry will not grant independence; the only chance of obtaining it is by change of that Ministry, The King is so attached to that Ministry, that he will not change them, until it appears that they have so far lost the confidence of the people, that their representatives in Parliament dare no longer to support them, and in the course of the last winter the weight and sentiment of the people were so considerable, as to bring many great questions nearly to a balance, and particularly to carry two votes, one against the increase of the influence of the Crown, and another against the Board of Trade and Plantations, a vote that seemed almost to decide the American question, and they came within a very few votes of deciding against the American Secretary. Now where parties are approaching so near to a balance, even a small weight thrown into either scale may turn it.

In my letter of the 19th of February, I said, that my appointment was notorious in America, and that therefore it was probably known to the Court of London, although they had not regular evidence of it. The question then, was more particularly concerning a commission to assist in the pacification. This was published in the American newspapers, in a general way, but I have no reason to think they are particularly informed of these matters; if they were, no evil that I am aware of could result from giving them the information officially. Certainly they have no official information, and it is denied, that they know the nature of Mr Adams' commission.

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Without any great effort of genius, I think it is easy to demonstrate to any thinking being, that by granting American independence, and making a treaty of commerce upon principles of perfect reciprocity, England would in the present circumstances of affairs make an honorable and an advantageous peace. It would have been more for their honor and advantage never to have made this war against America, it is true, but having made it, all the dishonor and disadvantage there is in it are indelible, and after thirteen colonies have been driven to throw off their government and annihilate it in every root and branch, becoming independent in fact, maintaining this independence against a force of forty thousand men and fifty ships of war, that would have shaken most of the States of Europe to the foundation, after maintaining this independence four years, and having made an honorable treaty with the first power in Europe, after another power had fallen into the war in consequence of the same system, after the voice of mankind had so far declared against the justice of their cause, that they could get no ally, but on the contrary all the maritime powers are entering into a confederacy against them, upon a point which has been a principal source of their naval superiority in Europe; in these circumstances, the only honorable part they can act, is to conform to the opinion of mankind, and the dishonorable and ruinous part for them to act is to continue the war. For the principle, that the people have a right to a form of government according to their own judgments and inclinations, is, in this intelligent age so well agreed on in the world, that it would be thought dishonorable by mankind in general, for the English to govern three millions of people against their wills by military force, and this is all they can ever hope for, even supposing they could bribe and tempt deserters enough from our army and apostates from our cause to make it impossible for us to carry on the war. This, however, I know to be impossible, and that they never will get quiet possession again of the government of any one whole State in the thirteen; no, not for an hour. If England considers further, that America is now known all over Europe to be such a magazine of raw materials for manufactures, such a nursery of seamen, and such a source of commerce and naval power, that it would be dangerous to all the maritime powers to suffer any one of them to establish a domination and a monopoly again in America.

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I know there exists in some European minds, a prejudice against America, and a jealousy that she will be hurtful to Europe, and England may place some dependence upon this prejudice and jealousy, but the motions of the maritime powers begin to convince her, that this jealousy and prejudice do not run so deep as they thought, and surely there never was a more groundless prejudice entertained among men, and it must be dissipated as soon as the subject is considered. America is a nation of husbandmen, planted on a vast continent of wild uncultivated land, and there is, and will be for centuries, no way in which these people can get a living, and advance their interest so much as by agriculture. They can apply themselves to manufactures, only to fill up interstices of time, in which they cannot labor on their lands, and to commerce, only to carry the produce of their lands, the raw materials of manufactures, to the European market.

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Europe is a country whose land is all cultivated nearly to perfection, where the people have no way to advance themselves but by manufactures and commerce; here are two worlds then, fitted by God and nature, to benefit each other, one by furnishing raw materials, the other manufactures, and they can never interfere. The number of States in America, their position and extension over such a great continent, and their fundamental constitution that nine States must concur to war, show that nine of these States never can agree in any foreign war, or any other, but for self defence, if they should ever become powerful. But in this case, however disagreeable a prospect it may open to Americans, Europe has an everlasting warranty against their becoming dangerous to her in the nature of men, the nature of her governments, and their position towards one another.

All these circumstances serve to show, and the people of England begin to be sensible of it, that Europe will never suffer them to regain their domination and monopoly, even if the English were able to extort a forced submission. In this situation then, the only honorable and advantageous course for England is to make peace, and open commerce with America, in perfect consistency with her independence and her alliances. The people of England cannot be said to furnish subsidies without murmuring, for it is certain there never was so much murmuring and such radical discontent in that nation nor any other, but at the eve of a revolution.

I very cheerfully agree with your Excellency in opinion, that the Court of Spain has sagacity enough to penetrate and to defeat the deceitful designs of the English, and am not under other apprehensions from thence, than that the report of a negotiation with Spain will leave some impressions in America, where I believe the English Ministry chiefly intend it. I have already said, that from the present British Ministry I expect no peace. It is for the nation and for the change of Ministry, as a step towards peace, that I thought it might have some effect to make the communication, and to satisfy those people in America, who without the most distant thought of departing from their independence or their alliances, wish still to take every reasonable measure towards peace. Your Excellency's letter will convince them, that my apprehensions were wrong, and your advice will undoubtedly be followed, as it ought to be; for they cannot promise themselves any advantages from the communication equivalent to the inconveniency of taking a measure of this kind, which ought not to be done but in concert, against the opinion of the Ministry of France.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, July 27th, 1780.

Sir,

Since my letter of the 21st, and upon reading over again your Excellency's letter to me of the 20th, I observed one expression, which I think it my duty to consider more particularly. The expression I have in view, is this, "that the King without having been solicited by the Congress, had taken measures the most efficacious to sustain the American cause."

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Upon this part of your letter, I must entreat your Excellency to recollect, that the Congress did as long ago as the year 1776, before Dr Franklin was sent off for France, instruct him, Mr Deane, and Mr Lee, to solicit the King for six ships of the line, and I have reason to believe, that the Congress have been from that moment to this, persuaded that this object has been constantly solicited by their Ministers at this Court.

In addition to this, I have every personal, as well as public motive to recall to your Excellency's recollection, a letter or memorial, which was presented to your Excellency in the latter end of the month of December, 1778, or the beginning of January, 1779, in which a great variety of arguments were adduced to show, that it was not only good policy, but absolutely necessary, to send a superiority of naval force to the coasts of the Continent of America.^[7] This letter, together with your Excellency's answer, acknowledging the receipt of it, I transmitted to Congress myself, and their Journals show, that they received them near a year ago, so that Congress I am persuaded, rest in the most perfect security in the persuasion, that everything has been done by themselves and their servants at this Court, to obtain this measure, and that the necessary arrangements of the King's naval service have hitherto prevented it.

But if it was only suspected by Congress, that a direct application from them to the King was expected, I am assured they would not hesitate a moment to make it. I am so convinced by experience, of the absolute necessity of more consultations and communications between his Majesty's Ministers and the Ministers of Congress, that I am determined to omit no opportunity of communicating my sentiments to your Excellency, upon everything that appears to me of importance to the common cause, in which I can do it with propriety. And the communications shall be direct in person, or by letter to your Excellency, without the intervention of any third person. And I shall be very happy, and think myself highly honored, to give my poor opinion and advice to his Majesty's Ministers upon anything that relates to the United States, or the common cause, whenever they shall be asked.

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I wish I may be mistaken, but it could answer no good purpose to deceive myself; and I certainly will not disguise my sentiments from your Excellency. I think that Admiral Graves, with the ships before in America, will be able to impede the operations of M. de Ternay, of M. de Rochambeau, and of General Washington, if their plan is to attack New York.

If there should be a naval battle between M. de Ternay and Admiral Graves, the event is uncertain. From the near equality of force, and the equality of bravery and of naval science which now prevails everywhere, I think we cannot depend upon anything decisive in such an engagement, unless it be from the particular character of Graves, whom I know personally to be

neither a great man, nor a great officer. If there should be no decision in a naval battle, Graves and his fleet must lay at New York, and M. de Ternay and his, at Rhode Island. I readily agree, that this will be a great advantage to the common cause, for the reasons mentioned in my letter to your Excellency of the 13th of this month. But still I beg leave to suggest to your Excellency, whether it would not be for the good of the common cause to have still further resources in view, whether circumstances may not be such in the West Indies, as to enable M. de Guichen to despatch ships to the reinforcement of M. de Ternay, or whether it may not consist with the King's service to despatch ships from Europe for that purpose, and further, whether the Court of Spain cannot be convinced of the policy of keeping open the communication between the United States and the French and Spanish Islands in the West Indies, so as to co-operate with France and the United States in the system of keeping up a constant superiority of naval power, both upon the coasts of North America and in the West India Islands. This is the true plan which is finally to humble the English, and give the combined forces the advantage.

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The English, in the course of the last war, derived all their triumphs, both upon the Continent of America and the Islands, from the succors they received from their Colonies. And I am sure that France and Spain, with attention to the subject, may receive assistance in this war, from the same source equally decisive.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Translation.

Versailles, July 29th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 27th of this month. When I took upon myself to give you a mark of my confidence, by informing you of the destination of Messrs de Ternay and Rochambeau, I did not expect the animadversion, which you have thought it your duty to make on a passage of my letter of the 20th of this month. To avoid any further discussions of that sort, I think it my duty to inform you, that Mr Franklin being the sole person who has letters of credence to the King from the United States, it is with him only that I ought and can treat of matters, which concern them, and particularly of that which is the subject of your observations.

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Besides, Sir, I ought to observe to you, that the passage in my letter, which you have thought it your duty to consider more particularly, relates only to sending the fleet commanded by the Chevalier de Ternay, and had nothing further in view, than to convince you, that the King did not stand in need of your solicitations to induce him to interest himself in the affairs of the United States.

I have the honor to be, &c

DE VERGENNES.

COUNT DE VERGENNES TO B. FRANKLIN.

Translation.

Versailles, July 31st, 1780.

Sir,

The character with which you are invested, your wisdom, and the confidence I have in your principles and sentiments, induce me to communicate to you a correspondence, which I have had with Mr Adams.

You will find, I think, in the letters of that Plenipotentiary, opinions and a turn, which do not correspond either with the manner in which I explained myself to him, or with the intimate connexion which subsists between the King and the United States. You will make that use of these pieces, which your prudence shall suggest. As to myself, I desire, that you will transmit them to Congress, that they may know the line of conduct, which Mr Adams pursues with regard to us, and that they may judge whether he is endowed, as Congress no doubt desires, with that conciliating spirit, which is necessary for the important and delicate business, with which he is

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I have the honor to be, &c.

DE VERGENNES.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, August 14th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 27th of July I set out from Paris on a journey to Amsterdam. I left Mr Dana, and Mr Thaxter at Paris, who will regularly transmit to Congress whatever shall occur of importance to the United States to know. They will also enclose all the English, French, and Dutch gazettes. They are exerting themselves in this Republic to man their ships of war, in which they have great success, as they give very great premiums for seamen, as far as sixty ducats a man. The Russian men-of-war are arrived and anchored in sight of the Texel, and several of their officers have been ashore in this city. The Plenipotentiaries are gone to Petersburg. Sweden and Denmark have adopted the declaration of Russia. It is whispered, that the Dutch Ministers to the Congress at Petersburg are shackled with instructions, to insist on a warranty of their possessions in the East and West Indies, previous to their acceding to the confederation of the maritime powers, but this instruction produced a protest of the city of Amsterdam, with such reasons against it, that it is thought the opposite party will not venture to take upon themselves the consequences of a refusal to join in the confederation; so that it is expected the treaty will take place.

It is universally considered as a great misfortune to us, by all whom I converse with here, that Mr Laurens is not arrived. Some prudent person, authorised by Congress, is earnestly desired here. He would not be publicly received, at least until the States shall take a decided part with the other maritime powers against England; this case, however, may soon happen. But there is not in Europe a better station to collect intelligence from France, Spain, England, Germany, and all the northern parts, nor a better situation, from whence to circulate intelligence through all parts of Europe than this. And it may be depended on, that our cause has never suffered from anything more than from the failure of giving and receiving intelligence. A Minister here, from Congress, would be considered as the centre of communication between America and this, and many other parts of Europe; and I have since my arrival here, been more convinced than ever, that Congress might open a considerable loan here, and be supplied from hence with stores and with clothing, and at the same time be gradually extending the commerce between this country and America, to the great advantage of both. I have had a great deal of conversation upon the subject of a loan, and shall have more. I am sure that a loan might be obtained by any one with powers from Congress. But there are no powers as yet arrived in Europe that will ever succeed here.

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We are still in daily hope and expectation that Mr Laurens will arrive; but should he decline to come, or in case any accident has befallen him, I most earnestly recommend to Congress the appointment of some other gentleman, with a proper commission, with full powers and especially to borrow money, and to sign proper promissory notes for the payment of it.

The King of Sweden is at Spa, from whence in the letter of the 30th of July the public are informed, that his Majesty, the first who during the present maritime war has given validity to the rights of neutrals, by means of the declaration which he caused to be made the last year to the belligerent powers, and by means of the protection which he granted from that time to the commerce and the navigation of his subjects, in sending out from his ports a numerous squadron, has manifested the consistency of his sentiments and disposition in this respect, by a new declaration, lately made to the Courts of Madrid, Versailles, and London, an authentic copy of which here follows.

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DECLARATION OF SWEDEN.

"From the commencement of the present war, the King has taken care to make known his fashion of thinking to all Europe; he has prescribed to himself a perfect neutrality; he has discharged the duties of it with scrupulous exactness; he has thought himself entitled to enjoy in consequence of it the rights attached to the quality of a sovereign absolutely neuter. Notwithstanding his trading subjects have been obliged to demand his protection, and his Majesty has found himself under a necessity of granting it to them. To fulfil this object, the King caused to be armed the last year a certain number of vessels; one part of them he employed upon the coasts of his kingdom, and the other has served to convoy the Swedish merchant vessels, in the different seas where the commerce of his subjects called them to navigate; he communicated these measures to the belligerent powers, and he prepared himself to continue them in the course of the present year, when other Courts, which had equally adopted a neutrality, communicated to him the dispositions which they had made, conformable with those of the King, and tending to the same end. The Empress of Russia caused to be presented a declaration to the Courts of London, Versailles, and Madrid, by which she informed them of the resolution she had taken to defend the

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commerce of her subjects, and the universal rights of neutral nations. This declaration was founded upon principles so just, that it did not appear possible to call them in question. The King has found them entirely conformable to his own cause, to the treaty concluded in 1666, between Sweden and England, and to that between Sweden and France; and his Majesty has not been able to excuse himself from acknowledging and adopting these same principles, not only with regard to the powers with whom the said treaties are in force, but also with relation to those who are already involved in the present war, or who may become so in the sequel, and with whom the King has no treaty to appeal to. It is the universal law, and in default of particular engagements, this becomes obligatory upon all nations. In consequence of which, the King declares once more, that he will observe in future the same neutrality, and with the same exactness, which he has observed heretofore. He will forbid his subjects, under severe penalties, to deviate in any manner whatsoever from the duties which a similar neutrality imposes; but he will protect their lawful commerce by all means possible, when they shall conduct it conformably to the principles abovementioned."

From Hamburg, the 1st of August, we have the following article. "All nations and all commercial cities being interested in the liberty of the seas and the safety of navigation, attacked and violated in our days, in a manner whereof history furnishes few examples, we have not learned here with less joy than in the rest of Europe, (if we except perhaps Great Britain,) the generous resolution which the three Powers of the North have taken to protect, by an armed neutrality, the commerce of their subjects, and at the same time the rights of all nations; rights immemorial, which honor and justice alone ought to cause to be respected, without having occasion to recur to the sanction of treaties. The Court of Denmark has adopted these principles into the declaration, which, after the example of Russia, she has made to the belligerent powers, and which is conceived in these terms."

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DECLARATION OF DENMARK.

"If a neutrality the most exact and the most perfect, with a navigation the most regular, and an inviolable respect for treaties had been sufficient to place the freedom of commerce of the subjects of the King of Denmark and Norway in a state of safety from these misfortunes, which ought to be unknown to nations which are at peace, and who are free and independent, it would not be necessary to take new measures to insure them this liberty to which they have a right the most incontestible.

"The King of Denmark has always founded his glory and his grandeur upon the esteem and the confidence of other people; he has made it a law to himself, from the commencement of his reign, to manifest to all the powers, his friends, a conduct the most capable of convincing them of his pacific sentiments, and of his sincere desire to contribute to the general prosperity of Europe. His proceedings, the most uniform and which nothing can conceal, are a proof of this. He has not hitherto addressed himself, but to the belligerent powers themselves, to obtain the redress of his grievances; and he has never failed of moderation in his demands, nor of gratitude when they have had the success, which they ought to have. But the neutral navigation has been too often molested, and the most innocent commerce of his subjects too frequently disturbed, for the King not to think himself obliged to take at present measures proper to assure to himself and to his allies, the safety of commerce and navigation, and the maintenance of the indispensable rights of liberty and independence. If the duties of neutrality are sacred, if the law of nations has also its decrees adopted by all impartial nations, established by custom, and founded in equity and reason, an independent and neutral nation does not lose by the war of another the rights which it had before that war, because that peace continues for her with all the belligerent people, without receiving, and without having to follow, the laws of any of them. She is authorised to make in all places, (the contraband excepted) the traffic, which she would have a right to make if peace existed in all Europe, as it exists for her. The King pretends to nothing beyond that which neutrality entitles him to. Such is his rule and that of his people, and his Majesty not being able to avow the principle, that a belligerent nation has a right to interrupt the commerce of his States, he has thought it a duty, which he owed to himself and to his people, faithful observers of his regulations, and to the powers at war themselves, to lay open to them the following principles, which he has always had, and which he will always avow, and maintain in concert with her Majesty the Empress of all the Russias, whose sentiments he acknowledges to be entirely conformable to his own.

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"1st. That neutral vessels may navigate freely from port to port, and upon the coasts of nations at war.

"2d. That the effects belonging to the subjects of the powers at war may be free upon neutral vessels, excepting merchandises of contraband.

"3d. That nothing be understood by this denomination of contraband, but that which is expressly defined as such in the third article of the Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, in 1770, and in the twentysixth and twentyseventh articles of his treaty of commerce with France, in 1742; and the King will equally avow that, which is fixed in these articles towards the powers, with which he has no treaty.

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"4th. That we should consider as a port blocked, that into which no vessel can enter without an evident danger, by reason of ships of war, stationed to form very near an effectual blockade.

"5th. That these principles serve as a rule, in all proceedings, and that justice be rendered with

despatch and according to the documents of the sea, conformably to treaties and to received usages.

"His Majesty does not hesitate to declare, that he will maintain these principles, as well as the honor of his flag, and the liberty and independence of commerce, and of the navigation of his subjects; and it is to this end, that he has caused to be armed a part of his fleet, although he desires to preserve with all the powers at war, not only the good intelligence, but even all the intimacy, which a neutrality can admit. The King will never deviate from this, without being forced; he knows the duties and the obligations of it; he respects them as much as his treaties, and desires nothing but to maintain them. His Majesty is also persuaded, that the belligerent powers will do justice to these motives; that they will be as far as he is himself from everything, which oppresses the natural liberty of men, and that they will give to their Admiralties and to their officers, orders conformable to the principles here announced, which evidently tend to the prosperity and the interest of all Europe.

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"Copenhagen, July the 8th, 1780."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, August 17th, 1780.

Sir,

I was never more amused with political speculations, than since my arrival in this country. Every one has his prophecy, and every prophecy is a paradox. One says, America will give France the go-by. Another, that France and Spain will abandon America. A third, that Spain will forsake France and America. A fourth, that America has the interest of all Europe against her. A fifth, that she will become the greatest manufacturing country, and thus ruin Europe. A sixth, that she will become a great military and naval power, and will be very ambitious, and so terrible to Europe. In short, it seems, as if they had studied for every impossibility, and agreed to foretell it, as a probable future event.

I tell the first, that if the King of France would release America from her treaty, and England would agree to our independence, on condition we would make an alliance offensive and defensive with her, America ought not to accept it, and would not, because she will in future have no security for peace, even with England, but in her treaty with France. I ask the second, whether he thinks the connexion of America of so little consequence to France and Spain, that they would lightly give it up. I ask the third, whether the family compact added to the connexion with America, is a trifling consideration to Spain. To the fifth, I say, that America will not make manufactures enough for her own consumption these thousand years. And to the sixth, that we love peace, and hate war so much, that we can scarcely keep up an army necessary to defend ourselves against the greatest of evils, and to secure our independence, which is the greatest of blessings; and, therefore, while we have land enough to conquer from the trees and rocks and wild beasts, we shall never go abroad to trouble other nations.

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To the fourth I say, that their paradox is like several others, viz, that Bacchus and Ceres did mischief to mankind, when they invented wine and bread; that arts, sciences, and civilization have been general calamities, &c. That upon their supposition, all Europe ought to agree to bring away the inhabitants of America, and divide them among the nations of Europe, to be maintained as paupers, leaving America to be overgrown again with trees and bushes, and to become again the habitations of bears and Indians, forbidding all navigation to that quarter of the world in future. That mankind in general, however, are probably of a different opinion, believing that Columbus, as well as Bacchus and Ceres, did a service to mankind, and that Europe and America will be rich blessings to each other, the one supplying a surplus of manufactures, and the other a surplus of raw materials, the productions of agriculture.

It is very plain, however, that speculation and disputation can do us little service. No facts are believed, but decisive military conquests; no arguments are seriously attended to in Europe but force. It is to be hoped, our countrymen, instead of amusing themselves any longer with delusive dreams of peace, will bend the whole force of their minds to augment their navy, to find out their own strength and resources, and to depend upon themselves.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, August 22d, 1780.

Sir,

In a letter of the 14th instant, I had the honor to transmit to Congress the declaration of the Courts of Sweden and Denmark, conformable to that of Russia, which have been presented to the belligerent powers. I now send the answer of the King of France to the declaration of Sweden. It is conceived in these terms.

Answer of France to the Declaration of Sweden.

"The King has constantly desired, that the neutral powers should not receive any damage by the war in which his Majesty is engaged; his orders have assured to the vessels belonging to these powers the enjoyment of all the liberty, which the laws of the sea allow them; and if any individual navigators have had cause to complain of having suffered by the violence of the subjects of his Majesty, he has rendered them immediate and ample justice.

His Majesty has seen with satisfaction in the declaration which has been presented to him, on behalf of the King of Sweden, that it was the intention of this Prince, to continue to protect the navigation of his subjects against all violence; that even his Swedish Majesty had resolved to take measures, in concert with other Courts, and especially with the Empress of Russia, to accomplish more effectually this purpose. The King cannot but wish, that the confederation of his Swedish Majesty with those powers, may produce the benefit which they promise themselves from it; that the ocean may be free, conformably to the law of nations and to treaties, which are known to be nothing more than explanations of that law; and, in fine, that all the nations who have no part in the war, may not suffer the evils of it. His Majesty has renewed to the officers of his marine, and to the privateers which carry his flag, orders entirely conformable to the principles, upon which must depend the safety and tranquillity of all neutral vessels. For a stronger reason still, the subjects of the King of Sweden ought to be assured, that they will meet with no obstruction from those of his Majesty, since there is no Frenchman, who is ignorant of the alliance and friendship, which has so long subsisted between the two Crowns.

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"The precautions which his Swedish Majesty has taken, as they must confine the Swedish navigators within the bounds of the most exact neutrality, so they will be a new motive for them to demand the execution of those laws, of which their master discovers himself to be a zealous defender; laws, which the King ardently wishes to see adopted by the unanimous concurrence of all the powers, in such a manner, that no one may have to suffer by the war, if his sovereign does not take a part in it, provided he shall conform to the rules prescribed, to prevent all abuse of the neutral flag. Versailles, 4th of August, 1780."

In a London paper of the 15th of August, are the following queries of the Court of Sweden, relative to the proposal, which the Court of Russia has made for the reciprocal protection and navigation of their subjects.

Queries of the Court of Sweden.

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"1st. How, and in what manner, a reciprocal protection and mutual assistance shall be given?

"2d. Whether each particular power shall be obliged to protect the general commerce of, the whole, or if, in the meantime, it may employ a part of its armament in the protection of its own particular commerce?

"3d. If several of their combined squadrons should meet, or, for example, one or more of their vessels, what shall be the rule of their conduct towards each other, and how far shall the neutral protection extend?

"4th. It seems essential to agree upon the manner, in which representations shall be made to the powers at war, if, notwithstanding our measures, their ships of war, or armed vessels, should continue to interrupt our commerce in any manner; must these remonstrances be made in the general name of the united powers, or shall each particular power plead its own cause only?

"5th. Lastly, it appears essentially necessary to provide against this possible event, where one of the united powers seeing itself driven to extremities, against any of the powers actually at war, should claim the assistance of the allies in this convention to do her justice, in what manner can this be best concerted? A circumstance, which equally requires a stipulation that the reprisals in that case shall not be at the will of such party injured, but that the common voice shall decide; otherwise, an individual power might at its pleasure draw the rest against their inclinations and interests into disagreeable extremities, or break the whole league, and reduce matters into their original state, which would render the whole fruitless and of none effect."

Answer of the Court of Russia.

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"1st. As to the manner in which protection and mutual assistance shall be granted, it must be settled by a formal convention, to which all the neutral powers will be invited, the principal end of which is, to ensure a free navigation to the merchants ships of all nations. Whenever such vessel shall have proved from its papers, that it carries no contraband goods, the protection of a squadron or vessels of war shall be granted her, under whose care she shall put herself, and which shall prevent her being interrupted. From hence it follows;

"2d. That each power must concur in the general security of commerce; in the meantime, the better to accomplish this object, it will be necessary to settle, by means of a separate article, the places and distances which may be judged proper for the station of each power. From that method will arise this advantage, that all the squadrons of the allies will form a kind of chain, and be able to assist each other; the particular arrangements to be confined only to the knowledge of the allies, though the convention in all other points will be communicated to the powers at war, accompanied with all the protestations of a strict neutrality.

"3d. It is undoubtedly the principle of a perfect equality which must regulate this point. We shall follow the common mode with regard to safety; in case the squadrons should meet and engage, the commanders will conform to the usages of the sea service, because, as is observed above, the reciprocal protection under these conditions should be unlimited.

"4th. It seems expedient, that the representations mentioned in this article be made by the party aggrieved, and that the Ministers of the other confederate powers support those remonstrances in the most forcible and efficacious manner. [320]

"5th. We feel all the importance of this consideration, and to render it clear, it is necessary to distinguish the case. If any one of the allied powers should suffer itself to be drawn in by motives contrary to the established principles of a neutrality and perfect impartiality, should injure its laws, or extend their bounds, it cannot certainly be expected that others should espouse the quarrel; on the contrary, such a conduct would be deemed an abandoning the ties which unite them. But if the insult offered to one of the allies should be hostile to the principles adopted and announced in the face of all Europe, or should be marked with the character of hatred and animosity, inspired by resentment at these common measures of the confederacy, which have no other tendency than to make, in a precise and irrecoverable manner, laws for the liberty of commerce, and the rights of every neutral nation, then it shall be held indispensable for the united powers to make a common cause of it, (at sea only) without its being a groundwork for other operations, as these connexions are purely maritime, having no other object than naval commerce and navigation. From all that is said above, it evidently results, that the common will of all, founded upon the principles admitted and adopted by the contracting parties, must alone decide, and that it will always be the fixed basis of the conduct and operations of this union. Finally, we shall observe, that these conventions suppose no other naval armament than what shall be conformable to circumstances, according as these shall render them necessary, or as may be agreed. It is probable, that this agreement, once ratified and established, will be of the greatest consequence; and that the belligerent powers will find in it sufficient motives to persuade them to respect the neutral flag, and prevent their provoking the resentment of a respectable communion, founded under the auspices of the most evident justice, and the sole idea of which is received with the universal applause of all impartial Europe." [321]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, August 23d, 1780.

Sir,

The errand of Mr Cumberland to Madrid is a mere finesse of the British Ministry, intended to aid the stockjobbers to keep up the stocks, aid the loan, and the canvass for an election, and lull the belligerent powers, while they prepare their measures for future enterprises and another campaign. They have carried this plot so far, that I see some paragraphs in the foreign papers, which seem intended to counteract it.

The truth is, according to my information, that orders are already sent out by the British cabinet to prosecute the war with vigor in North Carolina and Virginia, the ensuing fall, winter, and spring. General Prevost is about to sail with some frigates to aid their operations on Cape Fear river. It is said at the same time, that they are sounding the House of Bourbon through Sardinia, and have made some loose propositions of accommodation, the groundwork of which is the sacrifice of America; and there is no doubt they would yield to France and Spain very great things to carry their point against America, who may depend upon the utmost exertions of their malice and revenge. But all this will not do. France and Spain are now responsible for their conduct to the rest of Europe, especially the Northern powers; and besides this, the separation between America and England is an object of more pressing importance to France and Spain, than any concessions that England can make them. So that America need not be under any apprehensions of being deserted. [322]

If, however, she were to be deserted by all the world, she ought seriously to maintain her resolution to be free. She has the means within herself. Her greatest misfortune has been, that she has never yet felt her full strength, nor considered the extent of her resources.

I cannot but lament, however, that there is no representation of Congress in this Republic, vested

with powers to borrow money. This would be a double advantage. We should avail ourselves of a loan, and at the same time lessen the loan of England. A loan once begun here, would rapidly increase, so as to deprive the English of this resource. This is the method in which commerce may be extended between the two Republics, and the political sentiments and system of Holland changed. I fancy that several very heavy and solid houses here might be persuaded to become security for the payment of interest, and that contracts might be made with them to send them remittances in produce, either to Europe, St Eustatia, St Thomas, &c., to enable them to discharge the interest. Might not merchants be found in Philadelphia, Boston, and many other places, who would enter into contract with the public to remit such a sum as should be agreed on, in the produce of the country to such houses here? This method, if Congress should think it expedient to fall into the way of sending fleets of merchantmen under convoy, would easily succeed. The safe arrival of the Fier Roderique, with so large a number of vessels under her care, gives great encouragement to the plan.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 4th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the pleasure to write to Congress news, which I hope they will receive many other ways before this letter can arrive, viz.; that the outward bound British West India fleet of fiftytwo sail and five East Indiamen, on the 9th of August, fell in with the combined French and Spanish fleets, about sixty leagues from Cape St Vincents, and were most of them taken; the frigates which composed the convoy and four of the West Indiamen alone having escaped. This is the account. We may possibly hear of some deductions, but the account in general is authentic, and of very great importance, as the value of the property is large, the number of soldiers and seamen considerable, and the disappointment to the fleets and armies of our enemies in the East and West Indies and in North America, not to be repaired.

This news has been from the 22d of August to the 3d of September in travelling from London to Amsterdam, where it makes a very great sensation indeed. We had, at the same time, news of the capture of most of the Quebec fleet by an American frigate and two brigantines.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 5th, 1780.

