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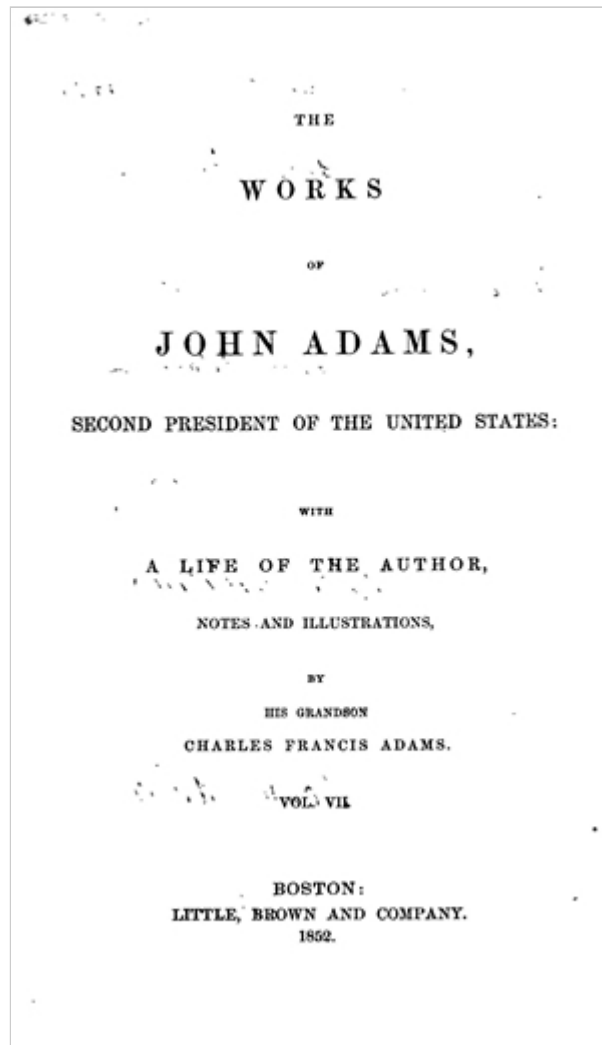
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Edition Used:

The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, by his Grandson Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856). 10 volumes. Vol. 7.

Author: [John Adams](#)

Editor: [Charles Francis Adams](#)

About This Title:

A 10 volume collection of Adams' most important writings, letters, and state papers, edited by his grandson. Vol. 7 contains letters and state papers from 1777 to 1782.

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[Editor: illegible word]

From my Chamber in Worcester Sept.^r 1st: 1755

John Adams.

Phyladelphia June 1775

John Adams.

Philadelphia June 26 1797

John Adams.

Quincy April 15 1815

John Adams.

J. Adams.

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OFFICIAL LETTERS, MESSAGES, AND PUBLIC PAPERS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The official papers of Mr. Adams are so voluminous as altogether to forbid the idea of embracing the whole within the limits of the present work. At the outset, it was supposed that the fact of the publication by government of a large portion of them, in a permanent form, would render the work of reproduction to any great extent superfluous. But a close investigation showed that a selection was absolutely necessary, in order to do justice to the career of the writer as a statesman. Ten critical years in the foreign relations of the country, in the course of which its position as an independent state was first recognized in Europe, could not but produce memorials essential to the history of those who acted any part in the scene. To Mr. Adams these are most important, as developing the substantial unity of his system of policy, from first to last, a feature which has not been hitherto pointed out so clearly as justice to him would seem to demand.

The necessity of making a selection from these papers having for this reason been assumed, the next thing was to look for some principle of publication adapted to answer the purpose intended. After due reflection, it was, first of all, thought best to place the selected letters by themselves, not even connecting with them any private correspondence of the same date, that might lay open the secret springs of the movements described. This will find its proper place in the general collection relating to public events, which immediately follows these official papers. By the arrangement, in chronological series, reference can be made at pleasure by the curious reader to any period of time, without incurring the hazard of breaking the continuous record of the author's public action. Secondly, the rule of publication was made to apply, first, to the magnitude of the events described; next, to the manner in which they are treated; thirdly, to the influence exercised upon them, directly or incidentally, by the writer; lastly, to the effect upon his own position. To one or other of these reasons the presence of each of the papers contained in this part of the work must be referred.

Many letters have been admitted, signed by the members of the Commission to France; none, however, which are not believed to have been drawn up by Mr. Adams, and which do not tend to show the place occupied by him in that unfortunate association, and the efforts which he made to change its character, or to effect its dissolution. This portion of the collection is a mere continuation of the series in the Diary, and derives much light from the explanations therein given.

The public letters of distinguished persons which either occasioned, or are in reply to, those of Mr. Adams, are furnished in all cases where they are deemed necessary to promote the end designed. Many of them have never been published before. Some, though printed in other forms, are not found in the great repository of these papers,—the Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution,—a valuable work, but unfortunately disfigured by numerous typographical errors, especially in proper

names, and wanting in that most indispensable part to every useful publication of an extended and complex nature, a thorough index.

The letters of Mr. Adams, when drawn from his copy books, will, in many cases, be found to vary more or less from the ultimate forms as they may yet exist elsewhere. This is to be ascribed to the fact, that the former were often in the nature of rough drafts, altered or improved, when transcribed to be sent away, and not to any design of the editor. He ventures upon no liberties with the text, excepting such as are requisite to correct obvious errors of haste, or marked imperfections of language.

Many letters from French and other correspondents will be found in the language in which they were written. This has been thought better than to take the responsibility of translating them. Variations of phrase, which in themselves appear trifling, do yet, in many cases, materially change the character of a style. And that is the particular which, in official papers, it seems most important to preserve intact. Neither is it presumed, that the occasional introduction of a language so generally made part of the system of education in America, as the French, can present such an obstacle to the understanding of the text as may not readily be surmounted.

In the year 1809, a series of papers was addressed by Mr. Adams to the publishers of the Boston Patriot, embracing extracts from many of his letters which had not at that time been published in any form, and such comments and elucidations as he deemed expedient to add, in order to explain his public course. These papers were afterwards collected and published in Boston, in a volume entitled *Correspondence of the late President Adams*. Recourse has been freely had to this volume, wherever it furnishes the materials for illustrating the same letters as now presented in a more extended form, and with a better chronological arrangement than was in that case practicable.

PUBLIC PAPERS.

THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Yorktown, Pennsylvania, 28 November, 1777.

Sir,—

I have the honor of conveying under this cover, an extract¹ from the minutes of congress of the present date, which certifies your election to be a commissioner at the Court of France. Had congress given direction, or if I were acquainted with precedents, a commission should have accompanied this notification. In the mean time, permit me, sir, to congratulate with the friends of America upon this judicious appointment, and to wish you every kind of success and happiness.

I have the honor to be, with very great respect and esteem, sir,

Your Humble Servant,

Henry Laurens,*President of Congress.*

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Yorktown, 3 December, 1777.

Sir,—

The 28th ultimo I had the honor of writing to you by the messenger, Frederick Weare, and of transmitting a vote of congress by which you are appointed a commissioner at the Court of France. Inclosed under this cover you will find a commission executed agreeable to the order of congress.

You have no doubt heard, or will hear before this can reach you, of the little affair which happened last week in Jersey,—the attack by the Marquis de la Fayette, at the head of about four hundred militia and a detachment from Morgan's rifles, on a piquet of three hundred Hessians twice reinforced by British,—in which our troops were successful, killed about twenty, wounded more, took fourteen prisoners, and chased the enemy about half a mile. We learned that General Greene, under whom the Marquis had acted, had been recalled from Jersey, but it is probable, from an account received this morning in a private letter from Major Clarke, something more must have been done before he recrossed Delaware.

The Major writes that, from different and corroborating accounts, Lord Cornwallis was killed or wounded; that, in an attack made at Gloucester, the enemy were beaten, left thirty dead on the field, &c., crossed the water, after having set fire to that pretty little town, by which the whole was consumed;¹ that the English officers, greatly enraged against the French nation, openly declare they would gladly forgive America for the exchange of drubbing the French; that General Howe had billeted his soldiers on the inhabitants of Philadelphia, two in each house, and had taken many of their blankets for the use of his light horse, which had occasioned universal discontent and murmuring among the citizens; that a ship and brig, richly laden, attempting to come up the river, had been lost among the *chevaux de frise*.

I beg, Sir, you will do me the favor to present my respectful compliments to Mr. S. Adams, and to accept the repeated good wishes of, Sir,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

Henry Laurens,*President of Congress.*

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

York, in Pennsylvania, 3 December, 1777.

Dear Sir,—

With great pleasure to ourselves we discharge our duty, by inclosing to you your commission for representing these United States at the Court of France. We are by no means willing to admit a thought of your declining this important service, and, therefore, we send duplicates of the commission, and the late resolves, in order that you may take one set with you, and send the other by another vessel.

These are important papers, and, therefore, we wish they may be put into the hands of a particular and careful person, with directions to deliver them himself into the hands of the commissioners. Mr. Hancock, before he left this place, said that he intended to send a gentleman to France on some particular business. Cannot we prevail to get this gentleman to undertake the delivery of our packet to the commissioners, they paying the expense of travel to Paris and back again to his place of business?

It is unnecessary to mention the propriety of directing these despatches to be bagged with weight proper for sinking them, on any immediate prospect of their otherwise falling into the enemy's hands.

We sincerely wish you a quick and pleasant voyage, being truly your affectionate friends,

R. H. Lee.

James Lovell.

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TO HENRY LAURENS, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Braintree, 23 December, 1777.

Sir,—

Having been absent on a journey, I had not the honor of receiving your letters until yesterday, when one, of the 28th of November inclosing a resolution of congress of the same day, and another of the 3d of December, inclosing a commission for Dr. Franklin, Dr. Lee, and myself, to represent the United States at the Court of France, were delivered to me in Boston.

As I am deeply penetrated with a sense of the high honor which has been done me in this appointment, I cannot but wish I were better qualified for the important trust; but as congress are perfectly acquainted with all my deficiencies, I conclude it is their determination to make the necessary allowances; in the humble hope of which, I shall submit my own judgment to theirs, and devote all the faculties I have, and all that I can acquire, to their service.

You will be pleased to accept of my sincere thanks, for the polite manner in which you have communicated to me the commands of congress, and believe me to be, with the most perfect respect and esteem, &c.

John Adams.

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Braintree, 24 December, 1777.

Gentlemen,—

Having been absent from this State, I had not the honor of your favor of December 3d, until the 22d, when it was delivered to me with its inclosures, namely,—a letter from the President to the Navy Board at Boston, and a private letter of December 8th, from Mr. Lovell. At the same time, I received a packet directed to Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Commissioners of the United States of America, in France, under seal. I also received a packet unsealed, containing,—

1. Copy of a letter dated the 2d of December, from the Committee of Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners.[1](#)
2. A duplicate of a commission of the 27th of November, to the Commissioners.
3. A duplicate of a resolve of December 3d; duplicates of resolves of November 20th and 21st, and duplicates of resolves of November 10th and 22d.
4. Two letters unsealed, to Silas Deane, Paris.
5. Two printed handbills,—one containing messages, &c., between the Generals Burgoyne and Gates; the other, a copy of a letter, &c., from Mr. Strickland. The packet under seal, I shall do myself the honor to forward by the first conveyance, and the other shall be conveyed, God willing, with my own hand.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest esteem, &c.

John Adams.

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BARON DE KALB TO JOHN ADAMS.

At Valley Forge Camp, 27 December, 1777.

Sir,—

As you are going to France in a public character from the United States, will you give me leave to present you a letter of introduction for M. le Comte de Broglie, one for M. Moreau, the first Secretary to Count de Vergennes, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and two for my lady, who will be glad to see you, and to get news from me by your means?

I wish you a good passage, a safe arrival, health and success in all your enterprises, no one being with more regard and esteem, sir,

Your Most Obedient And Very Humble Servant,

Baron de Kalb.

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(Inclosed With The Foregoing.)

BARON DE KALB TO THE COMTE DE BROGLIE.

Au Camp de Valley Forge, le 27 Décembre, 1777.

Monsieur Le Comte,—

Vous prenez tant d'intérêt au succès de la cause Américaine, que je vais oser vous recommander M. John Adams, l'un des membres du congrès, qui va en France, pour y traiter à la cour les affaires de Politique comme M. Deane y sera chargé des affaires de Commerce. M. Adams est un homme de mérite, généralement estimé dans ce pays ci, et auquel nous avons, M. Delessert de Valfort et moi, quelque obligation relativement à nos bagages. Votre crédit lui seroit d'une grande utilité, si vous vouliez daigner le lui accorder. J'ai eu l'honneur de vous écrire une longue lettre il y a deux jours, j'espère qu'elle vous parviendra. La poste pour Boston me presse, sans quoi j'eus aussi joint ici une copie. Je suis avec le plus respectueux dévouement, &c.

Le Baron de Kalb.

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BARON DE KALB TO M. MOREAU.

Au Camp de l'Armée Américaine, le 27 Décembre, 1777.

L'amitié dont vous m'avez toujours honoré, Monsieur, me fait prendre la liberté de vous recommander M. John Adams, l'un des membres du congrès, qui est chargé de Commission pour la France. Comme il aura certainement des demandes à faire à M. le Comte de Vergennes, et des affaires à traiter dans votre département, je vous supplie de lui accorder vos bons offices, persuadé que tout ce que le roi accordera aux États Unis de l'Amérique ne peut tendre qu'au bien et à l'avantage de son royaume.

Je serai fort aise de pouvoir vous être utile dans ce pays ci pendant le séjour que j'y ferai, ainsi que d'y exécuter les ordres de M. le Comte de Vergennes, s'il en avoit à me donner.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec le plus parfait et le plus sincère attachement, Monsieur, &c. &c.

Le Baron de Kalb,
Major-Général de l'Armée Américaine.

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THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Head Quarters, 9 January, 1778.

Sir,—

As General Knox will have the pleasure to see you before your going to France, I take the liberty of intrusting him with the inclosed letter for you, which you will find very importune,¹ but I hope you will excuse, on account of my being very desirous to let my friends hear from me by every opportunity. Such a distance, so many enemies are between me and every relation, every acquaintance of mine, that I will not reproach myself with any neglect in my entertaining with them the best correspondence I can. However, to avoid troubling you with too large a parcel of letters, I will send my despatches by two ways, as one other occasion is offered to me in this very moment. I must beg your pardon, sir, for making myself free enough to recommend you to some friends of mine in France; but as I do not believe you have many acquaintances in that country, I thought it would not be disagreeable to you, if I would desire Madame de la Fayette and the Prince de Poix to whom I write to introduce you to some of my other friends. Before indulging myself in that liberty, I asked the General Knox's opinion, who told me that he did not find any thing amiss in it, although I had not the honor of your particular acquaintance.

I told General Knox some particular advices which I believed not to be disagreeable to you. I hope you will hear good news from here, and send very good ones from there. Such is the desire of a friend to your country and the noble cause we are fighting for. I wish you a pleasant and safe voyage, and with the highest esteem and greatest affection for a man to whom the hearts of every lover of liberty will be indebted forever, I have the honor to be, sir,

Your Most Obedient Servant,

The Marquis de la Fayette.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Yorktown, 22 January, 1778.

Sir,—

On the 19th instant I had the honor of receiving and presenting to congress, your favor of the 23d ultimo, the contents of which afforded great satisfaction to the house. It is now the wish of every friend to American independence to learn speedily of your safe arrival at the Court of Versailles, where your sagacity, vigilance, integrity, and knowledge of American affairs, are extremely wanted for promoting the interest of these infant States. You are so well acquainted with our present representation in that part of Europe, and with the delays and misfortunes under which we have suffered, as renders it unnecessary to attempt particular intimations.

Inclosed you will find an act of the 8th instant for suspending the embarkation of General Burgoyne and his troops. Mr. Lovell has very fully advised you on that subject by the present opportunity; permit me to add, that I have it exceedingly at heart, from a persuasion of the rectitude and justifiableness of the measures, to be in the van of the British ministry and their emissaries at every court of Europe.

Baron Holzendorff presents his best compliments, and requests your care of the inclosed letter, directed to his lady. If I can possibly redeem time enough for writing to my family and friends in England, I will take the liberty by the next messenger to trouble you with a small packet; hitherto, all private considerations have been overruled by a constant attention to business of more importance; I mean since the first of November.

I have the honor to be, with great regard and esteem, sir,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

Henry Laurens,*President of Congress.*

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TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE.

Braintree, 3 February, 1778.

Sir,—

I had yesterday the honor of receiving from the hand of my worthy friend, General Knox, your kind letter to me, together with five others, which, with submission to the fortune of war, shall be conveyed and delivered as you desire. I am happy in this opportunity to convey intelligence from you to your friends, and think myself greatly honored and obliged by your politeness and attention to me; a favor which makes me regret the more my misfortune, in not having had the honor heretofore of a more particular acquaintance with a nobleman who has endeared his name and character to every honest American and every sensible friend of mankind, by his efforts in favor of the rights of both, as unexampled as they were generous. I thank you, sir, for the kind advice communicated by General Knox,¹ to which I shall carefully and constantly attend. Shall at all times be happy to hear of your welfare, and to have an opportunity of rendering you any service in my power.

I Have The Honor To Be,
With The Greatest Respect And Esteem, Sir,
Your Most Obedient And Obliged Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.2

Passy, 14 May, 1778.

Sir,—

In the several cruises made by Captains Wickes, Johnston, Cunningham, and others of our armed vessels, on the coast of Great Britain, it is computed that between four and five hundred prisoners have been made and set at liberty, either on their landing in France, or at sea, because it was understood that we could not keep them confined in France. When Captain Wickes brought in at one time near a hundred, we proposed to Lord Stormont an exchange for as many of ours confined in England; but all treaty on the subject was rudely refused, and our people are still detained there, notwithstanding the liberal discharges made of theirs, as above-mentioned. We hear that Captain Jones has now brought into Brest near two hundred, whom we should be glad to exchange for our seamen, who might be of use in expeditions from hence; but as an opinion prevails, that prisoners of a nation with which France is not at war, and brought into France by another power, cannot be retained by the captors, but are free as soon as they arrive, we are apprehensive that these prisoners may also be set at liberty, return to England, and serve to man a frigate against us, while our brave seamen, with a number of our friends of this nation, whom we are anxious to set free, continue useless and languishing in their jails.

In a treatise of one of your law writers, entitled *Traité des Prises qui se font sur Mer*, printed 1763, we find the above opinion controverted, p. 129, § 30, in the following words:—"Hence it seems that it is not true, as some pretend, that from the time a prisoner escapes, or otherwise reaches the shore of a neutral power, he is absolutely free. It is true, he cannot be retaken without the consent of that power, but such a power would violate the laws of neutrality if it should refuse its consent. This is a consequence of the asylum of the ship in which the prisoner or hostage was contained."

We know not of what authority this writer may be, and, therefore, pray a moment of your Excellency's attention to this matter, requesting your advice upon it, that, if it be possible, some means may be devised to retain these prisoners, till as many of ours can be obtained in exchange for them.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF COMMERCE.

Passy, 24 May, 1778.

Gentlemen,—

I find that the American affairs on this side of the Atlantic are in a state of disorder, very much resembling that which is so much to be regretted on the other, and arising, as I suppose, from the same general causes, the novelty of the scenes, the inexperience of the actors, and the rapidity with which great events have succeeded each other. Our resources are very inadequate to the demands made upon us, which are perhaps unnecessarily increased by several irregularities of proceeding.

We have in some places two or three persons, who claim the character of American agent, agent for commercial affairs, and continental agent, for they are called by all these different appellations. In one quarter, one gentleman claims the character from the appointment of Mr. William Lee; another claims it from the appointment of the Commissioners at Passy; and a third from the appointment of the Commercial Committee of Congress. This introduces a triple expense, and much confusion and delay. These evils have been accidental, I believe, and unavoidable, but they are evils still, and ought to be removed.

One person at Bordeaux, another at Nantes, and a third perhaps at Havre de Grace or Dunkirk, would be amply sufficient for all public purposes, and to these persons all orders from congress, or the commercial committee, or the commissioners at Paris, ought to be addressed. To the same persons all public ships of war, and all other ships belonging to the United States, and their prizes, ought to be addressed; and all orders for the supplies of provisions, clothing, repairs of vessels, &c., as well as all orders for shipping of merchandises, or warlike stores for the United States, ought to go through their hands. We have such abuses and irregularities every day occurring as are very alarming. Agents of various sorts are drawing bills upon us, and the commanders of vessels of war are drawing upon us for expenses and supplies which we never ordered, so that our resources will soon fail, if a speedy stop is not put to this career.

And we find it so difficult to obtain accounts from agents of the expenditure of moneys, and of the goods and merchandises shipped by them, that we can never know either the true state of our finances, or when and in what degree we have executed the orders of congress for sending them arms, clothes, medicines, or other things.

In order to correct some of these abuses, and to bring our affairs into a little better order, I have constantly given my voice against paying for things we never ordered, against paying persons who have never been authorized, and against throwing our affairs into a multiplicity of hands in the same place. But the consequence has been so many refusals of demands and requests, that I expect much discontent will arise from

it, and many clamors. Whether the appointment by congress of one or more consuls for this kingdom would remedy these inconveniences, I must submit to their wisdom.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DE SARTINE TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

Marly, le 6 Juin, 1778.

Je suis informé, Messieurs, que le sieur Bersolle, après avoir fait des avances assez considérables au Capitaine Jones, commandant la frégate des États Unis de l'Amérique, le Ranger, s'est fait donner par ce capitaine une lettre de change dont vous avez refusé de faire acquitter le montant. Comme le Sieur Bersolle se trouve par là dans l'embarras, et que vous sentirez sans doute qu'il est intéressant pour la conservation de votre crédit qu'il en soit tiré promptement, je suis persuadé que vous ne différerez pas de faire payer non seulement la lettre de change dont il s'agit, mais encore ce qui est dû par le Capitaine Jones, à la caisse de la marine à Brest, tant pour les effets qui lui ont été délivrés des magasins du roi, que pour sa subsistance personnelle et celle de son équipage. Sur ce qu'il a représenté que les gens de son équipage avoient pillé du navire, le Chatham, beaucoup d'effets, dont une partie, consistant en argenterie, avoit été vendue à un Juif, il a été pris des informations au moyen desquelles l'argenterie et d'autres effets ont été retrouvés; mais le tout a été en dépôt pour y rester, jusqu'à ce que le capitaine soit en état de rembourser ce qui a été payé pour ces effets.

Je pense, au surplus, qu'il est à propos que vous soyez informés que ce capitaine, qui s'est brouillé avec son état major et avec tout son équipage, a fait mettre en prison le Sieur Simpson, son second. Vous jugerez, peut-être, à propos de vous procurer les éclaircissemens nécessaires pour savoir si ce principal officier s'est mis dans le cas de subir une pareille punition.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec la plus parfaite considération, messieurs, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

De Sartine.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 15 June, 1778.

Sir,—

We beg leave to inform your Excellency, in answer to the complaint of M. Bersolle, that he had formerly taken the liberty himself to draw on our banker for advances made to Captain Jones before his last cruise, and was much displeas'd that his draught was refus'd payment. We acquainted him then with the reason of this refusal, namely,—that he had sent us no accounts of his disbursements or advances, by which we might judge whether his draft was well founded; and he had never any permission to draw on our banker. However, afterwards, when we had seen his accounts, payment was made to him.

In the present case, it is said, he has advanced to Captain Jones a thousand louis, immediately on his arrival, for which the Captain has drawn on us in M. Bersolle's favor. But as Captain Jones had not previously satisfi'd us of the necessity for this advance, nor had our permission for the draft, his bill was also refus'd payment. And as Captain Jones writes us, that, upon the news of our refusal, he was reduc'd to necessity, not knowing where to get victuals for his people, we conclude that the advance was not actually made, as it is impossible he should, in so short a time, have spent so large a sum. And we think it extremely irregular in merchants to draw bills before they send their accounts, and in captains of ships of war to draw for any sums they please without previous notice and express permission. And our captains have the less excuse for it, as we have ever been ready to furnish them with all the necessaries they desired, and Captain Jones in particular has had of us near a hundred thousand livres for such purposes, of which twelve thousand was to be distributed among his people to relieve their necessities, the only purpose mention'd to us for which this draft was made, and which we thought sufficient. If this liberty assum'd of drawing on us, without our knowledge or consent, is not check'd, and we are oblig'd to pay such drafts, it will be impossible for us to regulate our own contracts and engagements so as to fulfil them with punctuality, and we might in a little time become bankrupts ourselves. If, therefore, M. Bersolle has brought himself into any embarrassment, it is not our fault, but his. We are ready to discharge all debts we contract; but we must not permit other people to run us in debt without our leave; and we do not conceive it can hurt our credit if we refuse payment of such debts.

Whatever is due for necessaries furnish'd to Captain Jones by the Caisse de la Marine, at Brest, either from the magazine, or for the subsistence of his people, we shall also readily and thankfully pay as soon as we have seen and approv'd of the accounts; but we conceive that, regularly, the communication of accounts should always precede demands of payment.

We are much obliged by the care that has been taken to recover the goods pillaged from the Chatham, and we think the charges that have arisen in that transaction ought to be paid, and we suppose will be paid, out of the produce of the sales of that ship and her cargo.

We understand Lieutenant Simpson is confined by his captain for breach of orders; he has desired a trial, which cannot be had here, and, therefore, at his request, we have directed that he should be sent to America for that purpose.

We shall be obliged to your Excellency for your orders to permit the immediate sale of the Chatham and other prizes; that the part belonging to the captors may be paid them, as they are very uneasy at the delay, being distressed for want of their money to purchase clothing, &c., and we wish to have the part belonging to the Congress, out of which to defray the charges accruing on the ships. The difficulties our people have heretofore met with in the sale of prizes, have occasioned them to be sold, often for less than half their value. And these difficulties not being yet quite removed, are so discouraging, that we apprehend it will be thought advisable to keep our vessels of war in America, and send no more to cruise on the coast of England.

We are not acquainted with the character of Captain Batson; but if your Excellency should have occasion for a pilot on the coast of America, and this person, on examination, should appear qualified, we shall be glad that he may be found useful in that quality; and we are thankful to the Consul at Nice for his readiness to serve our countrymen.

With the greatest respect and esteem, we have the honor to be, your Excellency's, &c.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 20 July, 1778.

Sir,—

We have the honor to inform congress, that the Spy, Captain Niles, has arrived at Brest, and brought us a ratification of the treaties with His Most Christian Majesty, which has given much satisfaction to this court and nation. On the seventeenth instant we had the honor of exchanging ratifications with his Excellency, the Count de Vergennes. The treaties ratified, signed by his Majesty, and under the great seal of France, are now in our possession, where, perhaps, considering the dangers of enemies at sea, it will be safest to let them remain at present. Copies of them we shall have the honor to transmit to congress by this opportunity.

War is not yet declared between France and England, by either nation, but hostilities at sea have been already commenced by both; and as the French fleet from Brest, under the command of the Count d'Orvilliers, and the British fleet, under Admiral Keppel, are both at sea, we are in hourly expectation of a rencontre between them. The Jamaica fleet, the Windward Island fleet, and a small fleet from the Mediterranean, have arrived at London, which has enabled them to obtain, by means of a violent impress, perhaps a thousand or fifteen hundred seamen, who will man two or three ships more, in the whole, making Admiral Keppel's fleet somewhat nearer to an equality with the French. In the mean time, the Spanish flotilla has arrived, but the councils of that court are kept in a secrecy so profound, that we presume not to say with confidence what are her real intentions. We continue, however, to receive from various quarters encouraging assurances; and, from the situation of the powers of Europe, it seems highly probable that Spain will join France in case of war.

A war in Germany between the Emperor and King of Prussia seems to be inevitable, and it is affirmed that the latter has marched his army into Bohemia, so that we apprehend that America has at present nothing to fear from Germany. We are doing all in our power to obtain a loan of money, and have a prospect of procuring some in Amsterdam, but not in such quantities as will be wanted. We are constrained to request congress to be as sparing as possible in their drafts upon us. The drafts already made, together with the great expense arising from the frigates which have been sent here, and the expenses of the commissioners, *the maintenance of your ministers for Vienna and Tuscany*,¹ and of prisoners who have made their escape, and the amount of clothes and munitions of war already sent to America, are such, that we are under great apprehensions that our funds will not be sufficient to answer the drafts which we daily expect for the interest of loan office certificates, as well as those from Mr. Bringham.

We have the honor to inclose a copy of a letter from M. de Sartine, the Minister of Marine, and to request the attention of congress to the subject of it.

We are told in several letters from the honorable committee for foreign affairs, that we shall receive instructions and authority for giving up, on our part, the whole of the eleventh article of the treaty, proposing it as a condition to the Court of France, that they on their part should give up the whole of the twelfth. But, unfortunately, these instructions and that authority were omitted to be sent with the letters, and we have not yet received them. At the time of the exchange of the ratifications, we mentioned this subject to the Count de Vergennes, and gave him an extract of the committee's letter. His answer to us was, that the alteration would be readily agreed to; and he ordered his secretary not to register the ratification till it was done. We therefore request that we may be honored with the instructions and authority of congress to set aside the two articles as soon as possible, and while the subject is fresh in memory.

The letter to M. Dumas is forwarded, and in answer to the committee's inquiry, what is proper for congress to do for that gentleman, we beg leave to say, that his extreme activity and diligence in negotiating our affairs, and his punctuality in his correspondence with congress, as well as with us, and his usefulness to our cause in several other ways, not at present proper to be explained, give him, in our opinion, a good title to two hundred pounds sterling a year at least.

The other things mentioned in the committee's letter to us shall be attended to as soon as possible. We have received also the resolution of congress of the ninth of February, and the letter of the committee of the same date, empowering us to appoint one or more suitable persons to be commercial agents, for conducting the commercial business of the United States in France and other parts of Europe. But as this power was given us before congress received the treaty, and we have never received it but with the ratification of the treaty, and as by the treaty congress is empowered to appoint consuls in the ports of France, perhaps it may be expected of us that we should wait for the appointment of consuls. At present, Mr. John Bondfield of Bordeaux, and Mr. J. D. Schweighauser at Nantes, both by the appointment of Mr. William Lee, are the only persons authorized as commercial agents. If we should find it expedient to give appointments to any other persons, before we hear from congress, we will send information of it by the first opportunity. If congress should think proper to appoint consuls, we are humbly of opinion, that the choice will fall most justly, as well as naturally, on Americans, who are, in our opinion, better qualified for this business than any others; and the reputation of such an office, together with a moderate commission on the business they may transact, and the advantages to be derived from trade, will be a sufficient inducement to undertake it, and a sufficient reward for discharging the duties of it.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 27 July, 1778.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your kind congratulations on the favorable appearances in our American concerns, and for so politely particularizing one of the most inconsiderable of them, my safe arrival in France, which was after a very inconvenient passage of forty-five days.

Your letter to Mr. Izard I had the pleasure to send to him immediately in Paris, where he resides, the Court of Tuscany being so connected with that of Vienna, as to discourage hitherto his departure for Italy. He did me the honor of a visit yesterday, when we had much sweet communion, as the phrase is, upon American affairs.

Your other letter to your daughter-in-law, I have forwarded by a safe opportunity. You may depend upon my conveying your letters to any of your friends by the best opportunities, and with despatch. The more of your commands you send me, the more pleasure you will give me.