Sir,

As eloquence is cultivated with more care in free Republics than in other governments, it has been found by constant experience that such Republics have produced the greatest purity, copiousness and perfection of language. It is not to be disputed, that the form of government has an influence upon language, and language in its turn influences not only the form of government, but the temper, the sentiments, and manners of the people. The admirable models which have been transmitted through the world, and continued down to these days, so as to form an essential part of the education of mankind from generation to generation, by those two ancient towns, Athens and Rome, would be sufficient without any other argument to show the United States the importance to their liberty, prosperity, and glory, of an early attention to the subject of eloquence and language.

Most of the nations of Europe have thought it necessary to establish by public authority, institutions for fixing and improving their proper languages. I need not mention the academies in France, Spain, and Italy, their learned labors, nor their great success. But it is very remarkable, that although many learned and ingenious men in England have from age to age projected similar institutions for correcting and improving the English tongue, yet the government have never found time to interpose in any manner; so that to this day there is no grammar nor dictionary extant of the English language, which has the least public authority, and it is only very lately, that a tolerable dictionary has been published, even by a private person, and there is not yet a passable grammar enterprised by any individual.

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The honor of forming the first public institution for refining, correcting, improving, and

ascertaining the English language, I hope is reserved for Congress; they have every motive that can possibly influence a public assembly to undertake it. It will have a happy effect upon the union of the States to have a public standard for all persons in every part of the Continent to appeal to, both for the signification and pronunciation of the language. The constitutions of all the States in the Union are so democratical, that eloquence will become the instrument, for recommending men to their fellow citizens, and the principal means of advancement through the various ranks and offices of society.

In the last century, Latin was the universal language of Europe. Correspondence among the learned, and indeed among merchants and men of business, and the conversation of strangers and travellers, was generally carried on in that dead language. In the present century, Latin has been generally laid aside, and French has been substituted in its place; but has not yet become universally established, and according to present appearances, it is not probable that it will. English is destined to be, in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world, than Latin was in the last, or French is in the present age. The reason of this is obvious, because the increasing population in America, and their universal connexion and correspondence with all nations will, aided by the influence of England in the world, whether great or small, force their language into general use, in spite of all the obstacles that may be thrown in their way, if any such there should be. [326]

It is not necessary to enlarge further, to show the motives which the people of America have to turn their thoughts early to this subject; they will naturally occur to Congress in a much greater detail than I have time to hint at. I would therefore submit to the consideration of Congress, the expediency and policy of erecting, by their authority, a society under the name of "The American Academy, for refining, improving, and ascertaining the English Language." The authority of Congress is necessary to give such a society reputation, influence, and authority, through all the States, and with other nations. The number of members of which it shall consist, the manner of appointing those members, whether each State shall have a certain number of members, and the power of appointing them, or whether Congress shall appoint them, whether after the first appointment, the society itself shall fill up vacancies, these, and other questions, will easily be determined by Congress.

It will be necessary, that the society should have a library, consisting of a complete collection of all writings concerning languages of every sort, ancient and modern. They must have some officers, and some other expenses, which will make some small funds indispensably necessary. Upon a recommendation from Congress, there is no doubt but the Legislature of every State in the confederation would readily pass a law, making such a society a body politic, enable it to sue, and be sued, and to hold an estate, real or personal, of a limited value in that State. I have the honor to submit these hints to the consideration of Congress. [327]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 19th, 1780.

Sir,

The day before yesterday, Mr Dana arrived here from Paris, with the despatches which came by Mr Searle.

I am very sensible of the honor that is done me by this appointment, and yesterday morning I set myself seriously about discharging the duties of it, and this day I have been some leagues into the country upon the same service. There are good reasons for concealing the names of the gentlemen to whom I have applied for advice and assistance, but they are such as Congress, I think, would have approved if they had themselves been here.

I was told very candidly, that I might possibly be much mistaken in my information; that, possibly, I might think that money was more plenty here than it is; that America had more friends than she has; and that the difficulty of negotiating a loan here was less than it is; that it was mysterious that Congress should empower any gentleman to negotiate a loan, without, at the same time, empowering the same, or some other, to negotiate a political treaty of alliance and commerce, consistent with the treaties already made with other powers; that a Minister Plenipotentiary here, would be advised to apply directly to the Prince and the States-General; that he would not be affronted or ill treated by either, and whether received publicly or not, would be courted by many respectable individuals, and would greatly facilitate a loan. [328]

I was, however, encouraged to hope, that I might have some small success, and was advised to a particular course in order to obtain it, that cannot as yet be communicated. I must, however, apprise Congress, that there are many delicate questions, which it becomes my duty to determine in a short time, and perhaps none of more difficulty than what house shall be applied to, or employed. I have no affections or aversions to influence me in the choice. And shall not depend

upon my own judgment alone, without the advice of such persons as Congress will one day know to be respectable. But offence will probably be taken, let the choice fall upon whom it may, by several other houses, that have pretensions and undoubted merit. As this may occasion censure and complaints, I only ask of Congress not to judge of those complaints without hearing my reasons, and this request I presume I need not make. I have only to add, that the moment Mr Laurens shall arrive, or any other gentleman, vested with the same commission, I will render him every service in my power, and communicate to him every information I may possess.

But I ought not to conclude without giving my opinion, that it is absolutely necessary that Mr Laurens, or whoever comes in his place, should have a commission of Minister Plenipotentiary. If that gentleman was now here with such a commission, it would have more influence than perhaps anybody in America can imagine, upon the conduct of this Republic, upon the Congress at Petersburg, and upon the success of Mr Jay, at Madrid.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

Commission to John Adams, referred to in the preceding Letter.

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Whereas, by our commission to Henry Laurens, bearing date the 30th day of October, in the year of our Lord 1779, we have constituted and appointed him, the said Henry Laurens, during our pleasure, our agent for and on behalf of the said United States, to negotiate a loan with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate; and whereas the said Henry Laurens has, by unavoidable accidents, been hitherto prevented from proceeding on the said agency, we, therefore, reposing especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, ability, conduct, and fidelity, do by these presents, constitute and appoint you, the said John Adams, until the said Henry Laurens, or some other person appointed in his stead, shall arrive in Europe, and undertake the execution of the aforesaid commission, our agent for and on behalf of the said United States, to negotiate a loan with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate, promising in good faith to ratify and confirm whatsoever shall by you be done in the premises, or relating thereunto.

Witness his Excellency, Samuel Huntington, President of the Congress of the United States of America, at Philadelphia, the 20th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 1780, and in the fourth year of our independence.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President.*

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, September 16th, 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to send by this opportunity a few pamphlets and papers. The pamphlets relate to subjects which interest the United States, and therefore ought to be communicated to Congress for their consideration.

The attention of mankind is now turned, next to the Congress of America, upon that at Petersburg. The last letters from London say that they have information, that one of the first measures of this confederation will be an acknowledgment of American independence. Whether this is true or not, I am not able to say. The councils of the sovereigns of Europe are not easily penetrated; but it is our duty to attend to them, and throw into view such information as may be in our power, that they take no measures inconsistent with their and our interest for want of light, a misfortune that may easily happen. In this view, I could wish that the United States had a minister at each of the maritime Courts, I mean Holland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and, as the Cabinet of Berlin has much influence in the politics of Europe, Prussia. I say this upon supposition, that Congress can devise means of defraying the expense, which to be sure amounts to a large sum.

I have heard that Mr Searle has arrived at Brest, but am not informed of his destination, nor whether he has despatches for me. I am anxious to learn from Congress what their intentions may be respecting me, I have as yet received no authority to draw upon any fund whatsoever for my subsistence, nor to borrow money for that or any other purpose. I see no prospect of my commission being of any utility. Although many persons here think that peace will be made in the course of the ensuing winter or spring, yet I must confess I am of a different opinion. The idea, that France will dictate the conditions of peace, if it is made now, cannot be borne by Englishmen as yet, they are not yet sufficiently humbled, although probably every year will add some fresh humiliation to the demands upon their country. The English privateers have taken some Russian vessels loaded with hemp and iron, which must bring the question to a legal decision. The

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Admiralty will probably discharge them, and the Ministry will give up the point of free ships making free goods, provided the Dutch agree with the Northern Powers, for they will not venture upon a war with all the world at once. Besides the military force, which they could not stand against, they would not be able to obtain any stores for their navy. But the great question now is, whether the Dutch will agree. Their deputies are instructed to insist upon a warranty of their East and West India dominions. Whether the Northern Powers will agree to this condition, is a question. The States-General, however, are sitting, and will wait for despatches from Petersburg, and will probably be much governed by events. What events have happened in the West Indies and North America we shall soon learn.

Digby has sailed with a part of Geary's late fleet, whether for another expedition to Gibraltar, or whether for the West Indies or North America, is unknown. The success of these operations will probably influence much the deliberations both at Petersburg and the Hague. This time only can discover. It is said, however, that M. Le Texier will be exempted by the States-General from the payment of duties upon his masts, hemp, iron, and other naval stores that he is sending over land, to the French Marine. The capture of fiftyfive ships at once, so much wealth, so many seamen and soldiers, and such quantities of stores, is a severe stroke to the English, and cannot but have the most excellent effects for us, both in the West Indies and North America. The right vein is now opened, and I hope that the Courts of France and Spain will now be in earnest in convoying their own commerce and cruising for that of their enemies. This is a short, easy, and infallible method of humbling the English, preventing the effusion of an ocean of blood, and bringing the war to a conclusion. In this policy, I hope our countrymen will join, with the utmost alacrity. Privateering is as well understood by them as any people whatsoever; and it is by cutting off supplies, not by attacks, sieges, or assaults, that I expect deliverance from enemies. And I should be wanting in my duty, if I did not warn them against any relaxation of their exertions by sea or land, from a fond expectation of peace. They will deceive themselves if they depend upon it. Never, never will the English make peace while they have an army in North America.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 24th, 1780.

Sir,

Since the receipt of the despatches from Congress, brought by Mr Searle, I have been uninterruptedly employed in attempting to carry into execution their designs.

The first inquiry which arose in my own mind was, whether it was prudent to make any communication of my business to the States-General or to the Prince. Considering that my errand was simply an affair of credit, and that I had no political authority whatsoever, I thought, and upon consulting gentlemen of the most knowledge, best judgment, and most undoubted inclination for a solid and lasting connexion between the two Republics, I found them of the same opinion, that it was best to keep my designs secret as long as I could.

I then inquired whether it would be proper to communicate anything to the Regency of Amsterdam, or any branch of government whatsoever; and I was advised against it, and to proceed to endeavor to effect a loan upon the simple foundation of private credit. I have accordingly made all the inquiries possible, for the best and most unexceptionable House. Tomorrow I expect an answer to some propositions which I made yesterday.

This business must all be settled with so much secrecy and caution, and I am under so many difficulties, not understanding the Dutch language, and the gentlemen I have to do with not being much more expert in French than I am myself, and not understanding English at all, that the business goes on slower than I could wish. Commodore Gillon, by his knowledge of Dutch and general acquaintance here, has been as useful to me as he has been friendly.

I never saw the national benefit of a fine language generally read and spoken in so strong a light as since I have been here. The Dutch language is understood by nobody but themselves, the consequence of which has been, that this nation is not known. With as profound learning and ingenuity as any people in Europe, they have been overlooked, because they were situated among others more numerous and powerful than they. I hope that Congress will take warning by their example, and do everything in their power to make the language they speak, respectable throughout the world. Separated as we are from the Kingdom of Great Britain, we have not made war upon the English language any more than against the old English character. An academy instituted by the authority of Congress for correcting, improving, and fixing the English language, would strike Great Britain with envy, and all the rest of the world with admiration. The labors of such a society would unite all America in the same language, for thirty millions of Americans to speak to all the nations of the earth by the middle of the nineteenth century.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 25th, 1780.

Sir,

There are some persons in this Republic who have been attentive to this war, and who know somewhat of the history of the rise and progress of the United States of America, but it is astonishing that the number should be so small. Even in the city of Amsterdam, which is the most attentive to our affairs, and the best inclined towards us, there are few persons who do not consider the American resistance as a desultory rage of a few enthusiasts, without order, discipline, law, or government. There are scarcely any that have an adequate idea of the numbers, the increasing population, or the growing commerce of America.

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Upon my arrival here, some gentlemen were inquisitive about our forms of government. I asked if they had seen them in print; I was answered, no. Upon this I made it my business to search in all the booksellers' shops for a collection of American Constitutions, which was published in French two or three years ago, but could find only two copies, which I presented to the gentlemen who made the inquiry. Nothing would serve our cause more than having a complete edition of all the American Constitutions correctly printed in English at Philadelphia, by order of Congress, and sent to Europe, as well as sold in America. The Rhode Island and Connecticut Constitutions ought not to be omitted, although they have undergone no alteration; and it would be well to print the Confederation in the same volume. This volume would be read by everybody in Europe who reads English, and could obtain it, and some would even learn English for the sake of reading it; it would be translated into every language of Europe, and would fix the opinion of our unconquerability more than anything could, except driving the enemy wholly from the United States.

There has been nobody here of sufficient information and consideration to turn the attention of the public towards our affairs, to communicate from time to time to the public, in a language that is understood, intelligence from England, France or America; but on the contrary, there have been persons enough employed and well paid by our enemies, to propagate misinformation, misrepresentation, and abuse.

The ancient and intimate connexion between the Houses of Orange and Brunswick, the family alliances, and the vast advantage which the Princes of Orange have derived in erecting, establishing, and perpetuating the Stadtholder against the inclination of the republican party, and the reliance which this family still has upon the same connexion to support it, have attached the executive power of this government in such a manner to England, that nothing but necessity could make a separation. On the contrary, the republican party, which has heretofore been conducted by Barneveldt, Grotius, the De Witts and other immortal patriots, have ever leaned towards an alliance with France because she has ever favored the republican form of government in this nation. All parties however agree, that England has been ever jealous and envious of the Dutch commerce, and done it great injuries; that this country is more in the power of France if she were hostile, than of England, and that her trade with France is of vastly greater value than that with England. Yet England has more influence here than France. The Dutch, some of them at least, now see another commercial and maritime power arising, which it is their interest to form an early connexion with. All parties here see that it is not their interest that France and Spain should secure too many advantages in America, and too great a share in her commerce, and especially in the fisheries in her seas. All parties too see that it would be dangerous to the commerce, and even Independence of the United Provinces, to have America again under the dominion of England, and the republicans see, or think they see, that a change in this government and a loss of their liberties would be the consequence of it too.

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Amidst all these conflicts of interests and parties, and all these speculations, the British Ambassador, with his swarms of agents, is busily employed in propagating reports, in which they are much assisted by those who are called here Stadtholderians, and there has been nobody to contradict or explain anything. This should be the business in part of a Minister Plenipotentiary. Such a Minister, however, would not have it in his power to do it effectually, without frequent and constant information from Congress. At present this nation is so ignorant of the strength, resources, commerce, and constitution of America, it has so false and exaggerated an imagination of the power of England, it has so many doubts of our final success, so many suspicions of our falling finally into the hands of France and Spain, so many jealousies that France and Spain will abandon us, or that we shall abandon them, so many fears of offending the English Ministry, the English Ambassador, the great mercantile houses, that are very profitably employed by both, and above all, the Stadtholder and his friends, that even a loan of money will meet with every obstruction and discouragement possible. These chimeras, and many more, are held up to the people, and influence their minds and conduct to such a degree, that no man dares openly and publicly disregard them.

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I have this day received an answer to some propositions, which I made last Saturday to a very

respectable house, declining to accept the trust proposed. I do not, however, despair; I still hope to obtain something; but I am fully persuaded, that without a commission of Minister Plenipotentiary, and without time and care to lead the public opinion into the truth, no man living will ever succeed, to any large amount. Those persons, who wish to lend us money, and are able to lend us any considerable sum, are the patriots, who are willing to risk the resentment of the British and the Stadtholder, for the sake of extending the commerce, strengthening the political interest, and preserving the liberties of their country. They think, that lending us money without forming a political connexion with us will answer these ends. That cause stands very insecurely, which rests on the shoulders of patriotism in any part of Europe. But in such case, if patriotism is left in a state of doubt whether she ought to sustain it, the cause must fall to the ground.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, September 28th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 5th of this month, the Barons of Wassenaar and Heekeren, Ministers Plenipotentiary of the States-General, had their first audience of the Empress of Russia, presented their letters of credit, and were graciously received. The Baron de Wassenaar, in presenting his letters of credit, addressed to the Empress the following speech.

"Madam,

"The States-General, our masters, having received with a lively gratitude the invitation, which your Imperial Majesty has been so good as to make to them to take in concert with you the measures the most proper and the most effectual for the maintenance of the rights of their respective subjects, and of the dignity of their States, have thought, that they could not answer thereto with more promptitude than by ordering us to your Court, to the end to endeavor to conclude a project as great as it is just and equitable, the honor of which is solely due to your Imperial Majesty, and which apparently must complete the glory of your reign, already famous by so many illustrious events, and immortalise your name, by rendering you the support and the protectress of the most sacred rights of nations.

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"Their High Mightinesses will esteem themselves happy, if they may, on this occasion, strengthen still further, and by indissoluble ties the union, which already subsists between your empire and their Republic, and make themselves regarded by you as your most faithful and sincere allies, while they shall always esteem it an honor to give marks of the respectful regard and perfect veneration, which they have for your person, and eminent qualities. Our wishes will be complete, Madam, if in succeeding to serve our masters in so desirable an object, and upon which they have founded the greatest hopes, our Ministry might be agreeable to you, and procure us the approbation and the high benevolence of your Imperial Majesty."

The Empress made to this discourse a very gracious answer, in saying, that it was very agreeable to her, that their High Mightinesses considered the project upon this footing, and that she should act, in this affair, by giving proofs of the rectitude of which she discovered in all her actions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, October 6th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 6th of September, the Baron de Wassenaar Starenburg, and the Baron de Heekeren Brantzenburg, Ministers Plenipotentiary of their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces, had their first audience of their Imperial Highnesses, the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess, and the Baron de Wassenaar Starenburg had the honor to address, on this occasion, to the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess the following discourse.

"My Lord Duke,

"The States, our masters, in sending us to the Court of her Imperial Majesty, your august mother, have directed us at the same time, to renew to your Imperial Highness the assurances of their

most perfect consideration, and their respectful regards. The harmony and good understanding, which have subsisted between this Empire and their Republic, make them hope, that your Imperial Highness will be so good as to support with your credit the object, which makes the subject of their Mission, and thereby give to their High Mightinesses a new mark of the friendship, with which you have always honored them, and of which they will be zealous in all circumstances to ensure the continuance. Permit, My Lord Duke, that after having acquitted ourselves of these orders of our masters, we may have the honor to recommend our Ministry and our persons to the high benevolence of your Imperial Highness."

The Baron de Wassenaar then addressed himself to the Grand Duchess in the following terms.

"Madam,

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"Their High Mightinesses the States-General, our masters, in accrediting us at the Court of her Imperial Majesty, your august mother, have also commanded us to assure your Imperial Highness of their most respectful sentiments, and of the interest, which they will not cease to take in everything, which may contribute to your prosperity, and that of your Imperial House. Permit us, Madam, to recommend ourselves to the precious benevolence of your Imperial Highness."

The Grand Duke answered, "that nothing could be more agreeable to him, than to see those Ministers Plenipotentiary acquit themselves happily of their commission, that to this end he should not fail to support it as far as should be in his power, as he considered the Republic as the first ally of the Empire; charging them to write this to their High Mightinesses as his sincere sentiments."

On the 6th of September the Prince of Prussia arrived, and made a magnificent entry into the city of Petersburg.

Last night I had a letter from M. Dumas, at the Hague, dated the 3d of October, in which he writes, that a courier had arrived from their Plenipotentiaries at Petersburg, with despatches, which take away all plausible pretext from the temporisers, for delaying the accession of the Republic to the armed neutrality; that according to appearances, the Emperor, the Kings of Prussia and Portugal would accede to it likewise, and that all would agree in a maritime code, which should be useful to all for the future.

But this intelligence is so general, and has the air of being so conjectural, that I know not how much dependence is to be had upon it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, October 5th, 1780.

Sir,

I have no other information to give Congress respecting the execution of my new commission, except that I have been busily occupied ever since my receipt of it, in making the most particular inquiries I could concerning the best house, the best terms, &c. I shall delay finishing any contracts with any house for a little while, in hopes of Mr Laurens' arrival with a commission as Minister Plenipotentiary. If he does not arrive in a reasonable time, I shall proceed as well as I can.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, October 11th, 1780.

Sir,

It may serve to let Congress into the springs and motives which actuate this Republic, to be furnished with the following sketch of the Constitution, so far as it respects the authority of the Stadtholder.

"The seven Provinces of the Low Countries, formerly fiefs of the German Empire, but now for near two centuries so strictly united and confederated by the celebrated treaty of Utrecht, were before their union long governed by Dukes, Earls, Bishops, and other Lords, who with a limited

power were the sovereigns of them. When this country fell to the house of Burgundy, and afterwards to that of Austria, these princes in their own absence, established here Stadtholders or Governors, to whom they were obliged to give ample powers. These Stadtholders or Lieutenants had the administration of government, and presided in the courts of justice, the department of which was not then confined to judge of the law-suits of the citizens, but extended itself to affairs of State, in which the States themselves had little to do under the last Earls, who did not consult them, but when there was a question concerning taxes, or the safety of navigation and the fishery, and when it was necessary for such purposes to raise money.

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"The Stadtholders also took an oath to the States, by which they promised to maintain their fundamental laws and their privileges; at the inauguration of Princes, they received their oath at the same time with the States of the Provinces of which they were Stadtholders.

"It was upon this footing that William the First, Prince of Orange, was made Governor and Lieutenant-General of Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht, by Philip the Second, when he was upon his departure for Spain. This commission is dated the 9th of August, 1559. It contains among other things, 'We establish him in the state of Governor and Lieutenant-General of our counties of Holland, of Zealand, of the country of Utrecht, West Friesland, Voorne and the Brille, lands adjacent and annexed to our said Earldoms of Holland and Zealand.' The troubles arising soon after, he accomplished in 1576 a particular union between Holland and Zealand, the States of which conferred upon him as far as in them lay, the sovereign authority for all the time that these two Provinces should be at war and in arms, as the former had invested him with the same authority the year before.

"In 1581, the same thing was repeated by Holland, and soon after by Zealand; and in 1584, already elected Earl of Holland upon certain conditions, — he would have been invested with the sovereignty in all its forms, if he had not been assassinated by a villain hired and set to work by the Court of Spain. During the troubles, the States declared more than once, that they acknowledged the Prince of Orange in quality of their Governor-General, and Lieutenant of the King, in the Provinces of Holland, Zealand, West Friesland, and Utrecht, upon the same footing as these offices had been conferred upon him by his Majesty, there having been since no change or alteration of anything, which was conformable to the laws and customs of the country. Holland was the first, which in 1575, gave him a greater authority, but we do not find anywhere that the States ever declared him Stadtholder in their name; and Maurice, his son, ought to be considered as the first Governor and Stadtholder of their creation. His first instructions are extant; they were very confined; but they gave him more authority in 1587, after the departure of the Earl of Leicester. His successors in the Stadtholdership have had no instructions, but only commissions, and since that time their authority is very much augmented.

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"The commission given the 12th of May, 1747, to his Serene Highness, William the Fourth, father of the present Stadtholder, by the States of Holland, who conferred upon him, 'The power, the authority, and the command, to exercise the office of Governor, Captain-General, and Admiral; to protect, to advance, and to maintain the rights, the privileges, and the well being of the Province and of its members, cities and inhabitants, as well as the worship of the true reformed Christian religion, such as it is taught in the public churches, and to preserve and defend it against all molestation, oppression, disorder, disunion, detriment and damage. Moreover, to administer justice in the said Province of Holland and West Friesland, to obtain and duly to grant the provisions of justice to all those who shall require it, and to put them in execution, the whole, as far as regards the affairs of justice, by the advice of the President and Counsellors of the Court of Holland and West Friesland. To him, moreover, is given the power of granting, after having taken the advice of the Court of Justice, letters of grace, remission, pardon, and abolition, provided the said letters be duly — it being well understood, nevertheless, that they shall not be granted for murders, unpardonable in their nature, or for enormous crimes committed, — or by premeditated design; and for what concerns the military and the police, to act in this respect with the approbation of the States and the advice of their Counsellors and Deputies, conformably to their instructions; to change the Burgomasters and the Sheriffs of the cities and places of the Province, as may be convenient, conformably to the privileges of each city and of each place; moreover, both by land and sea, to watch over the safety and the good order of places and fortresses of the Province where there shall be occasion.'

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"The conditions upon which William the First was elected Earl of Holland, are related in the seventh volume of the history of the country, according to the resolutions of the States of Holland of that time. The Prince had agreed to them. All the cities of Holland, excepting Amsterdam and Gonda, had consented to them; and the Provinces of Zealand and Utrecht would without doubt have followed this example. These conditions contained among others,

First, That if the Prince contravened in any points, and did not redress the grievances at the requisitions of the States, these should be free from all engagements to him, and should have a right to provide of themselves for the government. Secondly, That after the death of the Prince, such of his sons as the States should judge the most capable, should be made Earl on the same footing. Thirdly, That the Prince should engage himself by oath to the observation of these conditions stipulated, and that the States on their part should do the same towards him.

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"In the preamble of the acts, by which the States confer the sovereign authority upon Prince William the First, is found these remarkable words, which are there laid down for a fundamental rule. 'That all Republics and communities ought to preserve and maintain themselves, and fortify themselves by unanimity, which cannot take place among so many members often different in

will and in sentiments; it was by consequence necessary that the government should be conferred upon one single chief.' From the establishment of the Republic, the good politicians and the greatest part of the inhabitants of these Provinces have regarded the Stadtholderian government as an essential part of the constitution. Accordingly, it has not been but twice without a Stadtholder, that is to say, from the year of 1650 to 1672, and again from the month of March, 1702, to April, 1747.

"The Stadtholdership has not been interrupted in Friesland, nor in the Provinces of Groningen and Ommelanden; but heretofore, the power of the Stadtholders of these two Provinces whose ancient instructions are to be found in Aitzema and elsewhere, although they have no place at present, was confined in more narrow bounds, and until William the Fourth, there never was a Stadtholder of all the seven Provinces together. [347]

"The Stadtholdership, and the offices of Captain-General and Admiral-General of each of the seven Provinces of the country of Drenthe, and of the generality, are at present hereditary, not only in the male line, but also in the female. The Stadtholder cannot declare war, nor make peace, but he has, in quality of Captain-General, the command in chief of all the forces of the State, and the military men are obliged to obey him in all that regards the military service. He is not restrained by instructions, and he disposes of the patents, an article very important in all that concerns the military.

"In this Republic, they call patents the orders in writing, which the Captain-General sends to the troops to march. He orders the marches, provides for the garrisons, and changes them at his pleasure. The ordinances and military regulations proceed from him alone; it is he, who constitutes and authorises the High Council of War of the United Provinces, and who, as Captain-General of each Province, disposes of all military offices as far as that of Colonel, inclusively. The highest posts, as those of Field Marshals, of Generals and Lieutenant-Generals, are given by the States-General, who choose those to fill them whom his Highness recommends. It is he also, who gives the governments, commandants, &c. of cities and places of arms of the Republic, and those of the barrier. The persons named, present their acts to their High Mightinesses, who provide them with commissions. In disposing of civil employments, which are in their departments, the States-General have always a great deal of regard also to the recommendations of his Highness. The power of the Stadtholder, as Grand Admiral, extends itself over everything which regards the naval forces of the State, and the other affairs of the departments of the Admiralties. These councils, called the Admiralties, preside over the perception [?] of the duties of entries, inwards and outwards, and have the direction of the custom-house, as well as that of the Admiralty. He presides here in person or by his representatives; and as chief of all these councils in general and of each one in particular, he is able to cause to be observed and executed their instructions, both by themselves, and what concerns them. He disposes of the employs of Lieutenant-Admirals and others, who command under him, and creates also the captains (*de haut bord*). The Grand Admiral, who has his part in all the prizes which are made, both by the vessels of the State and by privateers, establishes, when it is necessary, maritime councils of war, who do right in the name of their High Mightinesses, and of his Highness, but whose sentences are not executed until after he has approved and confirmed them. It is the same in those of the High Council of War of the United Provinces. [348]

"Here follows the COMMISSION of the Prince, exactly translated from the Dutch.

"The States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, to all those who shall see or hear these presents, greeting. We make known, that it being necessary to authorise and establish one person capable and qualified as Captain-General and Admiral-General of the people of war, by sea and land, who are in our service, for the maintenance of the State and of the government of this country, and for the direction of the affairs of war; for these causes, considering the good qualities and the capacity of his Highness, the Prince William Charles Henry Friso, by the Grace of God, Prince of Orange and of Nassau, Earl of Catzenelbogen, Vianden, Dietz, &c. &c. &c. and relying upon his firmness, valor, and inclination, for the prosperity of these countries, we have established and authorised, and we do establish and authorise his Most Serene Highness, the said Prince William Charles Henry Friso, Captain and Admiral-General over the people of war, who are in our service by sea and by land, giving to his Highness full power and authority to command, in that quality, all the said troops, and order them all that is convenient for the conservation and the maintenance of the union, for the safeguard and the defence of the State, for the tranquillity, the rights and the privileges of the country, both in general, and of each Province in particular; and for the protection of the inhabitants, as also for the conservation of the true reformed religion, in the manner that it is at present exercised, and under the public authority in the associated Provinces and cities; in fine, for the maintenance of the present form of government; the whole with the authority, the rights, the honors, and pre-eminence, thereto annexed. We have, moreover, conferred on his Serene Highness, as we hereby confer upon him, by these presents, until we shall have made known that we have disposed otherwise, the free power to dispose of patents and other things which relate to war, as the Lords, Princes of Orange, glorious ancestors of his Serene Highness have done, in quality of Stadtholders with relation to the troops. We command and ordain, most expressly, to all and every one, particularly to the officers of the troops, Colonels, Captains of Cavalry and of Infantry, and of other people of war in our service and pay, to acknowledge, respect, and obey his Serene Highness in that quality, giving him all succor, favor, and assistance, in executing his orders. His Serene Highness, as Captain-General of the State, shall take the ordinary oath to us, or to those whom we shall depute for that end, upon the instructions^[9] which we shall judge proper to prepare in [349]

this respect. Done, in our Assembly at the Hague, the 4th of May, 1747.

"The Stadtholder grants likewise, letters of grace, of pardon, and abolition, both of the crimes which they call *communia delicta*, and of military offences. In Holland and Zeeland, these letters are made out for the former, in the name of the States, with the advice of his Highness; in cases of common crimes, he consults the courts of justice, the counsellors deputies of the Provinces, the Council of State, and the tribunals of justice of the cities respectively, according to the nature of the case, and concerning the others, the High Council of War, &c.