War is not declared, that is, no manifesto has been published, but each nation is daily manufacturing materials for the other's manifesto, by open hostilities. In short, sir, the two nations have been at war ever since the recall of the ambassadors. The King of France has given orders to all his ships to attack the English, and has given vast encouragement to privateers.

The King of Great Britain and his council have determined to send instructions to their commissioners in America to offer us independency, provided we will make peace with them, separate from France. This appears to me to be the last effort to seduce, deceive, and divide. They know that every man of honor in America must receive this proposition with indignation. But they think they can get the men of no honor to join them by such a proposal, and they think the men of honor are not a majority. What has America done to give occasion to that King and council to think so unworthily of her?

The proposition is, in other words, this:—"America, you have fought me until I despair of beating you. You have made an alliance with the first power of Europe, which is a great honor to your country and a great stability to your cause; so great, that it has excited my highest resentment, and has determined me to go to war with France. Do you break your faith with that power, and forfeit her confidence, as well as that of all the rest of mankind forever, and join me to beat her, or stand by neuter, and see me do it, and for all this I will acknowledge your independency, because I think in that case you cannot maintain it, but will be an easy prey to me afterwards, who am determined to break my faith with you, as I wish you to do yours with France."

My dear countrymen, I hope, will not be allured upon the rocks by the syren song of peace. They are now playing a sure game. They have run all hazards; but now they hazard nothing.

I know your application is incessant, and your moments are precious, and, therefore, that I ask a great favor in requesting your correspondence; but the interests of the public, as well as private friendship, induce me to do it.

I Am, &C.

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Passy, 29 July, 1778.

Gentlemen,—

We have the honor of your letters of May 14th and 15th. We congratulate you on the general good appearance of our affairs, and we are happy in your assurances, that it is your fixed determination to admit no terms of peace, but such as are consistent with the spirit and intention of our alliance with France, especially as the present politics of the British cabinet aim at seducing you from that alliance, by an offer of independence, upon condition you will renounce it; a measure that will injure the reputation of our States with all the world, and destroy its confidence in our honor.

No authority from congress to make an alteration in the treaty, by withdrawing the eleventh and twelfth articles, has yet reached us. But we gave an extract of your letter to the Count de Vergennes, when we exchanged ratifications, who expressed an entire willingness to agree to it. We wish for the powers by the first opportunity. We have not yet seen M. Beaumarchais, but the important concern with him shall be attended to as soon as may be.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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M. DE SARTINE TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

(Translation.)[1](#)

Versailles, 29 July, 1778.

Gentlemen,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to transmit on the 16th instant. His Majesty relies greatly on the succors of provisions which the government of Massachusetts Bay may furnish the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The difficulties which the privateers of the United States have experienced till now in the ports of France, either as to the sale of their prizes, or to secure their prisoners, must cease, from the change of circumstances. I make no doubt, on the other hand, but that the United States will grant the same facilities to French privateers. To accomplish this double object, I have drafted a plan of regulations, which I hasten to submit to you. I beg you to examine it, and to signify to me what you think of it; or else to point out other means to attain the same end, in order that I may take thereon his Majesty's orders.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Sartine.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 13 August, 1778.

Sir,—

Your Excellency's letter of the 29th of July, inclosing a plan for a system of regulations for prizes and prisoners, we had the honor of receiving in due time, and are very sorry it has remained so long unanswered.

In general, we are of opinion, that the regulations are very good; but we beg leave to lay before your Excellency the following observations:—

Upon the second article we observe, that the extensive jurisdictions of the judges of admiralty in America, which, considering the local and other circumstances of that country, cannot easily be contracted, will probably render this regulation impracticable in America. In France, it will, as far as we are able to judge of it, be very practicable, and consequently beneficial. But we submit to your Excellency's consideration, whether it would not be better in America after the words "*les dits Juges*"¹ to add,—or the register of the court of admiralty, or some other person authorized by the judge. The jurisdictions of the courts of admiralty in America, extending for some hundreds of miles, this regulation would be subject to great delays and other inconveniences, if it was confined to the judge.

The fourth article seems to be subject to the same inconveniences, and, therefore, to require the same amendment.

Upon the fourteenth article, we beg leave to submit to your Excellency's consideration, whether the heavy duties upon British merchandise and manufactures, if these are to be paid upon prize goods, will not operate as a great discouragement to the sale of prizes made by American cruisers; and whether it would not be consistent with his Majesty's interest to permit merchandises and manufactures, taken in prizes made by Americans, to be stored in his Majesty's warehouses, if you please, until they can be exported to America, and without being subject to duties.

We know not the expense that will attend these regulations and proceedings in the courts of this kingdom; but as the fees of office in America are very moderate, and our people have been accustomed to such only, we submit to your Excellency, whether it will not be necessary to state and establish the fees here, and make the establishments so far public, that Americans may be able to inform themselves.

As we are not well instructed in the laws of this kingdom, or in the course of the courts of admiralty here, it is very possible that some inconveniences may arise in the practice upon these regulations, which we do not at present foresee; if they should, we

shall beg leave to represent them to your Excellency, and to request his Majesty to make the necessary alterations.

We submit these observations to your Excellency's superior wisdom, and have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect respect, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servants,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

Dr. Franklin concurs with us in these sentiments, but as he is absent, we are obliged to send the letter without his signature.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 28 August, 1778.

Sir,—

There are several subjects which we find it necessary to lay before your Excellency, and to which we have the honor to request your attention.

At a time when the circumstances of the war may demand the attention of government, and, without doubt, call for so great expense, we are very sorry to be obliged to request your Excellency's advice respecting the subject of money; but the nature of the war in America, the vast extent of country to defend, and this defence having been made chiefly by militia engaged for short periods, which often obliged us to pay more men than could be brought into actual service, and, above all, this war having been conducted in the midst of thirteen revolutions of civil government against a nation very powerful both by sea and land, have occasioned a very great expense to a country so young, and to a government so unsettled. This has made emissions of paper money indispensable, in much larger sums than in the ordinary course of business is necessary, or than in any other circumstances would have been politic. In order to avoid the necessity of further emissions as much as possible, the congress have borrowed large sums of this paper money of the possessors, upon interest, and have promised the lenders payment of that interest in Europe, and we therefore expect that vessels from America will bring bills of exchange upon us for this interest, a large sum of which is now due.

It is very true that our country is already under obligations to his Majesty's goodness for considerable sums of money; the necessities of the United States have been such, that the sums, heretofore generously furnished, are nearly, if not quite expended; and when your Excellency considers that the American trade has been almost entirely interrupted by the British power at sea, they having taken so many of our vessels as to render this trade more advantageous to our enemy than to ourselves; that our frigates and other vessels which have arrived in this kingdom, have cost us a great sum; that the provision of clothing and all the munitions of war for our army, except such as we could make in that country, have been shipped from hence at our expense; that the expense we have been obliged to incur for our unfortunate countrymen, who have been prisoners in England, as well as the maintenance of those taken from the enemy, has been very considerable; your Excellency will not be surprised when you are informed that our resources are exhausted.

We, therefore, hope for the continuance of his Majesty's generosity, and that the quarterly payment of seven hundred and fifty thousand livres may be continued. And we assure your Excellency, that the moment we are furnished with any other means of answering this demand, we will no longer trespass on his Majesty's goodness.

We have further to inform your Excellency that we are empowered and instructed by congress, to borrow in Europe a sum of money to the amount of two millions sterling; which is to be appropriated to the express purpose of redeeming so many of the bills of credit in America, as will be sufficient, it is apprehended, to restore the remainder to their original value. We, therefore, request his Majesty's permission to borrow such part of that sum in this kingdom, as we may find opportunity. Although we are empowered to offer a larger interest than is usually given by his Majesty, yet that we may not be any interruption to his Majesty's service, we are willing and desirous of limiting the interest which we may offer, to the same that is given by his Majesty. And although most persons will choose to lend their money to his Majesty, yet there may be others desirous of forming connections of trade with the people in America, who will be willing to serve them in this way. And perhaps nothing will have a greater tendency to cement the connection between the two nations, so happily begun, or to insure to the French nation the benefits of the American trade, than relations of this kind.

By the eighth article of the treaty of commerce, his Majesty has engaged to employ his good offices and interposition with the Emperor of Morocco and with the regencies of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and the other powers on the coast of Barbary, in order to provide as fully as possible for the convenience and safety of the inhabitants of the United States, and their vessels and effects, against all violence, insults, attacks, or depredations on the part of the said princes.

We have received information that there are already American vessels in Italy desirous of returning home, and that there are merchants in Italy desirous of entering into the American trade, but that an apprehension of danger from the corsairs of Barbary is a discouragement. We therefore request your Excellency's attention to this case, and such assistance from his Majesty's good offices as was intended by the treaty.

There is another thing that has occurred of late, on which we have the honor to request your Excellency's advice. There are many Americans in England and in other parts of Europe, some of whom are excellent citizens, who wish for nothing so much as to return to their native country, and to take their share in her fortune, whatever that may be, but are apprehensive of many difficulties in removing their property.

Whether it will be practicable and consistent with his Majesty's interest to prescribe any mode by which Americans of the above description may be permitted to pass through this kingdom with their apparel, furniture, plate, and other effects, not merchandise for sale here, without paying duties, we submit to his wisdom.

We have the honor to be, with respect, your Excellency's, &c.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE BEAUMARCHAIS.

Passy, 10 September, 1778.

Sir,—

In a letter we have received from the committee of commerce of the 16th of May, we are informed that they had ordered several vessels lately to South Carolina for rice, and directed the continental agents in that State to consign them to our address.

In the letter from Mr. Livingston to us, dated Charleston, South Carolina, 10th June, 1778, he has subjected the cargo of the Theresa to our orders.

In your letter to us, dated Passy, 8th September, 1778, you demand that the cargo arrived in your own vessel should be sold, and the money remitted to you in part for a discharge of what is due to you by the congress.

We are at a loss to know how you claim the Theresa as your proper vessel, because M. Monthieu claims her as his, produces a written contract for the hire and demurrage of her, part of which we have paid, and the remainder he now demands of us. However, sir, we beg leave to state to you the powers and instructions we have received from congress, and to request your attention to them as soon as possible, and to inform you that we are ready to enter upon the discussion of these matters at any time and place you please.

But until the accounts of the company of Roderique Hortalez & Co. are settled for what is passed, and the contract proposed either ratified by you and us, or rejected by one party, we cannot think we should be justified in remitting you the proceeds of the cargo of the Theresa.

We will, however, give orders to our agents for the sale of the cargo, and that the proceeds of the sale be reserved to be paid to the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co. or their representative, as soon as the accounts shall be settled or the contract ratified.

By a copy of a contract between a committee of congress and M. Francy, dated the 16th of April last, we perceive that the seventh article, respecting the annual supply of twenty-four millions of livres, shall not be binding upon either of the parties, unless the same shall be ratified by Roderique Hortalez & Co. and the Commissioners of the United States at Paris.

We take this opportunity to inform you, sir, that we are ready to confer with Roderique Hortalez & Co., or any person by them authorized for this purpose, at any time and place that they or you shall appoint.

We have the honor to be, sir,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servants,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 10 September, 1778.

Sir,—

By some of the last ships from America, we received from congress certain powers and instructions, which we think it necessary to lay before your Excellency, and which we have the honor to do in this letter.

On the 13th of April last, congress resolved, “that the commissioners of the United States in France be authorized to determine and settle with the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co. the compensation, if any, which should be allowed them on all merchandise and warlike stores, shipped by them for the use of the United States, previous to the 14th day of April, 1778, over and above the commission allowed them in the sixth article of the proposed contract between the Committee of Commerce and John Baptiste Lazarus Theveneau de Francy.”

In the letter of the Committee of Commerce to us, in which the foregoing resolution was inclosed, the Committee express themselves thus:—“This will be accompanied by a contract entered into between John Baptiste Lazarus de Theveneau de Francy, agent of Peter Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, representative of the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co. and the Committee of Commerce. You will observe that their accounts are to be fairly stated, and what is justly due paid. For as, on the one hand, congress would be unwilling to evidence a disregard for, and contemptuous refusal of, the spontaneous friendship of His Most Christian Majesty, so, on the other, they are unwilling to put into the private pockets of individuals what was gratuitously designed for the public benefit, you will be pleased to have their accounts liquidated, and direct in the liquidation thereof, that particular care be taken to distinguish the property of the crown of France from the private property of Hortalez & Co., and transmit to us the accounts so stated and distinguished. This will also be accompanied by an invoice of articles to be imported from France, and resolves of congress relative thereto. You will appoint, if you should judge proper, an agent or agents to inspect the quality of such goods as you may apply for to the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co., before they are shipped, to prevent any imposition.”

On the 16th of May last, congress resolved, “that the invoice of articles to be imported from France, together with the list of medicines approved by congress, be signed by the Committee of Commerce, and transmitted to the Commissioners of the United States at Paris, who are authorized and directed to apply to the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co. for such of the said articles as they shall not have previously purchased or contracted for;” “that copies of the invoices be delivered to Monsieur de Francy, agent for Roderique Hortalez & Co., together with a copy of the foregoing resolution;” and “that the articles to be shipped by the house of Roderique Hortalez &

Co. be not insured; but that notice be given to the Commissioners in France, that they may endeavor to obtain convoy for the protection thereof.”

We have the honor to inclose to your Excellency a copy of the contract made between the Committee and Monsieur Francy, a copy of Monsieur Francy’s powers, and a copy of the list of articles to be furnished according to that contract, that your Excellency may have before you all the papers relative to this subject.

We are under the necessity of applying to your Excellency upon this occasion, and of requesting your advice. With regard to what is passed, we know not who the persons are who constitute the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co., but we have understood, and congress has ever understood, and so have the people in America in general, that they were under obligations to his Majesty’s good will for the greatest part of the merchandise and warlike stores heretofore furnished under the firm of Roderique Hortalez & Co. We cannot discover that any written contract was ever made between congress or any agent of theirs and the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co.; nor do we know of any living witness, or any other evidence, whose testimony can ascertain to us, who the persons are that constitute the house of Roderique Hortalez & Co., or what were the terms upon which the merchandise and munitions of war were supplied, neither as to the price, nor the time, or conditions of payment. As we said before, we apprehend that the United States hold themselves under obligation to his Majesty for all those supplies, and we are sure it is their wish and their determination to discharge the obligation to his Majesty, as soon as Providence shall put it in their power. In the mean time, we are ready to settle and liquidate the accounts according to our instructions at any time, and in any manner which his Majesty or your Excellency shall point out to us.

As the contract for future supplies is to be ratified or not ratified by us, as we shall judge expedient, we must request your Excellency’s advice as a favor upon this head, and whether it would be safe or prudent in us to ratify it, and in congress to depend upon supplies from this quarter. Because, if we should depend upon this resource for supplies, and be disappointed, the consequences would be fatal to our country.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO M. LE RAY DE CHAUMONT.

Passy, 15 September, 1778.

Sir,—

As our finances are, at present, in a situation seriously critical, and as I hold myself accountable to congress for every part of my conduct, even to the smallest article of my expenses. I must beg the favor of you to consider what rent we ought to pay you for this house and furniture, both for the time past and to come. Every part of your conduct towards me and towards our Americans in general, and in all our affairs, has been polite [Editor:??] and obliging, as far as I have had an opportunity of observing, and I have no doubt it will continue so; yet it is not reasonable that the United States should be under so great an obligation to a private gentleman, as that two of their representatives should occupy for so long a time so elegant a seat, with so much furniture and so fine accommodations, without any compensation; and in order to avoid the danger of the disapprobation of our constituents on the one hand, for living here at too great or at too uncertain an expense, and on the other, the censure of the world for not making sufficient compensation to a gentleman who has done so much for our convenience, it seems to me necessary that we should come to an *éclaircissement* upon this head.

As you have an account against the Commissioners, or against the United States, for several other matters, I should also be obliged to you, if you would send it in as soon as possible, as every day renders it more and more necessary for us to look into our affairs with the utmost precision.

I am, sir, with much esteem and respect,

Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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M. LE RAY DE CHAUMONT TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Passy, 18 September, 1778.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 15th instant, making inquiry as to the rent of my house, in which you live, for the past and the future. When I consecrated my house to Dr. Franklin and his associates, who might live with him, I made it fully understood that I should expect no compensation, because I perceived that you had need of all your means to send to the succor of your country, or to relieve your countrymen escaping from the chains of your enemies. I pray you, sir, to permit this arrangement to remain, which I made when the fate of your country was doubtful. When she shall enjoy all her splendor, such sacrifices on my part will be superfluous, and unworthy of her, but at present, they may be useful, and I am most happy in obliging them to you.

There is no occasion for strangers, since you desire to avoid their strictures, to be informed of my proceeding in this respect. It is so much the worse for those who would not do the same if they had the opportunity, and so much the better for me to have immortalized my house, by receiving into it Dr. Franklin and his associates.

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

Le Ray de Chaumont.

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M. DE SARTINE TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 16 September, 1778.

Gentlemen,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the subject of the French ship *Isabella*, which the American privateer, General Mifflin, recaptured from a Guernsey privateer.

In the *General Thesis* you may see the provisions of the ordinance of the marine of 1681, which adjudges to captors, the recaptured vessels, when they have been during twenty-four hours in the enemy's hands, and which grants only a third for the charges of rescue, when they are retaken before the twenty-four hours. The American privateers shall enjoy in France, without difficulty, the benefit of this law, if it has been adopted by the United States in such a manner, as that the French privateers may be assured of experiencing the same treatment, with respect to the recaptures they may conduct into the ports of North America.

The English laws, on the contrary, grant a privateer only one eighth of the value of the vessels retaken within the first twenty-four hours, a fifth within the second day, a third within the third and fourth, and afterwards one half, which leaves at least, in every case, the other half to the losing proprietors. It is possible that the United States, as these laws are less advantageous to the privateers, and more favorable to the original proprietors of recaptured vessels, would give the preference to those of France.

In these circumstances, the rules of reciprocity observed between the two powers require that arrangements be made to adopt the law of one of the two nations, which shall be observed by the respective privateers; and, in the mean time, I am persuaded you think with me that the American privateer, General Mifflin, ought not to exact in France more than the same advantage which, in a similar case, a French privateer would enjoy in North America.

This discussion, moreover, will not perhaps apply in the particular affair in question. I am just informed that the French proprietor claims his vessel as retaken from pirates, offering to pay a third of its value to the American privateer which delivered it. This is agreeable to the tenth article, under the title of *Prizes*, of the ordinance of 1681, which appears justly applicable to this particular case. If it should be found that the Guernsey privateer falls under the description of those pirates, whose depredations have obliged his Majesty to order general reprisals, and that she has not been furnished with new letters of marque, which the Court of London did not grant before the month of August, to cruise against French vessels, as appears from the declaration of the captain of the *Isabella*, this question will be necessarily submitted to the

decision of the tribunals; and I could do no otherwise than see that the most prompt justice be rendered to the American privateer. I request, in any case, that you will be pleased to give me your opinion on the principal question, assuming the laws of the two nations to be different, with respect to reprisals or rescues.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Sartine.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 17 September, 1778.

Sir,—

We have this morning the honor of your Excellency's letter of the 16th, relative to the French brigantine, the *Isabella*, retaken by the American privateer, the General Mifflin, from a Guernsey privateer, after having been eighty hours in his hands.

We have the honor to agree perfectly with your Excellency in your sentiments of the justice and policy of the principle of reciprocity between the two nations, and that this principle requires that French ships of war or privateers should have the same advantage, in case of rescues and recaptures, that the American privateers enjoy in France.

We are so unfortunate at present, as to have no copy of any of the laws of the United States, relative to such cases, and are not able to recollect, with precision, the regulations in any of them. But we are informed by Captain M'Neil, that by the law of Massachusetts Bay, if a vessel is retaken within twenty-four hours, one third goes to the recaptors; after twenty-four hours until seventy-two hours, one half; after seventy-two hours and before ninety-six hours, three quarters; and after ninety-six hours, the whole.

All that we have power to do in this case is, to convey to congress a copy of your Excellency's letter and of our answer, and we have no doubt but congress will readily recommend to the several States to make laws, giving to French privateers either the same advantages that their own privateers have in such cases, in their own ports, or the same advantages that the French privateers enjoy in the ports of this kingdom in such cases, by the ordinance of the King. And we wish your Excellency would signify to us, which would probably be most agreeable to his Majesty. If the case of this vessel must come before the public tribunals, upon the simple question, whether she was retaken from a pirate or not, that tribunal, we doubt not, will decide with impartiality; but we cannot refrain from expressing to your Excellency, that we think the original owner will be ill advised if he should put himself to this trouble and expense.

We presume not to dispute the wisdom of the ordinance of the King, which gives to the recaptor from a pirate only one third; because we know not the species of pirates which was then in contemplation, nor the motives to that regulation. But your Excellency will permit us to observe, that this regulation is so different from the general practice and from the spirit of the law of nations, that there is no doubt it ought to receive a strict interpretation, and that it is incumbent on the original proprietor to make it very evident that the first captor was a pirate.

In the case in question, the Guernsey privateer certainly had a commission from the King of Great Britain to cruise against American vessels at least. But admitting, for argument's sake, that he had no commission at all, the question arises, whether the two nations of France and England are at war or not. And, although there has been no formal declaration of war on either side, yet there seems to be little doubt that the two nations have been at actual war, at least from the time of the mutual recall of their ambassadors, if not from the moment of the British King's most warlike speech to his parliament.

Now, if it be admitted that the two nations are at war, we believe it would be without a precedent in the history of jurisprudence, to adjudge the subjects of any nation to be guilty of piracy for any act of hostility committed at sea against the subjects of another nation at war. Such a principle, for what we see, would conclude all the admirals and other officers of both nations guilty of the same offence.

It is not the want of a commission, as we humbly conceive, that makes a man guilty of piracy; but committing hostilities against human kind; at least, against a nation not at war.

Commissions are but one species of evidence that nations are at war. But there are many other ways of proving the same thing.

Subjects and citizens, it is true, are forbidden by most civilized nations to arm vessels for cruising even against enemies without a commission from the sovereign; but it is upon penalty of confiscation or some other, perhaps, milder punishment, not on the penalties of piracy.

Moreover, perhaps, prizes made upon enemies by subjects or citizens, without commission from their sovereigns, may belong to the sovereign, not to the captors, by the laws of most nations; but, perhaps, no nation ever punished as pirates their own subjects or citizens for making a prize from an enemy without a commission.

We beg your Excellency's pardon for detaining you so long from objects of more importance,

And Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 17 September, 1778.

Sir,—

The last letter which we have had the honor to write jointly to congress, was of the 20th of July, and as we have sent several copies of it by different opportunities, we hope one of them, at least, will get safe to hand. Since our last, there has been an important action at sea between two very powerful fleets, in which, in our opinion, the French had a manifest and great advantage. But as all the newspapers in Europe are full of this transaction, and we have taken, in our separate capacities, every opportunity to transmit these papers to congress, we think it needless to be more particular concerning that event in this letter.

The French fleet, on the 11th of last month, again put to sea, and on the 22d Admiral Keppel sailed. By the best intelligence from London the populace are amused, and the public funds are supported, by hopes given out by administration, of peace, by an acknowledgment of American independency. But, as the credulity of that nation has no bounds, we can draw no inference from this general opinion, that such is the intention of government. We suppose that rumor to be a consequence of the insidious determination of the cabinet, to propose independence on condition of a separate peace.

We are here, at this moment, in a state of the most anxious and critical suspense, having heard nothing from Count d'Estaing, nor from America, since the 11th of July.

Congress will be informed by Mr. Arthur Lee, respecting the Court of Spain.

We have taken measures in Amsterdam for borrowing money of the Dutch, but what success we shall have we cannot yet say. We have also asked leave of this government to borrow money in this kingdom, but having no answer, we cannot say whether we shall get permission or not. We have yesterday applied for a continuation of the quarterly payment of seven hundred and fifty thousand livres; what the answer will be we know not; if it is in the negative, the consequence must be very plain to congress and to us. It is at all times wisest and safest, both for the representative and his constituent, to be candid, and we should think ourselves criminal if we should disguise our just apprehensions.

Congress then will be pleased to be informed that all the powers of Europe are now armed, or arming themselves, by land or sea, or both, as there seems to be a universal apprehension of a general war. Such is the situation of European nations at least, that no one can arm itself without borrowing money. Besides this, the Emperor and King of Prussia are at actual war. All this together has produced this effect,—that France,

England, the Emperor, Spain, Prussia, at least, are borrowing money, and there is not one of them, that we can learn, but offers better interest than the United States have offered. There can be no motive, then, but simple benevolence, to lend to us.

Applications have been frequently made to us by Americans, who have been some time abroad, to administer the oath of allegiance to the United States, and to give them certificates that they have taken such oaths. In three instances we have yielded to their importunity,—in the case of Mr. Moore, of New Jersey, who has a large property in the East Indies, which he designs to transfer immediately to America; in the case of Mr. Woodford, of Virginia, a brother of General Woodford, who has been some time in Italy, and means to return to America with his property; and yesterday, in the case of Mr. Montgomery, of Philadelphia, who is settled at Alicant, in Spain, but wishes to send vessels and cargoes of his own property to America. We have given our opinions to these gentlemen frankly, that such certificates are in strictness legally void, because there is no act of congress that expressly gives us power to administer oaths. We have also given two or three commissions, by means of the blanks with which congress intrusted us,—one to Mr. Livingston, and one to Mr. Amiel, to be lieutenants in the navy,—and in these cases we have ventured to administer the oaths of allegiance. We have also, in one instance, administered the oath of secrecy to one of our secretaries, and perhaps it is necessary to administer such an oath, as well as that of allegiance, to all persons whom we may be obliged, in the extensive correspondence we maintain, to employ. We hope we shall not have the disapprobation of congress for what, in this way, has been done, but we wish for explicit powers and instructions upon this head.

There are, among the multitude of Americans who are scattered about the various parts of Europe, some, we hope many, who are excellent citizens, who wish to take the oath of allegiance, and to have some mode prescribed by which they may be enabled to send their vessels and cargoes to America with safety from their own friends,—American men-of-war and privateers. Will it not be practicable for congress to prescribe some mode of giving registers to ships, some mode of evidence to ascertain the property of cargoes, by which it might be made to appear to the cruisers and to courts of admiralty, that the property belonged to Americans abroad? If congress should appoint consuls, could not some power be given to them, or would congress empower their commissioners or any others? Several persons from England have applied to us to go to America; they profess to be friends to liberty, to republics, to America; they wish to take their lot with her, to take the oath of allegiance to the States, and to go over with their property. We hope to have instructions upon this head, and a mode pointed out for us to proceed in.

In observance of our instruction to inquire into M. Holker's authority, we waited on his Excellency, the Count de Vergennes, presented him with an extract of the letter concerning him, and requested to know what authority M. Holker had. His Excellency's answer to us was, that he was surprised; for that M. Holker had no verbal commission from the ministry; but that M. de Vergennes, being informed that M. Holker was going to America, desired him to write to him, from time to time, the state of things and the temper of the people.

We have given orders to M. Bondfield, at Bordeaux, to ship to America twenty-eight 24-pounders, and twenty-eight 18-pounders, according to our instructions. By his answer to us, it will take some little time, perhaps two or three months, to get those cannon at a good rate, and in good condition.

Our distance from congress obliges us very often to act without express instructions upon points in which we should be very glad to have their orders. One example of which is,—the case of the American prisoners in England. Numbers have been taken and confined in jails; others, especially masters of vessels, are set at liberty. We are told that there are still five hundred in England. Many have escaped from their prisons, who make their way to Paris, some by the way of Holland, others by Dunkirk, and others by means of smuggling vessels in other ports of this kingdom. They somehow get money to give jailers, in order to escape; then they take up money in England, in Holland, in Dunkirk, and elsewhere, to bear their expenses to Paris; then they apply to us to pay these past expenses, and to furnish them money to defray their expenses to Nantes, Brest, and other seaport towns. When arrived there, they apply to the American agent for more money; besides this, bills of their drawing are brought to us from Holland and other places. All this makes a large branch of expense. We have no orders to advance money in these cases, yet we have ventured to advance considerable sums; but the demands that are coming upon us from all quarters, are likely to exceed so vastly all our resources, that we must request positive directions, whether we are to advance money to any prisoners whatever. If to any, whether to masters and seamen of private merchant vessels, and to officers and crews of privateers, as well as to officers and men in the continental service. We have taken unwearied pains, and have put the United States to very considerable expense, in order to give satisfaction to these people; but all we have done has not the effect; we are perpetually told of discontented speeches, and we often receive peevish letters from these persons in one place and another, that they are not treated with so much respect as they expected, nor furnished with so much money as they wanted. We should not regard these reflections, if we had the orders of congress.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO THE AMERICAN PRISONERS IN FORTON, PLYMOUTH, OR ELSEWHERE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Passy, 20 September, 1778.

Gentlemen,—

Although we have not written to you directly for some time, you may be assured we have not been unmindful of your interests, your comfort, or your liberty. We have been engaged a long time in negotiating a cartel of exchange. This work we found attended with many difficulties, but at last have obtained assurances from England that an exchange shall take place. We have also obtained from the government of this kingdom, a passport for a vessel to come from England to Nantes or Lorient with American prisoners, there to take in British prisoners in exchange. We now sincerely hope that you will obtain your liberty. We cannot certainly say, however, that all will be immediately exchanged, because we fear we have not an equal number to send to England. Those that remain, if any, will be those who have been the latest in captivity, and consequently have suffered the least.

While the British government refused to make any agreement of exchange, the commissioners here never discouraged their countrymen from escaping from the prisons in England, but, on the contrary, have lent small sums of money, sufficient, with great economy, to bear their expenses to some seaport, to such as have made their way hither. But, if the British government should honorably keep their agreement to make a regular exchange, we shall not think it consistent with the honor of the United States to encourage such escapes, or to give any assistance to such as shall escape. Such escapes hereafter would have a tendency to excite the British administration to depart from the cartel, to treat the prisoners that remain with more rigor, and to punish those that escape, if retaken, with more severity.

On the other hand, we have now obtained permission of this government to put all British prisoners, whether taken by continental frigates or by privateers, into the King's prisons, and we are determined to treat such prisoners precisely as our countrymen are treated in England, to give them the same allowance of provisions and accommodations, and no other. We, therefore, request you to inform us with exactness what your allowance is from the government, that we may govern ourselves accordingly.

We have the honor to be, with much respect and affection,

Your Countrymen And Humble Servants,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO RALPH IZARD.

Passy, 20 September, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

You have once or twice mentioned to me, in conversation, certain expressions in the treaty, relative to the fishery on the Banks of Newfoundland, which you apprehend may be liable to different constructions, and become the subject of controversy, if not the cause of war; but as it is very possible I may not have perfectly comprehended your meaning, I should be much obliged to you, if you would state it in writing, together with the historical facts, which are fresh in your memory, for the illustration of it.

If I understood you, your apprehension arises from the tenth article of the treaty.

“The United States, their citizens and inhabitants, shall never disturb the subjects of the most Christian King in the enjoyment and exercise of the right of fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland, *nor in the indefinite and exclusive right which belongs to them on that part of the coast of that island which is designed by the treaty of Utrecht, nor in the rights relative to all and each of the isles which belong to His Most Christian Majesty; the whole conformable to the true sense of the treaties of Utrecht and Paris.*”

“Les États Unis, leurs citoyens et habitans, ne troubleront jamais les sujets du roi très chrétien, dans la jouissance et exercice du droit de pêche sur les bancs de Terre-neuve, non plus que dans la jouissance indéfinie et exclusive qui leur appartient sur la partie des côtes de cette isle designée dans le traité d’Utrecht, ni dans les droits relatifs à toutes et chacune des isles qui appartiennent à sa Majesté très chrétienne; le tout conformément au véritable sens des traités d’Utrecht et de Paris.”

You mentioned to me the names of two places, from the one of which to the other, the French formerly claimed a right to fish and to exclude all other nations, and that such a right was claimed in the negotiation of the last peace, and you was apprehensive that such a claim might in future times be revived.

I should be very happy to receive your sentiments fully upon this subject, as it is no doubt of importance to us all.

I Am, With Much Esteem And Affection,
Your Friend And Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Passy, 22 September, 1778.

Sir,—

Upon looking over the account of the expenditure of the money for which we have jointly drawn upon the banker, since my arrival at Passy, I find some articles charged for similar ones to which I have paid in my separate capacity. I do not mean to be difficult about these things, but that we may have a plan for the future, I beg leave to propose, that the wages and expenses of the *maître d'hôtel* and cook, and of all the servants, their clothes, and every other expense for them, the wages, clothes, and other expenses of the coachman, the hire of the horses and carriage, the expenses of postage of letters, of expresses to Versailles and Paris and elsewhere, of stationary ware, and all the expenses of the family, should be paid out of the money to be drawn from the banker by our joint order. If to these Dr. Franklin chooses to add the washerwoman's accounts for our servants, &c. as well as ourselves, I have no objection; receipts to be taken for payments of money, and each party furnished with a copy of the account and a sight of the receipts once a month, if he desires it. The expenses of a clerk for each may be added, if Dr. Franklin pleases, or this may be a separate expense, as he chooses. Expenses for clothes, books, and other things, and transient pocket expenses, to be separate. Or, if any other plan is more agreeable to Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams begs him to propose it. The accounts for our sons at school may be added, if Dr. Franklin chooses it, to the general account, or otherwise. For my own part, when I left America, I expected, and had no other thought, but to be at the expense of my son's subsistence and education here in my private capacity, and I shall still be very contented to do this, if congress should desire it. But while other gentlemen are maintaining and educating large families here, and enjoying the exquisite felicity of their company at the same time, perhaps congress may think it proper to allow this article to us as well as to them; and I am sure I do not desire it, nor would I choose to accept it, if it was not allowed to others, although, perhaps, the duties, labors, and anxieties of our station may be greater than those of others.

I Am, Sir, Your Inmate, And Most Obedient Servant,

John Adams.

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RALPH IZARD TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 24 September, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

I must apologize for not having given you an immediate answer to your letter of the 20th instant, which would have been the case, if I had not been much employed in writing, on account of the sudden departure of Mr. Blake for Nantes. It has been my constant wish, that, as soon as Great Britain shall be compelled, by the virtuous exertions of our countrymen, to abandon her plans of conquest, we may enjoy the blessings of peace, uninterrupted by disputes with any power whatsoever. Contentions with France ought, above all others, to be avoided, from every consideration. It is upon this account that I have suffered great uneasiness from some articles in the treaties with this court, which I fear will, in some future day, be productive of much discontent and mischief. Two of those articles have been pointed out by congress, and by their direction have been altered. The little time which was spent in examining the treaties may be the reason why some other parts may have escaped their attention; and I wish they may not occur to them when it is too late. Had the “alterations that were *proposed on either side*” to be made from the treaty originally transmitted by congress to the commissioners at this Court, been communicated to me, some good might possibly have been derived from it. I have no doubt but it was the indispensable duty of those gentlemen to have made such communication, and if any evils should be sustained in consequence of their persisting in their refusal to make them, in spite of every application on my part, they ought to be answerable for them to their country. This, however, is not the proper time nor place for the discussion of these points. I shall, therefore, proceed to take notice of that part of the treaty only, which you have done me the honor to ask my sentiments upon.

The eighth article of the original treaty, proposed by congress, contains the following words:—“The Most Christian King shall retain the same rights of fishery on the Banks of Newfoundland, and all other rights relating to any of the said islands, which he is entitled to by virtue of the treaty of Paris.”

The thirteenth article of the treaty of Utrecht contains the following:—“It shall be *allowed* to the subjects of France to catch fish and to dry them on land, in that part only, and in no other besides that, of the said island of Newfoundland, which stretches from the place called Cape Bonavista to the northern point of the said island, and from thence, running down by the western side, reaches as far as the place called Point Riche.”

The French pretended that, in consequence of the above article, they had an exclusive right to fish on such parts of the coast of Newfoundland as are therein described, but the claim was never admitted by England; indeed, the treaty of Utrecht does not afford any grounds for such a claim. The fifth article of the treaty of Paris

says,—“The subjects of France *shall have the liberty* of fishing and drying on a part of the coasts of the island of Newfoundland, *such as it is specified* in the thirteenth article of the treaty of Utrecht.” The words “indefinite and exclusive right” make no part of either of the above treaties, yet they are inserted in the tenth article of our treaty of commerce; and that it may seem as though no innovation was intended, that right is claimed as having been “designed” in the treaty of Utrecht; and the whole is to be [not such as it is *specified*, but] conformable to the “true sense” of the treaties of Utrecht and Paris. Perhaps my apprehensions on this subject may be groundless; and should that not be the case, perhaps they may be useless. I am induced to mention this last observation, by the conversation I had with you about the fishery at Mr. Bertin’s, at Passy, in which we differed totally respecting the importance of it to America in general, and particularly to the state of Massachusetts Bay. You were of opinion, that the fishery was not only an object of no consequence, but that it was, and always would be, a prejudice to New England. If this should really be the case, some consolation may be derived from it, when the probability of being excluded from part of it is considered. Since the advantages of commerce have been well understood, the fisheries have been looked upon by the naval powers of Europe as an object of the greatest importance. The French have been increasing their fishery ever since the treaty of Utrecht, which has enabled them to rival Great Britain at sea. The fisheries of Holland were not only the first rise of the republic, but have been the constant support of all her commerce and navigation. This branch of trade is of such concern to the Dutch, that in their public prayers, they are said to request the Supreme Being “that it would please Him to bless the government, the lords, the states, and also their fisheries.” The fishery of Newfoundland appears to me to be a mine of infinitely greater value than Mexico and Peru. It enriches the proprietors, is worked at less expense, and is the source of naval strength and protection. I have, therefore, thought it my duty to give my sentiments on this subject to my friend, Mr. Laurens. If my reasons appear to him to have any weight, it is probable they may be communicated to the delegates of those States who will be more immediately affected. If not, they will be suppressed, as they ought to be, and neither they, nor any body else, will be troubled with them.

I Am, Dear Sir, With Great Regard,
Your Friend And Humble Servant,

R. Izard.

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TO RALPH IZARD.

Passy, 25 September, 1778.

Sir,—

I have received with much pleasure your favor of yesterday's date. No apology was necessary for the delay of so few days to answer a letter, the contents of which did not, from any public consideration, require haste. My most fervent wishes mingle themselves with yours, that the happy time may soon arrive when we may enjoy the blessings of peace, uninterrupted by disputes with any power whatever. But alas! my apprehensions are very strong that we are yet at a distance from so great a felicity.

You will readily acknowledge the impropriety of my entering into the question concerning the duty of the commissioners here to have made the communications of the treaty which you mention. But of this you may be assured, that I shall at all times hold myself obliged to you for the communication of your sentiments upon any public affair. I am, therefore, sorry that in your letter you have confined yourself to that part of the treaty upon which I particularly requested your sentiments. And I now take the liberty to request your sentiments upon every part of the treaty which you conceive liable to doubtful construction, or capable of producing discontent or dispute; for I have the honor to be fully of your opinion, that it is of very great importance to be upon our guard, and avoid every cause of controversy with France as much as possible. She is, and will be, in spite of the obstacles of language, of customs, religion, and government, our natural ally against Great Britain as long as she shall continue our enemy, and that will be at least as long as she shall hold a foot of ground in America, however she may disguise it, and whatever peace or truce she may make.

You have mortified me much, by mentioning a conversation at M. Bertin's, which, if you understood me perfectly, and remember it right, had either too much of philosophy or of rodomontade for a politician, especially for a representative of the United States of America, and more especially still, for a citizen of the Massachusetts Bay.

Your sentiments of the fishery, as a source of wealth, of commerce, and naval power, are perfectly just, and, therefore, this object will and ought to be attended to with precision, and cherished with care. Nevertheless, agriculture is the most essential interest of America, and even of the Massachusetts Bay, and it is very possible to injure both, by diverting too much of the thoughts and labor of the people from the cultivation of the earth to adventures upon the sea. And this, in the opinion of some persons, has been a fault in the Massachusetts Bay. Experience has taught us in the course of this war, that the fishery was not so essential to our welfare as it was once thought. Necessity has taught us to dig in the ground instead of fishing in the sea for our bread, and we have found that the resource did not fail us.

The fishery was a source of luxury and vanity that did us much injury; yet this was the fault of the management, not of the fishery. One part of our fish went to the West India Islands for rum, and molasses to distil into rum, which injured our health and our morals; the other part went to Spain and Portugal for gold and silver, almost the whole of which went to London, sometimes for valuable articles of clothing, but too often for lace and ribbons. If, therefore, the cessation of the fishery, for twenty years to come, was to introduce the culture of flax and wool, which it certainly would do so far as would be necessary for the purposes of decency and comfort, if a loss of wealth should be the consequence of it, the acquisition of morals and of wisdom would perhaps make us gainers in the end.

These are vain speculations, I know. The taste for rum and ribbons will continue, and there are no means for the New England people to obtain them so convenient as the fishery, and, therefore, the first opportunity will be eagerly embraced to revive it. As a nursery of seamen and a source of naval power, it has been and is an object of serious importance, and perhaps indispensably necessary to the accomplishment and the preservation of our independence. [1](#) I shall, therefore, always think it my duty to defend and secure our rights to it with all industry and zeal, and shall ever be obliged to you for your advice and coöperation.

Pardon the length of this letter, and believe me, with much esteem,

Your Friend And Servant,

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, Saturday, 26 September, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

I very much approve your plan with regard to our future accounts, and wish it to be followed.

The accounts that have been shown you are only those of the person we had intrusted with the receiving and paying our money, and intended merely to show how he was discharged of it. We are to separate from that account the articles for which congress should be charged, and those for which we should give credit.

It has always been my intention to pay for the education of my children, their clothes, &c., as well as for books and other things for my private use; and whatever I spend in this way I shall give congress credit for, to be deducted out of the allowance they have promised us. But as the article of clothes for ourselves here is necessarily much higher than if we were not in public service, I submit it to your consideration, whether that article ought not to be reckoned among expenses for the public. I know I had clothes enough at home to have lasted me my lifetime in a country where I was under small necessity of following new fashions.

I shall be out of town till Monday. When I return, we will, if you please, talk further of these matters, and put the accounts in the order they are hereafter to be kept.

With Great Esteem, I Am
Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant,

B. Franklin.1

I inclose a letter just received from Mr. Ross. Some answer should be sent him; I have not had time. Inclosed are his late letters. If any good news arrive, my servant may be sent express to me with it.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO WILLIAM LEE.

Passy, 26 September, 1778.

Sir,—

We have considered with some attention the papers which you have laid before us, containing a project of a treaty to be made between the Republic of the United Provinces and that of the United States of America.

As congress have intrusted to us the authority of treating with all the States of Europe, excepting such as have particular commissioners designated by congress to treat with them; and as no particular commissioner has been appointed to treat with their High Mightinesses, we have already taken such measures as appeared to us suitable to accomplish so desirable a purpose as a friendship between two nations so circumstanced as to have it in their power to be extremely beneficial to each other in promoting their mutual prosperity. And we propose to continue our endeavors in every way consistent with the honor and interest of both.

But we do not think it prudent, for many reasons, to express at present any decided opinion concerning the project of a treaty, which you have done us the honor to communicate to us.

We cannot, however, conclude without expressing a ready disposition to treat upon an object which, besides laying the foundation of an extensive commerce between the two countries, would have a very forcible tendency to stop the effusion of human blood, and prevent the further progress of the flames of war.

We have the honor to be, with the utmost respect, sir,

Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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RALPH IZARD TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 28 September, 1778.

Sir,—

I am favored with your letter of 25th, and agree with you in opinion that there is no necessity of discussing the question respecting the commissioners now; inconveniences might rise from it, and no valuable purpose could be answered that I know of. I agree with you, likewise, if the fishery of New England has proved injurious by introducing luxury and vanity, it must be the fault of the people, rather than of the fishery. If the quantity of money which is acquired by the fishery affords an argument for the discontinuance of it, I am afraid it may be applied with equal propriety against every other industrious means of introducing wealth into the state. The passion for ribbons and lace may easily be checked by a few wholesome sumptuary laws; and the money that has hitherto been employed on those articles will be found very useful toward sinking our enormous national debt. This debt, I fear, will not be sunk during my life; till that is done, I do not think that any danger to our morals is to be apprehended from our excessive riches.

I should be obliged to you, if you would let me know, whether you think the reasons which were given in my last letter, respecting the treaties, are well founded. I am very willing to communicate my sentiments to you on the other articles; but submit it to you, whether it would not be better that this should be done verbally, rather than by letter.

I Have The Honor To Be, With Much Esteem,
Your Friend And Humble Servant,

R. Izard.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO JOHN ROSS.

Passy, 30 September, 1778.

Sir,—

We have received your letter of the 22d of September, and take this opportunity to say, that we have no authority either to give you orders or advice, any further than respects the large sum of money which the commissioners put into your hands some time ago. Of the expenditure of this money we have demanded an account, which you have refused to give us.

With your private concerns we have nothing to do. If you have any power derived from the honorable committee of congress, to that committee you must be responsible, and look for instructions. We can never justify interfering in those affairs, much less could we be justified in advancing more money to a gentleman who has refused to give us an account of a large sum already intrusted to him, not to mention the circumstances of indecency with which that refusal was accompanied, and with which most of your letters since have been filled. We return you the original contract which you inclosed to us some time ago. That you may save yourself for the future the trouble of writing letters to us, we now assure you, that it is our fixed determination to have nothing further to do with you, or any affairs under your care, until you have laid before us and settled your account of the public money you have received from the commissioners, unless we have instructions from congress, which, with the most perfect attention, we shall ever observe.

We Are, Sir, Your Humble Servants,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

P. S. It is proper you should be informed, that there appears, from Mr. Williams's accounts, to have been a further advance made to you of twenty thousand livres, for which we likewise expect you will, without delay, account with us.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 1 October, 1778.

Sir,—

We have received the letter which your Excellency did us the honor to write to us on the 27th of last month, together with a copy of a letter from the Minister of the Marine to your Excellency, of the 21st of the same month.

Convinced of the propriety of those *éclaircissements* which his Excellency demands, we had recourse to our various instructions from congress, and although we have power and instructions to treat and conclude treaties with all the European powers, to whom no particular minister has been sent by congress, yet we cannot find that our powers extend to conclude treaties with the Barbary States.

We are, nevertheless, instructed to endeavor to obtain passes for vessels of the United States and their subjects from those powers, through the mediation and influence of His Most Christian Majesty, which we therefore request his Excellency to endeavor to procure, provided he sees no danger in the attempt, or material objections to it.

We have, however, the honor to agree with his Excellency in opinion, that an acknowledgment of the independence of the United States, on the part of those powers, and a treaty of commerce between them and us, would be beneficial to both, and a negotiation to that end not unlikely to succeed; because there has been heretofore some trade between them and us, in the course of which our people and vessels were well received.

We therefore submit to his Excellency's judgment, either to commence a negotiation for passes for American vessels immediately, or to wait until we can write to congress and obtain power to treat with those States and conclude treaties of commerce with them, when we shall request to commence and conduct the negotiation through the mediation and under the auspices of his Majesty. We have the honor to request his Excellency's advice hereupon.

We address this to your Excellency, as we have done many other things, which we suppose must be referred to other departments, because your Excellency being the Minister for Foreign Affairs, we have understood that we have no right to apply in the first instance to any other. But if we have been misinformed and ill-advised in this, and there is no impropriety in our making immediate application to other ministers upon subjects we know to be in their departments, we request your Excellency to give us an intimation of it; and for the future we will avoid giving unnecessary trouble to your Excellency.

We Have The Honor To Be,
With Sentiments Of Most Entire Respect,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO RALPH IZARD.

Passy, 2 October, 1778.

Sir,—

I have the pleasure of yours of the 28th, and agree with you in sentiment, that if the money which has heretofore been squandered upon articles of luxury could for the future be applied to discharge our national debt, it would be a great felicity. But is it certain that it will? Will not the national debt itself be the means, at least a temptation to continue, if not increase the luxury? It is with great pleasure that I see you mention sumptuary laws. But is there room to hope that our legislators will pass such laws? or that the people have, or can be persuaded to acquire those qualities that are necessary to execute such laws? I wish your answer may be in the affirmative, and that it may be found true in fact and experience. But much prudence and delicacy will be necessary, I think, to bring all our countrymen to this just way of thinking upon this head. There is such a charm to the human heart in elegance, it is so flattering to our self-love to be distinguished from the world in general by extraordinary degrees of splendor in dress, in furniture, equipage, buildings, &c., and our countrymen, by their connection with Europe, are so much infected with the habit of this taste and these passions, that I fear it will be a work of time and difficulty, if not quite impracticable, to introduce an alteration; to which, besides, the great inequalities of fortune, introduced by the late condition of our trade and currency, and the late enterprises of privateers, are dangerous enemies.

You ask my opinion, whether the reasons in your last letter are well founded. It is observable that the French Court were not content with the treaty proposed by congress, which contained all, in my opinion, which is contained in the article as it now stands in the treaty of the 6th of February. What motive they had for inserting the words “indefinite and exclusive,” is left to conjecture.¹ The suspicion, that they meant more than the treaty proposed by congress expressed, arises from a fact which you remember, namely,—that the French at the time of the last peace claimed more. I wish to know, if there is any letter or memorial extant, in which such a claim is contained, or whether it was only a verbal claim made by their ambassadors; whether any of the magazines of that time mention and discuss any such claim. If the fact is incontestable that they made such a claim, it is possible that it may be revived under the words “indefinite and exclusive.” But I hope it will not, and I hope it was not intended when these words were inserted. Yet I confess I cannot think of any other reason for inserting them. The word *indefinite* is not amiss, for it is a right of catching fish and drying them on land, which is a right indefinite enough. But the word *exclusive* is more mysterious. It cannot mean that Americans and all other nations shall be “excluded” from the same right of fishing and drying on land, between the same limits of Bonavista and Riche. It would be much easier to suppose that the following words, “in that part only, and in no other besides that,” gave rise to the word *exclusive*; that is, that right of fishing and drying within those limits, for which

we have excluded ourselves from all others. I will undertake to show better reasons, or at least as good, for this sense of the word *exclusive*, as the most subtle interpreter of treaties can offer for the other, although I think them both untenable.

My opinion further is this,—that as contemporaneous exposition is allowed by all writers on the law of nations to be the best interpreter of treaties, as well as of all other writings, and as neither the treaty of Utrecht, nor the treaty of Paris in 1763, ever received such an interpretation as you are apprehensive may hereafter be contended for, and as the uninterrupted practice has been against such a construction, so I think that the treaty of Paris of the 6th of February, 1778, is not justly liable to such a construction, and that it cannot be attempted with any prospect of success. I agree with you, however, that as we are young States, and not practised in the art of negotiation, it becomes us to look into all these things with as much caution and exactness as possible, and furnish ourselves with the best historical light and every other honest means of securing our rights. For which reason I requested your sentiments upon this subject in writing, and continue to desire in the same way your observations upon the other parts of the treaty. Reduced to writing, such things remain in letters and letter-books, as well as more distinctly in the memory, and the same man or other men may recur to them at future opportunities, whereas transient conversations, especially among men who have many things to do and to think of, slip away, and are forgotten. I shall make use of all the prudence I can, that these letters may not come to the knowledge of improper persons, or be used to the disadvantage of our country, or of you or me in our personal capacity.

I Am, &C.

John Adams.

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ARTHUR LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Chaillot, 6 October, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

You have often complained, that taking care of the public papers, and having the business of the commission done in your rooms, was an unequal share of the public burden apportioned to you.

Whatever may be my sentiments on that point, yet to remove, as far as I can, with propriety, all cause of discontent, I am willing to appropriate a room in my house for the meeting and deliberations of the commissioners and the custody of the public papers, provided regular hours are appointed for those meetings and that business. I will answer for the regular arrangement and preservation of the public papers, and that the business of the public shall always be despatched before that of individuals.

Should this arrangement be agreeable to you, and Dr. Franklin concurs, the execution of it will meet with no moment's delay from me.

I Have The Honor To Be, With The Greatest Esteem, &C.

Arthur Lee.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

Passy, 10 October, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

I have sometimes complained, that having no place appointed for the public papers, nor any person to keep them in order, was an inconvenience and interruption to the public business. I have added, that to have the papers in my chamber as they are, in disorder, and several persons going to them at pleasure, taking out some papers and removing others, was unequal upon me, as making me in a sort responsible for the order which I could not preserve, and for papers themselves which I could not secure; besides that it occasioned continual applications to me alone, and necessitated me to spend a great part of my time in writing orders, notes of hand, copies of letters, passports, and twenty other things, which ought at all times to be written by our clerks, at least as long as it is thought necessary to put the public to the expense of keeping so many.

I have not asked Dr. Franklin's opinion concerning your proposal of a room in your house for the papers and an hour to meet there, because I know it would be in vain; for I think it would appear to him, as it does to me, more unequal still. It cannot be expected that two should go to one, when it is as easy again for one to go to two; not to mention Dr. Franklin's age, his rank in the commission, or his character in the world, nor that nine tenths of the public letters are constantly brought to this house, and will ever be carried where Dr. Franklin is.

I will venture to make a proposition in my turn, in which I am very sincere; it is that you would join families with us. There is room enough in this house to accommodate us all. You shall take the apartments which belong to me at present, and I will content myself with the library room and the next to it. Appoint a room for business, any that you please, mine or another, a person to keep those papers, and certain hours to do business.

This arrangement would save a large sum of money to the public, and as it would give us a thousand opportunities of conversing together, which now we have not, and, by having but one place for our countrymen and others who have occasion to visit us to go to, would greatly facilitate the public business, it would remove the reproach we lie under, of which I confess myself very much ashamed, of not being able to agree together, and will render the commission more respectable, if not in itself, yet in the eyes of the English nation, the French nation, and, above all, the American nation; and I am sure, if we judge by the letters we receive, it wants to be made more respectable, at least in the eyes of many persons of the latter. If it is any objection to this, that we live here at no rent, I will agree with you in insisting on having the rent fixed, or leave the house.

As I suppose, the proposal I made of appointing Mr. W. T. Franklin to take the care of the papers, occasioned your letter of the sixth instant, I cannot conclude this answer to it without repeating that proposal.

This appointment can be but temporary, as a secretary will probably arrive from congress ere long.

But in the mean time, Mr. Franklin, who keeps papers in good order and writes very well, may be of more service to us than he is at present. We shall then have a right to call upon him to do business, and we shall know what situation he is in, and what reward he is to have. I agree perfectly with you, that an hour should be fixed for business; and I beg leave to propose nine o'clock in the morning, to which hour, and from thence to any other hour in the day you please, I will endeavor to be punctual. If you have any objection to this hour, you will be so good as to name another.

I am, dear sir, with an earnest desire and a settled determination to cultivate a harmony, nay more, a friendship with both my colleagues, as far as I can, consistent with the public service, and with great respect and esteem,

Your Friend And Colleague,

John Adams.

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ARTHUR LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Chaillot, 12 October, 1778.

Dear Sir,—

I have hoped for leisure to answer your favor as fully as in my own vindication it demands. There are matters touched in it which imply a censure upon me, which a recapitulation of facts I am satisfied would convince you is unjust. But as I despair of sufficient leisure for some time, I must content myself with replying to what is immediately necessary.

A desire to remove, as much as I could, the cause of your complaint, was the motive I stated to you for writing, and I repeat to you it was the only one. I mentioned my objections to your other plan when you proposed it; if you think them of no weight, let that or any other that will be most agreeable to you and Dr. Franklin be adopted, and it will have my most hearty concurrence.

With regard to the proposal of coming to live with you, nothing would give me more pleasure were it practicable. I thank you for the civility of offering me your room, but it would be impossible for me to do so unhandsome a thing, as to desire that of any gentleman. The living upon the bounty of a common individual I always objected to; besides, in the best of my judgment, that individual appears to me justly chargeable with the foul play used with our despatches. Till I see reason to think otherwise, I should hold myself inexcusable, both to my constituents and myself, if I were to put myself so much in his power. The house I am in, at all events, I must pay for this half year, therefore it would not save this expense. To live together was what I proposed, and labored to effect, though in vain, when the commissioners first came here. I thought it would be attended with every good consequence, and there was nothing I desired more. But, under all the circumstances of that proposition now, and the inveterate habits that have taken place, it appears to me to be attended with insuperable objections. I am, however, open to conviction, and shall be most happy in finding any practicable means of effecting the ends you propose.

Having to dress, breakfast, despatch letters, and do the necessary family affairs before I come to you, I find eleven o'clock the soonest I can engage for.

I had the same earnest desire you express, prompted as well by my own inclination and interest as by my wish for the public good, to cultivate harmony and friendship with both my colleagues, and nothing ever gave me more uneasiness than the impossibility that I have hitherto found of effecting it.

I Am, With The Greatest Respect And Esteem, &C.

A. Lee.

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M. GENET¹ TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Versailles, ce 24 Octobre, 1778.

Monsieur,—

Je viens de traduire pour Monseigneur le Comte de Vergennes les divers papiers de la Gazette de New York que vous trouverez dans le fragment ci-joint d'une gazette Anglaise du 17 de ce mois. Il n'est pas douteux que le prochain Courier de l'Europe ne contienne une traduction de ces divers papiers. Toute la France y verra un des deux cotés de la question, c'est à dire, celui sous lequel les Commissaires Anglais la présentent, sans voir en même temps ce que les Américains peuvent y répondre, parceque les Gazettes Américaines où seront sans doute les réponses convenables, pourront ne pas arriver en Europe aussitôt qu'il conviendrait.

Je prends la liberté de vous prier en conséquence, non pas d'y répondre en votre nom, mais de me fournir des notes d'après lesquelles je puisse, dans le No. 58 des *Affaires d'Angleterre*¹ qui paroîtra incessamment, combattre les assertions injurieuses des Commissaires Anglais, et contre le congrès et contre les membres; notamment, sur l'article des boites de cartouche des troupes du Général Burgoyne; sur l'état où sont actuellement ces troupes à Boston, &c.

J'en ferai usage, comme de réflexions et observations venant d'un particulier ignoré, et au moins nos ennemis communs n'auront point l'avantage que l'Europe se remplisse de ses inculpations contre le congrès et la France, sans que quelqu'un essaye de remettre les esprits sur la bonne voie.

Je Suis Avec Respect, Monsieur, &C.

Genet.

P. S. Plutôt vous pourrez m'envoyer vos observations, mieux ce sera.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 28 October, 1778.

Sir,—

While we officially communicate to you the inclosed resolve,² the foundation of which you cannot remain a stranger to, we must entreat you to be assiduous in sending to those commissioners who have left France, and gone to the courts for which they were respectively appointed, all the American intelligence, which you have greater opportunity than they of receiving from hence, particularly to Mr. Izard and Mr. William Lee. We do not often send more than one set of gazettes by one opportunity; and we hear of several vessels which have miscarried.

Congress must and will speedily determine upon the general arrangement of their foreign affairs. This is become, so far as regards you, peculiarly necessary, upon a new commission being sent to Dr. Franklin. In the mean time, we hope you will exercise your whole extensive abilities on the subject of our finances. The Doctor will communicate to you our situation in that regard.

To the gazettes, and to conversation with the Marquis de Lafayette, we must refer you for what relates to our enemies, and close with our most cordial wishes for your happiness.

Your Affectionate Friends,

R. H. Lee,

James Lovell.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Versailles, ce 29 Octobre, 1778.

Monsieur,—

J'ai trouvé si important pour le bien commun des deux nations, les sentimens où vous vous êtes montré devant moi chez M. Izard, touchant le secours qu'il conviendrait d'envoyer actuellement à M. le Comte d'Estaing, que j'ai cru ne pouvoir me dispenser d'en hasarder l'insinuation à nos ministres. Pour ne point vous compromettre à cause de votre caractère de député du congrès, et n'en ayant point la permission de vous, je n'ai point voulu vous nommer. Je me suis contenté de dire que je m'étois trouvé à Paris, avec plusieurs Américains, et que leur vœu unanime paroissoit être que la France envoyât sans délai douze vaisseaux de ligne en Amérique, pour dégager l'escadre de Toulon. C'est à M. de Sartine que j'ai fait cette ouverture, et je me propose de la faire demain à M. le Comte de Vergennes. M. de Sartine a eu la bonté de m'entendre avec attention. Je ne prétends point dire qu'il ait saisi cette idée comme ce qu'il y auroit à présent de mieux à faire, ni que je le juge décidé à l'adopter; mais aux questions qu'il a daigné me faire, j'imagine au moins qu'il ne trouveroit point étrange que je mîsse sous ses yeux un mémoire, tendant à prouver la nécessité de cette expédition et la manière d'y procéder, ainsi que l'espèce d'avantages qui en résulteroient. Peut-être conviendrait-il de faire voir dans ce mémoire que la saison n'est pas trop avancée, et qu'on n'a point à craindre de manquer de trouver M. le Comte d'Estaing pour se joindre à lui. Il faudroit aussi y détailler les facilités de toute espèce qu'une nouvelle escadre françoise est sûre de trouver dans tous les ports Américains, ainsi que les pertes auxquels s'exposent les Anglais s'ils veulent balancer ces nouvelles forces, et enfin le peu de sujet que nous avons de craindre ici que cette diminution de forces en Europe nous porte aucun préjudice. Si vous persistez toujours dans cette opinion, que peut-être comme député vous ne prendriez pas sur vous de suggérer dans la crainte de paroître trop vous avancer vis-à-vis d'une cour qui a déjà fait de grands efforts dans cette affaire, vous pouvez développer vos idées dans un mémoire que je pourrai présenter comme adressé à moi par un de mes amis parmi Messieurs les Américains. En effet, M. Lloyd, M. Pringle, M. Jenings, et d'autres peuvent m'avoir communiqué une pareille idée, et il n'y auroit aucun inconvénient pour le congrès de qui ils ne sont point autorisés, à ce qu'elle fût discutée ici entre nos ministres. Vous savez comme moi que les forces réunies de Byron et du Lord Howe mettent aujourd'hui vis-à-vis de M. d'Estaing dixneuf ou vingt vaisseaux de ligne et six de cinquante canons. Il me semble que c'est une position inquiétante, et sur laquelle on ne doit pas s'endormir ici. Je m'estimerai très heureux si je puis promouvoir quelque bien, et surtout que ce soit d'une manière qui vous soit agréable.