"In the Provinces of Holland and Zeeland, the Stadtholder makes every year an election of the magistrates of the cities, upon a representation or nomination of a double number, which the cities themselves send to him. He has the choice of two, and in some cases, of three candidates, whom the States of Holland name to fill the offices, which their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, and formerly the Chamber of Accounts of their dominions had the disposition or election of, when there was no Governor. In some cities, the Stadtholder elects only the sheriffs, in others the burgomasters and sheriffs, and in some, the counsellors of the cities also. The magistrates, in taking possession of their offices, promise by oath, to maintain the rights, privileges, and immunities of their cities and citizens; and they take an oath also of fidelity to the States of Holland and Friesland. In 1672, the magistrates of Dort, added 'as also to his Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange, Stadtholder of the Province,' and the same thing was done in 1747, but only in Dort. When the States, in extraordinary cases which require it, judge proper to invest him with an act of authority, he can dismiss all these magistrates and replace them by others. This was done upon this footing, in 1672 and 1748. 'Saving their honor, and without its being permitted to suspect them of having ill conducted in the exercise of their offices, the Stadtholder promising to take, in case of need, their persons and their families under his protection and safeguard, &c.' The Prince of Maurice having changed in 1718 the magistrates of the greatest part of the cities, was thanked for it by the States of Holland, who, by their resolution of the 16th of November of the same year, approved unanimously of what his Excellency had done.

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"There are some few offices, which, by the constitution, the States have the disposal of, but in effect, the Stadtholder disposes of all offices, and is by this means in a capacity to oblige and attach to him, the magistrates of the cities, and other persons whom he pleases to gratify with them. He elects the counsellors and inspectors of the dykes of Rhyndland, of Delfland, and of Schieland, &c. upon a presentation of three persons which these Colleges, established in Holland for many centuries, send directly to him. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in an old ordinance, calls these officers Counsellors of the Dykes. Their offices are for life; and besides these three Colleges, there are still several others in Holland, but the three abovementioned are the most considerable.

"In virtue of the regulations made in 1674 and 1675, and renewed since the accession of the Prince to the Stadtholdership, he has a great power in the Provinces of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Overysse. The decision of the differences, which may there arise among the respective members and quarters belong to him; all the offices and commissions, which are exercised both in the Provinces and without. The States of Guelderland had, in 1748, conferred on the Prince Stadtholder the power of correcting, changing, and augmenting the regulation of the Regency of the year 1675, as his Highness should judge necessary for the good and advantage of the Province, in case that in this regulation he should find articles, which, according to the constitution of the present form of government, have occasion to be altered. But his Highness, in re-establishing it, did not judge proper to avail himself of this concession, which he nevertheless accepted in 1750. See the last article of the regulation published that year. In 1748, the Quarter of Nimeguen made a present to the Prince of the Earldom of Culembourg, and the States of Overysse did the same with regard to the lands, which they possessed in the Earldom of Bantheim. By this he is the First Member of the States, and Sovereign Lord of the Lower Earldom.

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"He has at his disposal all the offices and commissions in the Provinces of Groningen and Ommelanden, since the regulation of the year 1748, and the Prince Stadtholder has also acquired the greatest prerogatives in Friesland, by the regulation of December, 1748. As Stadtholder of the country of Drenthe and of the territory of the Generality, he has also very fair prerogatives, and annual appointments. The Council of State of the United Provinces, as well as the Councils Deputies of Holland and West Friesland, have, of their own motion offered, and at last conceded to his Highness all the employments which were in their disposal. By the articles ninth, sixteenth, and twentyfirst of the Treaty of Union of Utrecht, the Stadtholders of that time had been named provisionally, arbiters of the differences, which contrary sentiments and opposite views might occasion among the confederates, who, in thus submitting to an arbitration of points so important, had considered no doubt, that in fact there could not be any union or confederation among allies, who united themselves so closely, without agreeing upon means of coming to a conclusion, in cases, in which the plurality of voices did not take place.

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"Since the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership on the footing where it is at present, similar differences between the Provinces are no longer to be feared; the Prince Stadtholder, being fortified with a power sufficiently great to maintain the union, by preventing the consequences of all which might disturb it, or being a prejudice to the State in general, or to the Provinces, or their Quarters, or their members in particular; finally to take and put in execution the measures and resolutions necessary, &c. His Highness presides in the Court of Holland, and in the Courts of Justice of the other Provinces, and his name is placed at the head of their commandments, ordinances, and bills. In Overysse and in the Province of Utrecht, the fiefs are held in the name

of the Prince Stadtholder. He is supreme curator of the Universities of Guelderland, of Friesland, and Groningen, Grand Forrester and Grand Hunter in Guelderland, Holland, and other places.

"In the Province of Utrecht, his Highness, by virtue of the regulation of the year 1674, disposes of the provostship, and other benefices, which have remained attached to the chapters, as also the canonical prebends, which have fallen vacant in the months which were formerly called Popish. [354]

"Conformably to the first article of the instructions of the Council of State of the United Provinces, the Stadtholder is the first member of it, and has there the right of suffrage, with an appointment of twentyfive thousand florins a year. In virtue of a resolution of the States-General, of the 27th of February, the Prince of Orange had enjoyed it before his elevation to the Stadtholdership, having been placed, from the year 1670, in the Council of State. The 26th of July, 1746, their High Mightinesses granted the same appointments to the Prince Stadtholder.

"He assists also, whenever he judges proper for the service of the State, at the deliberations of the States-General, there to make propositions, &c. and sometimes also at the conferences held by the Deputies of their High Mightinesses in the several departments, according to the order established at the Assemblies of the States of particular Provinces, and at those of their Counsellors, or States Deputies. In Guelderland, in Holland, and in the Province of Utrecht, his Highness participates of the sovereignty, as Chief, or President of the body of Nobles; and in Zealand, where he possesses the Marquisate of Veere and of Flessingue as First Noble, and representing alone all the nobility. In his absence, he has in Zealand his representatives, who hold the first place, who have the first voice in all the councils, and the first of whom is always First Deputy from this Province at the Assembly of their High Mightinesses. The three quarters of the Province of Guelderland conferred the dignity of Chief, or President of the Body of Nobles, on his Serene Highness, in 1750. None of his predecessors had it, but Basnage says, in his Annals of the United Provinces, that the Prince William the Second, a little before his death, had a design to get himself elected First Noble in Guelderland, where the nobility had been at all times devoted to him. [355]

"The Body of Nobles of Holland, having prayed in 1635, the Prince Frederick Henry to do them the honor of being their Chief, his Highness, who as Stadtholder had neither seat nor voice in the Assembly of the States of the Province, graciously accepted of this offer, and became thereby a permanent member of it. The Body of Nobles have done the same with regard to the successors of this Prince.

"Veere and Flessingue are two of the six cities, which, with the First Noble compose the Assembly of the States of Zealand. The councils in Zealand, in which the Prince or his representatives have the first voice, are the Assembly of the States, and of the Counsellors Deputies; in the Council of the Admiralty, in the Chambers of Accounts, and in the Assembly, that they name the States of Walcheren, a College, which has the care of the dykes of this part of the Province. It appears, that under the precedent Stadtholders, the Assembly of the States of Zealand, composed, as at present, of the First Noble, and the six cities, disposed of all provincial offices and commissions, and one may see, by the resolution of the States of Zealand of the 15th of June, 1751, how this affair has been regulated.

"In 1749, the Prince Stadtholder was created by the States-General, Governor-General and Supreme Director of the Companies of the East and West Indies, dignities which gave him a great deal of authority and power, and which had not been conferred upon any of his predecessors. They have not yet been rendered hereditary. He has his representatives in the respective chambers, and chooses the Directors of the two companies, upon a nomination of three persons, who have the qualifications necessary to be elected. From his elevation to the Stadtholdership, the Prince enjoyed in Zealand this prerogative. His Serene Highness enjoys, without paying taxes, as the precedent Stadtholder might have enjoyed, the thirtieth part of all the divisions, which the East India Company makes; that is to say, the dividends of sixtysix actions and two thirds, each action being reckoned at three thousand florins, old capital. See the resolutions of their High Mightinesses, of the twentyseventh of November, 1747, when the company gives to the interested a dividend of fifty per cent, the portion of the Stadtholder amounts to fifty thousand florins. The Prince Stadtholder represents the dignity and the grandeur of the Republic, and without bearing the name of sovereign, and doing all in the name of the States, of which he is the Lieutenant-General, he enjoys in several respects, even the effects of the sovereignty. We have already seen what are his principal prerogatives, his authority, his great credit, and his influence in all affairs. [356]

"The Ambassadors and other Ministers in foreign Courts hold their commissions and receive their instructions from the States-General, who nevertheless do not name to these employs, excepting such as are agreeable to the Prince Stadtholder, and recommended by his Highness. These Ministers address their despatches to their High Mightinesses, or to their Register, and correspond also with the Counsellor Pensionary of Holland. They also render an account to the Prince Stadtholder of the negotiations with which they are charged, and of all important and secret affairs. [357]

"Treaties, alliances, conventions, &c. are negotiated, signed, and ratified in the name of the States-General, after having been communicated to the Provinces and ratified by them. The name of the Prince Stadtholder does not appear, but he can, when there is a question concerning his particular affairs, enter into negotiation with foreign Courts, and conclude with them treaties, as it was done with Spain in 1646 and 1647.

"Some of the foreign Ministers who reside at the Hague, are also accredited with the Prince Stadtholder. The prerogatives of the Prince Stadtholder of the Republic are at present sufficiently fixed; but they are not precisely the same in all the Provinces. The appointments and revenues of the Stadtholder and Captain-General, to consider them even in proportion, cannot be put in parallel with those of a King of England. Nevertheless, it is reckoned that the revenues of the Stadtholdership of the Seven United Provinces, of the country of Drenthe and the Territory of the Generality, comprehending the twentyfive thousand florins which the Prince enjoys annually as First Member of the Council of State, and the dividends of the company of the East Indies, amount to three hundred thousand florins a year. The Stadtholder pays neither imposts nor taxes, excepting those which they call in Holland *Odinarés Verponding*, which is raised in this Province upon the lands and upon the houses, &c. The body guards and the aid-de-camp of his Most Serene Highness are entertained at the expense of the union. Holland alone pays the company of a hundred Swiss, and makes good the hire of the houses, which the Prince Stadtholder and some of the principal officers of his house occupy at the Hague, who enjoy also a freedom from excises. On some occasions, the Counsellors Deputies of Holland and West Friesland, dispose, upon the proposition of the Stadtholder, or of the Counsellor Pensionary in his behalf, of certain sums necessary for the service of the State; and upon an act of this Council, they pass them in account at the Receiver-General of the Province.

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"As Captain-General of the union, his Highness has a hundred thousand florins of appointments a year, besides twentyfour thousand from Friesland, and twelve thousand from Groningen, in quality of Captain-General of these two Provinces. In time of war, the State grants extraordinary sums to the Captain-General, for the expense of each campaign.

"The Prince Stadtholder, as the eminent head of the Republic, is revered, honored, and respected by all the world. The Princes of Orange, by the great revenues of their patrimonies, both of their principalities and of their signorial lands in France, Germany, and Burgundy, and in divers places of the United Provinces, have frequently been a great support to the State. William the First, the father of his country, who always preferred the prosperity of the Republic to his own and that of his house, raised twice, and led an army, in a great part at his own expense, as we may see by the public declaration, which the States-General made of it, in the inscription of the mausoleum, which they raised to the memory of this great man, in one of the churches of Delft.

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"Offers the most tempting for them and for their houses have been made to the Stadtholders, provided they would depart ever so little from the engagements which they had taken with their country; but they have rejected them all with disdain, and would not have other friends nor other enemies than those of the Republic. As she was in some sort their daughter, they could not but have a lively affection for her, to such a degree as to be at all times ready to sacrifice their lives and all things to her defence. Thus they have been the authors and conservators of her liberties, in the first place against the Spanish tyranny, and since against an enemy still more formidable, who opened to himself in 1672 a passage into the heart of the Republic. The same thing was near happening in 1748."

I have translated this from the French, because it is not often to be found, and is the shortest and best account of the Stadtholdership I can find. It is full of instruction to the United States of America, and will serve to explain many political phenomena. As all these powers are in possession of a family connected by blood and by ancient habits and political alliances to that of Hanover, we may easily see, that the American cause will meet with powerful obstacles. I am still, however, of opinion, that it would be good policy to send a Minister Plenipotentiary here, accredited both to the States-General and to the Prince Stadtholder, without this even a loan of money will scarcely succeed. Mr Laurens is taken and carried to England.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

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Amsterdam, October 14th, 1780.

Sir,

The extracts of letters you were so good as to send me, have been inserted in the papers, and I should be obliged to you for future communications of the same kind. Notwithstanding the flow of spirits, and the vigorous exertions of our countrymen this year, I am sorry to say I cannot see a prospect of anything decisive this campaign. The fatal defect in the plan of the campaign in not sending a sufficient number of ships with M. de Ternay, or soon after him, will render abortive all the great exertions and immense expenses of the year. And, at the same time, Cornwallis will spread too much devastation at the southward, where the want of numbers of whites, the great numbers of blacks, and above all the want of discipline and experience, will make the people long unhappy and unfortunate.

The ill luck of Carolina, pursues her citizens even to sea, and to Europe, I think. Can nothing be done for the relief of Mr Laurens. Will you be so good as to apply to Court, and see if they will

send us somebody suitable to exchange for him? After exchanging so many military men as prisoners of war, it is pitiful to use Mr Laurens as they do.

I have felt the mortification of soliciting for money as well as you. But it has been because the solicitations have not succeeded. I see no reason at all that we should be ashamed of asking to borrow money, after maintaining a war against Great Britain and her allies for about six years, without borrowing anything abroad, when England has been all the time borrowing of all the nations of Europe, even of individuals among our allies, it cannot be unnatural, surprising, or culpable, or dishonorable for us to borrow money. When England borrows, annually, a sum equal to all her exports, we ought not to be laughed at for wishing to borrow a sum, annually, equal to a twelfth part of our annual exports. We may, and we shall wade through, if we cannot obtain a loan; but we could certainly go forward with more ease, convenience, and safety by the help of one. I think we have not meanly solicited for friendship anywhere. But to send Ministers to every great Court in Europe, especially the maritime Courts, to propose an acknowledgment of the independence of America, and treaties of amity and commerce, is no more than becomes us, and in my opinion is our duty to do. It is perfectly consistent with the genuine system of American policy, and a piece of respect due from new nations to old ones. The United Provinces did the same thing, and were never censured for it, but in the end they succeeded. It is necessary for America to have agents in different parts of Europe, to give some information concerning our affairs, and to refute the falsehoods that the hired emissaries of Great Britain circulate in every corner of Europe, by which they keep up their own credit and ruin ours. I have been more convinced of this, since my peregrinations in this country than ever. The universal and profound ignorance of America here, has astonished me. It will require time and a great deal of prudence and delicacy to undeceive them. The method you have obligingly begun of transmitting me intelligence from America, will assist me in doing, or at least attempting, something of this kind, and I therefore request the continuance of it, and have the honor to be, with respectful compliments to Mr Franklin and all friends, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, October 14th, 1780.

Sir,

Repeated letters from London confirm the account of Mr Laurens being confined in the Tower; so close a prisoner, that neither his old correspondents, nor even his refugee relations, are suffered to speak to him.

There have been so many precedents of exchanges, Mr Lovell, as well as the Major-Generals, Sullivan, Stirling, Lee, and others, having been exchanged as prisoners of war, that it is very extraordinary they should now treat Mr Laurens as a prisoner of State. It is not, however, merely a proof that passion and caprice govern their councils. I conceive it is intended to signify to the tories in America, whom they believe to be more numerous than they are, and to their officers and troops serving in that country, that now they have obtained an election of Parliament to their minds, they are determined to prosecute the war with vigor, and to bring America still to unlimited submission. For, however, our countrymen may have flattered themselves with hopes of peace, there is nothing further from the thoughts of the King of England, his Ministers, Parliament, or nation, (for they are now all *his*;) than peace, upon any terms that America can agree to. There is no future event more certain in my mind, than that they never will acknowledge American independence while they have a soldier in the United States. Nay, they would not do it, even after their troops should be driven from the continent.

I think I see very clearly, that America must grow up in war. It is a painful prospect, to be sure. But when I consider, that there are more people in America than there are in the United Provinces of the Low Countries, that the earth itself produces abundance in America, both for consumption and exportation, and that the United Provinces produce nothing but butter and cheese, and that the United Provinces have successfully maintained wars against the formidable monarchies of Spain, France, and England, I cannot but persuade myself, it is in the power of America to defend herself against all that England can do.

The Republic, where I now am, has maintained an army of a hundred and twenty thousand men, besides a formidable navy. She maintains at this day a standing army of thirty thousand men, which the Prince is desirous of augmenting to fifty thousand, besides a considerable navy; all this in a profound peace. What cause, physical or political, can prevent three millions of people in America from maintaining for the defence of their altars and fireside, as many soldiers as the same number of people can maintain in Europe, merely for parade, I know not.

A navy is our natural and our only adequate defence. But we have only one way to increase our shipping and seamen, and that is privateering. This abundantly pays its own expenses, and procures its own men. The seamen taken, generally enlist on board of our privateers, and this is the surest way of distressing their commerce, protecting our own, increasing our seamen, and

diminishing those of the enemy. And this will finally be the way, by capturing their supplies, that we shall destroy, or captivate, or oblige to fly, their armies in the United States.

A loan of money in Europe would assist privateering, by enabling us to fit out ships the more easily, as well as promote and extend our trade, and serve us in other ways. I fear that Cornwallis' account of his defeat of General Gates, whether true or false, will extinguish the very moderate hopes which I had before, for a time.

There is a prospect, however, that the English will force this Republic into a war with them, and in such case, or indeed in any case, if there were a Minister here accredited to the States-General and to the Prince Stadtholder of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, he would assist a loan. There is another measure which may be taken by Congress to the same end; that is, sending some cargoes of produce, upon account of the United States directly here, or to St Eustatia, to be sold for the payment of interest. The sight of a few such vessels and cargoes would do more than many long reasonings and negotiations.

Another method may be taken by Congress. Make a contract with private merchants in Philadelphia, Boston, Maryland, Virginia, or elsewhere, to export annually produce to a certain amount, to Amsterdam or St Eustatia, or both, to be sold for the payment of interest. The merchants, or houses contracted with should be responsible, and known in Europe, at least some of them.

This country has been grossly deceived. It has little knowledge of the numbers, wealth, and resources of the United States, and less faith in their finally supporting their independence, upon which alone a credit depends. They have also an opinion of the power of England, vastly higher than the truth. Measures must be taken, but with great caution and delicacy, to undeceive them. [365]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, October 24th, 1780.

Sir,

I have this moment the honor of your letter of the 20th of this month, and it is as cold water to a thirsty soul. I have been busily employed in making inquiries, in forming acquaintances, and in taking advice. In hopes of Mr Laurens' arrival, and wishing him to judge for himself, I have not decided upon some questions that necessarily arise. I am not able to promise anything, but I am led to hope for something. The contents of Mr Jay's letters will certainly be of great weight and use. I am assured of the good will of a number of very worthy and considerable people, and that they will endeavor to assist a loan.

Let me entreat your Excellency to communicate to me everything you may further learn respecting the benevolent intentions of the Court of Madrid, respecting this matter. I will do myself the honor to acquaint you with the progress I make. I was before in hopes of assisting you somewhat, and your letter has raised these hopes a great deal, for the English credit certainly staggers here a little.

The treatment of Mr Laurens is truly affecting. It will make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the Americans; but this will not be a present relief to him. You are, no doubt, minutely informed of his ill usage. Can anything be done in Europe for his comfort or relief? [366]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, October 24th, 1780.

Sir,

I have received several letters from London concerning Mr Laurens. It is certain, that he has been treated with great insolence by the populace, in his journey from Dartmouth to London, and that he is confined to a mean apartment in the Tower, denied the use of pen and ink, and none of his friends has been able to obtain leave to visit him, excepting his son and Mr Manning, and these positively limited to half an hour. He is sick with a cholera, much emaciated, and very much incensed against the authors of his ill usage. I saw last night a letter from Mr Manning himself,

so that there is no doubt of the truth of this account. This deliberate, this studied manifestation to all the world, of their contempt and hatred of all America, and of their final determination to pursue this war to the last extremity, cannot be misunderstood. The honor, the dignity, the essential interests, and the absolute safety of America, requires that Congress should take some notice of this event. I presume not to propose the measures that might be taken, because Congress are in a much better situation to judge.

I have waited in hopes of Mr Laurens' arrival, but now all hopes of it are extinguished. I must fix upon a house, and settle the conditions, in pursuance of my commission. No time has been lost; it has all been industriously spent in forming acquaintances, making inquiries, and taking advice of such characters as it is proper to consult. The present state of things affords no hopes, but from a particular order of men. These I have endeavored to gain, without giving offence to any others, and I am not without hopes of obtaining something, though I much fear it will be short of the expectations of Congress. I am not at liberty yet to mention names, hereafter they will be known. I cannot with too much earnestness recommend it to Congress, to take measures if possible to send some cargoes of produce to Amsterdam, or St Eustatia, for the purpose of paying interest; a little of this would have a great effect.

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I ought not to conclude without repeating my opinion, that a commission to some gentleman, of Minister Plenipotentiary, is absolutely necessary.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, October 27th, 1780.

Sir,

It seems to be now certain, that some of Mr Laurens' papers were taken with him.

There have been sent to His Most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange, copies of letters from M. de Neufville, Mr Gillon, Mr Stockton, and Colonel Derrick, and a copy of the plan of a treaty projected between the city of Amsterdam and Mr William Lee.

The Prince was much affected at the sight of these papers, and laid them before their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, the States of Holland and West Friesland. One gentleman, at least, was present, who was concerned in the transaction with Mr Lee, who handsomely avowed the measure. The Regency of Amsterdam have since given in writing a unanimous avowal of it, and of their determination to support it. The letters of M. de Neufville and Mr Gillon are said to be decent and well guarded. So that upon the whole it seems to be rather a fortunate event, that these papers have been publicly produced. I wish I could say the same of Mr Laurens' captivity, but I cannot. The rigor of his imprisonment, and the severity of their behavior towards him, are not at all abated.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

JAMES LOVELL TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, October 28th, 1780.

Sir,

I shall endeavor to write largely to you, but I will not at this moment risk the sailing of the vessel for that purpose. It is reported, that Mr Searle is taken. Our affairs in Holland must in such case be very bad, as you will not have received any powers for acting instead of Mr Laurens, who is too probably taken and carried to England, from Newfoundland. And I also know of other fatalities of my letters.

Your obedient servant,

JAMES LOVELL,
For the Committee of Foreign Affairs.

N. B. Copies of your commission and instructions for a loan are enclosed.

Amsterdam, October 31st, 1780.

Sir,

The British Ministry, by the terrible examples of the rioters, have so intimidated the nation, and by their success in the late elections have so great a majority in Parliament, that they think themselves secure for seven years, and seem determined to go on with more vigor than ever.

The letters from their Generals Clinton, Cornwallis, &c. show, they are now adopting a new system. These letters are full of panegyrics upon the tories and refugees. Gage, and the two Howes, and Burgoyne, made light of these auxiliaries, which made Mr Galloway their enemy, who has been very industrious in exposing their characters. Indeed the Ministry seem to be wholly governed now by Mr Galloway, and their Generals seem to have adopted the same sentiments. The consequence is, that in America, at least where the British army rules, the refugees are cherished. Cornwallis, in his last letter, in which he gives an account of his battle with General Gates, assures the Ministry, that he is determined to make some examples among his prisoners. But none of these are more decisive proofs of their present system, than their treatment of Mr Laurens, whom they are holding up to that nation in the frightful character of a rebel, knowing that this word, and this idea, is enough to inflame them beyond all degrees of reason.

It is not only in England and America, that they mean to spread a terror; they think, that they can terrify all nations, this in particular. They have sent over to His Most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange, some copies of letters taken with Mr Laurens. I cannot learn, that there are any, but from M. de Neufville and Mr Gillon, who are here. But it is propagated, that there are many more, and M. Van Berckel and the Baron Van der Capellan are named. But I have very good reason to believe, that they have not a line of either. [370]

The English are giving out, as is their practice every fall, that they are determined to send great forces to America. Fourteen regiments are talked of, ten thousand men, but these threats will be executed as usual. Fourteen regiments, if they send them, will not produce four thousand men in America, to repair all their losses in North America and the West Indies.

We have one enemy more pernicious to us than all their army, and that is an opinion, which prevails in too many American minds, that there is still some justice, some honor, some humanity, and some reason in Great Britain, and that they will open their eyes and make peace. That there are individuals who have these virtues cannot be doubted. Rome had many such, even after the *ultimi Romanorum*. But they were so few, in comparison to the whole, and had so little share in government, that they only served, by their endeavors to bring things back, to make the nation more miserable.

I am so fully convinced, that peace is a great way off, and that we have more cruelty to encounter than ever, that I ought to be explicit to Congress. We shall be forced to wean ourselves from the little remainder of affection and respect for that nation. Nay, even from our curiosity. I cannot think it decent, that any American should voluntarily set his foot on British ground, while we are treated as we are. The practice is too common to step over, upon motives of curiosity, pleasure, or business, and I cannot but think it ought to be discountenanced. [371]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, November 4th, 1780.

Sir,

M. de Neufville this morning brought me a number of bills of exchange, drawn upon Mr Laurens, in the month of July, amounting to seven or eight hundred pounds sterling, and informed me that your Excellency had declined becoming responsible for them and referred him to me. I have inquired of Mr Searle, who informs me there are about twenty thousand pounds in such bills now on their way. If there were only seven or eight hundred pounds, I would accept them, for the honor of the United States, and run the venture of being able to pay them, by borrowing, or some way or other; but twenty thousand pounds is much beyond my private credit. I have been and am pursuing all those measures, to which I am advised by gentlemen, in whose judgment I can justify placing confidence, and am not without hopes of succeeding in some measure; but I have not as yet been able to obtain any money, nor any certainty of obtaining any in future. I write this, therefore, to your Excellency, that if you could see your way clear to become responsible for these bills, for the present, I will engage to see them paid with the money I may borrow here, if I borrow enough before the term for their payment expires, or as much of them as I shall be able to borrow; but in this case, if I should not succeed in obtaining the money, your Excellency will be answerable. I should be sorry that the credit of the United States should suffer any stain, and [372]

would prevent it if I could; but at present it is not in my power.

The successes of the English at the southward, added to the many causes that obstructed our credit in this Republic before, some of which it would not be prudent to explain, will render a loan here difficult; but I still hope not quite impracticable.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, November 16th, 1780.

Sir,

On the 10th of this month, Sir Joseph Yorke presented to the States-General the following

MEMORIAL.

"High and Mighty Lords,

"The King, my master, has discovered during the whole course of his reign the most sincere desire to maintain the union, which has subsisted for more than a century between his Crown and this Republic. This union rests upon the immovable basis of reciprocal interest; and as it has contributed much to the prosperity of the two nations, the natural enemy of both employs all the resources of his policy to destroy it. For sometime past, this enemy has not labored but with too much success, being supported by a faction, which seeks to govern the Republic, and which is always ready to sacrifice the general interest to private views. The King has seen with as much surprise as regret, the little effect which has been produced by his repeated demands of the succors stipulated by the treaties, and the representations of his Ambassadors, concerning the daily violations of engagements the most solemn.

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"The moderation of the King has induced him to attribute this conduct of your High Mightinesses, to the intrigues of an *overbearing cabal*; and his Majesty would still persuade himself, that your justice and your intelligence will determine you to fulfil your engagements towards him, and to prove by all your proceedings your resolution to put in vigor the system formed by the wisdom of your ancestors, and the only one which can ensure the safety and glory of the Republic. The answer of your High Mightinesses to this declaration, which the subscriber makes by the express order of his Court, will be the touchstone of your sentiments and intentions towards the King.

"His Majesty has had for sometime indications without number of the dangerous designs of an *unbridled cabal*. But the papers of Mr Laurens, who calls himself a President of a pretended Congress, have made a discovery of a conspiracy without example in the annals of the Republic. It appears by these papers, that the gentlemen of Amsterdam have commenced a clandestine correspondence with the rebels of America, from the month of August, 1778, and that there were instructions and full powers given by them, relative to the conclusion of an indissoluble treaty of amity with these rebels, subjects of a sovereign, to whom the Republic is bound by engagements the most strict. The authors of this conspiracy pretend not to deny it; on the contrary, they avow it, and endeavor in vain to justify it. It is in these circumstances, that his Majesty, depending on the equity of your High Mightinesses, demands a formal disavowal of a conduct so irregular, not less contrary to your engagements the most sacred, than to the fundamental laws of the Batavian Constitution. The King demands also, a prompt satisfaction proportioned to the offence, and an exemplary punishment of the Pensionary, Van Berckel, and of his accomplices, as disturbers of the public peace, and violators of the law of nations.

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"His Majesty persuades himself, that the answer of your High Mightinesses will be prompt and satisfactory in all respects. But if the contrary should happen, if your High Mightinesses refuse a demand so just, or endeavor to evade it by silence, which will be considered as a refusal, in that case, the King will not be able to consider the Republic itself but as approving of misdemeanors, which it refuses to disavow and to punish; and after such a conduct, his Majesty will see himself in the necessity of taking such measures, as the maintenance of his dignity and the essential interests of his people demand.

"Done at the Hague, the 10th of November, 1780.

JOSEPH YORKE."

Whether Sir Joseph Yorke, after twenty years' residence in this Republic, is ignorant of its Constitution, or whether, knowing it, he treats it in this manner, on purpose the more palpably to insult it, I know not. The sovereignty resides in the States-General; but who are the States-General? Not their High Mightinesses, who assemble at the Hague to deliberate; these are only deputies of the States-General. The States-General are the Regencies of the cities, and the bodies of nobles in the several Provinces. The Burgomasters of Amsterdam, therefore, who are called

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the Regency, are one integral branch of the sovereignty of the Seven United Provinces, and the most material branch of all, because the city of Amsterdam is one quarter of the whole Republic, at least in taxes.

What would be said in England if the Count de Welderen, Ambassador at the Court of London, had presented a Memorial to the King, in which he had charged any integral part of their sovereignty, as the whole House of Lords, or the whole House of Commons, with conspiracies, factions, cabals, sacrificing general interests to private views, and demanded exemplary punishment upon them? The cases are in nature precisely parallel, although there are only three branches of the sovereignty in England, and there are a greater number than three in Holland.

There are strong symptoms of resentment of this outrageous Memorial in Amsterdam; but whether the whole will not evaporate, I know not. Many persons, however, are of opinion that a war is inevitable, and ensurance cannot be had even to St Eustatia, since this Memorial was made public, under twenty or twentyfive per cent.

This Memorial is so like the language of Lord Hillsborough and Governor Bernard, that I could scarcely forbear substituting Boston for Amsterdam, and Otis, or Hancock, or Adams, for Van Berckel, as I read it. I should not wonder if the next Memorial should charge the Republic with rebellion, and except two or three from pardon.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, November 17th, 1780.

Sir,

From the time of the arrival of my commission, I have been constantly employed in forming acquaintances, making inquiries, and asking advice; but am sorry to be obliged to say, that hitherto I see no certain prospect of borrowing any money at all.

For some years past, all the information I could obtain from this country, led me to think that America had many friends in this Republic, and that a considerable sum might be borrowed here, provided application was made to Dutch houses, of old families and numerous connexions. And after my arrival here, I had the opinion of persons whom I had every reason to think knew best, that if proper powers should arrive from the thirteen United States, money might be had. But now that all agree, that full powers have arrived, I do not find the same encouragement. This nation has been so long in the habit of admiring the English, and disliking the French, so familiarized to call England the natural ally, and France the natural enemy of the Republic, that it must be the work of time to eradicate these prejudices, although the circumstances are greatly altered. Add to this the little decision and success which has appeared in the conduct of the affairs of America and her allies, and the series of small successes which the English have had for the last twelve months; the suspense and uncertainty in which men's minds have been held respecting the accession of the Dutch to the armed neutrality; and at last the publication of some papers taken with Mr Laurens, the part the Stadtholder has acted, and the angry Memorial of Sir Joseph Yorke concerning them; all these things together have thrown this nation into a state of astonishment, confusion, and uncertainty, to such a degree, that no house that I have as yet thought it prudent to apply to, dares to undertake the trust. The times are now critical indeed. The question will be decided in a few days, whether the Republic shall join the armed neutrality or not. Four Provinces have voted for it; two others have voted in such a manner that their deputies may agree to it; and most men say it will be decided by the plurality.

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The King of England demands a disavowal of the Amsterdam Treaty, and the punishment of the Regency. They will not be punished, nor their conduct disavowed. The King of England, therefore, must take such measures as he shall think his dignity, and the essential interests of his people require. What these will be, time alone can discover. Many think he will declare war, but more are of a different opinion.

Congress, who have been long used to contemplate the characters and the policy of this King and his Ministers, will see that they are now pursuing towards this Republic, the same maxims which have always governed them. Their measures in America, for many years, were calculated to divide the many from the few in the towns of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston; next, to divide the Provinces from their capitals, and then to divide the rest of the Continent from those Provinces, which took the earliest a decided part.

Their plan now is, to divide the people of Amsterdam from their Burgomasters, and to single out M. Van Berckel, for the fate of Barnevelt, Grotius, or De Witt; to divide the other cities of Holland from Amsterdam, and the other Provinces of the Republic from Holland. But they will succeed no better in Holland than in America, and their conduct bids fair to make M. Van Berckel the most respected and esteemed of all the citizens.

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In the present critical state of things, a commission of a Minister Plenipotentiary would be useful here. It would not be acknowledged, perhaps not produced, except in case of war. But if peace should continue, it would secure its possessor the external respect of all. It would give him the right to claim and demand the prerogatives and privileges of a Minister Plenipotentiary, in case anything should turn up which might require it. It would make him considered as the center of American affairs, and it would assist, if anything would, a loan.

I cannot conclude without observing, that I cannot think it would be safe for Congress to draw for money here, until they shall receive certain information that their bills can be honored. There are bills arrived, which if Mr Franklin cannot answer, must, for what I know be protested.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, November 24th, 1780.

Sir,

The letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write me on the 13th is received, and I have accordingly accepted the bills, and shall draw upon your Excellency about the time they become payable, for money to enable me to discharge them, provided I should not succeed in my endeavors to borrow it here.

I have hitherto no prospect at all. When I first arrived here, I had such informations as made me believe that a sum of money might be had upon the credit of the United States. But the news from Carolina, and New York and the West Indies, but above all, the affair of the Burgomasters and Sir Joseph Yorke's Memorial, have struck a panic which must have time to wear off. At present I meet with only one gentleman who thinks anything can be done, and I fear that he deceives himself. [379]

I hope by this time your Excellency's health is restored, and have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, November 26th, 1780.

Sir,

It is now certain that the States-General have, by a plurality of five Provinces, determined to accede to the armed neutrality. Zealand and Guelderland have agreed to it likewise; but upon condition of a warranty of the possessions of the Republic. If the intention of Sir J. Yorke's memorial was to intimidate their High Mightinesses from this measure, he has missed his aim. Nor will the conduct of the Burgomasters of Amsterdam be disavowed, nor M. Van Berckel, nor his accomplices, punished. We shall see how the British Ministry will disentangle themselves from this perplexity.

All these things, however, so far from aiding our affairs in this nation, seem to have put an entire stop to them for the present. The nation is trembling for their commerce, their money in the British funds, their East and West India possessions, and no man dares engage in a measure that may in some degree increase the alarm. [380]

The bills upon Mr Laurens I have accepted, those of them at least that have arrived, upon an assurance from Dr Franklin, that in case I should not be able to borrow the money by the time they become payable, that I may draw upon him for it. I think Congress will perceive the danger of drawing any more, until they shall receive intelligence from me that the money is ready.

The choice of a house is a point of so much importance, that I could not justify making it, without the most mature inquiry and reflection. Not only the success of the negotiation will depend upon it, but the political consequences of it will be important. I have made every inquiry and several proposals, but all have been politely declined. There are two houses which I believe would accept it, but these, although respectable, are so far from the first rank that I should be sorry to fix upon either, if I could see a prospect of gaining one of higher rank. I am told, that opening the loan now would injure us exceedingly; but I know not what to judge. I have found so many opinions mistaken, that in this country I cannot judge which are well founded.

Fear is ever the second passion in minds governed by avarice. As long, therefore, as the English

misrepresentations can make people here believe that there is a possibility of conquering America, or of our returning to the government of England, so long we shall find little credit here.

The Prince was ill advised when he undertook what he was not obliged to do, in producing Mr Laurens' papers, which he did too, in a manner justly offensive to the United States. It was the part of Sir Joseph Yorke to have produced them, not to the Prince, but to their High [381] Mightinesses. His Serene Highness, therefore, in this work of supererogation, gave himself the air of an instrument of Sir Joseph, which has not at all recommended him to the Dutch nation.

But Sir Joseph, or his master, has committed a greater mistake in presenting that intemperate memorial. It is said, that he pleads positive orders; but many believe that if he had such orders, he procured them from his Court, and that the memorial was prepared at the Hague, and adjusted to the state of parties and politics in the Republic. Be this as it may, both the Prince and the Ambassador have missed their aim, and the publication of Mr Laurens' papers has had a contrary effect from what they expected and intended.

The Republic, however, is in an embarrassed situation. The Prince has a decided inclination for England. He has the command of armies and navies, and the gift of so many offices, that his influence is astonishing among the nobility, and all the higher families. Besides this, the clergy are very generally devoted to him, and their influence among the populace is very great; so that there is great danger that the Republic will not be able to exert its real strength, even in case England should continue their hostilities. I say continue, because it is certain that by repeated violations of territory, as well as by innumerable captures of innocent vessels, hostilities have been long since begun.

It is the opinion of many here, that without the discovery of Mr Laurens' papers, the Republic would not have acceded to the armed neutrality. As this great confederation is now determined on, we shall see what will be its effects. The Empress of Russia is not of a character to be trifled with; yet I think the English will not respect the new arrangement. They will violate the principles of it, at least towards the Dutch, and risk a war with all the maritime powers of the world at once, rather than relinquish America, and agree to the principle of free ships, free goods. [382]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, November 30th, 1780.

Sir,

I have already accepted bills drawn upon Mr Laurens, to the amount of thirtyfour thousand three hundred and fiftyeight guilders. How many more will arrive, I know not. I shall inform your Excellency from time to time, as they appear, and I accept them.

This Republic is in a violent crisis. If a certain party prevails, we shall raise no money here; if they do not, we shall raise very little. Patience is recommended to me, and delay in hopes of a turn of affairs. I am advised to do nothing, to attempt nothing, not even to choose a house, at present.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, November 30th, 1780.

Sir,

The state of parties in this Republic is still critical. Many anonymous pamphlets appear on both sides. Those which proceed from the English party, are virulent against M. Van Berckel. The Republic itself wavers, according to events and causes, which are impenetrable. A few days ago, the plan appeared to be, to accede to the armed neutrality, in order to satisfy one party, and to disavow the conduct of Amsterdam, in forming with Mr Lee, the project of a treaty, in order to appease the other.^[10] Fifteen cities, even in the Province of Holland, have disavowed this measure; Haerlem and Dort are the only two, which have approved it. The Grand Pensionary of Holland has sent after the courier, who had been despatched to the Plenipotentiaries at [383]

Petersburg, and brought him back to the Hague. What alteration is to be made, is unknown. It is now given out, that they have determined to increase the fortifications of the maritime towns, and augment their garrisons.

I see every day more and more of the inveterate prejudices of this nation in favor of the English, and against the French; more and more of the irresistible influence of the Stadtholder, and more and more of the irresolution, uncertainty, and confusion of the nation. How the whole will conclude, I know not. One thing, however, is certain, that Congress can depend upon no money from hence. I have, confiding in the assurances of Dr Franklin, accepted all the bills drawn upon Mr Laurens, which have yet been presented to me, amounting to thirtyfour thousand three hundred and fiftyeight guilders; but I have no prospect of discharging them, or even of deriving my own subsistence from any other source than Passy. Congress, will, therefore, I presume, desist from any further drafts upon Holland, at least until they receive certain information that money has been borrowed, of which I see no present prospect.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 14th, 1780.

Sir,

I am every day accepting the bills of exchange, which were drawn upon Mr Laurens; but I have no prospect of obtaining money to discharge them, from any other person than Dr Franklin.

For some years before I came to Holland, every person I saw from this place assured me, that in his opinion, money might be borrowed, provided application was made with proper powers directly from Congress to solid Dutch houses. After my arrival here, these assurances were repeated to me, by persons whose names I could mention, and who I thought could not be deceived themselves, nor deceive me. But now that powers have arrived, and application has been made to Dutch houses undoubtedly solid, these houses will not accept the business. In short, I cannot refrain from saying, that almost all the professions of friendship to America, which have been made, turn out, upon trial, to have been nothing more than little adulations to procure a share in our trade. Truth demands of me this observation. Americans find here the politeness of the table, and a readiness to enter into their trade, but the public finds no disposition to afford any assistance, political or pecuniary. They impute this to a change in sentiments, to the loss of Charleston, the defeat of General Gates, to Arnold's desertion, to the inactivity of the French and Spaniards, &c. &c. &c. But I know better. It is not the love of the English, although there is a great deal more of that than is deserved, but it is fear of the English and the Stadtholderian party.

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I must, therefore, entreat Congress to make no more drafts upon Holland, until they hear from me that their bills can be accepted, of which, at present, I have no hopes.

People of the first character have been, and are still constantly advising, that Congress should send a Minister Plenipotentiary here, and insist upon it that this would promote a loan. It is possible it may; but I can see no certainly that it will. Sending a few cargoes of produce, would do something.

The Dutch are now felicitating themselves upon the depth and the felicity of their politics. They have joined the neutrality, and have disavowed Amsterdam, and this has appeased the wrath of the English, the appearance of which, in Sir Joseph Yorke's Memorial, terrified them more than I ever saw any part of America intimidated in the worst crisis of her affairs. The late news we have of advantages gained by our arms in several skirmishes in Carolina, contributes a little to allay the panic. But all in Europe depends upon our success.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

[386]

Amsterdam, December 18th, 1780.

Sir,

War is to a Dutchman the greatest of evils. Sir Joseph Yorke is so sensible of this, that he keeps alive a continual fear of it, by memorials after memorials, each more affronting to any

sovereignty of delicate notions of dignity than the former. By this means he keeps up the panic, and while this panic continues, I shall certainly have no success at all. No man dares engage for me; very few dare see me.

On Tuesday last, the 12th of December, the British Ambassador had a conference with the President of the States-General, and upon that occasion presented to their High Mightinesses the following Memorial.

"High and Mighty Lords,

"The uniform conduct of the King towards the Republic, the friendship which has so long subsisted between the two nations, the right of sovereigns, and the faith of engagements the most solemn, will, without doubt, determine the answer of your High Mightinesses to the Memorial, which the subscriber presented some time ago, by the express order of his Court. It would be to mistake the wisdom and the justice of your High Mightinesses to suppose, that you could balance one moment to give the satisfaction demanded by his Majesty. As the resolutions of your High Mightinesses, of the 27th of November, were the result of a deliberation, which regarded only the interior of your government, and it was not then in question to answer the said Memorial, the only remark which we shall make upon those resolutions is, that the principles which dictated them, prove evidently the justice of the demand made by the King. In deliberating upon this Memorial, to which the subscriber hereby requires, in the name of his Court, an answer immediate and satisfactory in all respects, your High Mightinesses will recollect, without doubt, that the affair is of the last importance; that the question is concerning a complaint made by an offended sovereign; that the offence, of which he demands an exemplary punishment and complete satisfaction, is a violation of the Batavian constitution, whereof the King is the warranty, an infraction of the public faith, an outrage against the dignity of his Crown. The King has never imagined that your High Mightinesses would have approved of a treaty with his rebel subjects. This would have been on your part a commencement of hostilities, and a declaration of war. But the offence has been committed by the magistrates of a city, which makes a considerable part of the State, and it is the duty of the sovereign power to punish and repair it. His Majesty, by the complaints made by his Ambassador, has put the punishment and the reparation into the hands of your High Mightinesses, and it will not be but in the last extremity, that is to say, in the case of a denial of justice on your part, or of silence, which must be interpreted as a refusal, that the King will take this charge upon himself.

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"Done at the Hague, the 12th of December, 1780."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, December 21st, 1780.

Sir,

The sentiments and affections of a people may be learned from many little circumstances, which few people attend to. The poets and orators are generally considered as the surest repositories of popular ideas, both in ancient and modern nations. The clergy may be classed among the latter, and it is very certain, that most public preachers accommodate both their sermons and their prayers, in some degree, to the general taste of their hearers, and avoid everything which will unnecessarily give them offence.

At Rotterdam, there are several English churches. The Presbyterian church, which would be the least likely, one should think, to be bigotted by England, I attended. The parson in his prayer, after petitioning heaven for the States of Holland and West Friesland, the States-General and Council of State, and for the Prince of Orange, their hereditary Stadtholder, and Governor, &c. added a petition for England, for the King, Queen, and royal family, for their health, long life, and prosperity, and added, that he might triumph over all his enemies in the four quarters of the world.

At Amsterdam, I have attended both the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, and heard similar supplications to heaven in both. At Utrecht, I attended the Presbyterian church, and there heard a prayer for the English, with much more fervor and in greater detail. The parson was quite transported with his zeal, and prayed that the rebellion, which has so long prevailed, might be suppressed, and hide its head in shame. At Leyden there is another English church. The parson, I am told, is a tory, but prudently omits such kind of prayers.

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This is quite a work of supererogation in the reverend zealots, and is, therefore, a stronger proof that such sentiments are popular. The English, who are very numerous in all these cities, are universally in favor of the British Ministry. But there are so many Dutch families who worship in these churches, that the parsons would not give them offence, if such prayers were offensive. This is the more remarkable, as the religion of North America is much more like that of this

Republic, than like that of England. But such prayers recommend the parson to the Prince of Orange, and to the English party, and no other party or person has influence or courage enough to take offence at them.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 25th, 1780.

Sir,

It is very difficult to discover with certainty the secret spring, which actuates the Courts of Europe; but whatever I can find, with any degree of probability, I shall transmit to Congress at one time or another.

The Prince of Orange is himself of the royal family of England; his mother was a daughter of King George the Second, and this relation is no doubt one among the several motives, which attach the Stadtholder to England. His Princess is a niece of the King of Prussia, and it is believed is not perfectly agreed with His Most Serene Highness, in his enthusiasm for the English Court. The King of Prussia has a great esteem and affection for his niece, with whom he frequently corresponds. In some of his letters he is supposed to have expressed his sentiments freely upon the Prince's conduct, intimating, that his Highness would take too much upon himself, and make himself too responsible, if he persevered in a resolute opposition to the armed neutrality. The Empress of Russia, who possesses a masterly understanding, and a decided inclination for America, is thought too, to have expressed some uneasiness at the Prince's political system. The King of Sweden, who was lately at the Hague, is reported to have had free conversation with the Prince upon the same subject. All these intimations together, are believed to have made His Most Serene Highness hesitate a little, and consider whether he was not acting too dangerous a part, in exerting all his influence in the Republic, to induce it to take a part in opposition to the general sense and inclination of the people, and to all the maritime powers of Europe. [390]

The English Court is undoubtedly informed of all this. They dread the accession of the Dutch to the armed neutrality, more than all the other branches of that confederation, because of the rivalry in commerce, and because the Dutch will assist the Royal Marines of France and Spain, more than all the others. The present conduct of the English indicates a design to go to war with the Dutch, on pretence of an insult to their Crown, committed two years ago, by a treaty with America, in hopes, that they will not be supported in this quarrel by the confederated neutral powers. But they will be mistaken. The artifice is too gross. The confederated powers will easily see, that the real cause of offence is the accession to the armed neutrality, and the conduct of Amsterdam, in projecting a treaty with America, only a pretence. [391]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 25th, 1780.

Sir,

The dispute between Great Britain and the United Provinces is now wrought up to a crisis. Things must take a new turn in the course of a few days, but whether they will end in a war, or in the retraction of one party or the other, time alone can determine.

I have before transmitted to Congress the two Memorials of Sir Joseph Yorke, against M. Van Berckel, and the Burgomasters of Amsterdam. The language of both is conformable to that domineering spirit, which has actuated the Councils of St James, from the beginning of this reign, and they have committed the honor and dignity of the King, and engaged the pride of the nation so far, that there is no room left for a retreat, without the most humiliating mortification. On the other hand, there is authentic information, that the States proceeding in their usual forms, have determined to refer the conduct of Amsterdam to a committee of lawyers, who are to consider and report, whether the Burgomasters have done anything, which they had not by law and the Constitution authority to do. It is universally known and agreed, that the report must and will be in favor of the Burgomasters. This report will be accepted and confirmed by the States, and transmitted to all the neutral Courts, in order to show them, that neither the Republic in general nor the city of Amsterdam in particular, have done anything against the spirit of the armed [392]

neutrality. The States have also determined to make an answer to the British Ambassador's Memorials, and to demand satisfaction of the King his master, for the indignity offered to their sovereignty, in those memorials. In this resolution, the States have been perfectly unanimous, the Body of Nobles, for the first time, having agreed with the Generality. The question then is, which power will recede. I am confidently assured, that the States will not; and indeed if they should, they may as well submit to the King, and surrender their independence at once. I am not, however, very clear what they will do. I doubt whether they have firmness to look a war in the face. Will the English recede, if the Dutch do not? If they should, it would be contrary to the maxims, which have invariably governed them during this reign. It will humble the insolent overbearing pride of the nation; it will expose the Ministry to the scoffs and scorn of opposition; it will elevate the courage of the Dutch, the neutral powers, and the House of Bourbon, not to mention the great effect it will have in America, upon the whigs and tories, objects which the British Court never loses sight of.

This Republic is certainly, and has been for several weeks, in a very violent struggle. It has every symptom of an agony, that usually precedes a great revolution. The streets of the city swarm with libels of party against party. Some masterly pamphlets have been written in favor of the Burgomasters. Thousands of extravagant and incredible reports are made and propagated. Many new songs appear among the populace, one particularly adapted for the amusement of the sailors, and calculated to inspire them with proper sentiments of resentment against the English. A woman, who sung it in the streets, the day before yesterday, sold six hundred of them in an hour, and in one spot. These are symptoms of war. But it is not easy to conquer the national prejudices of a hundred years' standing, nor to avoid the influence of the Stadtholder, which is much more formidable. In this fermentation, the people can think of nothing else, and I need not add, that I have no chance of getting a ducat of money, but I think Congress will see the necessity of having here in these critical times more ample powers.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 25th, 1780.

Sir,

Affairs are still in suspense. This day being Christmas, and yesterday a Sunday, there was no public Exchange held on either. But business, and especially stockjobbing, goes on without ceasing, being done at the coffee-houses on Sundays, and holy-days, when it cannot be held upon 'Change.

The English mail, which had been interrupted by contrary winds for three posts, arrived on Saturday. The English gazettes of the 19th announced, that Sir Joseph Yorke was recalled, and a Dutch war was inevitable. Private letters informed, that the Count de Welderen was about leaving the British Court, and that an embargo was laid on all Dutch ships in Great Britain; that the stocks had fallen two per cent, and that a war was inevitable. The stock-jobbers, Englishmen, and others at the coffee-houses, had melancholy countenances, and uncommon anxiety. News was also propagated from the Hague, that Sir Joseph Yorke was gone. Others said he had received his orders to go. As there was no Exchange, the public judgment is not made up, whether there will be war or not. Some gentlemen of knowledge and experience think all this a farce, concerted at the Hague, between Sir Joseph and his friends there, and the Ministry in England, in order to spread an alarm, intimidate the States into an answer, which may be accepted with a color of honor, &c. or to do something worse, that is, rouse a spirit among the mobility against the Burgomasters of Amsterdam. I cannot, however, but be of opinion, that there is more in this, and that the Ministry will carry their rage to great extremities. They have gone too far to look back, without emboldening their enemies, confounding their friends, and exposing themselves to the contempt and ridicule of both. A few hours, however, will throw more light upon this important subject. The plot must unravel immediately.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 26th, 1780.

Sir,

The public papers of this morning inform me, that Sir Joseph Yorke left the Hague on the morning of the 24th, without taking leave of anybody, and bent his way to London by the way of Antwerp and Ostend.

Sometime in the month of April last, a certain British Ambassador, who had an inclination to take a few of the pleasures of Paris in his way to Germany, said in that city, where I received the information in the time of it, "to be sure the Americans will carry their point, and establish their independence, for there will infallibly be a war between England and Holland before Christmas." [395]

If the war is considered to commence from the departure of the Ambassador, Sir Joseph went off exactly in time to accomplish the prophecy. Since the departure of Sir Joseph has been generally known, the city has been in a fermentation. The English Ministry are cursed here as heartily as anywhere in general. Things are said by our friends to be in a very good situation, but I never know what to believe. The English are very bold I think; they are very enthusiastic, they are sure of the assistance of Providence, as sure of success against all their enemies as the old lady was of relief from want, and making her fortune by drawing a prize in the lottery. "But have you bought a ticket, mamma?" said her daughter. "No, my child," replied the old lady, "I have no ticket, but Providence is Almighty, and therefore I am sure of the highest prize, ticket or no ticket."

I have the honor to be, &c

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 28th, 1780.

Sir,

The Dutch say, that the English are acting the part of the sailor, who having quarrelled with three others, as stout as himself, and got his bones broken and eyes beat out in the squabble, challenged four more to fight him at the same time, that he might have it in his power to make up with all seven *with honor*. [396]

If the English are not actuated by the same blind and vindictive passions, which have governed them so many years, it is impossible to see through their policy. I think it is impossible they should be ignorant of the articles of confederation of the neutral powers. These articles as I am informed, warrant to all the neutral powers their treaties with England, and stipulate that if either is attacked after the 20th of November last, it shall be made a common cause.

If the English should issue letters of marque against the Dutch, the States-General will not immediately issue letters of marque in return, but will represent the facts to the Congress at Petersburg, and demand the benefit of the treaty of armed neutrality, and all the powers who are parties to that confederation will join in demanding of England restitution, and in case of refusal, will jointly issue letters of marque and reprisal.

The political machine that is now in motion, is so vast, and comprehends so many nations, whose interests are not easy to adjust, that it is perhaps impossible for the human understanding to foresee what events may occur to disturb it. But at present there is no unfavorable appearance from any quarter. We are in hourly expectation of interesting news from the English, French, and Spanish fleets, from Petersburg, from London and the Hague, and especially from North America. Every wheel and spring in the whole political system of Europe would have its motions rapidly accelerated by certain news from America, of any decisive advantage obtained over Cornwallis, in South Carolina; so true it is, that America is the very centre and axis of the whole. [397]

The death of the Empress Queen it is generally thought will make no alteration in the system of Europe. Yet it is possible after some time there may be changes, none, however, which can be hurtful to us.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 30th, 1780

Sir,

The Province of Zealand having been opposed to the other Provinces in so many instances, and having lately protested against the resolution of the States-General, which begin to be thought

spirited, it may be useful to explain to Congress the causes which influence that Province to a conduct which is generally thought to be opposite to the true interest of the Republic in general.

In the States of Zeeland there are only five voices, three of which are absolutely in the discretion of the Prince of Orange, who has one voice as Stadtholder of the Province, another as Marquis of Veere, and a third as First Noble. The Stadtholder is therefore absolute in this Province, which accounts at once for its conduct upon every occasion. The friends, however, of the Prince, of England, and of Zeeland, are not willing that the world should believe that the Prince's power in this Province, and his attachment to England are the sole causes of its conduct upon every occasion, and therefore they enlarge upon several topics, as apologies and excuses for a behavior, which cannot wholly be justified. The arguments in justification or excuse of Zeeland are drawn from four principal sources. First, the situation of the islands, which compose the Province. Secondly, the interests of its particular commerce. Thirdly, the weakness of its interior forces. Fourthly, the state of its finances. [398]

1. The territory of Zeeland consists of five or six islands, two of which are moderately large, and the rest very small. These islands are formed in the mouth of the (Escaut) Scheldt, by the sea, or by the different branches of the Scheldt itself. In case of a sudden invasion, these islands separated from the Province of Holland by an arm of the sea, are too unconnected to receive any immediate assistance. Such an invasion is so much the more easy for the English, as Zeeland is very near them. They may invade this Province even before a suspicion should be conceived that the project had been formed. Who shall oppose their enterprise? Shall it be the French, who are now friendly? Dunkirk, it is true, is near enough, but what forces are there at Dunkirk? The only naval force there, consists of a few privateers, who could neither oppose an armament escorted by British men-of-war, nor venture to transport troops to oppose it, even supposing the invasion was not made by surprise. Shall the Zealanders themselves make a resistance to the English? But separated from one another by waters, which would necessarily retard their junction, the island of Walcheren, the principal of all, would be in possession of the enemy before they could put themselves in a posture to repel force by force. It is, moreover, not only possible but easy to make a descent upon Zeeland by so many places, that the Zealanders with their own forces alone could not defend effectually all the passages. Eight thousand English, or even a smaller number would force the Zealanders everywhere, because there is nowhere a fortress capable of holding out twelve hours. The ports of Flushing and Veere are the only ones which have any defence; but they are very far from the state in which they ought to be, to stop an enemy determined upon pillage, animated by revenge, and whom the pleasure of doing mischief instigates forcibly. It is conceded that if the English descended in Zeeland, they would be constrained to abandon it very soon; that they might and would be driven from it in a few days; that the figure which they would make would be neither glorious nor honorable, and that their temerity would cost them dear; but the disorder caused by an invasion remains after the expulsion of the invaders. The people invaded are always the victims of the evils which they have suffered, and these evils, always considerable to the individuals, are seldom compensated entirely. When an incendiary has burned my house, whether he is punished or not, my house is consumed and lost to me. The exactions, the pillage, and all the abominations which follow the *coups de main* of an unbridled soldiery, would be cruelly felt by the unfortunate Zealanders, even after the perpetrators should be driven out, or sacrificed to the public resentment. [399]

2. The peculiar commerce of Zeeland. This Province has no other than that small commerce, which is known by the name of the coasting trade. This kind of trade is considerable in the Provinces of Holland, North Holland, and Friesland. The number of vessels employed in these three Provinces in this kind of trade is inconceivable, and the greatest part of them is destined for the service of France. All which France receives from foreigners, and all which it furnishes to foreigners, is carried in these Holland vessels, and if there was no other than the freight for the masters and owners of these vessels, this profit would still be of the greatest consideration. Thus it is not surprising that the Province of Holland has taken such strong measures in favor of France. Its particular commerce would naturally determine it this way. On the contrary, Zeeland employs the small number of her merchant ships in a commerce with England, a commerce so much the more lucrative, as it is almost entirely contraband or smuggled. [400]

The profits to be made on brandy and other spirituous liquors, imported clandestinely into England, are very considerable; and it is Zeeland that makes these profits, because they are her subjects who entertain a continual correspondence with the English smugglers. The proximity of the coasts of Zeeland to those of England, renders this commerce, which is prohibited to English subjects, sure for the inhabitants of Zeeland. Fishing barks are sufficient to carry it on, and these barks are rarely taken, whether it is that they are difficult to take, or whether there is not much desire to take them. These barks, arrived upon the coasts of England, find others which come to take what they bring. The place where this traffic is held, is generally some creek upon the coast of England, where the vessel may be loaded and unloaded in secrecy. Moreover, those whom the English Ministry appoint to prevent this commerce at sea, are those who favor it. We know very well the decided inclination of the English in general, and, above all, of their seamen for strong liquors. Zeeland, concurring openly in the measures, which the Republic is now taking against England, or, if you will, against the powers at war, would draw upon itself particularly the hatred, anger, and vengeance of a nation, without which it is impossible to sustain its trade, and this Province would, by this means, deprive a great number of its subjects of a source of gain, which places them in a condition to furnish the imposts which they have to pay. Is it not then the part of prudence in the States of Zeeland, to avoid with care everything that might embroil them, particularly with England? Is it not also the wisdom of the States-General to have a regard to the [401]

critical situation of one of the Seven Provinces which compose the union?

3. The weakness of her internal forces. Zeeland is open on all sides to the English. To set them at defiance, she ought to have in herself forces capable of intimidating Great Britain. But where are such forces to be found? In the garrisons, which the Republic maintains there? Two or three thousand men dispersed at Flushing, at Veere, and in some other cities, are but a feeble defence against a descent of six or seven thousand English, well determined. Will these troops of the Republic be supported by armed citizens? Suppose it; their defeat will be not less certain. These citizens, who have never seen a loaded musket discharged, are more proper to carry an empty fusil, to mount guard at a state-house, which is never to be attacked, than to march to the defence of a coast threatened with a descent, or to present themselves upon the parapet of a fort, battered with machines that vomit forth death. These citizens, or rather these soldiers of a moment, would carry disorder into the ranks, and do more injury than service, by giving countenance to the flight of those brave warriors, who make it a point of honor to combat with a steadfast foot. Moreover, who are these citizens, which might be joined to the regular troops? Are they the principal inhabitants? Those who have the most to lose? Those to whom birth and education have given sentiments of honor and of glory? No. These have, by paying sums of money, exemptions, which excuse them from taking arms, to defend the country in time of peace. Is it credible that in the most critical moments they will generously renounce these exemptions? It will be, then, the citizens of the second order, the artisans, or people who have little or nothing to lose, who will serve for the reinforcement to the veterans. Experience demonstrates what dependence is to be placed at this day upon such militia. It would be in vain to oppose to this the time of the revolution, those times of the heroism of the ancestors of the Dutch. The cause is not the same; they attack at this day in a different fashion, and perhaps the defence too would be made in a very different manner. It might be otherwise, if the coasts of Zeeland were fortified with good forts, or if the cities of Flushing and Veere were in a condition to sustain a siege of some months, and with their little garrisons stop the assailants, until the arrival of succors. But one must be very little informed not to know that the English, although they should be incommoded in their landing, would nevertheless effect it with little loss. [402]

4. The state of her finances. Zeeland, of all the Seven Provinces, is that which costs the most for the maintenance of her dykes. More exposed than all the others to be drowned by the sea, her coasts require continual repairs. These reparations cannot be made, but at great expense. Unprovided with wood suitable for the construction of ramparts capable of stopping the waves, which beat upon her continually, she is obliged to import from foreigners those numberless and enormous timbers, which art substitutes in the place of those rocks, which nature has granted to other countries, for holding in the ocean and restraining its fury. It is necessary, therefore, that a great part of the public revenue of the Province should go to foreigners. She must, moreover, furnish her quota to the general treasury of the Republic; from whence it follows, that she cannot expose herself to the indispensable necessity of increasing her imposts, to furnish the new expenses, which an extraordinary armament would bring upon all the State. More than once, in time of peace, the public coffers of the State have been obliged to furnish to the Province of Zeeland, the succors which she could not find at home, without reducing her subjects to the most horrible distress. To what condition, then, would those subjects be reduced, if in the progress of the armed neutrality, such as is proposed, or in a war with England, they should still be obliged to pay new contributions? All the world agrees that Zeeland is poor; it must be acknowledged then that she will be plunged in the lowest indigence, if the expenses of the country are augmented, although there are many individuals in Zeeland who are very rich and grand capitalists, and luxury among the great is carried to excess as immoderate as it is in Holland. Zeeland has so long embarrassed the Republic in all their deliberations concerning the armed neutrality, and lately concerning the serious quarrel, that England has commenced against her, that I thought it would at least gratify the curiosity of Congress to see the causes which have governed, laid open, as I find them explained in conversation and in public writers. Zeeland's reasons seem to be now overruled, and the Prince's absolute authority there of little avail. To all appearances, the English must recede, or contend with a bitter enemy in this Republic. Old prejudices seem to wear off, and it is now said publicly, that the friendship between the English and Dutch has been like the brotherly love between Cain and Abel; yet I can never depend upon anything here until it is past, I have been so often disappointed in my expectations. [403]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, December 31st, 1780.