Je suis avec respect, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

Genet.

P. S. Je vous fais mes remerciemens de la lettre, que vous avez eu la bonté de m'écrire. Elle sera employée comme vous l'entendez.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 30 October, 1778.

Sir,—

We have been honored with your letter of the 26th of October, and we thank your Excellency for the prompt and generous manner in which you have given liberty to four of our countrymen who were among the prisoners at Dinant. Such examples of benevolence cannot fail to make a lasting impression on the American mind.

Since the receipt of your Excellency's letter, we have received another from the American prisoners at Brest, by which it appears that there are ten of them, from four of whom only we had received letters when we wrote before; the other six having written to us, but their letters miscarried. We inclose a copy of this last letter, and have the honor to request a similar indulgence to all the ten.

By a letter we received last night from Lorient, we have the pleasure to learn that three whaling vessels bound to the coast of Brazil have been taken by his Majesty's frigates or by French cruisers, and sent into that port. It is very probable that the three masters of these vessels, and every one of their sailors, are Americans.

We are happy in this opportunity of communicating to your Excellency some intelligence which we have been at some pains to collect, and have good reasons to believe exactly true. The English last year carried on a very valuable whale fishery on the coast of Brazil off the River Plate, in South America, in latitude thirty-five south, and from thence to forty, just on the edge of soundings, off and on, about the longitude sixty-five from London. They have this year about seventeen vessels in this fishery, which have all sailed in the months of September and October. All the officers, and almost all the men, belonging to those seventeen vessels, are Americans from Nantucket and Cape Cod in Massachusetts, excepting two or three from Rhode Island, and perhaps one from Long Island. The names of the captains are,—Aaron Sheffield of Newport; Goldsmith and Richard Holmes from Long Island; John Chadwick, Francis May, Reuben May, John Meader, Jonathan Meader, Elisha Clark, Benjamin Clark, William Ray, Paul Pease, Reuben Fitch, Bunker Fitch, Zebedee Coffin, and another Coffin, all of Nantucket; John Lock, Cape Cod; Delano, Nantucket; Andrew Swain, Nantucket; William Ray, Nantucket. Four or five of these vessels go to Greenland; the fleet sails to Greenland the last of February or beginning of March.

There was published last year in the English newspapers, and the same imposture has been repeated this year, a letter from the lords of the admiralty to Dennis de Berdt, in Coleman Street, informing him that a convoy should be appointed to the Brazil fleet. But this, we have certain information, was a forgery, calculated merely to deceive

American privateers, and that no convoy was appointed or did go with that fleet either last year or this.

For the destruction or captivity of a fishery so entirely defenceless (for not one of the vessels has any arms) a single frigate or privateer of twenty-four or even twenty guns would be quite sufficient. The beginning of December would be the best time to proceed from hence, because they would then find the whale vessels nearly loaded. The cargoes of these vessels, consisting of bone and oil, will be very valuable, and at least four hundred and fifty of the best kind of seamen would be taken out of the hands of the English, and might be gained into the American service to act against the enemy. Most of the officers and men wish well to their country, and would gladly be in its service if they could be delivered from that they are engaged in. But whenever the English men-of-war or privateers have taken an American vessel, they have given to the whalers among the crews their choice, either to go on board a man-of-war and fight against their country, or to go into the whale fishery. So many have chosen the latter as to make up most of the crews of seventeen vessels.

We thought it proper to communicate this intelligence to your Excellency, that if you found it compatible with his Majesty's service to order a frigate from hence or from the West Indies, to take from the English at once so profitable a branch of commerce and so valuable a nursery of seamen, you may have an opportunity of doing it; if not, no inconvenience will ensue.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

John Adams.

[Mr. Lee did not sign, but objected to the acknowledgment of giving up the American subjects captured in the enemy's vessels as being a favor.]

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. SCHWEIGHAUSER.

Passy, 4 November, 1778.

We have at length obtained a sight of M. Bersolle's accounts, and take this opportunity to communicate to you our observations upon them.

As by the resolutions of congress, the whole of all vessels of war taken by our frigates belong to the officers and men; nay, further, as they have even an additional encouragement of a bounty upon every man and every gun that is on board such prizes, it was never the intention of congress to be at any further expense on account of such prizes.

Every article of these accounts, therefore, that relates to repairs of the Drake or furniture for the Drake, must be charged to Captain Jones, his officers, and men, and come out of the proceeds of the sale of the Drake, or be furnished upon her credit and that of the officers and men of the Ranger. It would certainly be a misapplication of the public interest, if we should pay any part of it.

In the next place, all those articles of these accounts which consist in supplies of slops or other things furnished the officers and men of the Ranger must be paid for by them, not by us. Their shares of prize-money in the Drake, the Lord Chatham, and other prizes made by the Ranger will be abundantly sufficient to discharge these debts, and in no such cases can we justify advancing any thing to officers or men.

As the Lord Chatham belongs, half to the public and half to the captors, all necessary expenses on her account should be paid; a moiety out of the captors' half, and the other moiety out of the half which belongs to the United States.

All necessary supplies of munition and repairs to the Ranger, and of victuals to her company, we shall agree to pay at the expense of the United States. For the sustenance of the prisoners of all the prizes after they were put on shore, we suppose the United States must pay. These rules are so simple, and Captain Jones being now at Brest, it should seem that Captain Jones and your agent might very easily settle this matter.

We have received your letter of the 29th of last month. We wrote you on the 27th, and advised you to proceed against Mr. P. Dudoyer. We are glad to find that Mr. Williams has delivered the effects according to the inventory inclosed to us, and approve of the receipt you have signed.

You have our permission to draw bills upon us to the amount of such part of your account as may be necessary to you, to which we shall pay all due honor.

That poor fellow, Barnes, you will do well to supply with necessaries and send home, but do not give him any money; he has not discretion to use it.

You have our hearty consent to employ as many of the prisoners as you think proper and as are willing to engage in your service.

We thank you for the news from Brest, and wish you to inquire of Captain Bell and the other American masters lately arrived, what despatches they brought for us. We have received some packets of newspapers and two or three scattering letters, but not a word from congress or any committee or member of congress, which is to us unaccountable, and leaves room to fear that some accident has happened to our despatches.

We Are, &C. &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 7 November, 1778.

Sir,—

We have the honor to inclose a copy of the declaration concerning the eleventh and twelfth articles of the treaty of commerce, which we have received from his Excellency, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in exchange for a similar one signed by us, in pursuance of the instructions of congress.

We have also the honor to inclose copies of a correspondence with his Excellency, M. de Sartine, the Secretary of State for the Marine, concerning cases of rescues and recaptures, that congress may, if they judge proper, take some resolution on this head. It seems to be equitable that the same rule should be observed by both nations.

We also inclose copies of a correspondence on the subject of negotiation with the Barbary States. We do not find ourselves authorized to treat with those powers, as they are not in Europe; and indeed we are not furnished with funds for making them presents.

We have had the honor of a copy from the Auditor-General, inclosing the form of bills of exchange to be drawn upon us for the interest due upon loan office certificates, and acquainting us that this interest will amount to two millions and a half of livres annually. When it was proposed to pay the interest here, we had no idea of so much being borrowed. We shall pay the most punctual obedience to these and all other orders of congress, as long as our funds shall last. But we are obliged to inform congress, that our expenses on prisoners being great, and being drawn upon by the order of congress from various quarters, and receiving no funds from America, we suffer the utmost anxiety, lest we should be obliged to protest bills. We have exerted ourselves to the utmost of our power to procure money, but hitherto with little success; and we beg that some supplies may be sent us as soon as possible. We are very sorry that we are not able to send to congress those supplies of arms, ammunition, and clothing, which they have ordered; but it is absolutely impossible, for the want of funds; and M. Beaumarchais has not yet informed us whether he will execute the agreement made for him with you, or not.

We have the pleasure to inform congress that Mr. Matthew Ridley, of Maryland, has made a present to the United States of a valuable manuscript upon naval affairs, which he has left with us. We shall take the first opportunity of a frigate to send it to congress.

We inclose to congress copies of a correspondence between the Ambassador of the King of the two Sicilies and us, which, as his Majesty is the eldest son of the King of

Spain, is considered as an event indicative of the good-will of a greater power, although this is respectable.

It is of great importance to penetrate the councils of an enemy, in order to be prepared beforehand against his designs; we shall therefore be happy to advise congress of the intentions of Great Britain so far as we can conjecture.

We have every reason to believe that the hostility of the disposition of the British Court has no other bounds but those of their power. Their threats, however, of large reinforcements and of Russian auxiliaries are without foundation. The interest of the King of Prussia and of the Empress Queen (who both choose at present to preserve decent terms with Great Britain) to prevent a close alliance between England and Russia, we apprehend will prevent it. In short, we can see no probability of England's forming any alliance against America in all Europe; or indeed against France; whereas, on the other side, from the astonishing preparations of Spain, the family compact and other circumstances, and from the insolent tyranny of the English over the Dutch, and their consequent resentment, which has shown itself in formidable remonstrances, as well as advances towards a treaty with us, there is reason to believe that, if Great Britain perseveres in the war, both of these powers will at length be involved in it.

We had the honor to write to congress on the 20th of July and the 17th of September, of which we have sent duplicates and triplicates, and to which we beg leave to refer. By this opportunity we shall send the newspapers which contain all the public intelligence.

We inclose a number of notes of hand which have been taken from our unhappy countrymen who have escaped from England, to whom we have lent money, as they had no other way of subsistence.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 12 November, 1778.

Sir,—

Last night we had a letter from Nantes, a copy of which we have the honor to inclose to your Excellency.

The subject of it appears to us of great importance to the United States, as well as to the individuals, Frenchmen and Americans, who are interested in the vessels destined to America; also to a considerable number of gentlemen and others, who are going passengers in this fleet; and ultimately, to the common cause.

It gives us great pleasure to find so large a number of vessels going out upon this occasion. Their cargoes are much wanted to enable our countrymen to sustain the war. We therefore most cheerfully join with the subscribers to the letter, who have also petitioned your Excellency, in requesting a large convoy to protect those ships quite home to America.

Upon this occasion, we cannot refrain from submitting to your Excellency our opinion, that the more of the King's ships are sent to America, the more certainly France maintains a superiority of naval power in the American seas, the more likely it will be that she will have the advantage in the conduct of the war; because the French, having the ports and the country, the provisions, the materials, and the artificers of America open to them, and the English being obliged to derive all these things from Europe, the former have a vast advantage over the latter in the conduct of the war in that quarter of the world; not to mention that the French ships being newer and in better condition than the English, are better able to sustain the American seas.

Your Excellency will excuse our suggesting one reflection,—that whatever vessels of war are sent to America, they should be plentifully furnished with marine woollen cloths, especially blankets and gloves, or mittens, without which it is extremely difficult for the men to do their duty in the cold season upon that coast,

We Are, &C. &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 12 November, 1778.

Sir,—

The alliance between this kingdom and the United States of America is an event of such magnitude in their history, that we conceive it would be highly pleasing to our constituents to have the picture of his Majesty, their illustrious ally, to be kept in some public place where the congress sits.

We would carefully avoid every thing which would be disagreeable, and would therefore submit this proposal to your Excellency's consideration; and if you should be of opinion that no offence would be given, we request your Excellency's kind offices to procure us, for the benefit of our constituents, the pictures of their Majesties, the King and Queen, that posterity, as well as those of the present generation, who may never have an opportunity of seeing those royal personages, may become acquainted with the nearest resemblance of them which the arts have devised.1

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 3 December, 1778.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to congress the latest newspapers. As they contain the speech at the opening of parliament, and some of the debates in both houses upon the addresses in answer to it, they are of very great importance. I learn, by some newspapers and private letters, that an opinion has been prevalent in America that the enemy intended to withdraw from the United States; and considering the cruel devastations of the war, and the unfortunate situation of our finances, nothing would give me so much joy as to see reasons to concur in that opinion, and to furnish congress with intelligence in support of it. But I am sorry to say, the reverse is too apparent. We may call it obstinacy or blindness, if we will, but such is the state of parties in England, so deep would be the disgrace, and perhaps so great the personal danger to those who have commenced and prosecuted this war, that they cannot but persevere in it at every hazard; and nothing is clearer in my mind, than that they never will quit the United States until they are either driven or starved out of them. I hope, therefore, congress will excuse me for suggesting, that there is but one course for us to take, which is to concert every measure, and exert every nerve, for the total destruction of the British power within the United States.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO DR. PRICE.

Passy, 7 December, 1778.

Sir,—

By one of the late ships from America we had the pleasure of receiving from congress an attested copy of their resolution of the 6th of October, conceived in these words:—

In Congress, 6 October, 1778.

Resolved, That the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esquires, or any of them, be directed forthwith to apply to Dr. Price, and inform him that it is the desire of congress to consider him as a citizen of the United States, and to receive his assistance in regulating their finances; that, if he shall think it expedient to remove with his family to America, and afford such assistance, a generous provision shall be made for requiting his services.

Extract From The Minutes.

Charles Thomson,*Secretary*.

From a great respect to the character of Dr. Price, we have much satisfaction in communicating this resolution. We request your answer as soon as convenient. If it should be in the affirmative, you may depend upon us to discharge the expenses of your journey and voyage, and for every assistance in our power to make your passage agreeable, as well as your reception and accommodation in our country.

We have the honor to be, with the highest esteem and respect, sir,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servants,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.[1](#)

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO JOHN ROSS.

Passy, 29 December, 1778.

Sir,—

We have received your letters of the 15th and 24th of December, with their envelopes, and once more assure you, that we have no authority to do any thing in your affairs until you have settled your accounts. Whenever you shall be disposed to lay your accounts before us, we shall be ready to receive them and settle them according to the strictest justice, and to pay you the balance, if any, which may be found due to you, according to the resolutions of congress and our ability.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 1 January, 1779.

Sir,—

Some late proceedings of the enemy have induced us to submit a few observations to your Excellency's superior light and judgment.

His Britannic Majesty's Commissioners, in their manifesto of the 3d of October, have denounced "a change in the whole nature and future conduct of the war;" they have declared, "that the policy as well as the benevolence of Great Britain has thus far checked the extremes of war," when they tended "to distress the people and desolate the country;" that the whole contest is changed; that the laws of self-preservation must now direct the conduct of Great Britain; that these laws will direct her to render the United States of as little avail as possible to France, if they are to become an accession to her, and by every means in her power to destroy the new connection contrived for her ruin. Motions have been made and supported by the wisest men in both houses of parliament to address the King to disavow these clauses, but these motions have been rejected by majorities in both houses, so that the manifesto stands avowed by the three branches of the legislature.

Ministers of state made in parliament a question concerning the meaning of this manifesto; but no man who reads it, and knows the history of their past conduct in this war, can doubt its import. There is to be a "change in the nature and conduct of the war." A change for the worse must be horrible indeed! They have already burned the beautiful towns of Charlestown, Falmouth, Norfolk, Kingston, Bedford, Egg Harbor, and German Flatts, besides innumerable single buildings and smaller clusters of houses wherever their armies have marched. It is true they left Boston and Philadelphia unhurt, but in all probability it was merely the dread of a superior army that in these cases restrained their hands, not to mention that burning these towns would have been the ruin of the few secret friends they have still left, of whom there are more in those towns than in all America besides. They have not indeed murdered upon the spot *every* woman and child that fell in their way, nor have they in *all* cases refused quarters to the soldiers that at *all* times have fallen into their power, though they have in many. They have also done their utmost in seducing negroes and Indians to commit inhuman barbarities upon the inhabitants, sparing neither age, sex, nor character. Although they have not in all cases refused quarter to soldiers and sailors, they have done what is worse than refusing quarters; they have thrust their prisoners into such dungeons, loaded them with such irons, and exposed them to such lingering torments of cold, hunger, and disease, as have destroyed greater numbers than they could have had an opportunity of murdering, if they had made it a rule to give no quarter. Many others they have compelled by force to serve and fight on board their ships against fathers, brothers, friends, and countrymen; a destiny to every sensible mind more terrible than death itself.

It is, therefore, difficult to comprehend what they mean by a change in the conduct of the war, yet there seems to be no room to doubt that they mean to threaten something more cruel, greater extremes of war, measures that shall distress the people and lay waste the country more than any thing they have yet done. "The object of the war is now entirely changed." Heretofore their massacres and conflagrations were to divide us, and reclaim us to Great Britain. Now, despairing of that end, and perceiving that we shall be faithful to our treaties, their principle is by destroying us to make us useless to France. This principle ought to be held in abhorrence, not only by all Christians, but by all civilized nations. If it is once admitted that powers at war have a right to do whatever will weaken or terrify an enemy, it is not possible to foresee where it will end. It would be possible to burn the great cities of Europe. The savages who torture their prisoners do it to make themselves terrible; in fine, all the horrors of the barbarous ages may be introduced and justified.

The cruelties of our enemies have heretofore more than once exasperated the minds of the people so much as to excite apprehensions that they would proceed to retaliation, which, if once commenced, might be carried to extremities; to prevent which, the congress issued an address exhorting to forbearance, and a further trial, by examples of generosity and lenity, to recall their enemies to the practice of humanity amidst the calamities of war. In consequence of which, neither the congress nor any of the States apart have ever exercised, or authorized the exercise of the right of retaliation. But now, that commissioners vested with the authority of the nation have avowed such principles and published such threats, the congress have, by a resolution of the 30th of October, solemnly and unanimously declared that they will retaliate. Whatever may be the pretences of the enemy, it is the manifest drift of their policy to disgust the people of America with their new alliance, by attempting to convince them, that instead of shielding them from distress, it has accumulated additional calamities upon them.

Nothing, certainly, can more become a great and amiable character than to disappoint their purpose, stop the progress of their cruelties, and vindicate the rights of humanity which are so much injured by this manifesto. We therefore beg leave to suggest to your Excellency's consideration, whether it would not be advisable for his Majesty to interfere by some declaration to the Court of London and to the world, bearing the royal testimony against this barbarous mode of war, and giving assurances that he will join the United States in retaliation, if Great Britain, by putting her threats in execution, should make it necessary.

There is another measure, however, more effectual to control their designs, and to bring the war to a speedy conclusion,—that of sending a powerful fleet, sufficient to secure a naval superiority over them in the American seas. Such a naval force, acting in concert with the armies of the United States, would, in all human probability, take and destroy the whole British power in that part of the world. It would put their wealth and West Indian commerce into the power of France, and reduce them to the necessity of suing for peace. Upon their present naval superiority in those seas depend not only the dominion and rich commerce of their islands, but the supply of their fleets and armies with provisions and every necessary. They have nearly four hundred transports constantly employed in the service of their fleet and army in America,

passing from New York and Rhode Island to England, Ireland, Nova Scotia, and their West India Islands; and if any one link in this chain was struck off, if their supplies from any one of these places should be interrupted, their forces could not subsist. Great numbers of these vessels would necessarily fall into the hands of the French fleet, and go as prizes to a sure market in the United States. Great numbers of seamen, too, would become prisoners, a loss that England cannot repair. It is conceived that it would be impossible for Great Britain to send a very great fleet after the French into those seas. Their men-of-war, now in Europe, are too old, too rotten, too ill-manned, and their masts and yards are of too bad materials to endure such a navigation. The impossibility of their obtaining provisions, artists, and materials in that country, which would be easy to the French, makes it still clearer that they cannot send a great additional force, and the fear of Spain's interfering, with her powerful navy, would restrain them. Whereas France has nothing to fear in Europe from them, as the number and excellence of her armies are an ample security against the feeble land forces of Great Britain.

This naval superiority would open such commerce between the United States and the French West India Islands as would enable our people to supply themselves with the European and West India articles they want, to send abroad the produce of the country, and by giving fresh spirit and vigor to trade, would employ the paper currency, the want of which employ has been one cause of its depreciation. The maintenance of such a fleet in America would circulate so many bills of exchange as would likewise in a great measure relieve them from that dangerous evil. And these bills would all return to France for her manufactures, thereby cementing the connection and extending the trade between the two countries. Such a naval superiority would contribute very much to extinguish the hopes of the remaining number of persons who secretly wish, from sinister motives, to become again subjected to Great Britain, and would enable the people of the several States to give such consistency and stability to their infant governments, as would contribute greatly to their internal repose, as well as to the vigor of their future operations against the common enemy. The late speedy supply and reparation of his Majesty's fleet at Boston will show the advantages which this country must enjoy in carrying on a naval war on a coast friendly to her and hostile to her enemy. And these advantages will in future be more sensible, because the appearance of the fleet before was unexpected, and the harvest in that part of the country had been unfavorable. It is obvious to all Europe, that nothing less is at stake than the dominion of the sea, at least the superiority of naval power, and we cannot expect Great Britain will ever give it up without some decisive effort on the part of France. With such an exertion as that of sending a superior fleet to America, we see nothing in the course of human affairs that can possibly prevent France from obtaining such a naval superiority without delay. Without it the war may languish for years, to the infinite distress of our country, to the exhausting both of France and England, and the question left to be decided by another war.

We are the more earnest in representing these things to your Excellency, as all our correspondence from England for some time has uniformly represented that the intention of the cabinet is conformable to the spirit of the manifesto; that all parties grow more and more out of temper with the Americans; that it has become

fashionable with the minority, as well as the majority and administration, to reproach us, both in and out of parliament; that all parties join in speaking of us in the bitterest terms, and in heartily wishing our destruction; that great clamors are raised about our alliance with France, as an unnatural combination to ruin them; that the cry is for a speedy and powerful reinforcement of their army, and for the activity of their fleet in making descents on the sea-coast, while murdering and desolating parties are let loose upon the frontiers of the Carolinas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and New England; and that, very early in the year, they will carry all these projects into execution. This whole system may, as we conceive, be defeated, and the power of Great Britain now in America totally subdued (and if their power is subdued there, it is reduced everywhere) by the measure we have the honor to propose.

We submit the whole, merely as our opinions, to your Excellency's superior wisdom, and have the honor to be, &c.

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.[1](#)

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THE COMMISSIONERS TO JOHN LLOYD AND OTHERS.

Passy, 26 January, 1779.

Gentlemen,—

We had yesterday the honor of your letter of the 21st of this month.

You desire to know what port or ports is or are made free, pursuant to the treaty. We believe that none has as yet been determined on; at present, all the ports of France are open to American vessels of all denominations, and we are at present rather doubtful, whether it would be politic in us to apply to have any distinction made. If the appointment of free ports would relieve us from the payment of duties, import or export, we should apply immediately. But, as we apprehend, this advantage would not be the consequence; the limits of the free ports would be prescribed, and the same duties must be paid upon removing goods, within or without those limits, as are now paid upon the imports and exports. Goods, however, might be brought into such free ports from abroad, and then landed and stored for a time, and then exported without paying duties; but whether this would be any great advantage to our trade, you are better judges than we. We should be glad of your advice upon this head, and if you think of any advantages of considerable moment that would arise, we shall be always ready to apply for such an appointment.

We are sorry it is not in our power to give you any acceptable information respecting the article of the treaty which relates to the Barbary corsairs. All we can say is, that we have applied to the ministry upon this head some months ago, and received satisfactory expressions of the disposition of this government to do every thing which is stipulated in that article of the treaty. But some things remain to be determined by congress, to whom we have written upon the subject, and we must necessarily wait their instructions.

There are two inquiries to be made, namely,—which of all the nations who now trade with France is the most favored, and what duties are paid by that nation? These duties, and these only, we suppose we are to pay, and as soon as circumstances will permit (two of us having been for a fortnight very ill, and one of us continuing so,) we shall apply to the ministry for an *éclaircissement* upon this head, which we will endeavor to communicate to you as soon as we shall obtain it.

We have received an answer to our last application for a convoy, from their Excellencies, Count de Vergennes and M. de Sartine; but the answers convinced us that M. de Sartine was under some misinformation or misunderstanding relative to the business, which obliged us to write again. As soon as we shall be honored with an answer, we will communicate the result of it to you.

Meantime, we have the honor to be, with great respect, gentlemen,

Your Most Obedient, Humble Servants,

B. Franklin,

Arthur Lee,

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 11 February, 1779.

Sir,—

As your Excellency reads English perfectly well, my first request is, that you would do me the favor to read this, without a translation; after which, I submit it to your Excellency to make what use of it you shall think proper.

I have hitherto avoided, in my single capacity, giving your Excellency any trouble by letter or conversation; but the present emergency demands that I should ask the favor to explain my sentiments, either by letter or in person; if you will permit a personal interview, I am persuaded I can make myself understood; if you prefer a correspondence, I will lay open my heart in writing before your Excellency.

It is the address to the people in America, under the name of Mr. Silas Deane, that has occasioned this boldness in me. It is to me the most unexpected and unforeseen event that has happened. I hope your Excellency will not conclude from thence, that I despair of the commonwealth. Far otherwise. I know that the body of the people in the United States stand immovable against Great Britain; and I hope that this address of Mr. Deane, although it will occasion much trouble to individuals, will produce no final detriment to the common cause, but, on the contrary, that it will occasion so thorough an investigation of several things as will correct many abuses.

It is my indispensable duty, upon this occasion, to inform your Excellency, without consulting either of my colleagues, that the Honorable Arthur Lee was, as long ago as 1770, appointed by the house of representatives of the Massachusetts Bay, of which I had then the honor to be a member, their agent at the Court of London, in case of the death or absence of Dr. Franklin. This honorable testimony was given to Mr. Lee by an assembly in which he had no natural interest, on account of his inflexible attachment to the American cause, and the abilities of which he had given many proofs in its defence.

From that time to the year 1774, he held a constant correspondence with several of those gentlemen who stood foremost in the Massachusetts Bay against the innovations and illegal encroachments of Great Britain. This correspondence I had an opportunity of seeing; and I assure your Excellency, from my own knowledge, that it breathed the most inflexible attachment, and the most ardent zeal in the cause of his country.

From September, 1774, to November, 1777, I had the honor to be in congress, and the opportunity to see his letters to congress, to their committees, and to several of their individual members. Through the whole of both these periods, he communicated the most constant and certain intelligence which was received from any individual within my knowledge; and since I have had the honor to be joined with him here, I have ever

found in him the same fidelity and zeal, and have not a glimmering of suspicion that he ever maintained an improper correspondence in England, or held any conference or negotiation with anybody from thence, without communicating it to your Excellency and to his colleagues. I am confident, therefore, that every insinuation and suspicion against him of infidelity to the United States, or to their engagements with his Majesty, is false and groundless, and that they will assuredly be proved to be so.

The two honorable brothers of Mr. Lee, who are members of congress, I have long and intimately known; and of my own knowledge I can say, that no men have discovered more zeal in support of the sovereignty of the United States, and in promoting, from the beginning, a friendship and alliance with France; and there is nothing of which I am more firmly persuaded, than that every insinuation that is thrown out to the disadvantage of the two Mr. Lees in congress is groundless.

It would be too tedious to enter at present into a more particular consideration of that address; I shall, therefore, conclude this letter, already too long, by assuring your Excellency, that I am, with the most entire consideration,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Versailles, le 13 Février, 1779.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, le 11 de ce mois, et conformément à vos désirs, je n'ai point appelé le secours d'un traducteur pour prendre connoissance de son contenu. Je ne suis pas moins peiné que vous, monsieur, de l'appel au peuple d'Amérique que M. Silas Deane a publié. Il ne m'appartient pas de qualifier cette démarche; c'est à vos souverains respectifs d'en juger et de prononcer sur les différens qui peuvent s'être élevés entre messieurs leurs commissaires. La façon dont on vous a traités ici, ensemble et séparément, a dû vous convaincre, que si nous avons pu être instruits de vos contestations, nous n'y sommes entrés pour rien, et l'estime personnelle que nous avons cherché à faire remarquer à chacun de messieurs les commissaires, fait preuve que nous n'avons point adopté les préventions qu'on semble vouloir inspirer à l'Amérique, et dont le fondement nous est inconnu ici; quoique cette désagréable discussion nous soit étrangère, et que nous devions à tous égards nous abstenir d'y entrer, je n'en serai pas moins charmé de vous voir, monsieur. Le jour qui vous conviendra sera le mien; je vous prie seulement de me prévenir à l'avance de celui que vous aurez choisi.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une véritable considération, monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

De Vergennes.

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Passy, 13 February, 1779.

Gentlemen,—

I had yesterday the honor of your favor of the 28th of October, inclosing a resolution of congress of the 22d of the same month, to which I shall give all the attention in my power. 1 I have much satisfaction in the reflection that I have hitherto endeavored with much sincerity to conform to the spirit of it. What you recommend to me, namely,—to communicate to the ministers of other courts such intelligence as I may receive, will not in future be so much in my power; but as far as I can, while I stay in Europe, I shall endeavor to comply. Indeed, it is a long time that we have had no intelligence to communicate. Three vessels we know have been taken, each of which had many letters, and two of them public despatches; one that sailed from Philadelphia the 4th of November, another that sailed from the same port the 24th, and another that sailed from Boston on the 20th. These letters and despatches were all sunk, and we fear that others are lost.

It would be agreeable to me, indeed, if I were able to throw any light on the subject of finances. As to a loan in Europe, all has been done that was in our power to this end, but without the desired effect. Taxation and economy comprehend all the resources that I can think of.

We expect the honor of a visit from the Marquis de Lafayette this morning, whom we shall receive with gratitude for his gallant and glorious exertions in one of the best causes in which a hero ever fought.

Be pleased to accept my thanks for your kind wishes for my happiness, and believe me to be your affectionate friend,

John Adams.

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TO M. DE SARTINE.

Passy, 16 February, 1779.

Sir,—

By the late appointment of a minister plenipotentiary at this court, I am left at liberty to return to my own country, as it does not appear that congress have any further service for me to do in Europe. I therefore wish to return as soon as possible. But the English have heard so much of me in times past, that I should be very loth to be exposed to their good-will. If it is in your Excellency's intention, therefore, to send any man-of-war to any part of the United States, I would ask the favor of a passage for myself, my little son, and a servant.

I Have The Honor To Be, With The Highest Consideration, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 16 February, 1779.

Sir,—

Last evening I had the honor of your letter of the 13th of this month, in answer to mine of the 11th.

I thank your Excellency for the politeness with which you have agreed to my proposition of a conference upon the subject of Mr. Deane's "Address to the People of the United States."

At the time when my letter of the 11th was written and sent to your Excellency, there were three commissioners here, representatives of congress, between whom, it appeared to me, Mr. Deane's address had a tendency to destroy all confidence, as well as between your Excellency and them; for which reason I thought it my duty to endeavor, by a conference with your Excellency, to lessen those evils as far as should be in my power.

But within a few hours after my letter of the 11th was sent, the arrival of the Aid-de-Camp of the Marquis de Lafayette with despatches from congress to Dr. Franklin, and from their committee of foreign affairs to me, informing me of the new arrangement, by which Dr. Franklin is constituted Minister Plenipotentiary here, and I am restored to the character of a private citizen, so wholly changed the scene and the characters here, that I now think I have no right to do, what, if I had continued in the character of a commissioner, I should have thought it my indispensable duty to do.

This masterly measure of congress, which has my most hearty approbation, and of the necessity of which I was fully convinced before I had been two months in Europe, has taken away the possibility of those dissensions which I so much apprehended. I shall not, therefore, give your Excellency any further trouble, than to take an opportunity of paying my respects, in order to take leave, and to assure you that I shall leave this kingdom with the most entire confidence in his Majesty's benevolence to the United States, and inviolable adherence to the treaties between the two powers, with a similar confidence in the good disposition of his Majesty's ministers of state and of this nation towards us, and with a heart impressed with gratitude for the many civilities which I have received in the short space I have resided here, at Court, in the city and in the country, and particularly from your Excellency.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Versailles, 21 Février, 1779.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, le 16 de ce mois. Quoique vous soyez, désormais, sans caractère public en France, soyez persuadé que l'estime et la considération que vous vous êtes acquise à juste titre, n'ont aucunement diminuées; et je me flatte, monsieur, que vous ne me priverez point du plaisir de vous en assurer de bouche, et d'être en même temps l'interprète des sentimens de bienveillance dont le roi vous honore; ils sont la suite du contentement particulier qu'a sa Majesté de la sage conduite que vous avez tenue, pendant toute la durée de votre commission, ainsi que du zèle que vous avez constamment déployé, tant pour la cause de votre patrie, que pour le maintien de l'alliance qui l'attache à sa Majesté.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, très profondément, monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

De Vergennes.

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TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Passy, 21 February, 1779.

My Dear Marquis,—

The conversation with which you honored me last evening, has induced me to give you the trouble of this letter upon the same subject.

It is certain that a loan of money is very much wanted to redeem the redundancy of our paper bills; and without it, it is impossible to foresee what will be the consequence to their credit; and therefore every service that may be rendered in order to obtain it from this kingdom, from Spain or Holland, will be a most essential and acceptable service.

But without some other exertions, even a loan, perhaps, would be but a temporary relief; with them a smaller loan might suffice. You know perfectly well that the enemy in America are at present very weak and in great distress in every part. They are weak in Canada, weak in Halifax, weak in Rhode Island, weak in New York, weak in the Floridas, and weak in every one of the West India Islands. A strong armament of ships of the line, with five thousand troops, directed against Halifax, Rhode Island, or New York, must infallibly succeed. So it must against the Floridas; so it must against Canada or any one of the West India Islands.

You are very sensible, that in this state of weakness, the British possessions in America depend upon each other for reciprocal support. The troops and ships derive such supplies of provisions from Canada and Nova Scotia, that if these places or either of them were lost, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the other to subsist. The West India Islands derive such supplies from the Floridas, that if they were lost, the others could hardly subsist. Their fleets and armies in Canada, Halifax, Rhode Island, New York, and the Floridas, receive supplies of rum, sugar, molasses, &c., from the West India Islands, without which they could scarcely subsist. Every part of their possessions in America, both on the continent and in the islands, receives constant supplies from Europe, from England, Scotland, and Ireland, without which it must fall. You perceive, therefore, that their dominions in America at present form such a chain, the links mutually support each other in such a manner, that if one or two were taken away, the whole, or at least the greater part, must fall. In this state of things, then, the obvious policy is to send a strong squadron of ships-of-the-line to coöperate with the Count d'Estaing and the American army in some expedition directed against New York, Rhode Island, Halifax, or perhaps all of them in course. Five or six thousand troops would be quite enough. Above all, it is indispensably necessary to keep a clear naval superiority, both on the coast of the continent and in the West India Islands. This, together with French and American privateers, would make such havoc among the enemy's transports, passing from one of their possessions to another, as must ruin their affairs. The French have a great advantage

in carrying on this kind of war in America at present. The British ships are badly manned, and in bad repair. They cannot send them into the American seas without the utmost terror for their own coasts. And when they are in America, they have not such advantages for supplies of provisions, naval stores, &c., as the French.

The devastation which was made among their ships of the line, frigates, transports, and traders in the American seas the last summer, shows how much more might be done if a stronger force were sent there. As long as the enemy keep possession of New York and Rhode Island, so long it will be necessary for us to keep up large armies to watch their motions and defend the country against them, which will oblige us to emit more paper, and still further to increase the depreciation. Now, as long as they maintain the dominion of those seas, their troops will be protected by the cannon of their ships, and we could not dislodge them with any army, however large; at least, we could not keep those places. But if their force was captivated in those seas, as it might easily be by a sea force coöperating with the land forces, we might reduce our army and innumerable other articles of expense. We need not emit any more paper, and that already out would depreciate no further. I should be happy to have further conversation with you, sir, upon these subjects, or to explain any thing by letter which may be in my power.

With The Highest Sentiments Of Esteem And Respect,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Passy, 27 February, 1779.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write me on the 21st of this month. This testimony from your Excellency of those indulgent sentiments with which his Majesty is pleased to honor my sincere intentions, cannot fail to be preserved by me and my posterity as a most precious monument; and what is of infinitely more importance, it cannot fail to give great satisfaction to my country, to find that a servant of theirs, who has been honored with no small share of their confidence in the most dangerous of times and most critical circumstances, has been so happy as not to forfeit the confidence of their illustrious ally.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, 27 February, 1779.

Sir,—

By the new arrangement which was brought by the Marquis de Lafayette, I find myself restored to the character of a private citizen.

The appointment of a single minister at the Court of Versailles was not unexpected to me, because I had not been two months in Europe before I was convinced of the policy, and indeed of the necessity of such a measure. But I ever entertained hopes that when the news of such an alteration should arrive, the path of my own duty would have been made plain to me by the directions of congress, either to return home or to go elsewhere. But as no information we have received from congress has expressed their intentions concerning me, I am obliged to collect them by implication, according to the best of my understanding; and as the election of the new minister plenipotentiary was on the 14th of September, and the Alliance sailed from Boston the 14th of January, and in this space of four months no notice appears to have been taken of me, I think the only inference that can be made is, that congress have no further service for me on this side the water, and that all my duties are on the other. I have accordingly given notice to his Excellency, M. de Sartine, and to his Excellency, the Minister Plenipotentiary here, of my intentions to return, which I shall do by the first frigate that sails for any part of the United States, unless I should receive counter orders in the mean time. In a matter of so much uncertainty, I hope I shall not incur the disapprobation of congress, even if I should not judge aright of their intentions, which it is my desire, as well as my duty, to observe as far as I can know them.

By the papers inclosed with this, congress will perceive the discontented and tumultuous state of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, which is so great and so rapidly increasing, that the United States will have little to fear from reinforcements of their enemies the ensuing campaign. All their forces will be necessary to keep in order their own riotous populace at home, and to replace those which are daily consuming in the West Indies. There is, however, no prospect of their evacuating either New York or Rhode Island. The possession of those places is so indispensable, for the preservation of their West India and other trade, as well as of their other dominions in America, that nothing but the last necessity will induce them to give them up.

The greatest source of danger and unhappiness to the States, then, probably will be a depreciating currency. The prospect of a loan in Europe, after every measure that has been or could be taken, I think it my duty to say frankly to congress, is very unpromising. The causes of this are very obvious, and cannot be removed; the state of our currency itself, and the course of exchange, would be sufficient to discourage such a loan, if there were no other obstruction; but there are many others. There are

more borrowers in Europe than lenders, and the British loan itself will not be made this year at a less interest than seven and a half per cent.

I see no hope of relief, but from economy and taxation; and these, I flatter myself, will be found sufficient, if the people are once convinced of the necessity of them. When a people are contending not only for the greatest object that any people ever had in view, but for security from the greatest evil that any nation ever had to dread (for there is at this hour no medium between unlimited submission to parliament and entire sovereignty,) they must be destitute of sense as well as of virtue, if they are not willing to pay sufficient sums annually to defray the necessary expense of their defence in future, supported as they are by so powerful an ally and by the prospect of others, against a kingdom already exhausted, without any ally at all, or a possibility of obtaining one. As this is the first time I have had the honor to address myself to congress, since we received the news of your Excellency's appointment¹ to the chair, you will please to accept of my congratulations on that event.

I Have The Honor To Be, With The Highest Esteem, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DE SARTINE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Versailles, le 28 Février, 1779.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, le 16 de ce mois, pour me prévenir que vous êtes dans l'intention de retourner à l'Amérique, et que vous désirez y passer sur un bâtiment du roi. J'ai lieu de croire que lorsque vous avez formé cette demande, vous n'aviez pas connoissance des ordres qui ont été donnés au capitaine de la frégate l'Alliance appartenante aux États Unis, de faire ses dispositions pour mettre à la voile incessamment. Comme ce bâtiment a une marche supérieure, j'ai d'autant plus lieu de croire, que vous vous déterminerez à profiter de cette occasion, qu'il n'est pas possible de vous indiquer l'époque où le roi pourra en faire expédier un pour quelque port des États Unis.

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

De Sartine.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 3 April, 1779.

Sir,—

I received the letter you did me the honor to write to me of the 24th past. I am glad you have been at Brest, as your presence there has contributed to expedite the operations of Captain Landais in refitting his ship. I think with you, that more has been made of the conspiracy than was necessary, but that it would have been well if some of the most guilty could have received a proper punishment.¹ As that was impracticable under our present naval code, I hope you will, on your return, obtain an amendment of it.

I approve of clothing the midshipmen and petty officers, agreeable to their request to you, and hope you have ordered it without waiting to hear from me; and I now desire, that whatever else you may judge for the good of the service, our funds and circumstances considered, you would, in my behalf, give directions for; as the great distance makes it inconvenient to send to me on every occasion, and I can confide in your prudence, that you will allow no expense that is unnecessary.

My gout continues to disable me from walking, longer than formerly; but on Tuesday, the 23d past, I thought myself able to go through the ceremony, and accordingly went to Court, had my audience of the King in the new character, presented my letter of credence, and was received very graciously. After which, I went the rounds with the other foreign ministers, in visiting all the royal family. The fatigue, however, was a little too much for my feet, and disabled me for near another week. Upon the whole I can assure you, that I do not think the good will of this Court to the good cause of America is at all diminished by the late little reverses in the fortune of war; and I hope Spain, who has now forty-nine ships of the line and thirty-one frigates ready for service, will soon, by declaring, turn the scale.

Remember Me Affectionately To Master Johnny,
And Believe Me, With Great Esteem, Sir, &C.

B. Franklin.

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M. DE LAFAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

St. Germain, 9 April, 1779.

Dear Sir,—

I beg leave to apply to you in an instance where I am much concerned. The case I shall lay before you, and recommend to your care. There is an officer in Paris whom I wish to send over to America on board the Alliance, and who I know would be of some use in the American army. For that reason, besides this of recommendations I have a great regard for, I wish the gentleman may find a passage in the frigate. Dr. Franklin cannot officially send any officer; but I beg you would take him along with you, and I take upon myself the charge of presenting him to congress. All the marks of kindness I ever met with from them, and the knowledge which the strictest friendship has given me of General Washington's sentiments, make me as certain as possible, that my officer will meet with the best reception in Philadelphia and in the army, who know I am acquainted with what may be convenient to them.

It is with a great concern, that I hear of discontents between Captain Landais and his officers, and I flatter myself that you will again establish harmony and concord among them. I will take the opportunity of this frigate to write over to my friends in America.

The articles alluded to in your letter from Paris,¹ I have been very busy about, but I did not meet with great success till now, and what is done is not equal to what I could wish. It is true, our circumstances are rather narrow in this moment, and I think that the ministers are willing to do what they think possible or advantageous, but we do not always agree in opinion. I hope, however, America will have more and more occasions of knowing the true attachment of this nation for her.

With great impatience I wait for your answer, that I may send the officer to Nantes. I hope you will not refuse your patronage on this occasion, and I may answer, congress will have no objection to take a gentleman I send them.

You will, my dear sir, in settling his passage, much oblige your humble servant,

Lafayette.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Nantes, 13 April, 1779.

Sir,—

I had yesterday the honor of yours of the 3d of this month. Captain Landais had so much diffidence in some of his crew, that he could not think of carrying home any of the most culpable of the conspirators, especially as he was so weak-handed. The naval code of the United States has great occasion for amendments in many particulars, without which there will be little discipline, subordination, or obedience.

I am happy that you approve of clothing the petty officers, and thank you for the confidence you have put in me, in desiring that I would give directions in your behalf for what I may judge for the good of the service, funds and circumstances considered; a trust, however, that will involve me in difficulties, because I fear the demands of officers and men will be greater than I could wish. Obedience on board is so imperfect, that I do not expect the ship can possibly be got to sea without some money to the officers and men. I expect the ship here every day, and I hope in fifteen days to be at sea. If you have any letters I should be glad to carry them.

I am much pleased with your reception at Court in the new character, and I do not doubt that your opinion of the good-will of this Court to the United States is just. This benevolence is the result of so much wisdom, and is founded on such solid principles, that I have the utmost confidence in its perseverance to the end. Spain, too, must sooner or later see her true interests, and declare in favor of the same generous cause. I wish and hope with you, that it will be soon; if it is not, there is great reason to fear a very unnecessary and profuse effusion of human blood; for the English derive such spirits from their captures at sea and other little successes, and war is everlastingly so popular among them when there is the least appearance of success, however deceitful, that they will go on at whatever expense and hazard.

Master Johnny, whom you have honored with an affectionate remembrance, and who acts at present in the quadruple capacity of interpreter, secretary, companion, and domestic to his papa, desires me to present you his dutiful respects.

My regards, if you please, to Mr. Franklin and Mr. Geléc, and the young fry.

I Have The Honor To Be, With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 21 April, 1779.

Sir,—

I have received your two favors of the 13th instant. I am much obliged to you for undertaking the trouble of contenting the officers and people of the Alliance. I must now beg leave to make a little addition to that trouble, by requesting your attention to the situation of the officers and sailors, late prisoners in England, which Mr. Williams will acquaint you with; and that you would likewise order for them such necessaries and comforts as we can afford. I wish we were able to do all they want and desire, but the scantiness of our funds and the multitude of demands prevent it.

The English papers talk much of their apprehensions about Spain. I hope they have some foundation.

With Great Esteem, &C.

B. Franklin.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 24 April, 1779.

Sir,—

By the inclosed letter from M. de Sartine, expressing his Majesty's desire that the Alliance should be retained here a little longer, you will see that I am under a kind of necessity of disappointing you in your intentions of making your passage immediately in that vessel, which would be more unpleasing to me but for these considerations; that, possibly, it may be safer for you to go in a ship where the crew not being so mixed can be better depended on; where you will not be incommoded by the misunderstandings subsisting between the officers and their captain; and where you will have the society of the French Ambassador, M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who appears to me a most amiable man, and of very sensible and pleasing conversation. I hope this will, in some measure, compensate for the inconvenience of shifting your stores from one ship to the other. And as I shall order the Alliance to Lorient, where the King's frigate is, that carries the ambassador, the removal of your things from one ship to the other will be more easy. You can even go thither in the Alliance if you choose it. The ships in the American trade which were at Nantes when I offered them the convoy of the Alliance, having declined that offer, and sailed, as I understand, under another and perhaps safer convoy, makes her immediate departure for America less necessary, and perhaps she may now make a cruise in these seas, for which I understand she will have time; which will be probably more advantageous, and, therefore, more satisfactory to her people than a direct return. I hope she may procure us some more prisoners to exchange the rest of our countrymen, and at the same time reimburse us the charges of her refitting, which you know we stand much in need of.

M. Dumas writes me from the Hague of the 19th,—“Je sçais depuis hier, *de bonne part*, que l'Espagne s'est enfin déclarée. Cela fera un bon effet ici et partout.” I hope his intelligence is good; but nothing of it has yet transpired here.

Inclosed, I send you a cover which I have just received from Martinique, directed to me, but containing only a letter for you. The cover being unskilfully sealed over the seal of your letter, was so attached to it, that I had like to have broken open the one in opening the other. I send you also another letter which came from Spain.

I am obliged by your offer of taking charge of my despatches for America. I shall send them down to you by M. de la Luzerne, who is to set off in a few days.

With Great Esteem, I Have The Honor To Be, Sir,
Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

B. Franklin.

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(Inclosed With The Preceding.)

M. DE SARTINE TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Versailles, le 20 Avril, 1779.

La difficulté, monsieur, de recevoir des nouvelles de l'Amérique Septentrionale, et de donner de celles d'Europe au congrès, me fait désirer que vous suspendiez le départ pour l'Amérique Septentrionale de la frégate des États Unis, l'Alliance, parceque le roi a ordonné qu'il fut préparé une de ses frégates pour porter en Amérique le nouveau ministre plénipotentiaire que sa Majesté y envoie pour remplacer M. Gérard, dont la santé a été très dérangée l'année dernière; et afin de remplir une partie des vues que vous pouviez avoir en expédiant l'Alliance pour le continent des États Unis, le roi accordera avec plaisir à M. Adams son passage pour lui et sa suite sur ladite frégate. Sa Majesté désire que cette proposition puisse convenir avec les arrangemens du congrès, et dans ce cas, je vous serai très obligé de vouloir bien donner vos ordres en conséquence au capitaine de la frégate, l'Alliance, afin qu'il se rende tout de suite à Lorient, où il attendra les ordres ultérieurs que vous lui adresserez.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec une très parfaite considération, monsieur, &c. &c.

De Sartine.

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ARTHUR LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 5 June, 1779.

Dear Sir,—

By advices from America, since my last to you, my enemies are determined to impeach my attachment to our country and her cause, *per fas et per nefas*. This makes it necessary for me to request of you your opinion on that point, from the knowledge you have had of my conduct while we acted together in commission. The calumnies of wicked men can only be refuted by the testimony of those who are honest and competent, and it is necessary for me to desire this of you, lest any accident, which God forbid, should befall you on the voyage.

Late letters from Charleston say, they are all in good spirits there. No other news.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, with the greatest esteem,

Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant,

Arthur Lee.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

Lorient, 9 June, 1779.

Dear Sir,—

Your favors of June the 2d and 5th are now before me; that of the 29th of March I have answered, if I ever received it; for I have answered every one I have received from you, but not having my papers at hand, cannot be particular. I thank you for the manuscript and the pamphlet.

I am happy to hear from you and from all others so agreeable a character of the Chevalier de la Luzerne and M. Marbois, the last of whom I have had the pleasure to see.

I wish it was in my power to do more for Mr. Ford, and to take him with me; but the frigate will be so crowded, I fear it will be impossible.

The declarations of the northern powers against the right of England to stop their merchant vessels, and arming to support their rights, are important events. The displacing of Mr. Paine is a disagreeable and alarming one.

It is with no small astonishment, that I learn by your letter of the 5th, that by advices from America since your last to me, your enemies are determined to impeach your attachment to our country and her cause. Your request, that I would give my opinion on that subject, from the knowledge I have had of your conduct while we acted in commission together, can meet with no objection from me. But I hope I need not inform you, that my opinion upon this point is no secret at Versailles, Paris, Nantes, or elsewhere. Inclosed is a copy of a letter I did myself the honor to write to his Excellency, the Count de Vergennes, some time ago,¹ which, for any thing I know, is communicated to all the Court; but the answer shows that it was received. I had my reasons then for keeping it to myself, which exist now no more. I would transcribe the whole correspondence if it was in my power, but I have not time; and it is sufficient to say, that it was conducted by his Excellency with the most obliging politeness. It is my duty now to furnish you with a copy, lest any accident may befall me, which is by no means improbable. I thought then, and am confirmed in that opinion more and more, that it was my duty to communicate my sentiments at Court, upon that very extraordinary occasion; and, from regard to my own reputation, I am very glad you have given me an opportunity of furnishing you with evidence that I did this part of my duty so far forth. The letter was written, sent to Versailles, and received by his Excellency, before the arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette, his aid-de-camp, or Dr. Winship; that is, before the news reached Passy of the new arrangement. But lest that letter should not be sufficient, I shall inclose another certificate, not without a heartfelt grief and indignation, that malice should have been so daring and so

barbarous as to make either such a letter or such a certificate from me either necessary or even pardonable.

Your hint, that I must correct some things that are amiss, extorts from me an involuntary sigh. I shall be in a situation critical and difficult without example, my own character at stake from various quarters, and without any thing to support me but truth and innocence; and you need not be informed that these are not always sufficient. I have little expectation of doing good; God grant I may do no harm. I shall not designedly. But I suppose congress intend to examine me as a witness; and I must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as far as I know it. If the task should end here, I should not be much embarrassed; but if they should proceed to demand of me opinions and judgments of men and things, as there is reason to expect they will, although I hope they will not, what will be the consequence? Upon the whole, truth must be my shield; and if the shafts of interested malice can pierce through this, they shall pierce me.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Braintree, 3 August, 1779.

Sir,—

On the 27th of February, I had the honor of writing to congress, informing them of my intention of returning home, in consequence of the commission which superseded mine. On the 1st of March, I had again the honor of writing some information concerning the unprecedented interest which the British government are obliged to give for the loan of money for the service of the present year. On the 8th of March I took my leave of the American minister, and left Paris for Nantes, in expectation of there meeting the Alliance, and sailing in her for America in a few weeks. Upon my arrival at Nantes, I learned the Alliance was yet at Brest, and so embarrassed with nearly forty prisoners, who were supposed to have been concerned in a conspiracy to carry her to England, and with other difficulties, that it was uncertain when she would be ready.

The agent at Nantes at this time receiving a letter from his Excellency, Dr. Franklin, desiring him to consult me about the direction of the Alliance, I thought it would expedite the public service for me to make a journey to Brest, about two hundred miles, which I undertook accordingly, and arrived at that port without loss of time. There, after an attendance of some weeks, and much negotiation with commandants, intendants, and agents, all things were prepared for the frigate to sail for Nantes with about one hundred British prisoners to be exchanged for a like number of American prisoners, arrived there from England in a cartel. I returned to Nantes by land, and the Alliance in a few days arrived in the river; the prisoners were exchanged, about sixty enlisted in the Alliance, and the rest in the Poor Richard, Captain Jones.

After accommodating all the difficulties with the British prisoners, the American prisoners, the officers and crew of the Alliance, and supplying all their necessary wants, Captain Landais, having orders to sail for America, and every thing ready to proceed to sea in a few days, received unexpected orders to proceed to Lorient and wait there for further orders. I had the honor of a letter at the same time from his Excellency, inclosing one from the Minister of Marine, by which I learned that the King had been graciously pleased to grant me a passage on board the frigate which was to carry his Majesty's new minister plenipotentiary to the United States; that the frigate was at Lorient; and that the minister would be there in a few days. I went in the Alliance from Nantes to Lorient, where after some time the frigate, the Sensible, arrived; but his Excellency, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, did not arrive until the 10th of June. On the 14th of June, and not before, I had the pleasure to be under sail; and on the 2d of August arrived in Nantasket Roads.

I have entered into this detail of disappointments, to justify myself for not returning sooner, and to show that it was not my fault that I was not at home in eight weeks

from the first authentic information that I had nothing further to do in France. There is nothing remaining for me to do, but to settle my accounts with congress; but as part of my accounts are in conjunction with my late colleagues, with whom I lived in the same house during my residence in Paris, I am not able to judge whether congress will choose to receive my accounts alone, or to wait until the other commissioners shall exhibit theirs, and have the whole together under one view, so as to do equal justice to all. I am ready, however, to render all the account in my power, either jointly or separately, whenever congress shall order it; and I shall wait their directions accordingly.

It is not in my power, having been so long from Paris, to give congress any news of importance, except that the Brest fleet, under the Count d'Orvilliers, was at sea the beginning of June; that Admiral Arbuthnot was at Plymouth the 31st of May; and that there was a universal persuasion, arising from letters from Paris and London, that Spain had decided against the English. The Chevalier de la Luzerne will be able to give congress satisfactory information upon this head.

I ought not to conclude this letter, without expressing my obligations to Captain Chavagne and the other officers of the *Sensible* for their civilities in the course of my passage home, and the pleasure I have had in the conversation of his Excellency, the new Minister Plenipotentiary from our august ally, and the Secretary to the Embassy, Monsieur Marbois.

The Chevalier de la Luzerne is a Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem; of an ancient and noble family, connected by blood with many characters of principal name in the kingdom; a grandson of the celebrated Chancellor de Lamoignon; a nephew of Monsieur Malesherbes, perhaps still more famous as first President of the Court of Aids and as a Minister of State; a brother of the Count de la Luzerne and of the Bishop of Langres, one of the three dukes and peers who had the honor to assist in the consecration of the King; a near relation of the Maréchal de Broglie and the Count his brother, and of many other important personages in that country. Nor is his personal character less respectable than his connections, as he is possessed of much useful information of all kinds, and particularly of the political system of Europe, obtained in his late embassy in Bavaria; and of the justest sentiments of the mutual interests of his country and ours, and of the utility to both, of that alliance which so happily unites them; and at the same time divested of all personal and party attachments and aversions. Congress and their constituents, I flatter myself, will have much satisfaction in his negotiations, as well as in those of the secretary to the embassy, who was recently secretary to the embassy in Bavaria, and who is a counsellor of the parliament of Metz, a gentleman whose abilities, application, and disposition cannot fail to make him useful in the momentous office he sustains.

I Have The Honor To Be, With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Braintree, 4 August, 1779.

Sir,—

At the close of the service on which congress have done me the honor to send me, it may not be amiss to submit a few remarks to their consideration on the general state of affairs in Europe, so far as they relate to the interests of the United States. As the time approaches when our relations with the most considerable States in Europe will multiply and assume a greater stability, they deserve the attention of Americans in general, but especially of those composing their supreme council.

France deserves the first place among those powers with which our connections will be the most intimate, and it is with pleasure I am able to assure congress that, from the observations I have made during my residence in that kingdom, I have the strongest reasons to believe that their august ally, his ministers and nation, are possessed of the fullest persuasion of the justice of our cause, of the great importance of our independence to their interests, and the firmest resolution to preserve the faith of treaties inviolate, and to cultivate our friendship with sincerity and zeal. This is of the more consequence to us, as this power enjoys in Europe at this hour an influence which it has not before experienced for many years.

Men are so sensible of a constant tendency in others to excesses, that a signal superiority of power never appears without exciting jealousies and efforts to reduce it. Thus, when Spain, under Charles V. and his successor, made herself dangerous, a great part of Europe united against her, assisted in severing the United Provinces from her, and by degrees greatly diminished her power. Thus, when France, under Louis XIV., indulged the spirit of conquest too far, a great part of mankind united their forces against her with such success as to involve her in a train of misfortunes, out of which she never emerged before the present reign. The English in their turn, by means of their commerce and extensive settlements abroad, arose to a degree of opulence and naval power, which excited more extravagant passions in her own breast, and more tyrannical exertions of her influence, than appeared in either of the other cases. The consequence has been similar, but more remarkable. Europe seems to be more universally and sincerely united in the desire of reducing her than they ever were in any former instance. This is the true cause why the French Court never made war with so universal a popularity among their own subjects, so general an approbation of other courts, and such unanimous wishes among all nations for her success, as at this time.

The personal character of the King; his declared patronage of morals and economy, and the great strokes of wisdom which have marked the commencement of his reign; the active spring which has been given to commerce by the division of the British empire and our new connections with his subjects; all these causes, together with the

two treaties of peace which have been lately signed under his auspices and his mediation, have given to this power a reputation which the last reign had lost.

The first of these treaties has determined those controversies which had for a long time divided Russia and the Porte, and the parties have been equally satisfied with the conditions of their reconciliation; a circumstance the more honorable for the French Ministry and the Chevalier de St. Priest, their Ambassador at Constantinople, as it is uncommon. The ancient confidence of the Porte in the Court of Versailles has revived, and the coolness, or rather enmity, which divided France and Russia for near twenty years, gives place to a friendship which is at this time in all its fervor, and will probably be durable, as these powers have no interest to annoy each other; but, on the contrary, are able to assist each other in a manner the most essential.

The peace of Germany, signed at Teschen the 13th of last May, has not equally satisfied the belligerent powers, who were on the one part the Emperor, and on the other the King of Prussia and the Elector of Saxony, his ally.

From the multitude of writings which have appeared before and during this war, in which the causes, the motives, and the right of it are discussed, it appears that in 1768, at the extinction of one of the branches of the House of Bavaria, which has been separated from its trunk for near five centuries, the House of Austria thought itself able, and priests and lawyers among their own subjects were complaisant enough to tell her she had a right, to put herself in possession of the best part of the patrimony of the extinguished line.

The King of Prussia, to whose interest this augmentation of power would have been dangerous, has crowned an illustrious reign by displaying all the resources of military genius and profound policy in opposition to it. While he contended in the field, France negotiated, and the work begun by his arms was completed by the cabinet of Versailles.

The Palatine House of Bavaria, the Duke of Deux Ponts, and particularly the Elector of Saxony, have obtained all they could reasonably demand; and the empire has preserved its balance of power in spite of its head. The King of Prussia has covered himself with glory, to which he put the finishing stroke by not demanding any compensation for the expenses of the war. All parties have been satisfied except the Emperor, who has disordered his finances, ruined his kingdom of Bohemia with immense fines, has not obtained any advantage over his adversary, and, consequently, has destroyed among his own troops the opinion they had of their superiority; and, in fine, has sustained a loss the most sensible for a young prince just beginning to reign, the reputation of justice and moderation. It is the influence, the address, and ability of the French Minister, joined to the firmness of Russia, which have completed this work; 1 and Louis XVI. has restored in Germany, to the nation over which he reigns, that reputation which his grandfather had lost.

The merit of the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who was Ambassador in Bavaria during the transaction of this business, and that of M. Marbois, the Secretary to that Embassy, in accomplishing an affair of such importance, which was rendered peculiarly delicate

by the late family connection between the Courts of Vienna and Versailles, was probably a motive for sending them now to America, a mission of no less importance and no less delicacy.

It is not probable, however, that they could have succeeded so soon, if England could have afforded subsidies to the Emperor. The Revolution in America, in which the French King has taken an earlier and a greater part than any other sovereign in Europe, has operated so as to conciliate to him a consideration that is universal. The new minister will give to congress information the most precise in this respect, and touching the part which Spain is taking at this time, for which reason I shall refrain from entering into it, and content myself with observing, that all these considerations ought to induce us to cherish the alliance of France; and that every good citizen of the United States ought to endeavor to destroy the remains of those prejudices which our ancient rulers have endeavored to inspire us with; that we have nothing to fear, and much to hope from France, while we conduct our affairs with good sense and firmness; and that we cannot take too much pains to multiply the commercial relations and strengthen the political connections between the two nations; provided always, that we preserve prudence and resolution enough to receive implicitly no advice whatever, but to judge always for ourselves, and to guard ourselves against those principles in government, and those manners, which are so opposite to our own constitution and to our own characters, as a young people, called by Providence to the most honorable and important of all duties, that of forming establishments for a great nation and a new world.

In the opinion of some, the power with which we shall one day have a relation the most immediate, next to that of France, is Great Britain. But it ought to be considered that this power loses every day her consideration, and runs towards her ruin. Her riches, in which her power consisted, she has lost with us, and never can regain. With us she has lost her Mediterranean trade, her African trade, her German and Holland trade, her ally, Portugal, her ally, Russia, and her natural ally, the House of Austria; at least, as being unable to protect these as she once did, she can obtain no succor from them. In short, one branch of commerce has been lopped off after another, and one political interest sacrificed after another. She resembles the melancholy spectacle of a great wide-spreading tree that has been girdled at the root. Her endeavors to regain these advantages will continually keep alive in her breast the most malevolent passions towards us. Her envy, her jealousy, and resentment will never leave us while we are what we must unavoidably be, her rivals in the fisheries, in various other branches of commerce, and even in naval power. If peace should unhappily be made, leaving Canada, Nova Scotia, or the Floridas, or any of them, in her hands, jealousies and controversies will be perpetually arising. The degree, therefore, of intercourse with this nation, which will ever again take place, may justly be considered as problematical; or rather the probability is, that it will never be so great as some persons imagine; moreover, I think that every citizen, in the present circumstances, who respects his country and the engagements she has taken, ought to abstain from the foresight of a return of friendship between us and the English, and act as if it never was to be.