Sir,

It will scarcely be believed in Congress, that at a time when there are the strongest appearances of war, there has not been a newspaper nor a letter received in this city from London, since the 19th or 20th of the month. There are symptoms of a more general war. If Britain adheres to her [404]

maxims, this Republic will demand the aid of Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, in pursuance of the treaty of armed neutrality. These powers will not be duped by the artifice of the British Court, and adjudge this war not a *casus fœderis*, when all the world agrees, that the accession of the Republic to the armed neutrality is the real cause of it, and the treaty between Mr Lee and M. de Neufville, only a false pretence. If the armed neutral confederacy takes it up, as nobody doubts they will, all these powers will be soon at war with England, if she does not recede. If the neutral powers do not take it up and England proceeds, she will drive this Republic into the arms of France, Spain, and America. In this possible case, a Minister here from Congress would be useful. In case the armed neutrality take it up, a Minister authorised to represent the United States to all the neutral Courts, might be of use.

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The Empress Queen is no more. The Emperor has procured his brother Maximilian, to be declared coadjutor of the bishopric of Munster and Cologne, which affects Holland and the Low Countries. He is supposed to have his eye on Liege; this may alarm the Dutch, the King of Prussia and France. The war may become general, and the fear of it may make peace, that is, it might if the King of England was not the most determined man in the world. But depressed, and distracted, and ruined as his dominions are, he will set all Europe in a blaze before he will make peace. His exertions, however, against us cannot be very formidable. Patience, firmness, and perseverance are our only remedies; these are sure and infallible ones, and with this observation, I beg permission to take my leave of Congress for the year 1780, which has been to me the most anxious and mortifying year of my whole life. God grant that more vigor, wisdom, and decision may govern the councils, negotiations, and operations of mankind in the year 1781.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, January 1st, 1781.

Sir,

You will receive herewith enclosed, a commission as Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Provinces of the Low Countries, with instructions for your government on that important mission, as also a plan of a treaty with those States,^[11] and likewise a resolve of Congress relative to the declaration of the Empress of Russia, respecting the protection of neutral ships, &c.^[12]

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Proper letters of credence on the subject of your mission will be forwarded by the next conveyance; but it is thought inexpedient to delay the present despatches on that account.

I have the honor to be, &c.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President*.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 1st, 1781.

Sir,

The mail from London, arrived this morning, brought us, for a new years' entertainment, the following

MANIFESTO.

"George R.—Through the whole course of our reign, our conduct towards the States-General of the United Provinces, has been that of a sincere friend and faithful ally. Had they adhered to those wise principles, which used to govern the Republic, they must have, shown themselves equally solicitous to maintain the friendship, which has so long subsisted between the two nations, and which is essential to the interests of both; but from the prevalence of a faction devoted to France, and following the dictates of that Court, a very different policy has prevailed. The return made to our friendship, for sometime past, has been an open contempt of the most solemn engagements, and a repeated violation of public faith.

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"On the commencement of the defensive war, in which we found ourselves engaged by the aggression of France, we showed a tender regard for the interests of the States-General, and a desire of securing to their subjects every advantage of trade, consistent with the great and just principles of our own defence. Our Ambassador was instructed to offer a friendly negotiation, to obviate everything that might lead to disagreeable discussion; and to this offer, solemnly made by

him to the States-General the 2d of November, 1778, no attention was paid. After the number of our enemies was increased by the aggression of Spain, equally unprovoked with that of France, we found it necessary to call upon the States-General for the performance of their engagements. The 5th article of the perpetual defensive alliance between our Crown and the States-General, concluded at Westminster, the 3d of March, 1678, besides the general engagement for succors, expressly stipulates, 'That that party of the two allies that is not attacked, shall be obliged to break with the aggressor in two months after the party attacked shall require it.' Yet two years have passed, without the least assistance given to us, without a single syllable in answer to our repeated demands. So totally regardless have the States been of their treaties with us, that they readily promised our enemies to observe a neutrality in direct contradiction to those engagements, and whilst they have withheld from us the succors they were bound to furnish, every secret assistance has been given to the enemy; and inland duties have been taken off, for the sole purpose of facilitating the carriage of naval stores to France.

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"In direct and open violation of treaty, they suffered an American pirate to remain several weeks in one of their ports, and even permitted a part of his crew to mount guard in a fort in the Texel.

"In the East Indies, the subjects of the States-General in concert with France, have endeavored to raise up enemies against us. In the West Indies, particularly at St Eustatia, every protection and assistance has been given to our rebellious subjects. Their privateers are openly received in the Dutch harbors, allowed to refit there, supplied with arms and ammunition, their crews recruited, their prizes brought in and sold; and all this in direct violation of as clear and solemn stipulations as can be made.

"This conduct, so inconsistent with all good faith, so repugnant to the sense of the wisest part of the Dutch nation, is chiefly to be ascribed to the prevalence of the leading magistrates of Amsterdam, whose secret correspondence with our rebellious subjects was suspected long before it was made known by the fortunate discovery of a treaty, the first article of which is, 'That there shall be a firm, inviolable, and universal peace and sincere friendship between their High Mightinesses the Estates of the Seven United Provinces of Holland, and the United States of North America, and the subjects and people of the said parties; and between the countries, islands, cities, and towns, situated under the jurisdiction of the said United States of Holland, and the United States of America, and the people and inhabitants thereof, of every degree, without exception of persons or places.'^[13]

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"This treaty was signed in September, 1778, by the express order of the Pensionary of Amsterdam, and other principal magistrates of that city. They now not only avow the whole transaction, but glory in it, and expressly say, even to the States-General, that what they did was what their indispensable duty required. In the meantime, the States-General declined to give any answer to the Memorial presented by our Ambassador; and this refusal was aggravated by their proceeding upon other business, nay, upon the consideration of this very subject to internal purposes; and while they found it impossible to approve the conduct of their subjects, they still industriously avoided to give us the satisfaction so manifestly due. We had every right to expect, that such a discovery would have roused them to a just indignation at the insult offered to us and to themselves, and that they would have been eager to give us full and ample satisfaction for the offence, and to inflict the severest punishment upon the offenders. The urgency of the business made an instant answer essential to the honor and safety of this country. The demand was accordingly pressed by our Ambassador, in repeated conferences with the Ministers, and in a second Memorial; it was pressed with all the earnestness, that could proceed from our ancient friendship, and the sense of recent injuries; and the answer now given to a Memorial on such a subject, presented more than five weeks ago, is, that the States have taken it *ad referendum*. Such an answer, upon such an occasion could only be dictated by the fixed purpose of hostility meditated and already resolved by the States, induced by the offensive Councils of Amsterdam, thus to countenance the hostile aggression, which the magistrates of that city have made in the name of the Republic.

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"There is an end of the faith of all treaties with them, if Amsterdam may usurp the sovereign power, may violate these treaties with impunity, by pledging the States to engagements directly contrary, and leaguering the Republic with the rebels of a sovereign to whom she is bound by the closest ties. An infraction of the law of nations, by the meanest member of any country, gives the injured State a right to demand satisfaction and punishment; how much more so, when the injury complained of is a flagrant violation of public faith, committed by leading and predominant members of the State? Since then the satisfaction we have demanded is not given, we must, though most reluctantly, do ourselves that justice, which we cannot otherwise obtain.

"We must consider the States-General as parties in the injury, which they will not repair, as sharers in the aggression, which they refuse to punish, and must act accordingly. We have, therefore, ordered our Ambassador to withdraw from the Hague, and shall immediately pursue such vigorous measures as the occasion fully justifies, and our dignity and the essential interest of our people require. From a regard to the Dutch nation at large, we wish it were possible to direct those measures wholly against Amsterdam; but this cannot be, unless the States-General will immediately declare, that Amsterdam shall upon this occasion receive no assistance from them, but be left to abide the consequences of its aggression.

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"Whilst Amsterdam is suffered to prevail in the general councils, and is backed by the strength of the State, it is impossible to resist the aggression of so considerable a part, without contending with the whole. But we are too sensible of the common interests of both countries not to

remember, in the midst of such a contest, that the only point to be aimed at by us, is to raise a disposition in the Councils of the Republic to return to our ancient union, by giving us that satisfaction for the past, and security for the future, which we shall be as ready to receive, as they can be to offer, and to the attainment of which we shall direct all our operations. We mean only to provide for our own security by defeating the dangerous designs that have been formed against us. We shall ever be disposed to return to friendship with the States-General, when they sincerely revert to that system, which the wisdom of their ancestors formed, and which has now been subverted by a powerful faction, conspiring with France against the true interests of the Republic, no less than against those of Great Britain.

"St James, December 20th, 1780."

"At the Court at St James, the 20th of December, 1780.

"Present,—The King's most Excellent Majesty in Council.

"His Majesty having taken into consideration the many injurious proceedings of the States-General of the United Provinces and their subjects, as set forth in his Royal Manifesto of this date, and being determined to take such measures as are necessary for vindicating the honor of his Crown, and for procuring reparation and satisfaction, is pleased, by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that general reprisals be granted against the ships, goods, and subjects of the States-General of the United Provinces, so that, as well his Majesty's fleet and ships, as also all other ships and vessels that shall be commissioned by letters of marque, or general reprisals, or otherwise, by his Majesty's commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, shall, and may lawfully seize all ships, vessels, and goods belonging to the States-General of the United Provinces, or their subjects, or others, inhabiting within any of the territories of the aforesaid States-General, and bring the same to judgment in any of the Courts of Admiralty within his Majesty's dominions. And to that end, his Majesty's Advocate-General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are forthwith to prepare the draft of a commission, and present the same to his Majesty at this Board, authorising the commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, or any person or persons by them empowered and appointed, to issue forth and grant letters of marque and reprisals to any of his Majesty's subjects, or others whom the said commissioners shall deem fitly qualified in that behalf, for the apprehending, seizing, and taking the ships, vessels, and goods belonging to the States-General of the United Provinces, and their vassals and subjects, or any inhabiting within the countries, territories, or dominions of the aforesaid States-General; and that such powers and clauses be inserted in the said commission as have been usual, and are according to former precedents; and his Majesty's said Advocate-General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are also forthwith to prepare the draft of a commission, and present the same to his Majesty at this Board, authorising the said commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, to will and require the High Court of Admiralty of Great Britain and the Lieutenant and judge of said Court, his surrogate or surrogates, as also the several Courts of Admiralty within his Majesty's dominions, to take cognisance of, and judicially proceed upon all manner of captures, seizures, prizes, and reprisals of all ships and goods that are, or shall be taken, and to hear and determine the same; and according to law to judge and condemn all such ships, vessels, and goods, as shall belong to the States-General of the United Provinces, or their vassals and subjects, or to any others inhabiting within any of the countries, territories, and dominions of the aforesaid States-General; and that such powers and clauses be inserted in said commission as have been usual, and are according to former precedents; and they are likewise to prepare, and lay before his Majesty at this Board, a draft of such instructions as may be proper to be sent to the Courts of Admiralty in his Majesty's foreign governments and plantations, for their guidance herein; as also another draft of instructions for such ships as shall be commissioned for the purposes aforementioned."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 4th, 1781.

Sir,

Notwithstanding the influence of the English nation, notwithstanding the influence of old prejudices and habits, notwithstanding the apprehensions that are entertained for immense sums in the English funds, and for the sudden destruction of an innumerable navigation at the commencement of a war; and above all, notwithstanding the authority and influence of the Stadtholder, I am confidently assured by several gentlemen, that the national opinion and affection is with us. The Baron Van der Capellan, with whom I have the honor of an agreeable

acquaintance, is of opinion, that four fifths of the nation wish us success in our enterprise.

The symptoms of popularity in this city are decisive. The Sunday before last, in the Presbyterian meeting, the parson, beginning as usual to pray for the King of England, was absolutely interrupted by a general murmur. On Christmas day, he attempted to repeat his imprudence, and was interrupted by still greater confusion; so that last Sunday he had learned discretion to leave out wholly this offensive clause. On the evening of new year's day, at the theatre, the public were entertained with the national tragedy, as it is called, *Gysbrecht Van Amstel*, after which the actors, as is customary, addressed the audience. There were many strokes in this address, which sufficiently indicated the spirit of the times, particularly a solemn injunction, that "they must not be slaves," and a quotation from a very popular song, with which the streets have rung these ten days, which were deeply and universally applauded.

The presses swarm with pamphlets, handbills, songs, and poems, generally much against the English, and commonly with some favorable hints to Americans. The conversation in private families, and the toasts in jovial circles, indicate a tremendous spirit in the body of this people, which, if once let loose from restraint, and properly directed, would make this nation the worst enemy that England ever had. It is essential to attend to these symptoms of popularity at this time, and in this country, because it is manifest, that the whole system of the English, in concert with their faction in the Republic, is now bent to excite the populace against the burgomasters of Amsterdam. They succeeded in 1748, and accomplished a change in the Regency. If they could succeed in the same manner now, they would change the political system of this nation entirely, and by this means, in the present situation of affairs in Europe and America, it is plain, they would work its entire and irretrievable ruin.

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Yet the course is so circuitous, to apply to the Courts of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, to induce them to join in demanding satisfaction of England, the shocks upon 'Change will be so great, by the sudden capture of so many ships, so many insurers, merchants, &c. will be ruined, and there will be so many arts to divide and discourage this people, that I cannot pretend to foresee what will happen. The confusion is yet so great, that I have no hopes at present of obtaining money. There must be time for the fermentation to go off; and the quarrel with England must become in the minds of all irreconcilable, before we can try the experiment whether we have any credit or not.

If Congress should think proper to send powers here to treat with the States-General, I beg leave to submit to their consideration the case of M. Dumas. He was early employed in our affairs here, has neglected all other business, has been attentive and industrious, and is a gentleman of extensive learning and amiable character. I believe he is not ambitious or avaricious, but moderate in his expectations. Whoever shall be honored with powers from Congress to reside here would find his assistance useful, for he is much devoted to the American cause; I hope, therefore, that Congress will pardon me if I venture to recommend him to their attention.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 5th, 1781.

Sir,

On the 10th of November, 1780, the Memorial of Sir Joseph Yorke to the States-General was presented, for a disavowal, satisfaction proportioned to the offence, and punishment of the guilty.

November 28th. A formal disapprobation of the States-General of the conduct of the Regency of Amsterdam.

December 12th. Second Memorial of Sir Joseph Yorke, for a satisfaction proportioned to the offence, and the punishment of the guilty.

14th. Answer of the States-General despatched by express to London, importing, that their High Mightinesses had taken the said Memorials *ad referendum*.

16th. Order of his Britannic Majesty to Sir Joseph Yorke to withdraw from the Hague, without taking leave, despatched by express; arrived at the Hague on the 23d.

19th. Letter of the Count de Welderen to the States-General, acknowledging the receipt of those of the 12th and of the 15th; Declaration of the States-General, touching their accession to the confederation of the North.

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20th. Signature of the Manifesto of his Britannic Majesty, published the 21st in the London Gazette extraordinary.

21st. Expedition of an express to Sir Joseph Yorke, arrived at the Hague on the night of the 23d, with the Manifesto published the 21st.

22d. Resolution of the States-General to refer the affair of the satisfaction and punishment of the guilty, to the Provincial Court of Justice.

25th. The departure of Sir Joseph Yorke for Antwerp.

26th. Expedition of an express to the Count de Welderen, with orders to present the Declaration touching the Confederation of the North, and to withdraw from London, without taking leave.

28th. The ordinary packet from London not yet arrived, and the last letters from London are of the 19th.

In this rapid succession have events rolled one after another, until the war has seemingly become inevitable.

The Prince of Orange has made a requisition or proposition to the States-General, to augment their navy with fifty or sixty vessels of war, and their army to fifty or sixty thousand men. The ships of war will be agreed to, but the troops not, as I am told. Once more I beg leave to say, I can believe nothing until it is past.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, January 14th, 1781.

Sir,

In an excursion, which I have lately made through the principal cities of this Province, Haerlem, Leyden, the Hague, and Rotterdam, I have had an opportunity of perceiving that there is a spirit of resentment against the English very general among the people. Notwithstanding this, everything is so artfully retarded, the manifesto, the letters of marque, and above all, the decision of the Court of Justice of Holland is so studiously delayed, while the English are making such vast depredations upon the defenceless merchant vessels, that I cannot yet be sure that war is decided. The counsels of the Prince, united with those of the proprietors in British funds, and the distresses of merchants may yet induce the Republic, against the general sense of the nation, to sue for a dishonorable peace.

I have received a letter, however, since my return, from M. Dumas of last Friday, which informs me that a letter is received from the Plenipotentiaries at Petersburg, dated the 19th of December, announcing that the Empress of Russia was well satisfied with all that had passed; that she had seen the two last Memorials presented by Sir Joseph Yorke to their High Mightinesses, and that she had more indignation than surprise at the sight of them; (it may be doubted, however, whether this is not a mistake, as the last Memorial was dated the 12th, and the letter of the Minister the 19th,) that the signature was to be on the 23d, after which, these Ministers were to display the character of Ambassadors Extraordinary, and that they would forthwith despatch another express with the convention signed. This express is now expected every moment, and as soon as he arrives, their High Mightinesses will publish the Manifesto. This little delay is but a pure formality. In the meantime, they resolved on the 12th of this month to distribute letters of marque to privateers, and orders to the ships of the State, to seize everything they can belonging to the English.

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Notwithstanding this, there are no privateers ready, and I fear there are fewer ships of war ready than there ought to be. It will be long before the Dutch can do any great things, and they must suffer very severely. Such are the effects of blind and mistaken policy. War is so new and so terrible a thing to this people, they are so divided in sentiment, their minds are so agitated with uncertainty, irresolution, and apprehension, that there is as yet no possibility of borrowing any money.

I must therefore repeat the request, that Congress would not think upon drawing for any more money here, until they receive certain advices from me, that there is some in hand.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 15th, 1781.

Sir,

The following is the declaration of the States-General, of their accession to the armed neutrality.

DECLARATION.

"Their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, having had nothing more at heart, since the commencement of the present war, and having desired nothing more earnestly, than to observe invariably the most strict and the most perfect neutrality between the belligerent powers, and to fulfil at the same time their essential and indispensable obligations by granting a convenient protection to the commerce and the navigation of their subjects, and by maintaining and defending the rights and liberties of their neutral flag, have learned with the highest satisfaction, that her Majesty, the Empress of all the Russias, constantly animated with noble and generous sentiments, which must transmit to the latest posterity the immortal lustre and renown of her glorious reign, has thought fit to declare to the belligerent powers, 'That being in the intention to observe during the present war the most exact impartiality, she is determined to maintain, by all the means the most efficacious, the honor of the Russian flag, as well as the safety of the commerce and the navigation of her subjects, and not to suffer any of the belligerent powers to give them any interruption.' The sentiments and the views of their High Mightinesses answer perfectly, and are entirely conformable to the principles, which make the basis of the declaration of her Imperial Majesty; and they consequently do not hesitate to lay open, after her example, to the belligerent powers, the same principles, which they are determined to follow, and to maintain in concert with her Imperial Majesty; viz.

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"1st. That neutral vessels may freely navigate from port to port, and upon the coasts of the powers at war.

"2dly. That the effects belonging to the subjects of the powers at war, shall be free upon neutral vessels, excepting only merchandises of contraband.

"3dly. That with regard to contraband, their High Mightinesses adhere to what is stipulated by the treaties concluded between them and the belligerent powers, and more expressly, by the sixth article of the treaty of marine with the Crown of Spain of the 17th of December, 1650; the third article of the treaty of marine with the Crown of England of the 1st of December, 1674; and the sixteenth article of the treaty of commerce, of navigation and of marine with the Crown of France of the 1st of December, 1739, for twentyfive years. The dispositions and determinations of which treaties, in their full extent relative to merchandises of contraband, their High Mightinesses consider as entirely founded on natural equity and the law of nations.

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"4thly. That no place shall be adjudged blockaded, but when ships of war, stationed in the neighborhood, shall hinder, that no vessel can enter without evident danger.

"5thly. That these principles shall serve as rules to judge of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of prizes.

"As these principles form and constitute the universal rights of neutral powers, and as they are, moreover, confirmed by treaties which can never be lawfully annulled or altered, or suspended but by a common act, and reciprocal consent of the contracting parties, their High Mightinesses flatter themselves, that the belligerent powers will acknowledge and respect the justice of them, by giving no obstruction to the commerce of the subjects of their High Mightinesses, and by not troubling them in the free enjoyment of rights, the propriety of which cannot be contested, to the flag of neutral and independent powers."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, January 15th, 1781.

Sir,

Zealand is still endeavoring to divert the Republic from its interest and its duty, to embarrass its operations, and involve it in disgrace and ruin.

The Directors of the Company of Commerce, and that of Ensurance, and a great number of merchants, established at Middleburg, in Zealand, have presented a petition to the States-General, to supplicate their High Mightinesses to try again the way of negotiation, and to endeavor to prevent by this means the damages with which the subjects of the Republic are still threatened, by a war with England, and to come to a friendly accommodation. This petition has been supported by a resolution of the States of Zealand, transmitted to the Assembly of the States-General; but it is said, that this petition has been rendered commissorial, and will not be

taken into consideration, unless the English should make some propositions of peace. The state of the Marine of this Republic, during the year 1781, as it has been proposed by the petition of the Council of State, is, two vessels of seventy guns, and five hundred and fifty men; nine of sixty guns, and four hundred and fifty men; fifteen of fifty guns, and three hundred men; two of forty guns, and two hundred and seventy men; one of forty guns, and two hundred and fifty men; fourteen of thirtysix guns, and two hundred and thirty men; thirteen of twenty guns, and one hundred and fifty men; five sloops, one hospital ship, four packet boats, twelve large armed vessels, sixteen smaller; making in the whole ninetyfour ships, and eighteen thousand four hundred and ninety men.

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 16th, 1781.

Sir,

The Prince, on the 26th of December, made a proposition to the States-General, viz. in substance, "That His Most Serene Highness had already communicated the last year to the respective Provinces his advice, to equip fifty or sixty vessels of war, and to augment the land forces to fifty or sixty thousand men, to put the frontier places in a good state of defence, and to provide necessary magazines of warlike stores, to the end, to be in a condition to defend the lawful rights of the Republic; that His Most Serene Highness had seen with satisfaction, that as far as respected the marine, it had been made better in some degree; and that he flattered himself, that the States of all the Provinces would reinforce it for the ensuing year, with redoubled zeal, since they could not be too much upon their guard in the present conjuncture; that it was equally necessary to put the Republic in a convenient state of defence, on the land side; and that he hoped, that they would at this day think seriously of it; that they would augment the fortifications, and supply the magazines, since, if they failed in this, His Most Serene Highness would not be responsible for the events, &c."

The States-General, after having thanked the Stadtholder, for his assiduous zeal and solicitude to maintain the Republic in the enjoyment of its liberty and independence, resolved, "That the proposition of His Most Serene Highness should be communicated to the respective Provinces, and that it should be represented to them, that His Most Serene Highness, animated with the purest love of his country, insists with reason (at this day when the danger is immediate, and war appears inevitable) upon the necessity of making unanimous efforts, to the end to resist this danger, and to preserve the Republic, by joining courage to prudence; that the maritime forces of the Republic are not yet sufficient to protect the commerce, the source of the well being of the public in all its branches, and to ensure from all invasion the possessions of the Republic, both in the East and the West Indies; that, therefore, their High Mightinesses think themselves under obligation to pray the members of the union, in a manner the most friendly and the most pressing, to fix their attention as soon as possible upon these objects, and to accomplish them with vigor, since the storm, which approaches at sea, may easily, by a sudden revolution, discharge itself upon the continent, so that an augmentation of land forces is as indispensably necessary, as the armament by sea; that from these motives, their High Mightinesses assure themselves, that since there no longer remains for the Republic a choice between peace and war, the respective members of the union will endeavor, as far as possible to defend their country, and all which is dear to them, by acting with unanimity, courage, and candor."

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I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Amsterdam, January 15th, 1781.

Sir,

Congress will not expect me to write upon the subject of peace at this time, when the flames of war are spreading far and wide, with more rapidity than ever, and I have no comfortable tidings on the subject of money.

In the first place, I believe there is not so much money here as the world imagines; in the next place, those who have what there is, have now no confidence in any nation or individual. All credit seems at a stand.

The Republic will want a loan; the northern neutral powers will want loans, and even a loan will be wanted to support the credit of a number of houses in the mercantile way, which are affected by the violent and sudden revolution of the times, and by the piratical depredations of the English. I hope, therefore, that Congress will not venture to draw here, until they have certain information that they may draw with safety.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, January 18th, 1781.

Sir,

At length one act has appeared, which looks like war. The following placard was resolved on the 12th of this month.

"The States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries to all those who shall see, hear, or read these presents. Greeting. Know ye, that the King of Great Britain having thought proper, without any lawful cause, to attack in a hostile manner this Republic, and as we are obliged to neglect nothing, which can serve for our defence, and to use at the same time the right, the example of which the conduct of the said Crown has commenced by setting us, and to act against it, in the same manner as they act against us, and consequently to do to the said King, and to his subjects, all the prejudice, which shall be in our power; for these causes, and for the protection of the commerce and of the navigation of this country, we have thought fit to establish, and to permit to all the subjects of these States, who shall take or destroy any English vessels of war, or privateers, the following rewards.

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I. "All those who shall fit out a privateer, and shall have obtained of his Highness the Prince of Orange and Nassau, in quality of Admiral-General of these countries, suitable commissions, after having given beforehand the requisite securities, shall not be held to furnish the third man of their crew, as it is ordained by the placard of their High Mightinesses, of the 26th of June, 1780, excepting those who will load with merchandises, and take at the same time the said letters of marque. Those, who shall have taken and conducted into one of the ports, or roads, within the jurisdiction of one of the Colleges of Admiralty of this country, a vessel of war or privateer of the King of Great Britain, shall draw, moreover, a bounty of one hundred and fifty florins for each man, who shall be found at the commencement of the combat on board of the said vessel of war, or privateer, as also a like sum for each pound of ball which the artillery, which shall be found on board the said vessel at the time aforesaid, can discharge at one time, not including the swivels, or the balls of the new artillery, called carronades, valued only at one quarter of their weight; in such sort, that if one of our privateers shall make herself master of an English vessel of war, or privateer mounted, for example, with forty pieces of cannon, carrying altogether three hundred and fifty pound weight of ball, that is to say, forty carronades, and fourteen hundred balls of eight pound, and the crew of which shall be two hundred and twenty men, shall receive for bounty or reward, by calculating each man and each pound of ball upon the footing of one hundred and fifty florins, the sum of eightyfive thousand eight hundred florins, and thus more or less in proportion to the crew; and the caliber of the cannon, which shall be found at the time of the combat, upon the English ship, besides the booty and the prize, and all the effects which shall be found on board, without any other deduction to be made from it, than the tenth for the Admiral.

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II. "The said recompenses assigned for prizes shall also take place in case the English vessel of war, or privateer, shall be totally destroyed, whether our armed vessel shall have sunk her, or burnt her, or shipwrecked her, or whether the said vessel shall have perished in any other manner, after having been taken; provided, nevertheless, that this recompense is not to be claimed in the whole, at least if the crew of the vessel destroyed has not been taken or killed. And if it should happen, that they have only driven the enemy's vessel on shore, so that the vessel has perished, but the crew has saved itself, our letters of marque shall not enjoy, in this case, but one half of the bounty or reward promised; so that in the case last mentioned they shall receive only fortytwo thousand nine hundred florins, instead of eightyfive thousand eight hundred.

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III. "Provided, nevertheless, that neither the prize nor the bounty shall ever be adjudged to any of our letters of marque, until after the affair shall have been carried before one of the Colleges of the Admiralty of this country, and the sentence shall have been there pronounced in her favor.

IV. "The said Colleges of the Admiralty may not adjudge these rewards, until after the Captain, Lieutenant, and Pilot of the privateer, as well as those who shall have freighted her, their book-keepers, and others authorised, shall have declared by a solemn oath, that the vessel of war, or privateer, of which they have made themselves masters, has been duly taken without any collusion directly or indirectly with the English, or with any other known to them. In case the freighters, who claim the adjudication of prizes and bounties, are out of the country, absent, or hindered by some other obstacle, it shall suffice, that the book-keepers, or some other authorised, take the oath, but so far as it is of his knowledge for himself, and for his freighters,

conformably to the special procuration, which he shall have for this effect; the freighters nevertheless shall be obliged to take an oath beforehand before the magistrate of their residence, or before other persons competent, whose testimonies they shall send.

V. "And for the better encouragement of the said ships, which shall have armed as privateers, we ordain, that those who shall have been wounded in a combat with the English ship, shall be maintained at the expense of the State, without its costing anything to the proprietors of the privateers, or those who shall be on board. We ordain also, that those who shall be maimed in fighting an English ship, shall be gratified on the part of the State, and without its costing anything to the freighters, with the moiety of the recompense granted by the Republic to those who serve on board vessels of war; they shall not, however, have a right but to those rewards which are given once, and not to those which shall be granted weekly, or monthly, or otherwise. As to what respects the maintenance of the wounded, the account of it shall be presented to the competent College of the Admiralty, to be there examined and duly regulated, so that the maimed, to the end that they may enjoy the moiety of the recompense proposed, may procure themselves an act of the said College of the Admiralty, after having furnished it the necessary proofs.

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VI. "For the encouragement of the ships of war, as well as the merchant vessels, which may be provided with commissions to make use of, in case of need, to cause to the English ships all the prejudice possible, we intend that the English ship of which they may make themselves masters, of what nature or denomination soever it may be, shall be given them entire, the tenth for the Admiral excepted, without pretending, however, to any further recompense.