But it is lawful to consider that which will probably be formed between the Hollanders and us. The similitude of manners, of religion, and, in some respects, of constitution, the analogy between the means by which the two republics arrived at independency, but, above all, the attractions of commercial interest, will infallibly draw them together. This connection will not probably show itself before a peace or a near prospect of peace. Too many motives of fear or interest place the Hollanders in a dependence on England, to suffer them to connect themselves openly with us at present. Nevertheless, if the King of Prussia could be induced to take us by the hand, his great influence in the United Provinces might contribute greatly to conciliate their friendship for us. Loans of money and the operations of commercial agents or societies will be the first threads of our connections with this power. From the essays and inquiries of your commissioners at Paris, it appears that some money may be borrowed there; and from the success of several enterprises by the way of St. Eustatia, it seems that the trade between the two countries is likely to increase, and, possibly, congress may think it expedient to send a minister there. If they should, it will be proper to give him a discretionary power to produce his commission or not, as he shall find it likely to succeed, to give him full powers and clear instructions concerning the borrowing of money; and the man himself, above all, should have consummate prudence, and a caution and discretion that will be proof against every trial.

If congress could find any means of paying the interest annually in Europe, commercial and pecuniary connections would strengthen themselves from day to day, and if the fall of the credit of England should terminate in bankruptcy, the seven United Provinces having nothing to dissemble, would be zealous for a part of those rich benefits which our commerce offers to the maritime powers, and, by an early treaty with us, secure those advantages, from which they have already discovered strong symptoms of a fear of being excluded by delays. It is scarcely necessary to observe to congress that Holland has lost her influence in Europe to such a degree, that there is little other regard for her remaining, but that of a prodigal heir for a rich usurer, who lends him money at a high interest. The State which is poor and in debt has no political stability. Their army is very small, and their navy is less. The immense riches of individuals may possibly be in some future time the great misfortune of the nation, because the means of defence are not proportioned to the temptation which is held out for some necessitous, avaricious, and formidable neighbor to invade her.

The active commerce of Spain is very inconsiderable; of her passive commerce we shall not fail to have a part; the vicinity of this power, her forces, her resources, ought to make us attentive to her conduct; but if we may judge of the future by the past, I should hope we had nothing to fear from it. The genius and interest of the nation incline it to repose. She cannot determine upon war but in the last extremity, and even then she sighs for peace. She is not possessed of the spirit of conquest, and we have reason to congratulate ourselves that we have her for the nearest and principal neighbor. Her conduct towards us at this time will perhaps appear equivocal and indecisive; her determinations appear to be solely the fruit of the negotiations of the Court of Versailles. But it ought to be considered she has not had motives so pressing as those of France to take in hand our defence. Whether she has an eye upon the Floridas, or what other terms she may expect from congress, they are no doubt better

informed than I am. To their wisdom it must be submitted to give her satisfaction, if her terms are moderate and her offers in proportion. This conduct may conciliate her affection and shorten delays, a point of great importance, as the present moment appears to be decisive.

Portugal, under the administration of the Marquis de Pombal, broke some of the shackles by which she was held to England. But the treaty, by which a permanent friendship is established between the Crowns of Spain and Portugal, was made in 1777, an event that the English deplore as the greatest evil, next to the irrecoverable loss of the Colonies arising from this war, because they will now no longer be able to play off Portugal against Spain, in order to draw away her attention, as well as her forces, as in former times. But as Portugal has not known how to deliver herself entirely from the influence of England, we shall have little to hope from her; on the other hand, such is her internal weakness that we have absolutely nothing to fear. We shall necessarily have commerce with her, but whether she will ever have the courage to sacrifice the friendship of England for the sake of it, is uncertain.

It would be endless to consider that infinite number of little sovereignties into which Germany is divided, and develop all their political interests. This task is as much beyond my knowledge as it would be useless to congress. They will have few relations friendly or hostile with this country, excepting in two branches of commerce, that of merchandise and that of soldiers. The latter, infamous and detestable as it is, has been established between a nation once generous, humane, and brave, and certain princes, as avaricious of money as they are prodigal of the blood of their subjects; and such is the scarcity of cash and the avidity for it in Germany, and so little are the rights of humanity understood and respected, that sellers will probably be found as long as buyers. America will never be found in either class. The State of Germany, with which we may have commerce of an honorable kind, is the House of Austria, one of the most powerful in Europe. She possesses very few countries, however, near the sea. Ostend is the principal city, where she might have established a trade of some consequence, if the jealousy of the maritime powers had not constantly opposed it. France, Spain, Holland, and England have been all agreed in their opposition; and the treaty of Utrecht, ratified more than once by subsequent treaties, has so shackled this port, that it will be impossible to open a direct trade to it without some new treaty, which possibly may not be very distant. England may possibly make a new treaty with Austria, and agree to privileges for this port, in order to draw away the advantages of the American trade from France and Spain; and in such a treaty, Holland may possibly acquiesce, if not accede to it. The port of Trieste enjoys liberty without limits; and the Court of Vienna is anxious to make its commerce flourish. Situated as it is at the bottom of the Gulf of Trieste, the remotest part of the Gulf of Venice, tedious and difficult as the navigation of those seas is, we could make little use of it at any time, and none at all while this war continues.

This Court would seize with eagerness the advantages that are presented to her by the independence of America; but an interest more powerful restrains her, and although she is certainly attentive to this revolution, there is reason to believe she will be one of the last powers to acknowledge our independence. She is so far from being rich, that she is destitute of the means of making war without subsidies, as is proved by the

peace which has lately been made. She has occasion for the succors of France or of England to put in motion her numerous armies. She conceives easily, that the loss of the resources and credit of the English has disabled them to pay the enormous subsidies which in former times they have poured into the Austrian coffers. She sees, therefore, with a secret mortification, that she shall be hereafter more at the mercy of France, who may choose her ally, and prefer at her pleasure either Austria or Prussia, while neither Vienna nor Berlin will be able, as in times past, to choose between Paris and London, since the latter has lost her past opulence and pecuniary resources. It is our duty to remark these great changes in the system of mankind which have already happened in consequence of the American war. The alienation of Portugal from England, the peace of Germany, and that between Petersburg and Constantinople, by all which events England has lost and France gained such a superiority of influence and power, are owing entirely to the blind diversion of that policy and wealth which the English might have still enjoyed, from the objects of their true interests and honor, to the ruinous American war.

The Court of Berlin flatters itself that the connections which have heretofore so long united France and Prussia will renew themselves sooner or later. This system is more natural than that which subsists at this day. The King of Prussia may then wait without anxiety the consequences of the present revolution, because it tends to increase the resources of his natural ally. The jealousy between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, and that between the Houses of Bourbon and Austria, are a natural tie between France and Prussia. The rivalry between France and Great Britain is another motive, too natural and too permanent for the former to suffer the King of Prussia to be long the ally of the latter. One of the favorite projects of Prussia, that of rendering the port of Emden a place of flourishing trade, interests him most powerfully in our independence. Silesia, one of his best provinces, has already felt the influence of it, and, sensible of the force that empires derive from commerce, he is earnestly desirous to see it introduced between America and his States; which gives ground to believe, that as Austria will be one of the last, so Prussia will be one of the first to acknowledge our independence; an opinion which is rendered more probable by the answer which was given by the Baron de Schulenburg to Mr. Arthur Lee, and the influence of the King of Prussia in the United Provinces, which is greater than that of any other power, arising from his great military force and the vicinity of his dominions. His near relation to the Stadtholder and the Prince of Brunswick is an additional motive to cultivate his friendship. The Electorate of Saxony, with a fruitful soil, contains a numerous and industrious people, and most of the commerce between the east and the west of Europe passes through it. The fairs of Leipsic have drawn considerable advantages for these four years from our trade. This power will see with pleasure the moment which shall put the last hand to our independence. The rest of Germany, excepting Hamburg and Bremen, have no means of opening a direct commerce with us; with the latter we have no connection at present; in the former all the commerce of Lower Germany is transacted; here we shall soon have occasion to establish an agent or consul.

Poland, depopulated by the war and a vicious government, reduced by a shameful treaty to two thirds of her ancient dominion, destitute of industry and manufactures, even of the first necessity, has no occasion for the productions of America. Dantzic

sees her ancient prosperity diminish every day. There is, therefore, little probability of commerce, and less of any political connection between that nation and us.

Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, comprehended under the denomination of the northern powers, have been thought by some to be interested in our return to the domination of Great Britain. Whether they consider themselves in this light or not, their late declarations against the right of England to interrupt their navigation, and their arming for the protection of their commerce on the ocean, and even in the English channel, are unequivocal proofs of their opinion concerning the right in our contest, and of their intentions not to interfere against us. It is very true that the articles of commerce which they produce, are, in many respects, the same with those of America. Yet, if we consider that we shall have occasion to purchase from them large quantities of hemp and sail-cloth, and that our productions of timber, pitch, tar, and turpentine, are less profitable with us without bounties than some other branches of labor, it is not probable that we shall lower the price of these articles in Europe so much as some conjecture, and, consequently, our increased demand upon those countries for several articles will be more than a compensation to them for the small loss they may sustain, by a trifling reduction in the price of those articles. It is not probable that the Courts of Petersburg, Stockholm, and Copenhagen have viewed with indifference the present revolution. If they have been apprehensive of being hurt by it in some respects, which, however, I think must have been a mistaken apprehension, yet the motive of humbling the pride of the English, who have endeavored to exercise their domination even over the northern seas, and to render the Danish and Swedish flag dependent on theirs, has prevailed over all others, and they are considered in Europe as having given their testimony against the English in this war.

Italy, a country which declines every day from its ancient prosperity, offers few objects to our speculations. The privileges of the port of Leghorn, nevertheless, may render it useful to our ships when our independence shall be acknowledged by Great Britain, if, as we once flattered ourselves, the Court of Vienna might receive an American minister. We were equally in error respecting the Court of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, where an Austrian prince reigns, who receives all his directions from Vienna, in such a manner that he will probably never receive any person in a public character, until the chief of his house has set him the example. The King of the Two Sicilies is in the same dependence on the Court of Madrid, and we may depend upon it, he will conform himself to all it shall suggest to him. This prince has already ordered the ports of his dominions to be open to American vessels, public and private, and has ordered his ambassador at Paris to apply to your commissioners for a description of the American flag, that our vessels might be known, and receive no molestation upon their appearance in his harbors.

The Court of Rome, attached to ancient customs, would be one of the last to acknowledge our independence, if we were to solicit for it. But congress will probably never send a minister to his Holiness, who can do them no service, upon condition of receiving a Catholic legate or nuncio in return; or, in other words, an ecclesiastical tyrant, which, it is to be hoped, the United States will be too wise ever to admit into their territories.

The States of the King of Sardinia are poor, and their commerce is very small. The little port of Villa Franca will probably see few American vessels, nor will there be any close relations, either commercial or political, between this prince and us.

The Republic of Genoa is scarcely known at this day in Europe but by those powers who borrow money. It is possible that some small sums might be obtained there, if congress would fall upon means of insuring a punctual payment of interest in Europe.

Venice, heretofore so powerful, is reduced to a very inconsiderable commerce, and is in an entire state of decay.

Switzerland is another lender of money, but neither her position nor her commerce can occasion any near relation with us.

Whether there is any thing in these remarks worth the trouble of reading, I shall submit to the wisdom of congress, and subscribe myself, with the highest consideration,

Your Most Obedient And Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Braintree, 10 September, 1779.

Sir,—

Looking over the printed journals of the 15th of last April, I find in the report of the committee appointed to take into consideration the foreign affairs of the United States, and also the conduct of the late and present commissioners of these States, the two following articles.

1. “That it appears to them, that Dr. Franklin is Plenipotentiary for these States at the Court of France; Dr. Arthur Lee, Commissioner for the Court of Spain; Mr. William Lee, Commissioner for the Courts of Vienna and Berlin; Mr. Ralph Izard, Commissioner for the Court of Tuscany; that Mr. John Adams was appointed one of the Commissioners at the Court of France in the place of Mr. Deane, who had been appointed a Joint Commissioner with Dr. Franklin and Dr. Arthur Lee, but that the said commission of Mr. Adams is superseded by the plenipotentiary commission to Dr. Franklin.

3. “That in the course of their examination and inquiry, they find many complaints against the said commissioners, and the political and commercial agency of Mr. Deane, which complaints, with the evidence in support thereof, are herewith delivered, and to which the committee beg leave to refer.”

The word “said” in the second article refers to the commissioners mentioned in the first, and, as my name is among them, I learn from hence that there were some complaints against me, and that the evidence in support of them was delivered to congress by the committee.

I therefore pray that I may be favored with copies of those complaints and evidences, and the names of my accusers, and the witnesses against me, that I may take such measures as may be in my power to justify myself to congress.¹

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE TREASURY BOARD.

Braintree, 19 September, 1779.

Gentlemen,—

By the last post, I had the honor of a letter from your secretary, inclosing, by your order, a copy of the resolutions of congress of the 6th of August, relative to the allowance to the late commissioners and their accounts, together with the resolution of your honorable board of the 26th of August, requesting me to inclose my accounts and vouchers to the board of treasury, that they may take order thereon.

I have the honor to transmit, by my worthy friend, Mr. Lowell, my accounts; in the first place, the account of moneys drawn for by Dr. Franklin and me jointly, and the expenditure of them. These moneys, from the time of my arrival at Passy, the 9th of April, 1778, to the end of August following, were received by Dr. Franklin, and the account kept by him of the expenditure. The account marked A is a copy of the account he gave me; but he never showed me any of the vouchers, and I never compared them, so that Mr. Franklin, I suppose, holds himself accountable for them.

From the 1st of October until the new commission arrived, the account was kept by me. At the end of each month I carried my account and vouchers to Dr. Franklin. We looked them over together, and signed the account, except the last, when Dr. Franklin being so ill of the gout, and I being engaged in settling my affairs in order to come away, it was omitted. I transmit the vouchers for all the time that the account was kept by me; but I have one request to make with respect to these, but more especially with respect to my private vouchers, which is, that when the honorable board have made the use of them they intend, they would deliver them to Mr. Gerry to be returned to me, being necessary for the security of my reputation, as well as against new demands of payment. The account thus kept by me, and signed monthly by my colleague and myself, is marked B. The large articles of family expenses and postage of letters are here inserted only in the large. Dr. Franklin has the original books of account of all these particulars, with other receipts in them.

The account marked C is my private account of moneys received by me singly, and includes what money I received of the navy board at Boston before my departure; what I received of the continental agents at Bordeaux, Nantes, Lorient, &c.; what I received of Mr. Franklin out of the moneys drawn for jointly, and what I received of Mr. Grand, the banker, either with my own hand or by drafts upon him; the amount of all which, exclusive of a draft for Mr. Deane's furniture, is NA livres.

The account marked D is a particular account of all my expenses, the amount of which is

This includes the expense of all my journeys from Bordeaux to Paris, from Paris to Nantes, from Nantes to Brest, from Brest back again to Nantes, the expenses of clothing for myself and servants, and, in general, all my particular expenses of every kind. During the time that the joint account was kept by Mr. Franklin, the honorable board will see that Mr. Franklin paid all these articles out of the joint stock which I was paying for out of my particular. The effect to the public is the same; but it was necessary to make the observation, in order to explain the articles.

The honorable board will also see in this account of mine several articles for books. I found myself in France ill-versed in the language, the literature, the science, the laws, customs, and manners of that country, and had the mortification to find my colleagues very little better informed than myself, vain as this may seem. I found also that Dr. Franklin, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Lee had expended considerable sums for books, and this appeared to me one of the most necessary and useful ways in which money had ever been spent in that country. I therefore did not hesitate to expend the sums mentioned in this account in this way, in the purchase of such a collection of books as were calculated to qualify me for conversation and for business, especially the science of negotiation. Accordingly the books are a collection of books concerning the French language, and criticism concerning French history, laws, customs, and manners, but above all a large collection of books on the public law of Europe, and the letters and memoirs of those ambassadors and public ministers who had acquired the fairest fame, and had done the greatest services to their countries in this way.

The honorable board will judge whether this is a “reasonable expense,” and whether it ought or ought not to be deducted from the allowance. I shall submit to their judgment with entire satisfaction.

All the articles in both accounts which were for my son, will, no doubt, be deducted from my allowance. Yet I ought to observe that Mr. Izard and Mr. William Lee have supported their families; Dr. Franklin has two grandsons, and Mr. A Lee a nephew; Mr. Deane two brothers, and afterwards a son; all that I desire is, that I may be treated like the others.

I departed from my own house the 13th of February, 1778, and happily arrived at it again the 2d of August, 1779. How far the honorable board will judge the resolution of congress, allowing three months after the recall, applicable to me, I do not know; indeed, whether I am recalled to this moment, I do not know. All I desire is, a reasonable compensation for the time I was actually in the service, and this was in fact from the day that I received my commission, which was in December, 1777; for from that day I was obliged to avoid all engagements in private business, and to devote myself to the preparation for my voyage as much as at any time after.

I shall send, by this opportunity, all the vouchers I have; when I was making journeys from place to place it was impossible for me to take receipts of postilions, tavern-keepers, and twenty other sorts of people for small sums; but I presume no man will say his expenses have been, or can be less than mine.

The United States have no house-rent, or hire of chariots or horses, or horsemen, or servants, or furniture of houses to pay for me. None of these things, except the servant who went with me, were ever added to the public expenses on my account. There are two or three small sums in the account, paid to Mr. Austin for services while he acted as my secretary, perhaps six weeks, which is all the expense the public bore for secretaries to me. I do not mention this as a virtue or merit, for I am convinced it was an error; and I would never advise any other gentleman to follow my example in these particulars.

I was obliged to be at some expense for bedding on board the *Sensible* in my passage home, as the board will see.

I submit the whole to the consideration of the board, only requesting that I may be informed what articles are allowed in the settlement of my account, under the head of reasonable expenses, and what are not. [1](#)

I have the honor to be, with great respect to the honorable board,

Their Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Philadelphie, le 29 Septembre, 1779.

Monsieur,—

Je m'applaudis bien sincèrement d'avoir prévu que votre séjour en Amérique ne seroit pas de longue durée, et je félicite vos compatriotes du choix qu'ils ont fait de vous, pour aller négocier la paix qui doit assurer le repos des treize Etats. Vous y porterez la modération et l'équité qui m'ont paru faire le fond de votre caractère, et vous êtes sûr d'avance de trouver en France le ministère du roi dans les mêmes dispositions. Le choix du congrès est approuvé par toutes les personnes bien intentionnées en Amérique; on y applaudira également en Europe, et je vous répons des suffrages et de la confiance de toutes les personnes dont vous serez connu. Vous travaillerez, monsieur, à donner la paix à votre pays, et mes soins auront pour objet de resserrer les noeuds qui unissent votre nation et la mienne. Nos travaux auront donc quelque analogie, et je vous prie d'être bien persuadé que je prendrai une part immédiate a vos succès.

La frégate la "Sensible" est toujours dans le port de Boston: il dépendra de vous, monsieur, de vous concerter avec M. de Chavagnes en cas que vous vous déterminiez à partir avec lui. Je suis persuadé d'avance que le ministre de la marine trouvera qu'on ne pouvoit faire un meilleur usage de ce vaisseau qu'en l'employant à vous ramener en Europe.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec le plus inviolable attachement, monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

Le Chevalier de la Luzerne.

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THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE TO CAPTAIN CHAVAGNES.

La mission, monsieur, dont le congrès vient de charger Monsieur Jean Adams, est d'une telle importance que Monsieur Gérard et moi avons pensé qu'il falloit prendre les mesures les plus promptes, et les plus sûres, pour assurer son passage. Nous avons en conséquence proposé au congrès, de se servir de votre frégate pour le transport de ce ministre, et notre proposition a été accepté. Cependant le congrès y a mis lui-même la condition que M. Adams feroit les dispositions convenables pour son départ dans une intervalle de temps raisonnable, et qu'il ne seroit pas de nature à retenir votre frégate trop long temps, je vous réitère donc, monsieur, la prière que je vous ai déjà faite, de vous concerter avec monsieur Adams touchant les mesures qu'il jugera apropos de prendre pour son départ. J'espère que, eu égard à la nature de la circonstance, le ministre approuvera entièrement le délai que vous serez dans le cas de mettre à votre départ, et je suis bien persuadé, d'un autre coté, que M. Jean Adams mettra toute la célérité possible dans les préparatifs de son départ.

Le Chevalier de la Luzerne.

Je pense entièrement, monsieur, comme M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, et je joins mes instances aux siennes.

Gérard.

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M. DE MARBOIS TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Philadelphie, le 29 Septembre, 1779.

Monsieur,—

Je n'ai que le tems de vous marquer combien j'ai pris de part au choix que vos compatriotes viennent de faire de vous, pour aller négocier la paix en Europe. J'ai été réellement touché de l'unanimité et de l'empressement avec lequel tous les esprits se sont réunis dans l'opinion qu'ils ont conçue de vous, et dans la persuasion qu'un ministre sans préjugés et sans autre passion que celle du bonheur de son pays et de la conservation de l'alliance, étoit l'homme le plus propre à conduire l'important ouvrage de la paix.

Je désire beaucoup, monsieur, que vous reconduisiez en Europe M. votre fils, malgré l'éloignement qu'il a pour la navigation. Il apprendra de vous les moyens d'être un jour utile à son pays, et vos préceptes et vos sentimens lui apprendront à chérir ma nation, qui sent de jour en jour davantage combien son union avec vous est naturelle et réciproquement avantageuse.

Je suis, avec respect, monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

De Marbois.

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TO M. DE SARTINE.

Braintree, 6 October, 1779.

Sir,—

The “Sensible” intending to sail in a few days, it is my duty to embrace the opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to his Majesty and to your Excellency for the favor of a passage in this frigate, which was rendered the more honorable and agreeable to me by the company of his Excellency, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and M. Marbois, two characters that I have every reason to believe will be peculiarly useful and acceptable in this country.

Your Excellency will permit me also to express my obligations to Captain Chavagnes and the other officers of the frigate, for their civilities, as these gentlemen, upon all occasions, discovered a particular attention and solicitude to render all the circumstances of the voyage as agreeable as possible to me and the other passengers, as well as to protect the merchant vessels under their convoy.

I hope and believe they have neither seen nor heard any thing here among the people of this country, but what has a tendency to give them a favorable opinion of their allies.

I Have The Honor To Be, With The Highest Consideration,
Your Excellency’S Most Obedient And Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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TO M. DE LA LUZERNE.

Braintree, 17 October, 1779.

Sir,—

I have the honor of your letter from Philadelphia of the 29th of September, and return you my sincere thanks for your kind congratulations on the honor which has been done me in my election to an important negotiation in Europe. The sentiments your Excellency is pleased to express of my character and of the good opinion of my own countrymen in general, are exceedingly flattering to me.

There is no character in which I could act with so much pleasure as in that of a peacemaker. But alas! sir, when I reflect upon the importance, the delicacy, intricacy, and danger of the service, I feel a great deal of diffidence in myself. Yet, when I consider the remarkable unanimity with which I was chosen, after congress had been so long distressed with the appearance of their foreign affairs, and so divided in sentiment about most other characters, I am penetrated with a sense of the honor done to me, more than I can express.

Your Excellency may be assured that, wherever I go, I shall carry with me the highest opinion of the wisdom, the equity, and policy of the present minister from France, and the fullest persuasion that his negotiations will be reciprocally advantageous to the allies, and incessantly tending to strengthen the ties of interest and good-will that at present unite them.

Your Excellency will be pleased to accept of my thanks for the favor of a passage in the frigate, the *Sensible*. I have not yet received from congress any despatches. As soon as they arrive, I shall immediately wait on Captain Chavagnes, and the frigate shall not be unnecessarily detained on my account. I will either embark immediately, or inform the captain that I cannot have the pleasure to go with him.

I must also request of your Excellency to present my respectful compliments and thanks to M. Gérard for so obligingly joining his instances with yours to the captain of the frigate for my passage in her.

I have the honor to be, with the sincerest attachment, &c.

John Adams.

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TO M. DE MARBOIS.

Braintree, 17 October, 1779.

My Dear Sir,—

I had the honor of your favor of the 29th of September by express, and I thank you for your kind compliments and congratulations on my election to the momentous office of peacemaker. I am really, sir, much affected with the unanimity with which the congress has conferred this honor upon me. I cannot be sufficiently sensible of the favorable opinion you express of me. But I feel myself agitated with too many very strong passions, relative to myself and my family, besides those which regard the prosperity of my country and the conservation of the alliance, to subscribe entirely to that opinion.

My little son, sir, is very sensible of the honor you have done him in mentioning his name upon this occasion, but I believe it will be my duty to leave him at home, that his education may be where his life is to be spent. He has already learned to esteem and respect the French nation, and that sentiment will, I hope, never leave him.

In whatever country I may be, I shall never forget the agreeable hours I have passed with M. de Marbois, nor cease to hope for his honor and prosperity.

I hope you have found every thing as agreeable at Philadelphia as you could expect, and that all circumstances will become from day to day more and more so. I am very ambitious of carrying with me to Europe any despatches which his Excellency, the Chevalier, may think proper to intrust to my care, especially letters to his friends, among whom I have particularly in my eye M. Malesherbes. I request also the same favor from you, sir, and have the honor to be,

With An Affectionate Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 20 October, 1779.

Sir,—

I have the honor to transmit you herewith inclosed two commissions, wherein you are authorized and appointed minister plenipotentiary from these United States, to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain, accompanied with instructions in each case for your government in the execution of those several commissions.

For your further information and benefit are inclosed copies of the instructions to the Hon. Benjamin Franklin and John Jay, Esquire, our Ministers Plenipotentiary at the Courts of Versailles and Madrid.

Also two acts of congress of the 4th and 15th instants, ascertaining your salary, and making provision for your subsistence on your arrival in France.

The nature and importance of the trust committed to your charge, will, I persuade myself, engage your immediate attention, and induce you to undertake the service and embark for France without loss of time.

Wishing you a prosperous voyage, and success in your embassy, I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the highest esteem and regard,

Your Humble Servant,

Samuel Huntington,*President.*

P. S. The Hon. Francis Dana, Esquire, is appointed your Secretary.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Braintree, 4 November, 1779.

Sir,—

I had yesterday the honor of receiving your letter of the 20th of October, inclosed with two commissions, appointing me minister plenipotentiary from the United States to negotiate peace and commerce with Great Britain, together with instructions for my government in the execution of these commissions, copies of instructions to the ministers plenipotentiary at Versailles and Madrid, and two acts of congress of the 4th and 15th of October.

Peace is an object of such vast importance, the interests to be adjusted in the negotiations to obtain it are so complicated and so delicate, and the difficulty of giving even general satisfaction is so great, that I feel myself more distressed at the prospect of executing the trust, than at the thought of leaving my country, and again encountering the dangers of the seas and of enemies. Yet, when I reflect on the general voice in my favor, and the high honor that is done me by this appointment, I feel the warmest sentiments of gratitude to congress, and shall make no hesitation to accept it, and devote myself without reserve or loss of time to the discharge of it. My success, however, may depend, in a very great degree, on the intelligence and advices that I may receive from time to time from congress, and on the punctuality with which several articles in my instructions may be kept secret. It shall be my most earnest endeavor to transmit to congress the most constant and exact information in my power, of whatever may occur, and to conceal those instructions which depend in any measure on my judgment. And I hope I need not suggest to congress the necessity of communicating to me as early as possible their commands from time to time, and of keeping all the discretionary articles an impenetrable secret; a suggestion, however, that the constitution of that sovereignty which I have the honor to represent might excuse.

As the frigate has been some time waiting, I shall embark in eight or ten days at furthest. Your Excellency will please to present my most dutiful respects to congress, and accept my thanks for the polite and obliging manner in which you have communicated their commands.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 15 February, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inform congress, that on the 9th of this month, and not before, I had the good fortune to arrive in this city from Ferrol (where I arrived on the 8th of December) with Mr. Dana, Mr. Thaxter, and the rest of the company in tolerable health, after a journey of near five hundred leagues, in the dead of winter, through bad roads and worse accommodations of every kind. We lost no time, more than was indispensable to restore our health, which was several times much affected and in great danger; yet we were more than twice as long in making the journey by land as we had been in crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

The next morning after our arrival in Paris, Mr. Dana and myself went out to Passy, and spent the day with his Excellency, Dr. Franklin, who did us the honor the next day to accompany us to Versailles, where we had the honor to wait on their Excellencies, the Count de Vergennes, M. de Sartine, and the Count Maurepas, with each of whom we had the honor of a short conference upon the state of public affairs. It is sufficient for me at present to say, in general, that I never heard the French ministry so frank, so explicit, so decided, as each of these was in the course of this conversation, in his declarations to pursue the war with vigor, and to afford effectual aid to the United States. I learned with great satisfaction that they are sending, under convoy, clothing and arms for fifteen thousand men to America; that seventeen ships of the line were already gone to the West Indies under M. de Guichen, and that five or six more at least are to follow, in addition to ten or twelve they have already there.

I asked permission of the Count de Vergennes to write to him on the subject of my mission, which he cheerfully and politely agreed to. I have accordingly written to his Excellency, and shall forward copies of my letter and of his answer as soon as it may be safe to do it.

The English are to borrow twelve millions this year, and it is said the loan is filled up. They have thrown a sop to Ireland, but have not appeased her rage. They give out exactly such threats as they did last year, and every other year, of terrible preparations. But congress knows perfectly well how these menaces have been accomplished. They will not be more fully executed the next year than the last, and if France and Spain should throw more of their force, especially by sea, into America the next year, America will have no essential injury to fear.

I have learned, since my arrival at Paris, with the highest pleasure, the arrival of M. Gérard, Mr. Jay, and Mr. Carmichael at Cadiz, for whose safety we had been under great apprehensions. I have now very sanguine hopes that a solid treaty will soon be

concluded with Spain; hopes which every thing I saw and heard in that country seemed to favor.

The Alliance frigate, now under the command of Captain Jones, with Captain Cunningham on board, is arrived at Corunna, where she is to be careened, after which she is to return to Lorient, and from thence to go to America, as I am informed by Dr. Franklin.

Mr. Arthur Lee and Mr. Izard are still in Paris, under many difficulties in procuring a passage home. Mr. William Lee is at Brussels. Mr. Izard has been to Holland to obtain a passage from thence, but unfortunately missed his opportunity, and returned disappointed.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Paris, 18 February, 1780.

My Dear General,—

You know extremely well the skill of our enemies in forging false news, and their artifice in circulating it, not only through the various parts of Europe, but in the United States of America, to keep up the spirits of their friends and depress those of their adversaries. It is their annual custom in the winter to send abroad large cargoes of these lies, and they meet with a success in making them believed, that is really astonishing.