VII. "If it should happen, that our privateers, merchant vessels, or others armed for a cruise at the expense of individuals of this country, should retake any vessels or effects belonging to the subjects of the State, and that such recapture shall be made in the space of fortyeight hours after they shall have been in the hands of the enemy, they shall enjoy in that case one fifth of the just value of the vessels or effects, which they shall have delivered; but if the recapture shall be made in the space of four days after the vessel shall have been in the hands of the English, they shall have one third of the said value; and if the recapture shall be made after four days, they shall have the moiety of it, without having any further regard to the greater or lesser time, that the said vessels or effects retaken shall have been in the hands of the English, after the expiration of the four days.

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VIII. "The adjudication of any one of the said recompenses, as well as the acts of the respective Colleges of the Admiralty in favor of the maimed or wounded, being shown to the Receiver-General of the duties of entry and clearance, to receive the appointed recompense, the payment of it shall be promptly made by the said Receiver-General at the Hague, or in the place of the College of Admiralty, in which the sentence or the taxation shall have been pronounced, as it shall be most convenient for the said Receiver-General.

IX. "Which Receiver-General shall be provided with sufficient sums of money to satisfy the said payments, and he shall always take care, that after having paid some bounties, he has always wherewith to satisfy promptly those which may be demanded of him in the sequel, either by the second moiety of the duties of Last and Vielgeld, or by negotiating successively the sums which he shall have occasion for, for a supply.

X. "In all cases, the privateer, who shall have taken or destroyed any English vessel, ought to take care to give without delay, and as soon as he arrives, notice to the said Receiver-General of the value of the bounties, which he has a right to claim, to the end that the said Receiver-General may be in a condition to make prompt payment.

XI. "And in all the respective Colleges of Admiralty, where the case shall be brought, they shall take care to render prompt sentences, even by postponing to other times the other affairs which may be before them.

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XII. "And in case an appeal or revision should be demanded, and by this means the sentences of the said Colleges shall be annulled, we have desired that in this case, the recompenses assigned by the sentences of the Admiralty should be delivered to the said privateers, so that the demand of revision may not suspend or hinder the payment; we mean at the same time, that the sureties, which the ships going to cruise ought to furnish, shall be obliged in that case to augment the surety, and to promise a prompt restitution of what shall have been paid to the said privateers in consequence of sentences of the Admiralty, in case that these sentences shall be reversed in the revision, and the privateers denied their demand. And to be the more sure that the sums delivered in such cases be restored, we have declared, and do declare by these presents, that the vessels and all which belongs to them, with which the said prizes shall have been made, shall be held judicially to make restitution of the bounties received; and that the said juridical obligation shall commence from the day that the said privateers shall have received their commissions, and shall go upon a cruise.

XIII. "And this placard shall have its effects from the day of this publication; and that nobody may pretend ignorance, we request and demand the Lords, the States, the Stadtholder, the Counsellors, Committees, and the Deputies of the States of the respective Provinces of Guelderland, and the Earldom of Zutphen, of Holland, and West Friesland, of Zealand, of Utrecht, of Friesland, of Overysse, and of Groningen and Ommelanden, and all other members and officers of justice, that they announce, publish, and post up this ordinance immediately, in all the places of this country, where it is customary to make such annunciations, publications, and

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postings; we charge and enjoin moreover, the Counsellors of the Admiralty, the Advocates of the Treasury, Secretaries-General of Convoys, and Licensers, Receivers, Masters of Convoys, Controllers, and Searchers, and at the same time the Receiver-General of the augmentation of the duty of Last and Vielgeld, and to all others to whom it belongs, to govern themselves exactly according to the tenor of these presents."

Their High Mightinesses have also published the following.

"The States-General of the United Provinces to all those who shall see, hear, or read these presents. Greeting. We make known, that to the end to encourage the loyal inhabitants of this State, we have thought proper by the present publication, to notify to all and every one, and to assure them that all those who, employed in the service of the Republic, in the war at sea, may be maimed in such a manner as to become incapable of gaining their livelihood by labor, and shall desire to be assisted by a sum of money, payable once for all, shall receive in proportion to the importance of their wounds, that which follows.

1. "For the loss of two eyes, fifteen hundred florins; for the loss of one eye, three hundred and fifty florins; as to other accidents, which may happen under the case mentioned, gratifications shall be given according to the good pleasure of the respective Colleges of the Admiralty.

2. "For the loss of two arms, fifteen hundred florins; for the loss of the right arm, four hundred and fifty florins; for that of the left arm, three hundred and fifty florins; and for other accidents and wounds in these members, at the discretion of the Colleges of the Admiralty, upon which each one depends. [433]

3. "For the loss of two hands, twelve hundred florins; for the loss of the right hand, three hundred and fifty florins; for that of the left hand, three hundred and fifty florins; as to lesser accidents, valuable at sums less considerable, at the discretion aforementioned.

4. "For the loss of two legs, seven hundred florins; for the loss of one leg, three hundred and fifty florins; for accidents less serious, the gratification shall be fixed by the Colleges of the Admiralty.

5. "For the loss of two feet, four hundred and fifty florins; for that of one foot, two hundred florins; and for smaller wounds, at the discretion of the respective Colleges.

6. "Moreover, all those who in the service of the Republic shall be maimed to such a degree as to be no longer able to gain a living by labor, nor to provide in any manner for their subsistence, shall receive during their lives, one ducatoon a week; and all other wounds or mutilations less considerable shall be paid in proportion."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, February 1st, 1781.

Sir,

One of the most brilliant events, which has yet been produced by the American Revolution, is the following Treaty of Marine, concluded at Copenhagen, the 28th of June, 1780, old style, between her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, for the maintenance of neutral mercantile navigation, and in which his Majesty, the King of Sweden, as well as their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces, have taken part and acceded, and which has been signed respectively, at St Petersburg, the 21st of July, 1780, and the 5th of January, 1781. [434]

TREATY OF MARINE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND DENMARK.

"As by the war by sea, which has actually broken out between Great Britain, on one side, and France and Spain on the other, the commerce and the navigation of neutral powers suffer considerable damages, her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, in consequence of their assiduous attention to unite their proper dignities, and their cares for the safety and the well being of their subjects, from the regard which they have so often testified for the rights of nations in general, have found it necessary, in the present circumstances, to determine their conduct according to those sentiments.

"Her Majesty, the Empress of Russia has, by her declaration, dated the 28th of February, 1780, to the belligerent powers, exposed to light, in the face of all Europe, the fundamental principles, which spring from the original law of nations, which she claims, and which she adopts as a rule of her conduct in the present war. As this attention of the Empress, to watch over the reciprocal rights of nations, has united the suffrages of all the neutral powers, so she has engaged herself in it, as an affair, which concerns the most essential of her interests, and she has carried it to that length, that we may seriously consider it as a subject worthy of the times present and to come, [435]

considering that it is to bring into one system, and establish permanently, the rights, prerogatives, and engagements of neutrality.

"His Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, convinced of these principles, has likewise established and demanded them in the declaration of the 8th of July, 1780, which he has caused to be presented, as well as that of Russia, to the belligerent powers; and to give them support, he has caused to be equipped a part of his fleet. From hence has arisen the harmony and unanimity, with which her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, have judged necessary, by a reciprocal friendship and confidence, and conformably to the interests of their subjects, to confirm these common engagements, to be concluded by a formal convention. In this view, their said Imperial and Royal Majesties have chosen and named for their Plenipotentiaries, viz. her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, M. Charles Van Osten, named Saken, present Counsellor of State, Knight of the Order of St Anne, Minister Plenipotentiary of her said Majesty to the Court of Denmark, &c. &c.; and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, M. Otton, Count de Thott, Privy Counsellor, Knight of the Order of the Elephant, &c.; M. Joachim Otton de Schack-Reventlaw, Privy Counsellor, Knight of the Order of the Elephant, &c.; M. Jean Henri d'Eichstedt, Privy Counsellor, Governor of his Royal Highness, the Hereditary Prince, Knight of the Order of the Elephant, &c.; and M. André Pierre, Count de Bernstorff, Privy Counsellor, Secretary of State of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Director of the Royal German Chancery, and Knight of the Order of the Elephant, &c.; who, after having exchanged their full powers, which are found in good and due form, have agreed and resolved upon the Articles following.

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"ARTICLE I. That their said Majesties have sincerely resolved to maintain constantly the most perfect friendship and concord with the powers actually engaged in the war, and to observe the most scrupulous neutrality; that they declare, in consequence, to hold themselves exactly to this, that the prohibition to carry on commerce of contraband with the powers actually at war, or with those, who may in the sequel be engaged in it, shall be strictly observed by their subjects.

"ART. II. To avoid all error and misunderstanding concerning the subject of the name of contraband, her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and Norway declare, that they acknowledge only as effects of contraband, those which are comprehended in the treaties subsisting between the said Courts, and one or the other of the belligerent powers.

"Her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, conforms herself entirely to the tenth and eleventh articles of her treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and extends also the engagements of this treaty, which are entirely founded upon natural law, to the Crowns of France and Spain, which at the date of the present convention, have no treaty of commerce with her empire. His Majesty, the King of Denmark and Norway conforms himself, on his part, principally to the second article of his treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and to the twentysixth and twentyseventh articles of his treaty of commerce with France, and extends also the engagements of this latter to Spain, considering that he has not with this last Crown any treaty, which determines any conditions upon this subject.

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"ART. III. As by this means the contraband is determined and fixed, conformably to special treaties and conventions subsisting between the high contracting parties and the belligerent powers, and principally in the treaty between Russia and Great Britain, of the 20th of June, 1766, as well as by that between Denmark and Great Britain, dated the 11th of July, 1670, and by that concluded between Denmark and France, the 23d of August, 1742, the will and intention of her Russian Imperial Majesty, and his Majesty the King of Denmark and Norway are, that all other commerce shall be, and remain free.

"Already their Majesties, in their declarations presented to the belligerent powers, have grounded themselves upon the general principles of the law of nature, from whence are derived the liberty of commerce and of navigation, the rights of neutral nations, and have resolved to depend no longer upon the arbitrary interpretations, that partial advantages and momentary interests may dictate. In this view, they have agreed upon the following articles.

"1. That it shall be lawful for every vessel to navigate from one port to another, and upon the coasts of the belligerent powers.

"2. That the effects belonging to the subjects of the belligerent powers shall be free upon neutral vessels, except merchandises of contraband.

"3. That to determine what ought to be held a port blocked, that alone can be considered as such, in which the vessels, which would enter, shall be exposed to an evident danger, by the force, which with this view attacks it, and by its vessels, which shall have taken a station sufficiently near.

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"4. That neutral vessels may only be stopped for just causes, and upon evident proofs; that, without loss of time, right shall be done them, and the procedures shall be always uniform, prompt, and according to the laws; and that every time, besides reparation to those who shall have suffered without cause, there shall be also given a complete satisfaction for the insult committed against the flags of their Majesties.

"ART. IV. To the end to protect the general commerce of their subjects, supported by the fundamental rules above laid down, her Majesty, the Empress of all the Russias, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and Norway, have thought fit, each one in particular, in order to obtain

these ends, to equip a proportional number of vessels of war and frigates. The squadron of each one of these respective powers shall be stationed in a certain latitude, and shall be employed in convoys, according to the exigence of the case, in which the commerce and the navigation of each nation may be.

"ART. V. If the merchant ships of one of the contracting powers shall be in a part of the sea where the ships of war of their own nation are not stationed, and, for this reason, cannot enjoy their protection; in that case, the commander of the vessels of war of the other power, being thereto required, shall grant them, with good faith and sincerity, the necessary assistance; and in this case, the vessels of war and frigates of one of the two powers, shall protect and support the merchant vessels of the other; provided, nevertheless, that, under the shelter of the protection demanded, there be not exercised any prohibited commerce, contrary to the laws adopted by the neutrality. [439]

"ART. VI. The present convention cannot be retroactive, and, by consequence, we cannot take part in differences, which have arisen before its conclusion; at least, if these affairs do not concern the violences which continue still, and which tend to oppress all the neutral nations of Europe.

"ART. VII. If, in spite of the vigilant and friendly care of the two powers, and the exact observation of the neutrality on their part, the Russian or Danish merchant vessels are insulted, or taken by the vessels of war, or privateers, of one or the other of the belligerent powers, in that case, the Minister of the party offended shall make representations to the Court, whose vessels of war or privateers shall have been guilty of this act, shall demand the restoration of the vessel taken, and shall insist upon a suitable reparation, without ever losing sight of the satisfaction for the insult done to the flag. The Minister of the other contracting party shall second efficaciously and seriously these representations, and shall thus continue them conjointly and unanimously; but if they refuse, or put off from time to time to do right, touching such grievances, in this case, their Majesties shall make reprisals against the power which refuses to do them right, and shall unite themselves forthwith, in the most efficacious measures for this just reprisal.

"ART. VIII. If one or the other of the contracting powers, or both together, in virtue of this convention, or any other which may be made, which may have relation to it, are disturbed, molested, or attacked, it is agreed that the two powers shall act in concert, to defend themselves reciprocally, and to procure themselves, by united efforts, an entire and satisfactory reparation, both for the insult done to the flag, and for the loss caused to their subjects. [440]

"ART. IX. This Convention is resolved and fixed for all the time that the present war shall continue, and shall serve as the basis of all the engagements which may be contracted in the sequel, according to the circumstances of the times, and upon occasion of new wars at sea, which may unfortunately trouble the repose of Europe; besides, these conditions shall be regarded as subsisting, and shall have a legal validity in the affairs both of commerce and navigation, and in the determination of the rights of neutral nations.

"ART. X. As the end and the principal motive of this Convention is, to assure the general liberty of commerce and of navigation, her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark and of Norway, agree and engage beforehand, to permit that other neutral powers accede to this convention, and by taking cognizance of these principles, to partake also of the obligations and advantages of the said convention.

"ART. XI. To the end that the belligerent powers may not pretend a cause of ignorance of these said engagements between the said Courts, the high contracting parties will communicate in a manner the most friendly to all the belligerent powers these maxims, in which they have united, which measures are so much the less hostile, as they are not hurtful to any other power; but have solely for their object the safety of the commerce and of the navigation of their respective subjects.

"ART. XII. The present Convention shall be ratified by the two contracting parties, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in good form in the term of six weeks, to be computed from the signatures, or even sooner; if it may be. In faith of which we have, in virtue of our full powers, signed the present, and, sealed it with our seals. Done at Copenhagen, the nineteenth of July, 1780. [441]

CHARLES VAN OSTEN, named SAKEN,
O. THOTT,
I. SCHACK REVENTLAW,
A. P. COMTE DE BERNSTORFF,
H. EICHSTEDT."

The ratifications of this Convention were exchanged at Copenhagen the 16th of September, 1780, by the same Ministers Plenipotentiary who signed it, and as to this end, the Ministers Plenipotentiary named to this purpose, viz. on the part of her Imperial Majesty, the Count Nikia Panin, actually Privy Counsellor, Senator, Chamberlain in Exercise, and Knight of the Orders of St Andrew, St Alexander Newsky, and St Anne, and the Count John Osterman, Vice Chancellor, Privy Counsellor, and Knight of the Orders of St Alexander Newsky and St Anne; and on the part of his Majesty the King of Sweden, the Baron Frederick Van Nalken, Envoy Extraordinary of his Swedish Majesty at the Court of her Imperial Majesty, Chamberlain, Commandant of the Order of the Polar Star, Knight of the Orders of the Sword and of St John, have signed, the 21st of July, 1780, at St Petersburg, a similar Convention, conceived in the same form, and word for word, of

the same tenor with that signed at Copenhagen, except the second article, in which the stipulations of contraband being resolved and ratified, to which they are to adhere, in consequence of treaties subsisting between the Crown of Sweden and the other powers, we have to this purpose, to avoid the repetition of what has been already said, added here, literally, the said second article.

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We ought further to recollect, that the two Kings, who have joined in this affair to her Imperial Majesty, have acceded as principal contracting parties to the treaties concluded between her Imperial Majesty and the said Courts, and have signed with their own hands upon this subject on one part and the other, an act, which has been exchanged at St Petersburg by the Ministry of her Imperial Russian Majesty.

Here follows the second article of the treaty concluded and signed at Petersburg, the 21st of July, 1780, between her Imperial Majesty and his Majesty the King of Sweden.

"ART II. To avoid all error and misunderstanding on the subject of the name of contraband, her Imperial Majesty of Russia and his Majesty the King of Sweden declare, that they acknowledge only as effects of contraband those which are contained in the treaties subsisting between the said courts and one or other of the belligerent powers."

Her Majesty the Empress of Russia conforms herself in this entirely to the tenth and eleventh articles of her Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, and extends also the engagements of this treaty, which are entirely founded upon the law of nature, to the Crowns of France and Spain, which at the date of the present Convention have no Treaty of Commerce with her empire. His Majesty the King of Sweden refers himself principally on his part to the eleventh article of his Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, and to the tenor of the preliminary Treaty of Commerce concluded in the year 1741, between the Crowns of Sweden and France, although, in this last, the contents of contraband are not expressly determined, but as the two Powers have therein understood to consider one another as *Gens amicissima*, and that as Sweden has therein reserved the same advantages, which the Hanseatic cities enjoy in France, from the most remote times to the present. The advantages, which are comprehended in the Treaty of Utrecht, being confirmed, the King has not found anything necessary to be added. With regard to Spain, the King finds himself in the same case as the Empress, and after her example he extends to this Crown the engagements of the said treaties, wholly founded on natural law.

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Their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, have acceded the 20th of November, 1780, upon the same footing to the said Convention, and it has been signed the 5th of January, 1781, at St Petersburg, only with the addition of a thirteenth article, which with relation to command, in case of rencounter or combination of the squadrons and the vessels of war of the two parties, there shall be observed what has been the usage between crowned heads and the Republic.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, February 15th, 1781.

Sir,

This morning the house of Botereau & Co. of this city, presented to me sixtysix bills of exchange, drawn by Congress on the 26th day of October last, in favor of Nathaniel Tracy, of Newburyport, amounting to the sum of ten thousand pounds sterling, payable at ninety days sight. I was obliged to ask the favor of the house to wait until I could write to your Excellency, to see if you can furnish the funds to discharge the bills. Without your warranty they must be protested, for I have not yet obtained a single ducat, nor any certain assurances of one.

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I have at length fixed my plan, and when it shall be made certain that the war with England is to continue, the prospectus will be published and the experiment tried. Some persons think I shall get some money; but there is no certainly of it. If this people should make peace with England, which they will if they can, we shall get no money at all. I think, however, that a peace is impossible, and therefore am not without hopes of borrowing some money. I must request the honor of your Excellency's answer by the return of post, because at that time M. Botereau will expect an answer from me.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, February 20th, 1781.

Sir,

Yesterday I had the honor of yours of the 12th, and will take an early opportunity to send you all the lights I can obtain, by inferences from the numbers of the bills. Those already presented, I shall accept, according to your advice.

The Duc de la Vauguyon is returned. I had the honor to make my compliments to him on Saturday at the Hague, where I attended Dr McLane's Church on Sunday, and the Prince's review upon the parade afterwards, and where I propose in future to spend more of my time.

You need not be anxious about the result of my demand of an answer. It was a measure, to which I was advised by the Duc de la Vauguyon, and by the Count de Vergennes, and by several worthy gentlemen in the government here. It was intended to bring necessarily into deliberation a connexion with France and America, on one side, at the same time when they considered the mediation of Russia, on the other, in order to prevent their accepting the mediation without limitations. [445]

The great city has lately faltered very much in point of firmness. I cannot but wish, that the proposition for an accession to the alliance between France and America, could have been made last week, the critical moment when it would have infallibly, I think, prevented the acceptation. But France did not think it politic to do anything against the views of Russia. But nothing but delay will come of this mediation. The United States, however, stand here in a more respectable light than in Spain. Here they are openly and candidly demanding an answer. If they receive one in the negative, it will be no more than the Republic has a right to give, and we shall lose nothing, but remain exactly where we were. If they give no answer for a year to come, the dignity of the United States is safe; that of the United Provinces will be hurt by the delay, if any. In Spain, the United States have been waiting in the person of one of their presidents, now going on three years, and have no answer. Now, I say, it is better to be open. Here the constitution demanded publicity. In Spain it forbid it. But the dignity of the United States is injured more than it would have been, if the demand to that Court could have been made public. For my own part, I own, as a private citizen, or as a public man, I would not advise the United States to wait for ever, either in Spain or Holland. If it does not suit their affairs to make a bargain with us, let them tell us so candidly, and let us all go home, that at least we may not be under the necessity of calling upon your Excellency for water to drink, which had much better quench the thirst of our army. [446]

I should be very much obliged to you for a copy of the replication of the two Imperial Courts, and of the new proposition of the Court of London, of which I have only had a confused intimation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Amsterdam, March 1st, 1781.

Sir,

As Friesland has taken the Provincial Resolution to acknowledge the independence of America, it seems to be high time for me to prepare for the execution of my instructions from Congress of the 16th of August, which I had the honor to communicate to you on the 25th of November, and which had been previously communicated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Versailles.

From these instructions it appears, that His Most Christian Majesty had made, by his Minister, to Congress, a tender of his endeavors to accomplish a coalition between the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the United States, and that this tender was accepted by Congress as a fresh proof of his Majesty's solicitude for their interests.

By another Resolution, I am instructed to propose a Treaty of Alliance, between His Most Christian Majesty, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the United States of America, having for its object and limited in its duration to the present war with Great Britain, and conformed to the treaties subsisting between His Most Christian Majesty and the United States. [447]

The system of operations was thus settled at Philadelphia between the King, by his Minister, and the Congress, and for obvious and wise reasons, the Minister of Congress at the Hague was to make the proposition to their High Mightinesses, and the Ambassador of his Majesty was to countenance and support it either publicly or privately, as he should judge proper, until the States-General should listen to it, so far as to enter into the negotiation.

In pursuance of these propositions, it seems to be necessary for me to go to the President of their High Mightinesses, and without offering him anything in writing, to make him the proposition, in

the words of the enclosed project, or others equivalent.

Friesland has taken so decided a part, and the other Provinces, especially Holland, are animated with such a spirit, that I cannot but flatter myself such a proposition would now run with rapidity through the seven Provinces, and contribute very much to accelerate the period of this bloody and ruinous war.

I have the honor to request your Excellency's sentiments upon the subject, and to be, with the most sincere and inviolable attachment, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

A MEMORIAL TO THE STATES-GENERAL.

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To their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries.

High and Mighty Lords,

The subscriber, a Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America, has the honor to lay before your High Mightinesses, as one of the high contracting parties to the Marine Treaty, lately concluded, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a resolution of Congress of the 5th of October last, concerning the same subject.

As the American revolution furnished the occasion of a reformation in the maritime law of nations, of so much importance to a free communication among mankind by sea, the subscriber hopes it may not be thought improper that the United States should become parties to it, entitled to its benefits and subjected to its duties. To this end, the subscriber has the honor of requesting that the resolution of Congress may be taken into the consideration of your High Mightinesses, and transmitted to the Courts of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark.

The subscriber begs leave to subjoin, that he should esteem it one of the most fortunate events of his life, if this proposition should meet with the approbation of your High Mightinesses, and the other powers who are parties to the neutral confederacy, and he be admitted, as the instrument of pledging the faith of the United States to the observance of regulations, which do so much honor to the present age.

The Hague, March 8th, 1781.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRINCE DE GALLITZIN, MINISTER OF THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

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Leyden, March 8th, 1781.

Sir,

I have lately received from Congress, as one of their Ministers Plenipotentiary, their resolution of the 5th of October last, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose to your Excellency, as the Representative of one of the high contracting parties to the Marine Treaty, lately concluded concerning this subject. As I am fixed by my duty for the present to this part of Europe, I have no other way of communicating this measure of Congress to the Northern Courts, but by the favor of their Ministers in this Republic. I must, therefore, request of your Excellency, if there is no impropriety in it, to transmit the resolution to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of her Imperial Majesty.

Your Excellency will permit me to add, that I should esteem myself very fortunate to be the instrument of pledging, in form, the faith of the United States of America to a reformation in the maritime law of nations, which does so much honor to the present age.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

Transcripts of the above letter were sent on the same day to the Baron de Sapherin, Envoy of the King of Denmark at the Hague; and to the Baron d'Ehrensverd, Envoy of the King of Sweden at the same place.

**TO M. VAN BERCKEL, FIRST COUNSELLOR PENSIONARY OF THE CITY
OF AMSTERDAM.**

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Leyden, March 8th, 1781.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose a Resolution of Congress of the fifth of October last, and to inform you, that I have this day communicated it to their High Mightinesses, the States-General, and to the Ministers of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, at the Hague.

With the greatest respect I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

**TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE AT THE
HAGUE.**

Leyden, March 8th, 1781.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a Resolution of Congress of the 5th of October last, and to inform your Excellency, that I have this day communicated it to their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces, and to the Ministers of the Courts of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, at the Hague.

Your Excellency will permit me to hope for your concurrence in support of this measure, as there may be occasion, and to assure you of the great respect and consideration with which I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

FROM THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

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Translation.

Hague, March 14th, 1781.

Sir,

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me, as also the copy of the resolution of Congress of the United States of North America, thereto annexed. You announce to me, that you have made an official communication thereof to the President of the Assembly of the States-General, as also to the Envoys of the Courts of Petersburg, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, and you request me to support this step with my good offices. I am persuaded, Sir, that you clearly perceive the impossibility of my seconding this measure, without the express order of the King, whatever may be my personal zeal for the true interests of North America.

Receive, Sir, the very sincere assurance of the sentiments of the most distinguished respect with which I have the honor to be, &c.

THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Leyden, March 18th, 1781.

Sir,

At length, notwithstanding the mediation of the Empress of Russia, the States-General have published the following Manifesto. It is entitled, the Counter Manifesto of the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries.

COUNTER MANIFESTO.

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"If ever the annals of the world have furnished an example of a free and independent State, hostilely attacked in the manner the most unjust, and without the least appearance of justice or equity, by a neighboring power, long in alliance, and strictly connected by ties founded upon common interests, it is, without contradiction, the Republic of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, which finds itself in this case, in relation to his Majesty, the King of Great Britain, and his Ministry.

"From the commencement of the troubles arisen between that Kingdom and its Colonies in America, their High Mightinesses, by no means obliged to take the smallest part in them, had formed the firm and invariable design to adopt and to follow in relation to these troubles, the system of the most perfect and the most exact neutrality; and when the same troubles had afterwards enkindled a war, which extended itself to more than one power, and spread itself to more than one part of the world, their High Mightinesses have constantly observed and maintained the same system, while at the same time they have not neglected to give, on more than one occasion, and relative to the most essential objects, the most convincing proofs of their sincere disposition to satisfy the desires of his Majesty, as far as they could advance, without wounding the rules of impartiality, and without compromising the rights of their sovereignty. It was in these views and to this end, that their High Mightinesses at first, and at the first requisition of his Britannic Majesty, published prohibitions the most express against the exportation of military stores to the Colonies of his Majesty in America, and against all fraudulent commerce with the same Colonies; and to the end, that those prohibitions should be executed the more effectually, their High Mightinesses did not hesitate, moreover, to take measures which did not fail to restrain and confine very greatly, the navigation and the commerce of their own subjects with the Colonies of the State in the West Indies.

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"It was, moreover, in the same views, and to the same end, that their High Mightinesses sent orders the most precise to all the Governors and Commanders of their Colonies and of their establishments, as well as to all the officers, commanders of their vessels of wars, to take special care to do nothing towards the flag of the American Congress, from whence they might lawfully infer or deduce an acknowledgment of the independence of the said Colonies. And it was above all in these views and to this end, that their High Mightinesses having received a memorial, which was presented to them by the Ambassador of England, containing complaints the most spirited against the Governor of St Eustatia, condescended to deliberate concerning this memorial, although conceived in terms little accommodated to those respects, which sovereign powers reciprocally owe to each other.

"This deliberation was soon followed by the recall of the said Governor, whom their High Mightinesses ordered to render an account of his conduct, and whom they did not permit to return to his residence until after he had exculpated himself of all the accusations brought against him by a justification of himself in detail, a copy of which was transmitted without delay to the Ministry of his Britannic Majesty. It was by means of these measures, that their High Mightinesses, having always had it at heart to avoid giving the smallest cause of dissatisfaction to his Britannic Majesty, have constantly endeavored to entertain and to cultivate his friendship and good understanding. But the conduct of his Britannic Majesty towards the Republic has been diametrically opposite.

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"The troubles between the Courts of London and Versailles had scarcely broken out, when we saw the ports of England filled with Dutch ships unjustly taken and detained. These vessels navigated under the faith of treaties, and were not loaded with other merchandises than with those which the express tenor of treaties declared free and lawful. We saw those free cargoes forced to submit to the law of an arbitrary and despotic authority. The Cabinet of St James knowing no other rules than a pretended right of temporary conveniency, thought proper to appropriate those cargoes to the Crown by a forced purchase, and to employ them to the profit of the royal navy. The representations the most energetic, and the most serious on the part of their High Mightinesses against such proceedings were to no purpose, and it was in vain that we demanded in the strongest manner the treaty of commerce, which subsisted between England and the Republic; by this treaty the rights and liberties of the neutral flag were clearly defined and stated. The subjects of Great Britain have enjoyed the full advantage of this treaty in the first and the only case, in which it pleased the Court of London to remain neuter, while the Republic was at war; at present in the reciprocal case, this Court cannot without the greatest injustice refuse the enjoyment of the same advantages to the Republic; and as little as his Britannic Majesty had a right to take away the advantageous effects of this treaty from their High Mightinesses, as little foundation had he to pretend to turn them from a neutrality, which they had embraced, and to force them to plunge themselves into a war, the causes of which had an immediate relation to rights and to possessions of his Britannic Majesty, originating without the limits of defensive treaties.

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"And, nevertheless, it was this treaty, which his Majesty, from the commencement of the troubles with the Crown of France, made no scruple to infringe and violate. The contraventions and infractions of this treaty on the part of Great Britain, and the arbitrary decisions of the courts of justice of that kingdom, directly contrary to the express sanction of this same treaty, multiplied from day to day; the merchant vessels of the Republic became the innocent victims of exactions and accumulated violences of the English men-of-war and privateers. Not content with this, even the flag of the State was not spared, but openly insulted and outraged by the hostile attack of the convoy under the command of the Rear Admiral, the Count de Byland. The strongest representations on the part of the State to his Britannic Majesty were useless. The vessels taken

from this convoy were declared lawful prizes; and this insult committed to the flag of the Republic was soon followed by the open violation of its neutral territory, both in Europe and in America. We shall content ourselves to cite two examples of it. At the Island of St Martins, the vessels of his Britannic Majesty attacked and took by force several vessels, which were in the Road, under the cannon of the fortress, where, according to the inviolable law of nations, these vessels ought to have found a safe asylum. The insolences committed by an English armed vessel upon the coast of the Republic, near the Island of Goedereede, furnish a second example of these violences; these insolences were pushed to such a degree, that several inhabitants of the Island, who were upon the shore, where they ought to have thought themselves sheltered from all insult, were exposed by the fire of this vessel to the most imminent danger, which they could not avoid but by retiring into the interior part of the Island. Unheard of proceedings, for which the Republic, notwithstanding the strongest and best founded representations, has not been able to obtain the smallest satisfaction.