Since my arrival here, I find they have been this winter at their old game again, and have circulated reports here, in Holland, and other parts of Europe, that they have made new contracts with other petty princes in Germany, by which, together with those made before, they will be able to draw seven thousand fresh troops from that country to serve in America; that, by appeasing the troubles in Ireland, they shall be able to avail themselves even of the military associations in that kingdom, by depending upon them for the defence of the country, and to draw near ten thousand men from thence for the service in America; that they have concluded a treaty with the Court of Petersburg, by which Russia is to furnish them with twelve ships of the line and twenty thousand men, which they say is of the more importance, on account of the intimate connection between Russia and Denmark, as the latter will be likely by this means to be drawn into the war with their numerous fleet of forty-five ships of the line. The greatest part of these tales are false, I know very well; and what is said of Russia is so contrary to all that I have heard of the good understanding between Versailles and Russia, that I have no doubt of its falsehood. But as I am very lately arrived, and consequently have not had opportunity to examine these reports to the bottom, I beg the favor of you to inform me with all the exactness possible, how much truth there is in them, if any at all.

You are very sensible that it is of the utmost importance that congress should have the earliest information of these things, and that you and I cannot render a more useful service to our country at present than by collecting such intelligence with precision, and transmitting it without delay. Knowing the pleasure you take in serving the United States in every way in your power, I thought I could beg this favor of you with propriety, and that you would believe me always

Your Assured Friend And Servant,

John Adams.

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 18 February, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Whether it is that the art of political lying is better understood in England than in any other country, or whether it is more practised there than elsewhere, or whether it is accidental that they have more success in making their fictions gain credit in the world, I know not. But it is certain that every winter since the commencement of the present war with America, and indeed for some years before, they sent out large quantities of this manufacture over all Europe and throughout all America; and what is astonishing is, that they should still find numbers in every country ready to take them off their hands.

Since my arrival in this city, I find they have been this winter at their old trade, and have spread reports here and in Holland and in various other parts of Europe, and, no doubt, they have found means to propagate them in America, too, tending to keep up the spirits of their well-wishers and to sink those of their opponents. Such as, that they have made new contracts with several German princes, by which they are to obtain seven thousand men to serve in America; that they have so skilfully appeased the troubles in Ireland, that they shall even be able to take advantage of the military associations there, by depending upon them for the defence of the kingdom, while they draw from thence ten thousand regular troops for the service in America; that they have even concluded a treaty with Russia, by which the Empress is to furnish them with twelve ships of the line and twenty thousand men, as some say, and twenty ships of the line and twelve thousand men, as others relate. This, they say, is of the greater moment, because of an intimate connection (I know not of what nature it is) between Russia and Denmark, by which the latter will be likely to be drawn into the war against the House of Bourbon and America; and Denmark, they say, has forty-five ships of the line.

I know very well that the greatest part of these reports is false; and particularly what is said of Russia is so contrary to all that I have heard for these twelve months past of the harmony between Versailles and Petersburg, that I give no credit to it at all; but I find that all these reports make impressions on some minds, and among the rest, on some Americans.

I therefore beg the favor of you to inform me of the exact truth in all these matters, that I may take the earliest opportunity of transmitting the intelligence to congress, where it is of importance that it should be known.

I was much mortified, when I was at Versailles the other day, that I could not have the honor of paying my respects to you; but I was so connected with other gentlemen,

who were obliged to return to dinner, that I could not; but I shall take the first opportunity I can get to wait on you, and assure you that I am,

With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DE LAFAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 19 February, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

As I came but this morning from Versailles, it was not in my power sooner to answer the letter you have honored me with, and this duty I now perform with the more pleasure, as it is of some importance to the interests of America. Since the first day, when I had the happiness of making myself and of being considered in the world as an American, I have always observed that among so many ways of attacking our liberties, and among the most ungenerous ones, treachery and falsehood have ever been the first weapons on which the British nation has the most depended.

I am glad it is in my power generally to assure you that the many reports propagated by them and alluded to in your letter are not founded upon truth. New contracts with petty German princes have not, I believe, taken place; and if any such merchandise were sent to America, it would at most consist of a few recruits. The troubles in Ireland, if there is the least common sense among the first patriots of that country, are not, I hope, at an end, and it seems they now begin to raise new expectations. The Russian troops, so much talked of in their gazettes, I take to be mere recruits for those thirty thousand Russians that Mr. Rivington had three years ago ordered to embark for America.

Those intelligences, my dear sir, must be counteracted by letters to our friends in America. But as the respect we owe to the free citizens of the United States makes it a point of duty for us never to deceive them, and as the most candid frankness must ever distinguish our side of the question from the cause of tyranny and falsehood, I intend paying to-morrow morning a visit to the minister of foreign affairs, and from him get such minute intelligence as shall answer your purpose.

With the most sincere regard, I have the honor to be, &c.

Lafayette, M. G.

P. S. On my return from Versailles, my dear sir, where I will settle the affairs of arms that I have undertaken, I will impart to you a project privately relating to me, that is not inconsistent with my sentiments for our country, America.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 20 February, 1780.

Sir,—

You have feared to be troublesome to the Count de Vergennes, and you have done me the honor of addressing yourself to me, in order to know what you are to think of several rumors which the English have endeavored to spread. I am infinitely flattered by the mark of confidence which you have been pleased to give me, but I have felt it my duty to lay your letter before the minister. He has directed me to assure you, that on every occasion he will be very happy to have you address yourself directly to him, and that you will always find him eager to satisfy your inquiries.

He has remarked, as well as yourself, the address which our enemies use to circulate false reports, and especially to make Europe believe that the Americans are making advances to them, in order to treat of an arrangement with them. The Count de Vergennes is as well persuaded of the contrary as he is confident that no new treaty has been negotiated with the princes of Germany, and that no levies are making there but for the sake of filling up the old ones. He does not think that the news of the treaty with Russia, nor that which relates to the Court of Denmark, are better founded. He has told me that I might do myself the honor to write you that all those rumors are false, and that you run no risk in presenting them as such to the persons on whom you think they may have made some impression, whether in Europe or in America.

I am extremely anxious to have the honor to see you, and congratulate you on your happy return. As I can but seldom go to Paris, I hope your business will permit you to do me the honor to call at my house and accept of a family dinner.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Genet.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 20 February, 1780.

Sir,—

Since my arrival in Europe, I have had the mortification to see in the public papers a series of little successes which our enemies have had in the prosecution of the war. The first was a very exaggerated account in the English Court Gazette of their successes against the Spaniards in South America. The next was the history of the repulse of General Lincoln and the Count d'Estaing at Savannah, and the raising the siege of that post. These were soon followed by the capture of the Spanish fleet of transport ships by Rodney's squadron, and the advantage gained by that admiral over the Spanish ships of war, after a most gallant resistance, however, off Gibraltar.

These small triumphs, although chiefly of the defensive and negative kind, and a poor compensation for the blood and the millions they are annually wasting, are, however, sufficient to cheer the spirits of the British populace, and to banish from the minds of the ministry all thoughts of peace upon reasonable terms; for the English in the present war act upon a maxim diametrically opposite to that of the Romans, and never think of peace upon any event fortunate to them, but are anxious for it under every great adversity.

A report of my appointment having also been carried to England by the cartels from Boston, and being spread in Europe by various other ways, by passengers in the Committee,¹ by French passengers in the *Sensible*, of whom there were a great number who had heard of it in all companies in America, and by many private letters, and the English ministerial writers having made use of this as evidence of a drooping spirit in America, in order to favor their loan of money, I thought it my best policy to communicate my appointment and powers to the French Court, and ask their advice, as our good allies, how to proceed in the present emergency. I accordingly wrote to his Excellency, the Count de Vergennes, the letter of the 12th of February, a copy of which is inclosed, and received his answer of the 15th, a copy of which is inclosed, to which I replied in a letter of the 19th, a copy of which is also inclosed.² When I shall receive his Excellency's answer, I shall do myself the honor to inclose that.

If there is any thing in these letters of mine which is not conformable to the views and sentiments of congress, I wish to be instructed in it, or if congress should not concur in sentiment with his Excellency, the Count, I shall obey their orders with the utmost punctuality and alacrity. I have ever understood that congress were first advised to the measure of appointing a minister to negotiate peace by the French Minister, then at Philadelphia, in the name of the Count de Vergennes. However this may have been, it cannot be improper to have some one in Europe empowered to think and treat of peace, which some time or other must come.

Since my last, which was of yesterday's date, I have had opportunity to make more particular inquiries concerning the pretended treaty with Russia, and am informed that the English ministry did, not long since, make a formal application by their ambassador to the Empress of Russia for a body of troops and a number of ships; but that the application was opposed with great spirit and ability in the Russian Council, particularly by the minister for foreign affairs, and rejected in council with great unanimity: and that the harmony between Versailles and Petersburg remains as perfect as when I left France.

I Have The Honor To Be, With Very Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 24 February, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me the 20th of this month.

I was cautious of troubling the minister with an application directly to him upon a subject like that of my letter to you; but I thank you for the trouble you have taken in laying it before him. The kind expressions of his Excellency's confidence, and his readiness to receive any application directly from me, do me great honor; and I shall not fail of paying my respects to him upon proper occasions.

I am happy to have his Excellency's authority to counteract the delusive artifices of our enemies; and he may be equally assured that the reports of advances made by the Americans towards an arrangement with the English are equally groundless.

I hope to have soon the honor of paying my respects to you at Versailles.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO GENERAL KNOX.

Paris, 28 February, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Your friend, the Marquis, with whom I have sometimes had the honor to drink your health after that of General Washington, will deliver you this. His love of glory is not diminished, nor his affection for America, as you see by his return. He has been indefatigable in endeavors to promote the welfare and comfort of our army, as well as to support their honor and character, and has had success in both.

He has had a share in convincing this Court of the policy and necessity of transferring their exertions into the American seas, and, I hope, he will in time assist in bringing Spain into the same system. But time is necessary to bring nations to comprehend new systems of policy, and everybody has, some time or other, an opportunity of throwing in light. France and Spain are not yet habituated to reasoning upon the new connection, nor are they yet sensible of all the advantages they might derive from it, in the prosecution of the war. France is, however, more convinced of it this year than last. But I have not time to say more, except that I am, as usual,

Your Friend,

John Adams.

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TO CAPTAIN LANDAIS.

8 March, 1780.

These may certify that on the 8th day of March, 1779, I set off from Passy to Nantes, expecting to meet the Alliance frigate and go in her to America. When I arrived at Nantes, I learned from the American agent that the Alliance was still at Brest; and, by Captain Landais's letters, it was uncertain how long she would remain there, upon which I determined to take a journey to Brest, to assist if I could in expediting her. Upon my arrival, there were thirty-eight prisoners on board, charged with having been concerned in a mutiny or conspiracy in the passage from Boston, whom Captain Landais had not been able to obtain permission to put on shore, which he thought necessary to be done before he could go to sea with safety. The frigate wanted stores and repairs, which he could not obtain until some one would become responsible for the pay for them, which Mr. Costentin declined doing until he had orders either from the American minister at court, or the American agent at Nantes; that Mr. Costentin, on my arrival, told me he had just received orders from Mr. Schweighauser to take my advice, which he took accordingly, and engaged to pay for what was wanted; and after an application from me and Captain Landais to the Intendant, and afterwards from me in writing, the prisoners were permitted to be sent on shore, and the stores and repairs were provided.

Certified at the request of Captain Landais, at Paris, the 8th day of March, 1780.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 12 March, 1780.

Sir,—

It is an observation made some years ago by a great writer of this nation, De Mably, that “the project of being sole master of the sea, and of commanding all the commerce, is not less chimerical nor less ruinous than that of universal monarchy on land; and it is to be wished, for the happiness of Europe, that the English may be convinced of this truth before they shall learn it by their own experience. France has already repeated several times that it was necessary to establish an equilibrium, a balance of power at sea, and she has not yet convinced anybody, because she is the dominant power, and because they suspect her to desire the abasement of the English, only that she may domineer the more surely on the continent. But if England abuses her power, and would exercise a kind of tyranny over commerce, presently all the States that have vessels and sailors, astonished that they had not before believed France, will join themselves to assist her in avenging her injuries.”¹

The present conjuncture of affairs resembles so exactly the case here put, that it seems to be a literal fulfilment of a prophecy.

A domination upon the sea is so much the more dangerous to other maritime powers and commercial nations, as it is more difficult to form alliances and combine forces at sea than at land. For which reason it is essential that the sovereign of every commercial State should make his nation’s flag respected in all the seas and by all the nations of the world. The English have ever acted upon this principle, in supporting the honor of their own flag, but of late years have grown less and less attentive to it, as it respects the honor of other flags. Not content with making their flag respectable, they have grown more and more ambitious of making it terrible. Unwilling to do as they would be done by, and to treat other commercial nations as they have insisted upon being treated by them, they have grown continually more and more haughty, turbulent, and insolent upon the seas, and are now never satisfied until they have made all other nations see that they despise them upon that element. It is said by the Baron de Bielfield, that piracies and robberies at sea are so odious, so atrocious, and so destructive to the interest of all the European nations, that every thing is permitted to repress them. Providence has not granted to any people an exclusive empire upon the seas. To aim at setting up a master there, to prescribe laws to other free nations, is an outrage to all Europe.

I have quoted these authorities, because they contain the true principle upon which, as I have ever conceived, the English began this war, and upon which they will assuredly continue it as long as they can get men and money, which will be as long as they have success. They contain also the true principles of France, Spain, and Holland, and all the powers of Europe. The outrages committed upon the Dutch commerce, and the

insults offered to their flag, ought to be, and are alarming to all the maritime powers. The late successes of the English will have no tendency to allay the fears of these powers; on the contrary, they will increase the alarm, by showing the precarious situation they will all be in if England should finally succeed, which some of them may, perhaps, apprehend from the late brilliant fortune of Admiral Rodney.

One cannot but be struck with the rapid series of fortunate incidents for the English, which have been published here in about the course of three months that I have been in Europe. The little affair of Omoa began it; the repulse of Savannah succeeded, with all its consequences; the Curraçoa fleet was next; Langara's fleet soon followed; Gibraltar was relieved; Don Gaston's squadron was dispersed by a storm; and Admiral Rodney had opportunity to get safe out of Gibraltar. The French East India fleet brings up the rear. There is hardly in history such a series of events, that no human wisdom could provide against or foresee. Yet, after all, the advantages gained are by no means decisive, although, no doubt, it will raise the ambition of the English, and, in some degree, damp the ardor of their enemies.

It must not have this effect, however, upon America. Let the maritime powers fare as they will, we must be free; and I trust in God we shall be so, whatever be their fate. The events of war are uncertain at sea, more than even by land; but America has resources for the final defence of her liberty, which Britain will never be able to exhaust, though she should exhaust France and Spain; and it may not be our hard fate, but it will be our unfading glory, finally to turn the scale of the war, to humble the pride which is so terrible to the commercial nations of Europe, and to produce a balance of power on the seas. To this end, Americans must be soldiers and seamen.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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ARTHUR LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Lorient, 15 March, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

By the bursting of the lock of one of my trunks on the journey, I was so unfortunate as to lose the packet of M. Gérard's letters, among which was that you copied, and of which I must beg you to send me an authenticated copy.

Since my arrival here, I received a packet from congress, which came by the Confederacy. In that is a copy of one of the most false and wicked papers I have read upon the subject, given in to congress by Mr. Carmichael. In that he says,—“I have frequently declared that Mr. A. Lee had not the confidence of the Court of France. My reasons for this declaration are, among others, the Chevalier Grand and his brother, Mr. Grand, gentlemen who, at various times, acted as secret agents between the commissioners and the Court of France, in whose assertions I placed confidence, because I saw the Court intrusted them with secrets of the highest importance, and because I never found myself deceived by these gentlemen in any other information I had the honor to receive from them while employed by the commissioners abroad. I was informed, and believe, that this want of confidence arose from information given by M. Garnier, Chargé des Affaires for the Court of Versailles at London.”¹

You will oblige me much, if you will show this extract to Mr. Grand and M. Garnier, and write me what they say to it. I always entertained, and do still entertain, too high an opinion, both of Mr. Grand's veracity and discretion, to believe he ever told Mr. Carmichael what he here asserts. But I shall change my opinion, if he refuses to contradict this assertion, since it has been made with a manifest design of injuring me and imposing upon congress. As Mr. Carmichael could not know that these gentlemen were intrusted with secrets of the highest importance by the Court, unless they communicated those secrets to him, I do not see how any other conclusion can be drawn from what Mr. Carmichael says of them, but that either they were not so trusted, or that they betrayed their trust in such communication to him. I cannot determine whether Mr. Deane or Mr. Carmichael is the most contemptible liar. And I confess to you, sir, that it astonishes me that such contemptible and manifestly malignant performances should have had the smallest influence on any one man of common sense or common honesty in or out of congress.

We have no news here, nor is it likely we shall sail this month. I beg my compliments to Mr. Dana.

With The Greatest Esteem, I Am, Dear Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant,

Arthur Lee.

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WILLIAM LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Bruxelles, 17 March, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I understand that our enemies have now in contemplation the offering of some terms to America, which go no farther than a truce; probably somewhat similar to the propositions made last year by Spain to Great Britain.

Though I am not informed of the terms of peace with which you are charged, nor whether your powers are discretionary, I trust you will not think it an intrusion in me to offer my sentiments on such a proposition as a truce for America, supposing it should be made.

A truce with America must, of course, accompany a peace in Europe; in that case, our enemies, after recovering from their present exhausted state, having their hands clear of European troubles, would have their whole strength to employ against America; for, I conceive, that with such a prospect before them, there would not be the most distant probability of agreeing on a peace before the expiration of the truce.

In America we must keep up a great military and naval establishment to prevent our being taken by surprise, at nearly as great an expense as we are now at in war, and besides risk the dreadful misfortunes which have almost universally attended standing armies and a heavy load of debt on the state. I cannot suppose it possible that France and Spain would consent to a truce with America while the war is to continue between Great Britain and them; but if they should, would it be wise in America to accept of a truce on such terms, and to let our allies run the hazard of being destroyed, that we may become an easy prey afterwards?

These are some of the evident objections to a truce in any shape, nor can I see any possible argument in its favor, though I know there are some Americans, though well-intentioned, but visionary geniuses, whose heads run much on the idea of a truce; but I hope nothing will be attended to, unless they are fair, open, and honorable propositions for a substantial and lasting peace, in which blessed work I most heartily wish you speedy and full success.

The Dutch are in a very disturbed state; as yet there does not seem to be a probability of their taking a decided and open part with us in the war. The influence and power of the Prince of Orange are unfortunately too great to permit them to adopt those measures which their honor and interest direct, and which, I believe, a great majority of the people wish. The Prince is retained against us by the flattering prospect of marrying his daughter to the Prince of Wales; but in Europe where every thing is bought and sold, France and Spain may do great things; for the confidant and director of the Prince is as mercenary a wretch as can be found in England or even in Scotland.

We shall probably see Mr. Laurens here in his way to Holland; but if he does not pass through this town, I shall be much obliged to you for giving me any interesting public intelligence that he brings.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mr. Dana; and if I can be of any service here in promoting the great work you have in hand, or in rendering any services to our country, I shall be always happy in receiving your commands, being with great esteem, dear sir,

Your Most Obligated And Obedient Servant,

W. Lee.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 24 March, 1780.

Sir,—

Mr. Burke's bill not being as yet public, we are not yet informed of the items of it. But as it already appears that it strikes at the department of secretary of state for America and at the board of trade, there seems to be little reason to doubt that it goes further, and strikes at the American board of commissioners, at all the American judges of admiralty, governors of provinces, secretaries, and custom-house officers of all denominations. At least, if this should not be found to be a part of the bill, there are stronger reasons, if possible, for abolishing this whole system of iniquity, together with all the pensions granted to the refugees from America, than even for taking away the board of trade. And from several late paragraphs in the papers, and from Mr. Fox's severe observations in the house of commons upon Governor Hutchinson, calling him in substance the "firebrand that lighted up all the fire between the two countries," it seems pretty clear that it is in contemplation to take away all these salaries and pensions.

If such a measure should take place, exiled as these persons are from the country which gave them birth, but which they have most ungratefully endeavored to enslave, they will become melancholy monuments of divine vengeance against such unnatural and impious behavior. Nevertheless, as these persons are numerous, and have some friends in England as well as in America, where they had once much property, there is a probability, I think, that whenever or wherever negotiations for peace may be commenced, they and their estates, now almost universally confiscated, will not be forgotten. But much pains and art will be employed to stipulate for them, in the treaty, both a restoration of their property and a right to return as citizens of the States to which they formerly belonged. It is very possible, however, that before a treaty shall be made, or even negotiations commenced, these gentlemen will become so unpopular and odious that the people of England would be pleased with their sufferings and punishment. But it is most probable that the Court will not abandon them very easily.

I should, therefore, be very happy to have the explicit instructions of congress upon this head, whether I am to agree, in any case whatsoever, to an article which shall admit either of their return or the restoration of their forfeited estates. There are sentiments of humanity and forgiveness which plead on one side; there are reasons of state and political motives, among which the danger of admitting such mischievous persons as citizens is not the least considerable, which argue on the other. I shall obey the instructions of congress with the utmost pleasure, or if for any reasons they choose to leave it at discretion, if I ever should have the opportunity, I shall determine it without listening to any passions of my own of compassion or resentment, according to my best judgment of the public good.

There is another point of very great importance, which I am persuaded will be aimed at by the English ministers; I am sure it will by the people of England, whenever terms of peace shall be talked of. For facilitating the return of commerce, they will wish to have it stipulated by the treaty, that the subjects of Great Britain shall have the rights of citizens in America, and the citizens of the United States the rights of subjects in the British dominions. Some of the consequences of such an agreement to them and to us are obvious and very important; but they are so numerous, and it is so difficult to determine whether the benefits or the inconveniences prevail, that I should be sorry to have so great a question left to my determination. If, however, contrary to my inclinations, it should fall to my lot to decide it without instructions, it shall be decided according to my conscience and the best lights I have.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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ARTHUR LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Lorient, 26 March, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have but one moment to thank you for your favor, with one from London inclosed, which I received on my return from Brest. We are likely to be detained here by the prize money for the Serapis, &c. not being paid, without which the crew of the Alliance threaten a mutiny.

If, as I apprehend it may, the application I requested you to make to Mr. G., should at all interfere with your plan, which I think very prudent, of keeping as free as possible from those disputes, which indeed are a reproach to us, I beg you will think no more of it. What has been Gérard's conduct since his arrival, and what his reception? He is a man to be observed narrowly. I do not mean on my account, but on that of the public, to which I think he will yet do much mischief if he is listened to. Farewell.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 30 March, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to congress copies of certain letters which I have had the honor to write to the Count de Vergennes, and of others which I have received from him.

It seems that the presentations of the American commissioners and ministers plenipotentiary have not been inserted in the Gazette, which occasioned some uneasiness in the minds of some of our countrymen, as they thought it a neglect of us, and a distinction between our sovereign and others. The inclosed letters will explain this matter, and show that no distinction has been made between the representatives of the United States and those of other powers.

I ought to confess to congress that the delicacy of the Count de Vergennes, about communicating my powers, is not perfectly consonant to my manner of thinking; and if I had followed my own judgment I should have pursued a bolder plan, by communicating immediately after my arrival, to Lord George Germaine my full powers to treat both of peace and commerce; but I hope congress will approve of my communicating first to this Court my destination, and asking their advice, and then pursuing it, because I think no doubt can be made that it is my duty to conduct my negotiations at present in concert with our ally, as I have hitherto done.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 30 March, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received the letter [1](#) which you did me the honor to write on the 21st instant. I remember very well to have said to you that your presentation should be inserted in the Gazette of France; but, from the information I have obtained, I am convinced that the presentations, whether of ambassadors or ministers plenipotentiary, have never been announced in our Gazette, so that it would savor of affectation to insert yours. As a substitute, I will have it mentioned, if you wish, in the *Mercure de France*, and you can, without any hazard, take measures to have the notice repeated in the foreign gazettes.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

P. S. I inclose the draft of an article, which I propose to have inserted in the *Mercure*. I shall not send it till you have given me your opinion of it.

Le S. Adams que le congrès des États Unis de l'Amérique a désigné pour assiste aux conférences pour la paix lorsqu'il y aura lieu, est arrive depuis quelque temps ici et a eu l'honneur d'être présenté au roi et à la famille royale.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 30 March, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor of your Excellency's letter of this day, in answer to mine of the 21st of this month. Until the receipt of it, I had taken it for granted that the presentation of every ambassador was regularly inserted in the Gazette of France; and, until very lately, several days since the date of my letter to your Excellency of the 21st of this month, I had supposed that the presentation of ministers plenipotentiary was constantly inserted likewise.

The information your Excellency has given me, that the presentations neither of ambassadors nor ministers plenipotentiary have ever been inserted, has perfectly satisfied me, and, I doubt not, will equally satisfy my countrymen who have heretofore been under the same mistake with myself.

I approve very much of your Excellency's proposition of inserting my presentation in the Mercury of France, and I shall take measures to have it repeated in the foreign gazettes.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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WILLIAM LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Brussels, 30 March, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have had the honor of receiving yours of the 21st instant. The name of the person you wish to know, is the Duke of Brunswick, brother to Prince Ferdinand, Field Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch land force. He is not liked by his family, as they conceive he is too much attached to the House of Austria.

The quintuple alliance that you mention, I conceive, is only the conjecture of some politicians; for there is not in fact any solid appearance of the Dutch resenting like men or an independent nation the cruel injuries and insults (that would be intolerable to any other people) which they have received from the English. The Prince of Orange, the better to deceive, and perhaps reflecting on the fate of De Witt, pretended to resent highly the insult offered to his flag; but you will agree with me that it must be only a pretence, when you know that Admiral Byland is to be honorably acquitted; and, in consequence, it is expected that the best captain in the Dutch navy will resign.

I hope you did not construe my last into any design of drawing from you any of the secrets of your mission, for, believe me, I have no such curiosity, being quite satisfied with that information respecting it, which the world is, and has been a long time in possession of; and besides, I know too well how extremely necessary circumspection and secrecy are to procure success to a negotiation.

Diffidence and distrust of an enemy are always warrantable, but particularly so when one has had repeated experience of their duplicity and treachery; the fatal experience of the Dutch in the negotiations at Gertruydenberg, as well as many other examples, teach us that distrust and resentment should not be carried to unreasonable lengths.

A great and good man has wisely observed that the best time to make peace is, when your enemy wishes for it; and I hope that the affairs of Ireland, with vigorous and well-directed operations on our part this campaign, will reduce our enemies to wish for peace in earnest before this year ends; although they seem to be getting the better of the opposition at home, which, it appears, they are determined to do, either by fraud or violence, as the papers will tell you how narrowly the life of Lord Shelburne has escaped one of the Scotch assassins.¹

With infinite pleasure, I shall communicate to you what information I may receive in my retirement, of the nature you require; but I apprehend that a few hundred pounds sterling per annum, properly applied, might procure you such intelligence as would be worth millions to America; for, in our enemies' quarters, every thing goes by purchase and sale; therefore, it was high time for us to have done with them.

We have no intelligence of the arrival of Mr. Laurens, though there are letters which mention his being embarked.

The Spaniards will do well to keep a watchful eye on the buccaneering expedition now preparing in England against their possessions in South America.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

William Lee.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

Paris, 31 March, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have received yours of the 26th and that of the 15th of this month. I inclose a copy of the letter you desire.

M. Garnier is gone into the country, and I have not seen him since I arrived here. Mr. Izard, however, has seen him, and will give you a satisfactory account of what he says.

If I were to apply to the other gentleman, you know what would be the consequence. It would fly very soon to, you know where, and I should have only the credit of meddling unnecessarily with disputes which I have kept out of as much as I could, and which it is certainly now the public interest, and consequently my duty, to keep out of as much as I can; I had, therefore, rather be excused. The gentleman himself would probably give you the same answer to a letter from you directly to him as he would give to me, unless I should use arts with him, which would be unworthy of you as well as me, and which I cannot use with anybody.

I shall have enough to do to steer my little bark among the rocks and shoals. I shall have perplexities enough of my own, which I cannot avoid, and dangers too. These I shall meet with a steady mind, and perhaps none of them will be greater than that, which I think my duty, of avoiding things that do not belong to me.

Scarcely ever any minister executed a commission for making a peace, without ruining his own reputation, in a free government. No minister that ever existed had a more difficult and dangerous peace to make than I have.

The gentleman you mention has hitherto been very still; but he has been well received by all that I have learnt.

Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO WILLIAM LEE.

Paris, 2 April, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Your favor of the 30th of March is just come to hand, and I thank you for it. I did not construe any thing in your last into a design of drawing from me any of the secrets of my mission; indeed, there is no secret in it, but my instructions, which will, I hope, remain so until they are executed, if that time should ever come.

I have had reasons, however, for saying nothing till now about my commission, but those reasons exist no more. I have indeed the honor to be minister plenipotentiary with full powers, with the ambassadors or ministers from France and Great Britain, and all other princes and states whom it may concern, to enter into conferences, negotiations, and treaties for peace.

When our enemy will wish for peace so far as to think of it in earnest, I know not. Peace concerns her more than any of the belligerent powers. America even can sustain the war, although it will be irksome and grievous, infinitely better than England. America grows more powerful, more numerous, more brave, and better disciplined every year of the war, and more independent too, both in spirit and circumstances. Their trade, it is true, does not flourish as it did, but their agriculture, arts, and manufactures increase in proportion to the decline of their trade. England is wasting away, notwithstanding the violence of her convulsive struggles, in wealth, in commerce, in manufactures, in sailors, soldiers, population, and, above all, in political consideration among the powers of Europe every day. Her reputation, which is a more durable source of power, and a more constant cause of prosperity to states as well as individuals, declines amidst all her activity, exertions, and successes. The hopes and fears of other nations are turning by degrees from her to other people, and these she will find it harder to regain than even the good will of America, which is also leaving her every day. The English nation do not seem to me to see any thing in its true light, or weigh any thing in a just balance. The points already gained by Ireland do not appear to be understood in England in their consequences; if she should carry the other points she aims at, she will become a dangerous rival to Great Britain in trade, and even in political power, and dangerous to her even in military; and she must and will carry those points, if this war is continued. Yet the predominant temper drowns all in England. Their pride, revenge, and habits of domineering will not suffer them to listen to any thing that does not soothe these lively passions.

The fury that appears among the members of parliament convinces me that the opposition is more formidable than you seem to think it. The committees go on, and although I do not found my expectations upon characters that now appear, I know that these committees will bring up others to public view who will do the work. When a

society gets disturbed, men of great talents and good qualities are always found or made.

I think I am perfectly sure of myself that I shall never be led much astray by my resentments against the English, however strong they may have been, and however justly founded. Distrust of them I have, quite separate from all resentment, so fixed by twenty years' incessant attention to their policy, that it is very possible they may be in earnest about terms of peace before I shall believe it; but this error, I hope, will do neither them nor me any harm.

I wish you had been more particular concerning that buccaneering expedition which you say is preparing in England against the Spanish possessions in South America.

Nothing from America, nor from Mr. Laurens. Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO W. CARMICHAEL.

Paris, 8 April, 1780.