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"While affairs were thus in a situation, which left to their High Mightinesses no other alternative, but to see the navigation and the commerce of their subjects, upon which depend the prosperity or the ruin of the Republic, wholly annihilated, or to come to violent measures against their ancient friend and ally, the magnanimous heart of her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, engaged her to invite the Republic with equal affection and humanity, to take measures the most just, and entirely conformable to the treaties which subsist between them and the other powers, to the end to defend and to maintain, conjointly with her Imperial Majesty and the other powers of the north, the privileges and the immunities, which the law of nations and the most solemn treaties assure to the neutral flag. This invitation could not but be infinitely agreeable to their High Mightinesses, considering that it offered them a means of establishing the protection of the commerce of their subjects upon the most solid foundation, and opened a way to place their independence in safety from all infraction, without derogating in the least from the alliances contracted, both with his Britannic Majesty and with the other belligerent powers.

"But it is this same means, which the Court of London has endeavored to take away from the Republic, by proceeding with precipitation to extremities the most outrageous, by the recall of her Ambassador, by the publication of a Manifesto containing pretended grievances, and by granting letters of marque and of pretended reprisals against the State, its subjects, and their goods; by which, this Court has but too plainly discovered her designs long since formed, of laying aside the essential interests which united the two nations, and of breaking the ties of ancient friendship, by attacking this State by a war the most unjust.

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"It will not be necessary to refute at length the reasons and pretended griefs alleged in the Manifesto, to convince every impartial man of their insolidity. It is sufficient to observe, in a few words, relative to the offer made by his Britannic Majesty, to open friendly conferences, that it was the abovementioned Treaty of Marine, which alone could make the object of those conferences; that the dispositions of this treaty, conceived in the most expressive terms, could not be liable to any doubt nor equivocation, that this treaty gives neutral powers the right of transporting freely in the ports of the belligerent powers all sorts of naval stores; that the Republic proposing to itself no other end, and desiring of his Britannic Majesty no other thing, than the quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the rights stipulated by this treaty, a point so evidently clear, and so incontestably just could not become the object of a negotiation, or of a new convention derogatory to this treaty, so that their High Mightinesses could not persuade themselves nor show themselves disposed to renounce, voluntarily, rights justly acquired, and to desist from these rights from regard to the Court of England; a renunciation, which, being advantageous to one of the belligerent powers, would have been little compatible with the principles of the neutrality, and by which their High Mightinesses would have exposed, on the other hand, the safety of the State to dangers, which they were obliged carefully to avoid; a renunciation, moreover, which would have caused to commerce and navigation, the principal support of the Republic, and source of her prosperity, an irreparable prejudice; since the different branches of commerce, strictly connected with each other, form a whole, whereof it is impossible to cut off so principal a part, without necessarily causing the destruction and ruin of the whole body; not to mention, that at the same time that their High Mightinesses made, with reason, a difficulty to accept the proposed conferences, they have not a little modified and tempered the actual exercise of their right by a provisional resolution.

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"And as to what relates to the succors demanded, their High Mightinesses cannot dissemble, that they have never been able to conceive how his Britannic Majesty has thought, that he could insist, with the least appearance of justice or of equity, upon the succors stipulated by the treaties, at a time when he had already beforehand withdrawn himself from the obligation, which those treaties imposed upon him towards the Republic. Their High Mightinesses have not been less surprised to see, that while the troubles in America, and their direct consequences could not concern the Republic in virtue of any treaty, and that the succor had not been demanded, until after the Crown of Spain had augmented the number of belligerent powers, his Britannic Majesty has, nevertheless, taken the occasion of this event to insist upon his demand with so much earnestness, and such an ardor, as if his Majesty thought himself to have a right to pretend and to maintain, that a war, once enkindled between him and any other power, was alone sufficient to oblige the State to grant forthwith, and without any anterior examination, the succors stipulated.

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"The Republic, it is true, had obliged itself by the treaties to assist Great Britain at all times, when this kingdom should find itself attacked, or threatened with an unjust war; and what is more, the Republic ought in this case, according to the same treaties, to declare war against the

aggressor; but their High Mightinesses never pretended to abdicate the right, which flows necessarily from the nature of every offensive alliance, and which cannot be contested to allied powers, to examine in the first place, and before the granting of succors, or taking part in the war, the principle of the dissensions which have arisen, and the nature of the difference, which has given occasion to it, as well as also to examine and weigh thoroughly the reasons and the motives, which may establish the *casus foederis*, and which ought to serve as a basis of the justice and the lawfulness of the war, on the part of that one of the confederated powers, who demands the succor. And there exists no treaty, by which their High Mightinesses have renounced the independence of the State, and sacrificed their interests to those of Great Britain, to such a degree, as to deprive themselves of the right of examination, so necessary and so indispensable, by engaging themselves to measures, by which they may be considered as obliged in duty to submit to the good pleasure of the Court of England, by granting the succors demanded, even where this Court, engaged in a quarrel with another power, judges proper to prefer the way of arms to that of a reasonable satisfaction upon just complaints.

"It was not then by a spirit of party, or by the device of a predominant cabal, but after a mature deliberation, and in a sincere desire to maintain the most precious interests of the Republic, that the States of the respective Provinces have all unanimously testified, that they were of opinion, that the succor demanded ought to be refused in a manner the most polite; and their High Mightinesses would not have failed to have transmitted to his Britannic Majesty conformable to these resolutions, an answer to the repeated demands of succors, if they had not been prevented by the violent and unheard of attack of the flag of the State under the command of Rear Admiral Byland, by the refusal to give satisfaction upon a point so grave, and by the declaration not less strange than unjust, which his Majesty thought fit to make relative to the suspension of the treaties, which subsisted between him and the Republic. Also many events, which by requiring deliberations of quite another nature, put an end to those, which had taken place on the subject of the said requisition.

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"It is in vain, and contrary to all truth, that they have endeavored to multiply the number of grievances, by alleging the suppression of the duties of exportation as a measure tending to facilitate the transportation of naval stores to France; for besides, that this suppression forms an object, which regards the interior direction of commerce, to which all the sovereigns have an incontestible right, and whereof they are not obliged to give an account to any body, this point has, it is true, been taken into consideration, but has never been concluded; so that these rights are still received upon the ancient footing; and that which is advanced in this regard in the manifesto, is found destitute of all foundation, although we cannot refrain from saying, that the conduct of his Britannic Majesty towards the Republic, furnished but too many motives to justify a similar measure on the part of their High Mightinesses.

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"The discontent of his Britannic Majesty, on the subject of what passed with the American, Paul Jones, is also quite as ill grounded. Already for several years, their High Mightinesses had resolved, and published everywhere, precise orders concerning the admission of privateers and armed vessels of foreign nations with their prizes, in the ports of their domination, orders, which to that time had been observed and executed without the least exception. In the case in question, their High Mightinesses could not depart from those orders, in regard to an armed vessel, who, furnished with a commission of the American Congress, was found in the Road of the Texel, combined with frigates of war of a sovereign power, without erecting themselves into judges, and pronouncing a decision upon matters, in which their High Mightinesses were in nowise obliged to take any part, and in which it did not appear to them convenient to the interests of the Republic to meddle in any manner. Their High Mightinesses then thought fit not to depart from the orders given so long ago, but they resolved to give the most express prohibition to hinder the said armed vessel from providing herself with warlike stores, and enjoined upon her to quit the Road as soon as possible, without remaining there longer than the time absolutely necessary to repair the damages suffered at sea, with the formal denunciation, that in case of a longer delay we should be obliged to compel his departure, to which end the officer of the State, commanding at the said Road, took care to make the requisite dispositions, whereof this armed vessel had scarcely the time to prevent the effects.

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"In regard to what has passed in the other parts of the world, the informations which their High Mightinesses have received from time to time from the East Indies, are directly opposite to those, which appear to have come under the eyes of his Britannic Majesty. The repeated complaints, which the directors of the East India Company have addressed to their High Mightinesses, and which the love of peace has made them stifle in their bosoms, are incontestible proofs of it. And the measures taken with regard to the West Indies, enumerated heretofore, ought to serve in all times as an irrefragable proof of the sincerity, the zeal, and the attention with which their High Mightinesses have taken it to heart, to maintain in those countries the most exact and the most strict neutrality; and their High Mightinesses have never been able to discover the smallest legal proof of any infraction of their orders in this respect.

"As to what concerns the project of an eventual treaty with North America, conceived by a member of the government of the Province of Holland, without any public authority, and the memorials presented upon this subject by Sir Joseph Yorke, the affair happened in the following manner. As soon as the Ambassador had presented the memorial of the 10th of November of the last year, their High Mightinesses, without stopping at expressions little suitable among sovereigns, with which this memorial was filled, did not delay to commence a deliberation the most serious upon this subject, and it was by their resolution of the 27th of the same month, that

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they did not hesitate to *disavow* and to *disapprove* publicly all which had been done in this respect; after which, they had all reason to expect that his Britannic Majesty would have acquiesced in this declaration, since he could not be ignorant that their High Mightinesses exercise no jurisdiction in the respective Provinces, and that it was to the States of the Province of Holland to whom, as clothed like the States of the other Provinces, with a sovereign and exclusive authority over their subjects, ought to be remitted an affair relatively to which their High Mightinesses had no reason to doubt, that the States of the said Province would act according to the exigence of the case, and conformably to the laws of the State and the rules of equity.

"The earnestness with which Sir Joseph Yorke insisted, by a second memorial, upon the article of the punishment, cannot therefore but appear very strange to their High Mightinesses, and their surprise increased still more when three days afterwards, this Ambassador declared, verbally, to the President of their High Mightinesses, that if he did not receive that day an answer entirely satisfactory to his memorial, he should be obliged to inform his Court of it by an express; their High Mightinesses, informed of this declaration, penetrated the importance of it, as manifesting visibly the measure already resolved in the Council of the King; and although the established customs admit not of deliberations upon verbal declarations of foreign Ministers, they judged it nevertheless proper to depart from them on this occasion, and to order their Secretary to wait on Sir Joseph Yorke, and give him to understand that his memorial had been taken *ad referendum* by the Deputies of the respective Provinces conformably to received usages, and to the constitution of the government; adding, what appears to have been omitted with design in the manifesto, that they would endeavor to complete an answer to his memorial as soon as possible, and as soon as the constitution of the government would permit. Accordingly, a few days after, the Deputies of Holland notified to the assembly of their High Mightinesses, that the States of their Province had unanimously resolved to require the advice of their Court of Justice, on the subject of demand of punishment, charging the said Court to give their opinion the soonest possible, laying aside all other affairs. Their High Mightinesses did not fail to transmit forthwith this resolution to Sir Joseph Yorke; but what was their surprise and their astonishment, when they learned that this Ambassador, after having reviewed his instructions, had addressed a billet to the Secretary, by which, in accusing this resolution with being evasive, he refused to transmit it to his Court; which obliged their High Mightinesses to send the said resolution to the Count de Welderen, their Minister at London, with orders to present it as soon as possible to the Ministry of his Britannic Majesty; but the refusal of this Ministry threw an obstacle in the way of the execution of these orders.

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"After this explanation of all the circumstances of this affair, the impartial public will be in a condition to set a just value upon the principal motive, or rather pretext which his Britannic Majesty has used to let loose the reins of his designs against the Republic. The affair reduces itself to this. His Majesty was informed of a negotiation which should have taken place in the year 1778, between a member of the government of one of the Provinces and a representative of the American Congress, which negotiation would have had for its object to project a treaty of commerce, to be concluded between the Republic and the said Colonies, *casu quo*, viz. in case the independence of these Colonies should have been acknowledged by the Crown of England; this negotiation, although conditional, and annexed to a condition, which depended upon an act to be antecedently performed by his Majesty himself; this negotiation, which without this act, or this anterior declaration, could not produce the smallest effect, was taken in so ill a part by his Majesty, and appeared to excite his discontent in such a degree, that he thought fit to require of the State a disavowal and a public disapprobation, as well as a complete punishment and satisfaction. It was forthwith, and without the least delay, that their High Mightinesses granted the first part of the requisition, but the punishment demanded was not in their power, and they could not agree to it, without flying in the face of the fundamental constitution of the State. The States of the Province of Holland were the only tribunal to which it belonged to take legal cognizance, and to provide for the case by the ordinary and regular ways.

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"This Sovereign, constantly attached to the maxims, which obliged it to respect the authority of the laws, and fully convinced that the maintenance of the department of justice in all the integrity and impartiality which are inseparable from it, ought to form one of the firmest supports of the supreme Power; this Sovereign, constrained by everything which is most sacred to defend, and to protect the rights and the privileges of its subjects, could not forget itself to such a degree as to subscribe to the will of his Britannic Majesty, by giving a blow to these rights and privileges, and by overleaping the bounds prescribed by the fundamental laws of the government. These laws required the intervention of the judiciary department, and this was accordingly the means which the said States resolved to employ, by requiring upon this object the advice of the Court of Justice established in their Province. It is by following this course that they have displayed before the eyes of his Britannic Majesty, of the English nation, and of all Europe, the unalterable principles of justice and equity, which characterise the Batavian Constitution, and which in a part so important of the public administration as is that which regards the exercise of the judiciary power, ought forever to serve as a buckler and a rampart against everything which could hurt the safety and the independence of a free nation; it was also by this means, and by following this course, that very far from shutting the road of justice, or evading the demand of punishment, they have on the contrary, left a free course to the way of regular proceeding, and conformable to the constitutional principles of the Republic; and it is finally by the same means, that by taking away from the Court of London all pretence of being able to complain of a denial of justice, they have prevented even to the smallest shadow or appearance of reason, which could authorise this Court to use reprisals to which, nevertheless, it has made no scruple to recur in a manner equally

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odious and unjust.

"But while the State took measures so just and so proper to remove all subject of complaint, the measure which was the epoch of the commencement of the rupture had already been resolved and concluded in the Council of the King. This Council had resolved to try all sorts of means to traverse and hinder, if it had been possible, the accession of the Republic to the convention of the Powers of the North, and the event has clearly demonstrated, that it is in hatred and resentment of this convention that the said Court has suffered itself to be drawn into the part, which it has been pleased to take against the Republic. For these causes, and since that after the repeated outrages and immense losses, which the subjects of the Republic must have sustained on the part of his Majesty, the King of Great Britain, their High Mightinesses find themselves moreover provoked and attacked by his said Majesty, and forced to employ the means which they have in hand, to defend and avenge the precious rights of their liberty and independence, they assure themselves with the firmest confidence, that the God of armies, the God of their fathers, who by the visible direction of his Providence sustained and delivered their Republic in the midst of the greatest dangers, will bless the means, which they have resolved to put in operation for their lawful defence, in crowning the justice of their arms, by the succors always triumphant of his Almighty protection, while that their High Mightinesses will desire with ardor the moment, when they shall see their neighbor and their ally, now their enemy, brought back to moderate and equitable sentiments; and at this epoch, their High Mightinesses will seize with earnestness all events, which, compatible with the honor and independence of a free State, may tend to reconcile them with their ancient friend and ally.

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"Thus done and resolved at the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, the Lords the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, at the Hague, the 12th of March, 1781."

It is remarkable, that their High Mightinesses, after so many delays, have chosen for the publication of this Manifesto, a time when the mediation of the Empress is depending. This mediation appears in a memorial, presented the 1st of March to the States-General, in these words.

"High and Mighty Lords.—As soon as her Majesty, the Empress, was informed of the sudden departure from the Hague of the Ambassador of his Britannic Majesty to your High Mightinesses, guided by the sentiments of friendship and benevolence, which she professes towards the two powers, she did not wait for further explanations, concerning the consequences, which might be produced by a procedure so alarming for their reciprocal tranquillity and well-being, to make by her Minister at the Court of London representations the most pressing, to the end to divert it, if it were possible, from coming to violent measures, and to induce it rather to prefer those of softness and conciliation, offering herself to co-operate in everything which might depend upon her. Although her Majesty has not yet had the time to receive the answer of the Court of London, she has, nevertheless, reason to presume, that her insinuations there will be received with pleasure.

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In this confidence, the Empress does not hesitate to give a new proof of her salutary intentions in favor of the reunion of two States, for whom she has an equal affection, and whom she has seen for so long a time live together in an intelligence the most perfect, and the most natural to their respective interests, by proposing to them formally her good offices and her mediation, to interrupt and put an entire end to the discord and the war, which has broken out between them. While M. Simolin, the Minister of the Empress at the Court of London, acquits himself of the orders, which she has given him concerning this object, the undersigned has the honor to fulfil the same task, on his part, towards your High Mightinesses, and to assure you of the zeal and earnestness with which he should desire to labor at the precious work of the re-establishment of the repose and the tranquillity of your State. The disinterestedness, the impartiality, and the views of general beneficence, which have instamped their seal upon all the actions of her Imperial Majesty, preside equally in this. The wisdom and the prudence of your High Mightinesses will know how to acknowledge in her these august characters, and will dictate the answer, which the subscriber will have to transmit to her, concerning the execution of his orders.

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"The Hague, March 1st, 1781.

THE PRINCE DE GALLITZIN."

The offer of mediation was accepted by their High Mightinesses with gratitude.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Leyden, March 19th, 1781.

Sir,

I have received your Excellency's letter of the 1st of January, with the commission and

instructions enclosed.^[14] I am very sensible of this fresh instance of the confidence of Congress, and shall do everything in my power to discharge the duties of this new trust; but I am obliged to say, that no commission that ever was given, required more patience, fortitude, and circumspection than this, virtues which I much fear have not fallen in sufficient quantities to my share.

I have experienced since my residence in this Republic, a great change in the external behavior of several persons of rank, who upon my first arrival received me with distinction, but from the moment of the publication of the papers taken with Mr Laurens, have been afraid to see me. The nation has indeed been in a violent fermentation and crisis. It is divided in sentiments. There are Stadtholderians and Republicans; there are proprietors in English funds, and persons immediately engaged in commerce; there are enthusiasts for peace and alliance with England; and there are advocates for an alliance with France, Spain, and America; and there is a third sort who are for adhering in all things to Russia, Sweden, and Denmark; some are for acknowledging American independence, and entering into treaties of commerce and alliance with her; others start at the idea with horror, as an everlasting impediment to a return to the friendship and alliance with England; some will not augment the navy without increasing the army; others will let the navy be neglected rather than augment the army. [470]

In this perfect chaos of sentiments and systems, principles and interests, it is no wonder there is languor, a weakness and irresolution, that is vastly dangerous in the present circumstances of affairs. The danger lies not more in the hostile designs and exertions of the English, than in the prospect of seditions and commotions among the people, which are every day dreaded and expected. If it were not for a standing army, and troops posted about in several cities, it is probable there would have been popular tumults before now; but everybody that I see, appears to me to live in constant fear of mobs, and in a great degree of uncertainty whether they will rise in favor of war or against it; in favor of England or against it; in favor of the Prince or of the city of Amsterdam; in favor of America or against it. I have ventured in the midst of these critical circumstances, pressed as I am to get money to discharge the bills of exchange, which Congress have drawn and I have accepted, to open a loan; but this is looked upon as a very hardy and dangerous measure, which nobody but an American would have risked, and I am obliged to assure Congress, that people are as yet so much afraid of being pointed out by the mob or the soldiery, as favorers of this loan, that I have no hopes at all of succeeding for several months, if ever. [471]

I have been advised to do nothing, in consequence of my commission, to the States at present, for fear of throwing before the people new objects of division and dissension. I have, however, communicated to their High Mightinesses, and to the Ministers of Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and France, the resolution of Congress, of the 5th of October, relative to the principles of the neutral confederation. The memorial and letters I have transmitted to Congress.^[15]

Whenever I shall communicate to their High Mightinesses the full powers of Congress, the course will be this. They will lie long upon the table, then taken *ad referendum*, that is, sent to the several Provinces, cities, and bodies of nobles, who compose the sovereignty, or as some say, the deputies of the sovereignty; these will deliberate, and deliberate, and deliberate, and probably some will be for, and some against making a treaty, at least it is supposed that Zealand and one or two other Provinces will be against it. But in the meantime, there will be much communication and negotiation among individuals at least, between this country and Russia, Sweden and Denmark upon the subject; and if it is true, as I am informed in a letter from Mr Gerry, that a Minister is appointed to the Court of Petersburg, as I hope it is, and that the same Minister, or some other, is empowered to treat with Sweden and Denmark, it is not impossible, I think it indeed probable, that we may succeed with these four nations at once; for let me add, there is not in my apprehension the least prospect of a general peace. England is at her old game of seduction and division, and is laboring under the pretence of employing the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia in mediations for peace, insidiously to embroil all Europe in the war. [472]

From motives of philanthropy, I hope she will not succeed, unless the same feelings of humanity should prompt me to wish all mankind at war with that nation, for her humiliation, which is at this time, if ever one was, *Hostis humani generis*.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Leyden, March 29th, 1781.

Sir,

The Baron de Lynden, Envoy Extraordinary from their High Mightinesses at the Court of Stockholm, had, about the 28th of February, a conference with the Count Ulrich Scheffer, to whom he presented, on the part of his masters, a Memorial too important to be omitted. It is as

follows.

"The subscriber, Minister Extraordinary of their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces, to his Majesty, the King of Sweden, by express orders received from his masters, has the honor to propose to his Majesty,

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"That their High Mightinesses, by their resolution of the 20th of November, having acceded to the confederation of the armed neutrality, according to the invitation given by the powers of the North, placing the most perfect confidence in the power, the magnanimity, and the fidelity of their Imperial and Royal Majesties, for fulfilling their engagements, and maintaining their dignity, by completing a work so gloriously undertaken, to wit, the liberty of the seas for neutral nations, did not suffer themselves to be diverted by the consideration of the consequences, which this accession and this declaration might draw upon the Republic from the part of the belligerent powers; but their High Mightinesses declared themselves for this accession and this declaration, relying, without reserve, upon the sentiments of their Imperial and Royal Majesties, which they manifested in the season, by the steps taken in this respect.

"That the event has entirely justified the instances of their High Mightinesses in regard to the British Court, since its Minister, after several vain attempts tending to impede the accession to the alliance in question, resolved, from the time when he had the first intimation of it, to speak a language altogether unheard of, and such as is scarcely agreeable to those respects, which sovereigns respectively owe each other, without allowing to the Republic the time necessary to take the affair into deliberation, conformably to a political system, which his Britannic Majesty fully understands; the Minister, nevertheless, insisting on a prompt and immediate satisfaction, and the punishment of a pretended offence, occasioned by the discovery of a negotiation with North America, without being satisfied by the provisional answer, or by the formal disavowal of their High Mightinesses touching the said negotiation, in which, as his Britannic Majesty has acknowledged, they had in nowise participated, nor had any knowledge of it; a negotiation relative to a pretended treaty, which, at the first glance of the eye, indicates sufficiently by its proper terms, to be nothing more than a project of an eventual treaty made by certain individuals, without being formally authorised thereto by the magistrates of Amsterdam, as a body, nor by the States of the Provinces of Holland, and still less by the States-General, who alone are authorised to contract engagements in the name of the Republic. The Minister in question refused even to accept the resolution, which enjoined on the Court of Holland, (the Province, which alone this affair concerns,) to deliberate, whether the laws of the country could authorise to pursue in justice the persons accused, and to punish them? A formality, without which no punishment can be inflicted, either in England, in this Republic, or in any other country. This Minister added menaces, that his Sovereign would procure for himself the satisfaction demanded; he was, at the same time, determined to attack the Republic by surprise, and to precipitate so violently the measures taken to commence hostilities, that my Lord Stormont, making use of vain pretences, would not even accept, on the part of the Count de Welderen, the said declaration, and answered him in writing, that he could not consider him any longer as the Minister of a friendly power, after having announced to him officially the manifesto of the King; while the same manifesto, which is remarkable, was sent to the Count de Welderen one hour before the time fixed the evening before by Lord Stormont, after repeated requests to have a conversation with him.

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"Besides, although in the manifesto in question, they make no mention of the accession of the Republic to the armed confederacy, (which it was necessary most carefully to pass over in silence,) it appears, however, distinctly to the penetrating eye of your Majesty, as well as to that of all Europe, if they will compare together the whole progress of this action, the time and the manner, in which the Manifesto was published, that the hatred occasioned by the accession of the Republic to the armed neutrality, is the true motive of the resentment of his Britannic Majesty, and has prompted him to a manifest aggression against the Republic, by capturing immediately a great number of merchant vessels belonging to her subjects, as well as some vessels of war. Besides, that this same Manifesto, known to your Majesty, discovers sufficiently the original of this hatred; considering, that among the pretended causes of offence serving to justify the hostile measures against the Republic, they there allege, that she has declared herself neuter. The Cabinet of St James, disdaining to observe, that this answer ought to offend the Powers of the North, to whom the treaties subsisting between England and the Republic are perfectly known, and that these powers could not be taxed with concluding a treaty of neutrality with a power, which they had not judged to be lawfully neuter in the present war, and without observing, that this liberty of negotiating has been by England herself put out of all doubt, since by her suspension of the treaty of 1674, made the 17th of April, 1780, she has declared, that she would hereafter regard the Republic as a neutral power, not advantaged by any treaty.

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"That in virtue of the reasons alleged, the hatred of Great Britain pierces, still more visibly, through the reproach inserted in the said Manifesto against the Republic, that she has advanced and favored the transportation of naval stores to France, by the suspension of duties upon those effects; at the same time, that it appears, that this suspension has never taken place, and that the Republic has a well founded right to make this transportation, not only during the continuance of the treaty of 1674, but also according to the principle prescribed to the neutral powers by the convention of the confederation; that a further examination of this manifesto should be superfluous, since his Majesty may himself estimate its value, and must, moreover, be convinced, that the conduct of their High Mightinesses, observed from the commencement of the troubles in regard to America, has evidently proved, that they have in nowise favored the revolted Colonies

of America; witness the condescension in favor of England, to which the Republic was not obliged by the shackles imposed upon the commerce of her Colonies, by the prohibition to take under convoy vessels loaded with ship-timber, and by the recall of the Governor of St Eustatia, upon the ill founded complaints of the British Ministry; condescensions, which have been rewarded by the attack and capture of the convoy sailing under the command of Count de Byland, by a violation of the territory of the Republic, and by the capture of American ships under the cannon of St Martins. That since their High Mightinesses have faithfully observed this system of moderation, it is manifest, that the resentment of his Britannic Majesty cannot be regarded, but as an effect of a resentment occasioned by the engagement taken for the neutrality, and to this effect their High Mightinesses are well founded to claim the tenor and the sense of the articles seventh, eighth, and ninth of that alliance, which forms the basis of the union of the neutrality contracted with their Imperial and Royal Majesties; that thus, there ought not to exist any further difficulty in fulfilling towards their High Mightinesses, become allies, the engagements, which are contracted in virtue of the known convention, of which they ought to be regarded as members, at the very moment even when this convention has been formed and concluded by their High Mightinesses at the Hague, and when their declaration has been despatched to the belligerent powers, conformably to the said accession and convention.

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"That if their High Mightinesses had occasion to complain of a single act of offence, or attack committed against them, and liable to be redressed upon general representations to their allies, they would have demanded their intervention for the redress of such a grievance, rather than to have recourse to arms; but as at present their High Mightinesses see themselves positively attacked by his Britannic Majesty, on occasion and in resentment of the aforesaid alliance, they find themselves obliged to defend themselves, and to repel the attack in the same manner in which it has been made, by returning hostilities for hostilities; being moreover persuaded, that the allied powers will not make any difficulty to make common cause with them, to procure to the Republic the satisfaction and indemnification of the losses sustained, by an attack as unjust as it is violent, and that the allies will concur with their High Mightinesses, in taking such further arrangements as the present circumstances require. This is what their High Mightinesses solicit earnestly, expecting it with so much more confidence, as they are intimately convinced that the generous and equitable sentiments which animate their Imperial and Royal Majesties will prevent them from suffering the Republic to become the victim of a political system as glorious as it is equitable, conceived for the maintenance of the safety and the right of neutrals, while the Republic alone exposed to all the violence of this unjust attack of England, might with difficulty make head against it, and thereby run the risk of becoming entirely useless to the confederation.

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"For these causes, the undersigned insisted upon the motives alleged above, fully convinced that the ratifications of the treaty signed at Petersburg will be made as soon as possible, and he has the honor, in the name and by the express order of his masters to demand the accomplishment of the articles seventh, eighth, and ninth of the said treaty, and to require in virtue of it a prompt and sufficient succor of his Majesty, whose equitable and magnanimous sentiments, known to all Europe, will not permit him to abandon a work worthy of all praise.

"The friendship and affection of your Majesty towards their High Mightinesses, appear to assure them beforehand of the succors which they expect from his Majesty, and to promise to the subscriber an answer as prompt as satisfactory, which he ought to press with so much the more zeal, as every moment of delay occasions great and irreparable losses to the Republic.

D. W. VAN LYNDEN."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

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Leyden, March 29th, 1781

Sir,

It is of importance to the people of America to observe how much lighter their own burthens are than those of their enemies, and for this reason I have every year since I have been in Europe taken notice of the new taxes laid, annually, in perpetuity upon the people of Great Britain by Parliament, in support of tyranny, in addition to all former debts and taxes. One sixth part of the new taxes of this year would be more than sufficient to pay the interest of the whole sum which America will expend this year in support of liberty. The new taxes consist in an additional duty of five per cent upon all articles subject to the duty of excise, except malt, soap, and candles, and green leather, valued at

£150,000 sterling.

Seven per cent upon the drawbacks at the custom-house,

167,000

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| An additional duty of one penny three farthings upon each pound of tobacco, | 61,000 |
| A duty of a halfpenny upon each pound of sugar, | 326,000 |
| | ----- |
| | 704,000 |
| The interest of the new loan is said to amount only to | 660,000 |
| | ----- |
| Which leaves a surplus of | 44,000 |

There cannot be a more striking contrast than that between the conduct of Lord North and M. Necker. The abilities of the former as a financier consist wholly in laying new taxes without end; those of the other lie in finding resources for vast expenses, without laying any new burthens on the people. M. Necker is laying a foundation for a credit in France as solid as that of Great Britain, by stating to the public the expenses and revenues. This is the only solid foundation of public credit. America will never obtain a credit of any consequence in Europe until she has a credit at home. It is demonstrable that the people of America are able to lend to Congress every year more than money enough to carry on the war, and pay all expenses. What is the reason they do not. The reasons are plain; first, they have not known that their public money was expended by any fixed rule, so that they could judge how much it amounted to; secondly, they did not see any certain prospect of the punctual payment of interest or principal at a fixed value. All the art of financiering in America lies in ascertaining with precision by a fixed standard, how much our expenses are; next ascertaining what our income is; thirdly, how much must be borrowed; fourthly, how to assure the payment of interest and principal. [480]

If taxes could be laid by Congress upon exports and imports, and upon the consumption of articles of luxury, convenience, and necessity, as they are in Europe, America would be able to raise more every year in taxes than she has ever spent in one year. Nay, we might oblige foreigners to pay all the expenses of the war, and establish a credit much more solid than that of Great Britain, because we have not such a debt to begin with. But without recurring to this system, which might injure our commerce as well as our liberties, it is unquestionably owing entirely to regulations of prices, embargoes, and stamping an arbitrary value upon what had no value, that has hitherto ruined our credit. But when all these systems shall be totally abolished in the several States, and measures shall be taken to lay annual taxes of a certain value, and these taxes mortgaged for the payment of interest, there is not a doubt but every State may obtain credit enough for the necessities of its own inhabitants. [481]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Leyden, April 16th, 1781.

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency, that I have received from Congress full powers and instructions to treat with the States-General, and to conclude a treaty of amity and commerce consistent with the relations already formed between the United States and France; and that I have also received a letter of credence, as a Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and another to His Most Serene Highness the Prince of Orange.

With the greatest respect, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

MEMORIAL TO THE STATES-GENERAL.

To their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries.

High and Mighty Lords,

The subscriber has the honor to propose to your High Mightinesses, that the United States of America in Congress assembled, have lately thought fit to send him a commission (with full powers and instructions) to confer with your High Mightinesses, concerning a treaty of amity and commerce; an authentic copy of which he has the honor to annex to this memorial. [482]

At the time, when the treaties between this Republic and the Crown of Great Britain were made, the people who now compose the United States of America, were a part of the English nation; as such, allies of the Republic and parties to those treaties; entitled to all their benefits, and submitting cheerfully to all their obligations.

It is true, that when the British administration, renouncing the ancient character of Englishmen, for generosity, justice, and humanity, conceived the design of subverting the political systems of the Colonies; depriving them of the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and reducing them to the worst of all forms of government; starving the people by blockading the ports, and cutting off their fisheries and commerce; sending fleets and armies to destroy every principle and sentiment of liberty, and to consume their habitations and their lives; making contracts for foreign troops and alliances with savage nations, to assist them in their enterprize; casting formally, by act of Parliament, three millions of people at once out of the protection of the Crown; then, and not till then, did the United States of America, in Congress assembled, pass that memorable act, by which they assumed an equal station among the nations.

This immortal Declaration, of the 4th of July, 1776, when America was invaded by a hundred vessels of war, and, according to estimates laid before Parliament, by fiftyfive thousand of veteran troops, was not the effect of any sudden passion, or enthusiasm; but a measure which had been long in deliberation among the people, maturely discussed in some hundreds of popular assemblies and by public writings in all the States; it was a measure which Congress did not adopt, until they had received the positive instructions of their constituents in all the States; it was then unanimously adopted by Congress, subscribed by all its members, transmitted to the Assemblies of the several States, and by them respectively accepted, ratified, and recorded among their archives; so that no decree, edict, statute, placard or fundamental law of any nation was ever made with more solemnity, or with more unanimity or cordiality adopted, as the act and consent of the whole people, than this; and it has been held sacred to this day by every State with such unshaken firmness, that not even the smallest has ever been induced to depart from it; although the English have wasted many millions, and vast fleets and armies, in the vain attempt to invalidate it. On the contrary, each of the thirteen States instituted a form of government for itself, under the authority of the people; has erected its legislature in the several branches; its executive authority with all its offices; its judiciary departments and judges; its army, militia, revenue, and some of them their navy; and all these departments of government have been regularly and constitutionally organised under the associated superintendency of Congress now these five years, and have acquired a consistency, solidity, and activity, equal to the oldest and most established governments.

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It is true, that in some speeches and writings of the English, it is still contended, that the people of America are still in principle and affection with them; but these assertions are made against such evident truth and demonstration, that it is surprising they should find at this day one believer in the world. One may appeal to the writings and recorded speeches of the English for the last seventeen years, to show that similar misrepresentations have been incessantly repeated through that whole period, and that the conclusion of every year has in fact confuted the confident assertions and predictions of the beginning of it. The subscriber begs leave to say from his own knowledge of the people of America, (and he has a better right to obtain credit, because he has better opportunities to know, than any Briton whatsoever,) that they are unalterably determined to maintain their independence. He confesses, that, notwithstanding his confidence through his whole life, in the virtuous sentiments and uniformity of character among his countrymen, their unanimity has surprised him; that all the power, arts, intrigues and bribes, which have been employed in the several States, should have seduced from the standard of virtue so contemptible a few, is more fortunate than could have been expected.

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This independence stands upon so broad and firm a bottom of the people's interests, honor, consciences, and affections, that it will not be affected by any successes that the English may obtain, either in America or against the European powers at war, or by any alliances they can possibly form, if indeed in so unjust and desperate a cause they can obtain any. Nevertheless, although compelled by necessity, and warranted by the fundamental laws of the Colonies and of the British constitution; by principles avowed in the English laws, and confirmed by many examples in the English history; by principles interwoven into the history and public right of Europe, in the great examples of the Helvetic and Batavian confederacies and many others, and frequently acknowledged and ratified by the diplomatic body; principles founded in eternal justice and the laws of God and nature; to cut asunder forever all the ties which had connected them with Great Britain; yet the people of America did not consider themselves as separating from their allies, especially the Republic of the United Provinces, or departing from their connexions with any of the people under their government; but, on the contrary, they preserved the same affection, esteem, and respect for the Dutch nation in every part of the world, which they and their ancestors had ever entertained.

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When sound policy dictated to Congress the precaution of sending persons to negotiate natural alliances in Europe, it was not from a failure in respect that they did not send a Minister to your High Mightinesses with the first whom they sent abroad; but instructed in the nature of the connexions between Great Britain and the Republic, and in the system of peace and neutrality, which she had so long pursued, they thought proper to respect both so far, as not to seek to embroil her with her allies, to excite divisions in the nation or lay embarrassments before it. But since the British administration, uniform and persevering in injustice, despising their allies, as much as their colonists and fellow-subjects; disregarding the faith of treaties, as much as that of

royal charters; violating the law of nations, as they had before done the fundamental laws of the Colonies and the inherent rights of British subjects; have arbitrarily set aside all the treaties between the Crown and the Republic, declared war and commenced hostilities, the settled intentions of which they had manifested long before, all those motives, which before restrained the Congress, cease, and an opportunity presents of proposing such connexions as the United States of America have a right to form, consistent with those already formed with France and Spain, which they are under every obligation of duty, interest, and inclination to observe sacred and inviolate, and consistent with such other treaties as it is their intention to propose to other sovereigns.

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A natural alliance may be formed between the two Republics, if ever one existed among nations. The first planters of the four northern States, found in this country an asylum from persecution, and resided here from the year 1608 to the year 1620, twelve years preceding their migration. They have ever entertained, and have transmitted to posterity, a grateful remembrance of that protection and hospitality, and especially of that religious liberty they found here, though they had sought them in vain in England.

The first inhabitants of two other States, New York and New Jersey, were immediate emigrants from this nation, and have transmitted their religion, language, customs, manners, and character; and America in general, until her relations were formed with the House of Bourbon, has ever considered this nation as her first friend in Europe, whose history and the great characters it exhibits in the various arts of peace, as well as achievements in war by sea and land, have been particularly studied, admired, and imitated in every State.

A similitude of religion, although it is not deemed so essential in this as it has been in former ages to the alliance of nations, is still, as it ever will be thought, a desirable circumstance. Now it may be said with truth, that there are no two nations whose worship, doctrine, and discipline, are more alike, than those of the two Republics. In this particular, therefore, as far as it is of weight, an alliance would be perfectly natural.

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A similarity in the forms of government is usually considered as another circumstance, which renders alliances natural; and although the constitutions of the two Republics are not perfectly alike, there is yet analogy enough between them to make a connexion easy in this respect.

In general usages, and in the liberality of sentiments in those momentous points, the freedom of inquiry, the right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, of so much importance to be supported in the world, and imparted to all mankind, and which at this hour are in more danger from Great Britain, and that intolerant spirit, which is secretly fermenting there, than from any other quarter, the two nations resemble each other more than any other.

The originals of the two Republics are so much alike, that the history of one seems but a transcript from that of the other; so that every Dutchman instructed in the subject must pronounce the American revolution just and necessary, or pass a censure upon the greatest actions of his immortal ancestors; actions which have been approved and applauded by mankind, and justified by the decision of Heaven.

But the circumstance, which, perhaps in this age, has stronger influence than any other in the formation of friendships between nations, is the great and growing interest of commerce, of the whole system of which through the globe, your High Mightinesses are too perfect masters for me to say anything, that is not familiarly known. It may not, however, be amiss to hint, that the central situation of this country, her extensive navigation, her possessions in the East and West Indies, the intelligence of her merchants, the number of her capitalists, and the riches of her funds, render a connexion with her desirable to America. And on the other hand, the abundance and variety of the productions of America, the materials of manufactures, navigation, and commerce, the vast demand and consumption of the manufactures of Europe, of the merchandises from the Baltic, and from the East Indies, and the situation of the Dutch possessions in the West Indies, cannot admit of a doubt, that a connexion with the United States would be useful to this Republic. The English are so sensible of this, that, notwithstanding all their professions of friendship, they have ever considered this nation as their rival in the American trade; a sentiment which dictated and maintained their severe act of navigation, as injurious to the commerce and naval power of this country, as it was both to the trade and the rights of the Colonies. There is now an opportunity offered to both to shake off this shackle for ever. If any consideration whatever could have prevailed with the English to have avoided a war with your High Mightinesses, it would have been an apprehension of an alliance between the two Republics; and it is easy to foresee, that nothing will contribute more to oblige them to a peace than such a connexion once completely formed.

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It is needless to point out particularly what advantages might be derived to the possessions of the Republic in the West Indies, from a trade opened, protected, and encouraged between them and the Continent of America, or what profits might be made by the East India Company, by carrying their effects directly to the American market; how much even the trade of the Baltic might be secured and extended by a free intercourse with America, which has ever had so large a demand, and will have more, for hemp, cordage, sailcloth, and other articles of that commerce; how much the national navigation would be benefitted, by building and purchasing ships there; how much the number of seamen might be increased, or how much advantage to both countries to have their ports mutually opened to their men-of-war and privateers, and their prizes.

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If, therefore, analogy of religion, government, original manners, and the most extensive and

lasting commercial interests, can form a ground and an invitation to political connexions, the subscriber flatters himself, that in all these particulars the union is so obviously natural, that there has seldom been a more distinct designation of Providence to any two distant nations to unite themselves together.

It is further submitted to the wisdom and humanity of your High Mightinesses, whether it is not visibly for the good of mankind, that the powers of Europe, who are convinced of the justice of the American cause, (and where is one to be found that is not) should make haste to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and form equitable treaties with them, as the surest means of convincing Great Britain of the impracticability of her pursuits? Whether the late Marine Treaty, concerning the rights of neutral vessels, noble and useful as it is, can be established against Great Britain, who never will adopt it nor submit to it, but from necessity, without the independence of America? Whether the return of America, with her nurseries of seamen, and magazines of materials for navigation and commerce, to the domination and monopoly of Great Britain, if that were practicable, would not put the possessions of other nations beyond seas wholly in the power of that enormous Empire, which has long been governed wholly by the feeling of its own power; at least without a proportional attention to justice, humanity, or decency? When it is obvious and certain, that the Americans are not inclined to submit again to the British government, on one hand; and that the powers of Europe ought not, and could not, with safety consent to it, if they were, on the other; why should a source of contention be left open for future contingencies to involve the nations of Europe in still more bloodshed, when, by one decisive step of the maritime powers, in making treaties with a nation long in possession of sovereignty, by right and in fact, it might be closed?

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The example of your High Mightinesses would, it is hoped, be followed by all the maritime powers, especially those, which are parties to the late Marine Treaty; nor can an apprehension, that the independence of America would be injurious to the trade of the Baltic, be any objection. This jealousy is so groundless, that the reverse would happen. The freight and ensurance in voyages across the Atlantic are so high, and the price of labor in America so dear, that tar, pitch, turpentine, and ship-timber can never be transported to Europe at so cheap a rate as it has been and will be afforded by countries round the Baltic. This commerce was supported by the English before the revolution with difficulty, and not without large Parliamentary bounties. Of hemp, cordage, and sailcloth, there will not probably be a sufficiency raised in America for her own consumption in many centuries, for the plainest of all reasons, because these articles can be imported from Amsterdam, or even from Petersburg, or Archangel, cheaper than they can be raised at home. America will therefore be for ages a market for most of these articles of the Baltic trade.

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Nor is there more, solidity in another supposition, propagated by the English to prevent other nations from pursuing their true interests, that other colonies will follow the example of the United States. Those powers, which have as large possessions as any beyond seas, have already declared against England, apprehending no such consequences. Indeed there is no probability of any other power of Europe following the example of England, in attempting to change the whole system of the government of colonies, and reducing them by oppression to the necessity of governing themselves. And without such manifest injustice and cruelty on the part of the metropolis, there is no danger of colonies attempting innovations. Established governments are founded deeply in the hearts, the passions, the imaginations, and understandings of the people, and without some violent change from without, to alter the temper and character of the whole people, it is not in human nature to exchange safety for danger, and certain happiness for very precarious benefits.

It is submitted to the consideration of your High Mightinesses, whether the system of the United States, which was minutely considered and discussed, and unanimously agreed on in Congress in the year 1776, in planning the treaty they proposed to France, to form equitable commercial treaties with all the maritime powers of Europe, without being governed or monopolised by any; a system which was afterwards approved by the King, and made the foundation of the treaties with his Majesty, a system to which the United States have hitherto constantly adhered, and from which they never will depart, unless compelled by some powers declaring against them, which is not expected; is not the only means of preventing this growing country from being an object of everlasting jealousies, rivalries, and wars among the nations? If this idea is just, it follows, that it is the interest of every State in Europe to acknowledge American independence immediately. If such benevolent policy should be adopted, the new world will be a proportional blessing to every part of the old.

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The subscriber has the further honor of informing your High Mightinesses, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, impressed with a high sense of the wisdom and magnanimity of your High Mightinesses, and of your inviolable attachment to the rights and liberties of mankind, and being desirous of cultivating the friendship of a nation eminent for its wisdom, justice, and moderation, have appointed the subscriber to be their Minister Plenipotentiary to reside near you, that he may give you more particular assurances of the great respect they entertain for your High Mightinesses, beseeching your High Mightinesses to give entire credit to everything, which their said Minister shall deliver on their part, especially when he shall assure you of the sincerity of their friendship and regard. The original letter of credence, under the seal of Congress, the subscriber is ready to deliver to your High Mightinesses, or to such persons as you shall direct to receive it. He has also a similar letter of credence to his Most Serene Highness the Prince Stadtholder.

All which is respectfully submitted to the consideration of your High Mightinesses, together with the propriety of appointing some person or persons to treat on the subject of this mission, by

JOHN ADAMS.

Leyden, April 19th, 1781.

MEMORIAL TO THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

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Leyden, April 19th, 1781.

To his Most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange and Nassau, Hereditary Stadtholder and Governor of the Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries.

The subscriber has the honor to inform your Most Serene Highness, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, impressed with a deep sense of your wisdom and magnanimity, and being desirous of cultivating the friendship of your Highness and of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, who have ever distinguished themselves by an inviolable attachment to freedom and the rights of nations, have appointed the subscriber to be their Minister Plenipotentiary at your Court, that he may give you more particular assurances of the great respect they entertain for your Highness and for the people over whom you preside as Stadtholder, beseeching your Highness to give entire credit to everything which their said Minister shall deliver on their part, especially when he shall assure you of the sincerity of their friendship and regard. The original letter of credence, under the seal of Congress, he is desirous of the honor of delivering whenever and in whatever manner your Highness shall judge proper to receive it. He has the further honor of informing your Highness, that the said United States have honored him with full powers to form a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the States-General, and also with letters of credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses; in consequence of which he has done himself the honor to present a Memorial, a copy of which is here annexed.

The subscriber in the discharge of these trusts considers himself rather as proposing a renovation of old friendships than the formation of new ones, as the Americans have ever been the good and faithful allies of this nation, and have done nothing to forfeit its esteem. On the contrary, they are confident they have a better title to it, as they adhered steadfastly through every trial to those principles which formed and supported the connexion, principles which founded and have supported this Republic, while others have wantonly abandoned them.

[494]

The subscriber thinks himself particularly fortunate to be thus accredited to a nation, which has made such memorable exertions in favor of the rights of men, and to a Prince, whose illustrious line of ancestors and predecessors have so often supported in Holland and England those liberties for which the United States of America now contend; and it will be the completion of his wishes if he should be so happy as to recommend the cause of his country to the favorable attention of your Most Serene Highness and of this people.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, April 27th, 1781.

Sir,

I have received your Excellency's letter of the 21st, and will send you the list of the bills, and of the times of their becoming due, according to your desire, as soon as I can make it out. I will examine M. de Neufville's bill, and if it is good accept it.

From the time I received from Congress their orders to borrow money here, I have constantly in my letters requested that no drafts might be made upon me, until there was news from me, that I had money to discharge them, and this request I shall repeat. But the cry of the army for clothes, induces Congress to venture upon measures, which appear hazardous to us. However, by the intelligence I have, they had grounds to expect that the drafts hitherto made would be honored.

[495]

I sometimes think, however, paradoxical as it may seem, that one set of bills protested, would immediately procure Congress a large loan. No bills are in better credit than these. There is an appetite here for American trade, as ravenous as that of a shark for his prey; and if they saw a prospect of having their trade broken up, they would do much to save it.

I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency, that I some time ago received from Congress, full powers to conclude with the States-General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries,

concerning a Treaty of Amity and Commerce; and that I have very lately received a letter of credence, as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and another to his Most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange. Being thus fixed to this country for the present, I have taken a house in Amsterdam, on the Keizersgragt, near the Spiegel street, for the convenience of our countrymen, who have occasion to visit me, and of the merchants, who have bills upon me, until their High Mightinesses shall have taken the necessary time to deliberate upon it, and determine to acknowledge the independence of the United States, enter into a treaty with them, and receive me at the Hague. If this should happen, I hope we shall obtain a credit here; but we never shall before.

[496]

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE AT THE HAGUE.

Leyden, May 1st, 1781.

Sir,

By the tenth article of the Treaty of Alliance between France and America, the Most Christian King and the United States agree, to invite or admit other powers, who may receive injuries from England, to make common cause with them, and to accede to that alliance, under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to, and settled between all the parties.

It will be readily acknowledged, that this Republic has received injuries from England; and it is not improbable, that several other maritime powers may be soon, if they are not already, in the same predicament. But, whether his Majesty will think fit to invite this nation at present to accede to that alliance, according to the article, must be submitted to his wisdom.

It is only proper for me to say, that whenever your Excellency shall have received his Majesty's commands, and shall judge it proper to take any measures, either for admitting or inviting this Republic to accede, I shall be ready, in behalf of the United States, to do whatever is necessary and proper for them to do upon the occasion.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

[497]

Leyden, May 3d, 1781.

Sir,

On the 1st of May I went to the Hague, and wrote to his Excellency, Peter Van Bleiswick, Grand Pensionary of Holland, that having something of importance to communicate to him, I proposed to do myself the honor to wait on him the next morning at half past eight, if that time should be agreeable to him; but if any other hour was more convenient, I requested his Excellency to mention it. The answer, which was not in writing, was, that half past eight should be the time.

Accordingly, the next morning I waited on him, and was politely received. I informed him that I had asked his permission to make him this visit, in order to inform him, that I had received from my Sovereign, the United States of America, full powers to treat with the States-General, and a letter of credence, as a Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and another to his Most Serene Highness, the Prince; and that it was my intention to communicate those powers and letters to their High Mightinesses, and to his Most Serene Highness on Friday next, the 4th of May.

His Excellency said he would acquaint the States-General and his Highness with it; that, in his private opinion, he thought favorably of it, but that he must wait the orders of his masters; that it was a matter somewhat delicate for the Republic. I replied, as to the delicacy of it in the present state of open war between England and Holland, I hoped that it would not be any obstacle; that I thought it the interest of the Republic, as well as that of America. His Excellency rejoined, "one thing is certain, we have a common enemy."

[498]

As this was a visit simply to impart my design, and as I knew enough of the delicate situation, and of the reputed sentiments of this officer, to be sensible that he did not wish to enter into any very particular conversation at this time upon public affairs, I here arose to take my leave. His Excellency asked me if I had any good news from America? I answered, none very late. He then

said, he should be very glad to form an acquaintance with me. I answered, this would be very flattering to me, and thus took my leave.

Tomorrow morning, I propose to go to the President of the States-General, to Secretary Fagel, and to the Secretary of the Prince. This moment, for the first time, I have received the Congress account of General Morgan's glorious victory over Tarleton.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, May 7th, 1781.

Sir,

On the 4th of May, I did myself the honor to wait on Peter Van Bleiswick, Grand Pensionary of Holland, and presented him a letter containing a copy of my Memorial to the States-General, &c. His Excellency said, that it was necessary for me to go to the President and Secretary of their High Mightinesses, and that it was not customary for foreign Ministers to communicate anything to the Pensionary of Holland. I told him that I had been advised by the French Ambassador to present copies to him, and they were only copies, which I had the honor to offer him. He said he could not receive them, that I must go to the President; but said he, "it is proper for me to apprise you, that the President will make a difficulty, or rather will refuse to receive any letter or paper from you, because the State you say you represent, is not yet acknowledged to be a sovereign State by the Sovereign of this nation; the President will hear what you have to say to him, make report of it to their High Mightinesses, and they will transmit it to the several Provinces for the deliberation of the various members of the sovereignty."

[499]

I thanked his Excellency for this information and departed. I then waited on the President of their High Mightinesses for the week, the Baron Linde de Hemmen, a deputy of the Province of Guelderland, to whom I communicated, that I had lately received from my sovereign, the United States of America in Congress assembled, a commission with full powers and instructions to treat with the States-General concerning a treaty of amity and commerce; that I had also received a letter of credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and I prayed him to lay before their High Mightinesses either the originals, or a Memorial, in which I had done myself the honor to state all these and to enclose copies.

The President said that he could not undertake to receive from me either the originals, or any Memorial, because America was not yet acknowledged as a sovereign State by the sovereign of this country; but that he would make report to their High Mightinesses of all that I had said to him, and that it would become the subject of deliberation in the several Provinces; that he thought it a matter of great importance to the Republic. I answered, that I was glad to hear him say that he thought it important; that I thought it was the interest of the two Republics to become connected. I thanked him for his politeness and retired, after having apprised him that I thought in the present circumstances, it would be my duty to make public in print my application to their High Mightinesses. I had prepared copies of my Memorial, &c. for the Secretary, M. Fagel; but as the President had refused to receive the originals, I thought it would be inconsistent for the Secretary to receive copies, so I omitted the visit to his office.

[500]

I then waited on the Baron de Ray, the Secretary of the Prince, with a letter addressed to his Most Serene Highness, containing a Memorial, informing him of my credentials to his Court, and copies of the Memorial to their High Mightinesses. The Secretary received me politely, look the letter, and promised to deliver it to the Stadtholder. He asked me where I lodged; I answered, at the Parliament of England, a public house of that name.

Returning to my lodgings, I heard about two hours afterwards, that the Prince had been to the assembly of the States-General for about half an hour; and in about another hour, the servant of the house where I lodged, announced to me the Baron de Ray. I went down to the door to receive him, and invited him into my room. He entered, and said that he was charged on the part of the Prince with his compliments to me, and to inform me, that as the independence of my country was not yet acknowledged by the Sovereign of his, he could not receive any letter from me, and therefore requested that I would receive it back, which I did respectfully. The Secretary then politely said he was very much obliged to me for having given him an opportunity to see my person, and took his leave.

The President made report to their High Mightinesses, as soon as they assembled, and his report was ordered to be recorded; whereupon the Deputies of each of the Seven Provinces demanded copies of the record to be transmitted to the respective Regencies for their deliberation and decision; or in the technical language of this country, it was taken *ad referendum* on the same day.

[501]

The next morning I waited on the French Ambassador, the Duc de la Vauguyon, and acquainted

him with all the steps I had taken. He said he still persisted in his opinion, that the time was not the most favorable, but as the measure was taken, I might depend upon it he would, as an individual, support and promote it to the utmost of his power.

It would take a large space to explain all the reasons and motives which I had for choosing the present time in preference to a later; but I think I can demonstrate, that every moment's delay would have been attended with danger and inconvenience. All Europe is in a crisis, and this ingredient thrown in at this time will have more effect than at any other. At a future time I may enlarge upon this subject.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, May 8th, 1781.

Sir,

I have the honor of yours of the 29th of April, and according to your desire I have enclosed a list of the bills accepted, with the times of their becoming due, and shall draw for the money to discharge them only as they become payable, and through the house of Fizeaux & Grand. [502]

I sincerely congratulate you upon the noble aid obtained from the French Court, for the current service of the year. Aids like this for two or three years, while the United States are arranging their finances, will be a most essential service to the common cause, and will lay a foundation of confidence and affection between France and the United States, which may last forever, and be worth ten times the sum of money. It is in the power of America to tax all Europe whenever she pleases, by laying duties upon her exports enough to pay the interest of money enough to answer all their purposes. England received into her Exchequer four hundred thousand pounds sterling in duties upon the single article of tobacco, imported from Virginia annually. What should hinder the government of Virginia from laying on the same, or a greater duty, on the exportation? Europe would still purchase Virginia tobacco, if there were eight pounds per hogshead duty to be paid. Virginia alone, therefore, could in this way easily pay the interest of money enough to carry on the whole war for the thirteen States for many years. The same reasoning is applicable to every article of export.

Yesterday were presented to me fifty bills of exchange for eleven hundred guilders each, drawn by Congress upon me on the 27th day of January, 1781, at six months sight. And on the same day other bills from No. 37 to No. 76 inclusively, drawn on me on the same 27th day of January, 1781, for five hundred and fifty guilders each, payable at six months sight, were presented to me. I asked time to write to your Excellency, to know if these bills and the others, drawn at the same time, can be discharged by you. If they cannot, it will be wrong to accept them, for I have no prospect at all of getting the money here, unless the States-General, who have taken the independence of America *ad referendum*, should determine to acknowledge it. [503]

About the same time that their High Mightinesses took the acknowledgment of the independence of the United States *ad referendum*, M. Van Berckel demanded a declaration of his innocence, or a trial. Whether the two affairs will aid or counteract each other I cannot tell.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, May 16th, 1781.

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose copies of the memorials, which I had the honor to present on the 4th instant to the President of their High Mightinesses, and to the Secretary of his Most Serene Highness.^[16] The former has been published in English, French, and Dutch, and has been favorably received by the public; but the public voice has not that influence upon government in any part of Europe that it has in every part of America, and therefore I cannot expect that any immediate effect will be produced upon the States-General. They will probably wait until they can sound the disposition of the Northern Powers, Russia particularly; and if they should not join in the war, their High Mightinesses will probably be willing to be admitted to accede to the treaty of alliance between France and America.

The Dutch fleet of about ten-sail of vessels from the Texel and the Maese has sailed. The news from the southern States of America of continual fighting, in which our countrymen have done themselves great honor; the capture of half the convoy under Hotham, by the Chevalier de la Motte Piquet, and the destruction made at Gibraltar by the Spaniards, have raised the spirits of this nation from that unmanly gloom and despondency, into which they were thrown by the capture of St Eustatia, Demerara, and Essequibo. But after all, this country at present, is divided in sentiments; it is an Alexandrine, that "like a wounded snake drags its slow length along."

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] The name of the person to whom this letter was sent is not mentioned in the original.
- [2] It is thus in the manuscript, but it should probably be 1778.
- [3] See Mr Adam's remarks on this speech, in a letter to M. Genet, above, p. 101.
- [4] *Barriers between Great Britain and the United States of America to a Reconciliation, Alliance, or even Peace.*
1. The malice, revenge, pride, obstinacy, and absurdity of the King and royal family.
 2. The guilt and danger of the Ministry, danger to their lives and present safety, as well as of ruin to their fortunes, characters, and reputations.
 3. The ambition and avarice of the Ministry, whose chiefs have the same hunger for the loaves and fishes as the Ministers; as little attention to, and affection for the public as they; and, therefore, dare not displease the King, and so give up their hopes of his favor, by adopting any principles, or espousing any system, that could lead to reconciliation, or to peace.
 4. The general prevalence of profligacy.
- [5] See this letter above, dated May 5th, 1780, p. 52.
- [6] This letter is printed in Franklin's Correspondence. Vol. III. p. 152.
- [7] See this memorial, or letter, in the Commissioners' Correspondence, Vol. I. page 500.
- [8] A copy of the Correspondence between Count de Vergennes and Mr Adams, respecting the communication of his powers to the British Ministry, being forwarded to Congress, a committee was appointed to consider the subject. Conformably to their report, the President wrote to Mr Adams the following letter in the name of Congress, on the 10th of January, 1781.

"Sir,

"Congress considers your correspondence with the Count de Vergennes, on the subject of communicating your Plenipotentiary powers to the Ministry of Great Britain, as flowing from your zeal and assiduity in the service of your country; but I am directed to inform you, that the opinion given to you by that Minister, relative to the time and circumstances proper for communicating your powers, and entering upon the execution of them, is well founded.

"Congress have no expectations from the influence, which the people may have on the British counsels, whatever may be the dispositions of that nation or their magistrates towards these United States, nor are they of opinion, that a change of Ministry would produce a change of measures. They therefore hope, that you will be very cautious of admitting your measures to be influenced by presumptions of such events, or their probable consequences.

"I am, &c.

S. HUNTINGTON,
President of Congress.

- [9] No such instructions exist.
- [10] See this project of a treaty in William Lee's Correspondence, Vol. II. pp. 310, 313.
- [11] See this commission, the instructions, and the plan of a treaty, in the *Secret Journals*, Vol. II. pp. 376 et. seqq.
- [12] The following is the resolve of Congress here alluded to.

"In Congress, October 5th, 1780. Her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, attentive to the

freedom of commerce and the rights of nations, in her declaration to the belligerent and neutral powers, having proposed regulations, founded upon principles of justice, equity, and moderation, of which their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties, and most of the neutral maritime powers of Europe, have declared their approbation, Congress, willing to testify their regard to the rights of commerce, and their respect for the sovereign who has proposed, and the powers who have approved the said regulations,

"*Resolved*, That the Board of Admiralty prepare, and report instructions for the commanders of armed vessels, commissioned by the United States, conformable to the principles contained in the declaration of the Empress of all the Russias, on the rights of neutral vessels.

"That the Ministers Plenipotentiary from the United States, if invited thereto, be, and hereby are, respectively empowered to accede to such regulations conformable to the spirit of the said declaration, as may be agreed upon by the Congress expected to assemble, in pursuance of the invitation of her Imperial Majesty."

- [13] See the whole of this treaty in William Lee's Correspondence, Vol. II. p. 313.
- [14] Appointing him Minister Plenipotentiary to the States-General of Holland and the Prince of Orange. See the Commission, Instructions, and Letters of Credence, in the *Secret Journals of Congress*. Vol. II. pp. 376, 377, 391.
- [15] See the Memorial and these Letters above, pp. 448, 449, 450.
- [16] These memorials are dated on the 19th of April. See above, p. 493.

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