Sir,—

I have this moment the honor of your letter from Madrid, of the 29th of February, as I suppose, although the month is not mentioned. I thank you, sir, for commencing a correspondence which I have for some time wished to begin. I wrote to Mr. Jay, at Madrid, the 22d of February, and wish to know if he has received the letter. It is certainly proper that those who are intrusted abroad should maintain a correspondence and cultivate a good understanding with each other, because, although their departments are in some respects separate, yet in others they are intimately connected. From all that I heard in Spain, I expected that you would meet with an agreeable reception at Madrid; and I am much pleased to learn from you that I was not mistaken.

I have sometimes wondered at the slowness of Spain in making a treaty with us; but, when I reflected upon a certain secret article, my surprise ceased. 1 We are already bound in a treaty to her, but she is not bound to us. It would be ungenerous in her, however, to hold us long in this situation. The treaty, notwithstanding all that has been justly said of the advantages to us, is not less advantageous to our allies. The single article that binds us to exclude all armed vessels of the enemies of our allies in all future wars from our ports, is worth more millions to them than this war will cost; nay, it will be a severer loss to Great Britain than all that she has spent in it. Whether Great Britain has considered this or not I do not, know; but she will some time or other discover it, and feel the inconvenience of it.

You ask for news from America. A vessel from Baltimore is arrived at Bordeaux, but not a single letter to Dr. Franklin or me. She brings two or three Baltimore newspapers, one as late as the 15th of February. A hard winter, deep snows, uncommon frosts; frozen over from Connecticut to Long Island, and from New Jersey to Staten Island. Lord Sterling went over to Staten Island with a party on the ice, burnt a few vessels and a guard-house, took a few prisoners, and brought off a few deserters. Some New Jersey people went over at the same time, and plundered without mercy. Finding the communication open with New York, which had been supposed to be obstructed by the ice, he returned. An article from a Fishkill paper says, that Clinton and Cornwallis sailed the 26th of December with seven thousand men for the West Indies, but that the storm which happened soon after their departure was supposed to have done him mischief. A ship, brig, and schooner lost in the storm on Cape Cod, unknown who or whence; all perished. Congress had recommended to all the States to regulate prices at twenty for one, which, by the speculations in the papers, was not well liked. Governor Johnson a delegate for Maryland, General Ward for Massachusetts, in the room of Mr. Dana (who desires me to return you his

compliments and respects.) The other delegates as last year. This is all the news I can recollect, having seen the papers only a few minutes in a large company.

The general state of affairs appears very well. I see no probability of England's obtaining an ally; on the contrary, there are many symptoms of an approaching combination of the maritime powers to protect neutral ships from searches and insults. Ireland is in the full career of independence. England seems determined to force Holland into a war against her, that she may have an opportunity to plunder her.

The correspondences and associations in England distress the ministry very much; and, if the war continues, and they should not be very successful, it seems likely that they would save us the trouble of despatching them. I wish, however, that France and Spain were more convinced of the advantages they have in America and the West Indies. The more ships they send into those seas, the more they will force England to send there; the more she sends there, the weaker she is in Europe, and the less she is dreaded and respected. Holland, Ireland, the opposition in England, and the other maritime powers all feel a confidence rising in proportion to the diminution of the British naval force in Europe, besides the innumerable advantages the French and Spaniards have in supporting the war in the American seas over the English, which they have not in Europe; but I am apprehensive of being tedious. My compliments to Mr. Jay and his family.

I Am, With Much Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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T. DIGGES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Extract.)

London, 14 April, 1780.

Every day seems to produce more advocates or wishers for withdrawing the troops from America, or giving up an offensive war in that country. A motion was to have been made this day in the commons, relative to the state of the war in that country, and to push the ministry for the giving up the principles of that war, and to go seriously to some accommodation. The voice of the majority of the people is decidedly for some such accommodation; but there is no one who can devise the means by which it can be done. Though most of my parliamentary acquaintance are for giving the independence, none of them seem bold enough to stand forth and move it in the house. The time is certainly not yet arrived when it would go down there, but I do not think it very distant; and, I am sure, had the topic been debated to-day, there would have appeared a manifest disposition in the house to abandon the principles of the war in America; and it seems as if ministry wished to feel the pulse of the house on that subject. A new and unexpected matter put off the whole affair. The speaker, without appearing to be very *ill*, stood up and declared a wish to resign, from not being able through *illness* to go on with the business of the house.¹ It appeared as much a political as a real illness, and I dare say some new movements, perhaps in the administration, may be the consequence. He has not, however, resigned, and the house is adjourned for the benefit of his health till next Monday week; perhaps it may then be too late to renew the intended motion about America, or the state of the war there. The possession of Charleston, if but for a week, or the taking two or three men-of-war from their enemies, may make these wise heads think their arms invincible, and that they may have some better success by prosecuting the war a little further.

I Wish You Every Success And Happiness, And Am,
With Very Great Regard, Your Obedient Servant,

W. S. C.²

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 18 April, 1780.

Sir,—

It is my duty to transmit to congress, as soon as prudence will admit, every thing which deserves consideration, as having either a direct or an indirect tendency to peace, or even to negotiations for that important object. The inclosed letter has been transmitted to Paris through such a channel, that I have reasons to believe 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. [1](#) 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 every thing 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.

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 been too obvious for the writer 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 are 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.

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 turn 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 soothe 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 distressed, or terrified, or panic-struck from the beginning, as Great Britain has been several times in the course of it.

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 late retreat from Savannah, and I think it is impossible to put any other construction upon it but this, namely,—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 have put an end to that part of the war which has been most distressing to America; and I certainly know that 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 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 of America*. I believe, on the contrary, that France has not wished a 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.

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 Americans 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 every thing 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.

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 to 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 false policy.

The next mistake is, the idea of a reconciliation and federal union with America. This must be intended separate 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 constitution of the Courts of France and Spain, and in the other Courts and political connections 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 the sure and certain road. If we go out of it, we may be lost.

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.

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WILLIAM CARMICHAEL TO JOHN ADAMS.

Madrid, 22 April, 1780.

Sir,—

I received with much pleasure your obliging letter of the 8th instant, and take the earliest opportunity of thanking you for the information it contained. I should have certainly commenced my correspondence with you earlier, had I thought Mr. Jay would have been constrained by various circumstances to reside so long at Cadiz. Your observations, with respect to the conduct which France and Spain ought to follow, correspond with the opinions of the Swedish and Dutch ministers here, both of whom I have an opportunity of frequently seeing. The crisis seems near when others beside Britain may play the part of the bully.

If the patriots in Ireland are content with that which they have forced Great Britain to grant them, I shall be much mistaken, and their conduct in that case will not correspond with the history of mankind. I resided three months in that kingdom in the year 1768, and am well acquainted with some of the men who now appear to take a lead in their affairs. Some of these will be for pushing things to the greatest extremity, and perhaps would succeed, if they had liberality enough to tolerate a religion against which they have the most violent animosity.

A fleet of twelve sail of the line, besides frigates and other armed vessels, with eleven thousand five hundred men and a fine train of artillery, will sail this month from Cadiz, if it hath not already sailed. The troops embarked the 14th. I suppose that from Brest sails about the same time. From these armaments you may judge whether your ideas for carrying the war into the American seas are not conformable to the intentions of the allies. We have the same news from America which you announce to me, and our papers are as late as the 10th of March. By several captures taken from the enemy, it appears that Arbuthnot's fleet must have suffered severely, and their dispersion must have been complete; for no news of their arrival in any port was received at Newbury, in Massachusetts Bay, the 14th of March, although they sailed the 26th of December from New York. It appears that congress meant to leave Philadelphia the 1st of April, but to what place is not mentioned. I have advice from Bordeaux that several letters for me arrived in the Buckskin, and were sent on to Madrid. Unhappily I have not received them, which chagrins me not a little. Mr. Jay and family present their respects to you; most of them have been unwell since their arrival here. I beg you to make the proper compliments for me to Mr. Dana, and to believe me,

Your Obligated And Humble Servant,

William Carmichael.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 25 April, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that a small schooner has arrived at Nantes from Baltimore, by which came the inclosed newspapers, which I inclose 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 twenty-eight 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.

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JOHN JAY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Madrid, 26 April, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have at length had the pleasure of receiving your very friendly letter of the 22d February last. It has been very long on the road. Accept my thanks for your kind congratulations, and permit me to assure you that I sincerely rejoice in your having reached the place of your destination, on a business which declares the confidence of America, and for an object, in the attainment of which, I am persuaded you will acquire honor to yourself and advantage to her.

The circumstances you mention as indications of the disposition of Spain, undoubtedly bear the construction you give them. As the Count de Florida Blanca is, I am told, a man of abilities, he doubtless will see and probably recommend the policy of making a deep impression on the hearts of the Americans by a seasonable acknowledgment of their independence, and by affording such immediate aids as their circumstances and the obvious interest of Spain demand. Such measures at this period would turn the respect of America for Spain into lasting attachment, and in that way give strength to every treaty they may form.

Sir John Dalrymple is here; he came from Portugal for the benefit of his lady's health (as is said). He is now at Aranjuez. He has seen the imperial ambassador, the governor of the city, Senor Campomanes, the Duke of Alva, and several others named to him, I suppose, by Lord Grant, who I find was much respected here. He will return through France to Britain.¹ I shall go to Aranjuez the day after to-morrow, and shall form some judgment of his success by the conduct of the court towards America.

I am much obliged by your remarks on the most proper route for letter and intelligence to and from America, and shall profit by them. You may rely on receiving the earliest accounts of whatever interesting information I may obtain; and that I shall be happy in every opportunity of evincing the esteem with which

I Am, &C. &C.

John Jay.

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 29 April, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Do you think it worth while to work into your next article from London the following observations of Lord Bolingbroke?

“The precise point at which the scales of power turn, like that of the solstice in either tropic, is imperceptible to common observation; and, in one case as in the other, some progress must be made in the new direction before the change is perceived. They who are in the sinking scale, for in the political balance of power, unlike to all others, the scale that is empty sinks, and that which is full rises; they who are in the sinking scale do not easily come off from the habitual prejudices of superior wealth, or power, or skill, or courage, nor from the confidence that these prejudices inspire. They who are in the rising scale do not immediately feel their strength, nor assume that confidence in it which successful experience gives them afterwards. They who are the most concerned to watch the variations of this balance, misjudge often in the same manner and from the same prejudices. They continue to dread a power no longer able to hurt them, or they continue to have no apprehensions of a power that grows daily more formidable. Spain verified the first observation when proud and poor and enterprising and feeble, she still thought herself a match for France. France verified the second observation, when the triple alliance stopped the progress of her arms, which alliances much more considerable were not able to effect afterwards. The other principal powers of Europe in their turns have verified the third observation in both its parts.”¹

These observations were never more remarkably verified than in these times; the English, proud and poor, and enterprising and feeble, still think themselves a match for France and Spain and America, if not for all the world; but this delirium cannot last long.

France and Spain and Holland continue to dread a power no longer able to hurt them; but this will be over as soon.

England continues to have small apprehensions of powers that grow daily more formidable; but these apprehensions will increase every day.

Your correspondent from London or Antwerp, among his lamentations over the blindness and obstinacy and madness of the ministry, may introduce these observations with propriety enough.

The balance of power was never perhaps shifted in so remarkable a manner and in so short a space of time. If the minds of the French and Spaniards had grown in confidence in proportion to the growth of their power, and if the confidence of the

English had decreased in proportion to the diminution of theirs, it would have been all over with England before now. You know very well that Lord Bolingbroke was the most eloquent writer that England ever produced. His political writings, particularly, are more admired than any in that language. His name and authority, added to the obvious truth of these observations, and their apposite application to the present times, will make an impression upon many minds in all the nations at war. If you think so, and that it will increase the spirit of our friends and diminish the insolence of our enemies, as it ought, you will make use of it in your own excellent manner; if not, burn it.

Your Friend,

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

À Versailles, le 30 Avril, 1780.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, les deux lettres que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire les 25 et 27 de ce mois; je vous fais mes remerciemens sincères pour les avis qu'elles renferment, et vous prie de vouloir bien continuer à m'envoyer ceux qui vous viendront de l'Amérique.

J'ai l'honneur d'être très sincèrement, monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

De Vergennes.

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W. CARMICHAEL TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Without Date.)

Sir,—

I did myself the honor of writing to you last post, in answer to yours of the 8th of April; at that time I had suspicions that a Sir John Dalrymple, who has now been here near three weeks, was employed by Great Britain to sound the disposition of this Court, and, in the mean time, to work under ground for the interests of his own country. I have hitherto been able to trace most of his motions, which are somewhat suspicious. He came hither from Lisbon under pretence, or really on account of his lady's bad state of health. He had a passport from the ministry here for that purpose, as I have been informed by those who are personally employed about him. He hath visited several of the principal grandees, and all those who were most connected with Lord Grantham. He hath been at Aranjuez, where the royal family is at present; hath seen the French ambassador, and, as I have been told, will soon set out for France. This last circumstance occasions me to give you the present trouble, although I ought to have no other apprehension of his residence here or at Paris at this crisis, unless it be the singularity of the circumstance; for I know he had at one time the confidence of his king, and at least that part of the administration. I have never heard that he hath done any thing to forfeit it. If he is employed in the way I suspect, he may be induced to pay you a visit, if he passes through Paris, which, although it may be unnecessary, induces me to put you on your guard. I shall endeavor to inform you punctually of his route, and shall be always happy, on every occasion, of testifying to you and Mr. Dana how much I am

Your Humble Servant,

William Carmichael.

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T. DIGGES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Extract.)

Wandsworth, 2 May, 1780.

General Conway's motion relative to America was put off to-day for some future period. Hartley's stands for Friday, the substance of which you will have in the General Advertiser of the 1st of May. Some deviltry has got into Conway's head, for he seems to think there is yet a door open for peace with America, short of independence, than which nothing can be so fallacious and absurd. How he can imbibe such notions I cannot think; but I am told he is much in the circle of a Scotch acquaintance, and sometimes talks to refugees, such as Mr. Galloway, Allen, &c. I cannot account for it otherwise, than that he is looking up to the command of the army.

I should be glad, when you see and read the debates upon those motions, to know what you think thereof. I am, on all occasions,

Your Obedient Servant,

William Russell.¹

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 3 May, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I had, two days ago, the honor to inclose to the minister a Boston Gazette of 21st February, in which is a relation of a glorious combat and cruise of my countryman, Captain Waters, of the Thorn. Let me beg of you, sir, to insert this account in the Gazette and the Mercure. There has not been a more memorable action this war; and the feats of our American frigates and privateers have not been sufficiently published in Europe. It would answer valuable purposes, both by encouraging their honest and brave hearts, and by exciting emulations elsewhere, to give them a little more than they have had of the fame they have deserved. Some of the most skilful, determined, persevering, and successful engagements that have ever happened upon the seas, have been performed by American privateers against the privateers from New York. They have happened upon the coasts and seas of America, which are now very well swept of New York privateers, and have seldom been properly described and published even there, and much more seldom ever inserted in any of the gazettes of Europe; whether it is because the actions of single and small vessels, and these privateers, are not thought worth publishing, or whether it has been for want of some person to procure it to be done.

Yours, Most Sincerely,

John Adams.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

8 May, 1780.

Observations from such a masterly hand as Mr. Adams, on the proposals for a general pacification, by the Dean of Gloucester, would be very acceptable. It is obvious his name must be kept secret. We hope for the honor of the company of Mr. Francis Dana and the other gentleman. The proper hour to be here would be at nine in the morning; an American breakfast shall be ready. The ceremony at chapel begins at half after ten.

Genet.

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TO M. GENET.1

Paris, 9 May, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

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

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.

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 the one which the folly and wickedness of Great Britain have 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 soon have been so fatal to her. I do not mean to enlarge.

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 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.

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FROM THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

À Versailles, le 10 May, 1780.

Je vous dois des remerciemens, monsieur, pour les différentes communications que vous avez bien voulu me faire. Si les notions que renferme la lettre qui vous a été confiée, sont exactes, vous ne devez pas tarder à en avoir la preuve, et dans ce cas il faudra voir quelles ouvertures on jugera à propos de vous faire. Je pense que vous ne devez point refuser de les entendre.

J'ai l'honneur d'être très parfaitement, monsieur, &c.

De Vergennes.

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FROM THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

À Versailles, le 11 May, 1780.

M. le Comte de Vergennes est très sensible à la communication que Monsieur Adams a bien voulu lui donner des derniers papiers Américains. Il les lui renvoie ci-joint, et le prie de continuer a lui faire passer tous ceux qu'il recevra. [1](#)

De Vergennes.

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TO W. CARMICHAEL.

Paris, 12 May, 1780.

Sir,—

I had, two days ago, the favor of yours without date, and thank you for the history of Sir John Dalrymple, whose memoirs would be sufficient to put me upon my guard, if I knew no more of him. He has seen the imperial ambassador. Pray do you discover any of the sentiments of the Austrian family where you are? The old rivalry between that and Bourbon, the old friendship and alliance with England? The new *éclat* and power of an old enemy, and the declining forces of an old friend, are circumstances that cannot escape the notice of the sensible and aspiring chief of that great house. The family alliance with France is a lucky circumstance at this time.

I have received a few journals by the way of Amsterdam. Young Colonel Laurens has refused to come to Europe; I suppose smitten with the charms of military glory, and foreseeing the war was turning to his town. You will see, in the public papers, before this reaches you, all the news from America; we are waiting with no small anxiety the arrival of news from Charleston.

De Ternay sailed the 2d, and we hope soon to have the news that the armament from Cadiz is sailed. De Rochambeau is too weak, wherever he is gone; he should have had more force. The Spanish force is very great. But would it not be better policy, both for France and Spain, to send more ships and fewer troops? The British possessions in America, both upon the continent and the islands, depend upon the sea for their existence. According to the bull in the English play, “the strongest ground, or the only ground they stand upon, is the ocean.” By a decided superiority of naval force upon the American coasts and among the islands, under active, vigilant, and enterprising commanders, who will not think it beneath them to cruise for and watch the motions of transports and merchantmen, the trade of America and the islands would flourish, and the supplies of the English be totally cut off. A few French or Spanish men-of-war cruising in the Massachusetts Bay, a few more lying at anchor in the harbor of Rhode Island, and cruising occasionally, a few more lying in the mouth of the Delaware, a few more in Chesapeake Bay, say three ships and three frigates in each, this would make twelve ships of the line and twelve frigates. These would, by cruising themselves occasionally, and giving full scope to our privateers, more certainly ruin the British power than four times that force in Europe. But suppose there was only one ship of the line and two frigates stationed in each, this would be only four ships and eight frigates; these would either totally destroy the British army in America, by starving it, or compel the English to keep more than double their number on the North American station. This would weaken them so much in the West India islands, that the French and Spanish forces there would do whatever they pleased.

I know not the reason of it; but the English do not seem to take Spain into their account at all. They make their calculations to equal or excel the French a little, but reckon the Spaniards for nothing. A very little activity on the part of these would terrify the English beyond measure. I suppose, but it is only conjecture, that the Floridas are the object of the force from Cadiz. Gibraltar occupies another immense force. These forces, however, or the amount of their expenses employed in the American seas and kept constantly in motion, would more certainly ruin the whole British power, and, consequently, more certainly obtain the Floridas, Gibraltar, or whatever else is aimed at, than direct attacks upon those places; attacking these places is endeavoring to lop off single limbs; securing the dominion of the American seas is laying the axe to the root of the tree. But enough of my small politics.

Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 12 May, 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 inclose to you, may be right in his conjecture, 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 propositions 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 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 sentiment, 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 opposition, who profess to be most zealous for peace.

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, upon the agriculture, commerce, and political relations of both, upon the connections 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 once 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.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, 13 May, 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.

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.

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TO T. DIGGES.1

13 May, 1780.

I have to acknowledge one of 14th of April and one of 2d of May. The parcels have not yet been seen nor heard of; you may stop the London Evening Post and the London Packet for the future; but send on the Courant, if you please. I have not yet received the debate on Conway's motion; I have seen the paper and read the debate. It is the scene of the goddess in the Dunciad, reading Blackmore to her children. The commons are yawning, while the ministry and Clinton are cementing the union of America by the blood of every province, and binding all to their allies, by compelling them to shed theirs. All is well that ends well. These wise folk are giving France and Spain a consideration in Europe, too, that they had not, and are throwing away their own as nothing worth. Sweden and Denmark are in the same system with Russia and Holland. Indeed, if the ministry had only common information, they would have known that this combination of maritime powers has been forming these eighteen months, and was nearly as well agreed a year ago as it is now. But when a nation is once fundamentally wrong, thus it is. Internal policy, external defence, foreign negotiations, all go away together. The bad consequences of a principle essentially wrong are infinite. The minority mean only to try if they can make peace with America separately, in order to revenge themselves, as they think they can, upon France and Spain. But this is as wrong and as absurd and impracticable as the plans of the ministry. All schemes of reconciliation with America, short of independence, and all plans for peace with America, allowing her independence separate from her allies, are visionary and delusive, disingenuous, corrupt, and wicked. America has taken her equal station, and she will behave with as much honor as any of the nations of the earth.

To say that the Americans are upon the poise, are balancing, and will return to their allegiance to the King of England, is as wild as bedlam. If witnesses cannot be believed, why do not they believe the nature of things? Ask the newspapers which are so free that nothing is spared; congress and everybody is attacked! Yet never a single paragraph was hinting in a most distant manner a wish to return. Ask the town meetings,—those assemblies which dared, readily enough, to think as they pleased, and say what they would, dared attack the king, lords, commons, governors, councils, representatives, judges, and whole armies, under the old government, and which attack everybody and every thing that displeases them at this day! Not one vote, not one instruction to a representative, not one motion, nor so much as one single speech in favor of returning to the leeks of Egypt. Ask the grand and petit juries who dared to tell the judges to their faces they were corrupted, and that they would not serve under them because they had betrayed and overturned the constitution! Not a single juror has ever whispered a wish to return, after being washed, to their wallowing in the mire. The refugees you mention never did know the character of the American people, but they know it now less than ever. They have been long away. The Americans at this day have higher notions of themselves than ever. They think they have gone through the greatest revolution that ever took place among men; that this revolution is

as much for the benefit of the generality of mankind in Europe as for their own. They think they should act a base and perfidious part toward the world in general, if they were to go back; that they should manifestly counteract the designs of Providence as well as betray themselves, their posterity, and mankind. The English manifestly think mankind and the world made for their use. Americans do not think so. But why proceed? Time alone can convince.

Adieu.

F. R. S.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Paris, 15 May, 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 thirty-four to thirty-seven 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.

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's and Landais's 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 Picquet 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.

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.

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 15 May, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I have engaged a person in London to send me all the political pamphlets as they come out, and some necessary books, as I shall order them. He has sent me already one box and one packet at least, to a Mr. Francis Bowens, merchant, in Ostend. I shall be once more obliged to you, if you would inform me in what way I can soonest get them from thence, and whether there are any regulations which may obstruct this communication. I suppose there are regulations to prevent the introduction of religious or irreligious books; but I shall have none sent me either for or against religion; my bundles will be nothing but politics and a few books that relate to them. If I can get the English pamphlets in this way, I may promise to be of some little use to you now and then in your way. The English have an advantage of us in one point. Their newspapers propagate every thing favorable to them all over Europe immediately, whereas the limitations upon the press in this country prevent us from much of this advantage. Their generals and admirals calculate their despatches for the eye of Europe, for the people, and they adjust them so as to make an impression upon the hopes of their friends and the fears of their enemies, and in this consists full one half of their power.

All governments depend upon the good will of the people. The popular tide of joy and hope and confidence carries away armies and navies to great exertion; for officers and armies and navies are but people. On the contrary, the ebb of sorrow, grief, and despair damps the ardor and activity of officers and men; even the tradesmen, artificers, and laborers, even the mortals adjudged to the galleys, are benumbed by it. The English excite the ardor of their people and of their fleets and armies by falsehood and fiction; their enemies have no occasion for any thing but the truth; this would be enough, if it were known; but the English find means to hide it even from their own eyes.

There is not a more delusive thing in the world than their last despatches from New York; fabricated entirely to impose upon the credulity of friends and enemies. I see thousands of these things every day that might easily be counteracted. I do not wish you to publish any thing against your rules; and if ever I propose any thing of that sort, it will be from ignorance or inattention; and I rely upon your knowledge and prudence to check it. But as I am likely to have a little more leisure than I have had for a long time, if you will give me leave, I will assist you a little in your labors for the public good.

I forget whether the first audience of the Chevalier de la Luzerne has been published in Europe. I inclose it to you. You may print it, if you judge proper; but whether you do or not, I should be glad if you would return it as soon as convenient, because I

have no other copy of the journal of those days. The publication of such things confirms the minds of people in their notions of the alliance, and gradually reconciles all to it; the people of England even are gradually familiarized to it in this way, and brought to consider it as unalterable, and a thing to be submitted to.

My Compliments To Your Amiable Family.

John Adams.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

Versailles, 17 May, 1780.

Monsieur,—

C'est avec le plus grand plaisir que je faciliterai votre correspondance et que j'accepte les offres que vous voulez bien me faire, qui entrent complètement dans les vues de notre ministre. Je vous répond du plaisir avec lequel il donnera son approbation, pour l'impression dans le Mercure, à tout ce qui nous viendra d'une aussi bonne main, et vous ne devez pas douter du secret qui sera gardé sur votre nom pour tout autre que pour Monseigneur le Comte de Vergennes.

Pour avoir par mon canal les pamphlets qui vous seront adressés, il faut que M. Francis Bowens après les avoir reçus de Londres, mette une nouvelle enveloppe avec mon adresse, et remette les paquets à M. de Bowens, Directeur des Postes à Ostende. Aussitôt que je les aurai reçus je ne manquerai pas de vous les faire passer. *Each bundle of the bigness of an ordinary octavo book, and but one at a time.*

Les détails sur la première audience du Chevalier de la Luzerne ont paru dans la Gazette de France et dans le Mercure. Je vous renvoie le cahier du Journal du Congrès. Permettez moi de vous observer que le Mercure ne paroît qu'une fois la semaine et que la place que la politique doit y occuper n'est pas fort considérable. Ainsi il conviendra que vos *Essays* soient de peu de longueur. Il vaut mieux qu'ils ne soient pas de longue haleine et qu'ils paroissent plus souvent. Cette nation-ci lit tout ce qui est court, et elle aime la variété. Il faut saisir son goût pour parvenir à la persuader.

J'Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C. &C.

Genet.

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TO M. GENET.

Paris, 17 May, 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 general 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.

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 connection with England, than with any other nation of Europe. 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 toryism. So that upon the whole, the alliance with France is in fact more natural, as far as religion is concerned, than the former connection with Great Britain or any other connection 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, 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, fashions, 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.

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.

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 its 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.[1](#)

Your Friend, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 19 May, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose 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 merchantmen, 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 convention¹ had gone through the constitution of government, and had accepted the report of the committee with some few unessential amendments.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 24 May, 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 punctually returned.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

Paris, 25 May, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Your kind favor of April 12th is yet unanswered. With nothing at all to do, I am as busy as ever I was in my life. Whether any good will result from it time must discover. I have undertaken to inform congress a little more particularly than they are wont to be informed, of some things that have passed in Europe, which will ultimately affect them; but I find it is in vain to put my eyes out by writing; for when letters are written we cannot get them across the water. I have, however, sworn, and I will perform. If it is possible to get letters to them by the way of Spain or Holland, or any other way, let the expense be what it will, they shall go.

I have a very good opinion of Count Sarsfield, and have the honor to see him sometimes, though not so often as I wish. Too many unsuitable characters, it is very certain, have been permitted to meddle in our affairs; but when or how it will be remedied, God only knows. In a country where every thing goes and is done by protection, and where the maxims of government are the direct opposites of ours, I see no prospect of having it otherwise, let who will be in or out.

As to jobs, I never had, and never will have any thing to do in any, let the consequence to me and my family be what it will. The trusts with which you and I have been honored by our country are too sacred to be tarnished by the little selfish intrigues in which the insects about a court are eternally buzzing. If I had neither a sense of duty, nor the pride of virtue, nor any other pride,—if I had no higher principle or quality than vanity, it would mortify this in an extreme degree, to sully and debase so pure a cause by any such practices.

On the characters you mention, I shall never condescend to bestow my confidence, nor my resentment nor contempt. They have ever been treated by me, and ever will be, with justice and civility; but they will never be my friends.

I have received a letter by the way of Bilboa for you, which I do myself the honor to inclose.

I was in hopes you would have been at congress before now. Your situation must be disagreeable, but I know from experience it can be borne.

Pray how do you relish Clinton's letter?¹ I think the policy of France and Spain is pointed out by it in sunbeams. I hope they will profit by it. They seemed to be convinced of it before this letter arrived. They have now the testimony of our enemy to the truth and justice of what you and I had the honor to represent to them, in conjunction with our colleague last January was twelve months.

I Am, With Much Esteem, &C., Yours,

John Adams.

I have a letter from Mr. S. Adams and Dr. Gordon; both desire to be remembered to you. No news from either, only respecting our constitution, which it seems the convention have adopted without any essential alterations. They have published their result for the remarks and opinions of the people, after which they are to revise it. If two thirds of the people, in 1795, shall desire a convention to revise and alter, as experience shall find necessary, it is to be done. Massachusetts very intent on filling up their quota of the continental army.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

Ce 26 Mai, 1780.

M. Genet renouvelle ses hommages à M. Adams. La lettre ci-incluse est traduite; [1](#) mais il reste à entendre deux ou trois mots qu'il a été impossible de lire. M. Adams est supplié de les écrire de nouveau, pour que cet excellent morceau ne reste pas incomplet.

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M. GENET TO JOHN ADAMS.

Ce 31 Mai, 1780.

M. Genet renouvelle tous ses hommages à M. Adams, et lui fait ses remerciemens de l'excellent morceau qu'il vient de lui envoyer.² Il ne doute point que le ministre ne désire qu'il soit imprimé dans le Mercure. Et M. Adams peut être certain de n'être point nommé.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Paris, 2 June, 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.

Lord George Germaine, 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 appears 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 world for their enmity, merely for the sake of returning to a connection 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 now discover a degree of esteem and regard for America.

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 espousing 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 a 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.

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.

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 the 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, have 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.

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.

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 efforts of this alliance. Let Britain tremble at the consequences of her own folly and her own crime.

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 to 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 assembly and the senators and governors. Is it possible these men should tyrannize 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 tyrannized 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?

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, could 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.[1](#)

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 16 June, 1780.

Sir,—

I have just received a letter from Nantes, brought in a ship from New London. I inclose your Excellency a newspaper inclosed 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 at 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.

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(Extract Inclosed)

RICHARD CRANCH TO JOHN ADAMS.

Boston, 26 April, 1780.

You will see by the papers the congress has recommended a total revolution in the paper currency. The general court is now sitting here. We have adopted the spirit of the recommendation, and a bill for that purpose has passed both houses, but is not yet enacted. By this act, a tax of seventy-two thousand pounds per annum for seven years, including the present year, is to be raised in hard money or produce at a certain rate; which sum is supposed sufficient to redeem our quota of the continental currency at its present depreciated value, estimated at forty paper dollars for one hard one. This tax is to be paid in silver, at six shillings and eight pence per ounce, or gold in proportion; or else in wheat, rye, corn, merchantable fish, barrelled pork and beef, &c. &c., which are to be delivered into the State stores, free of charge, at a certain stipulated price, such as the merchants would be willing to pay for them in silver and gold. This is the fund on which the new bills proposed by congress for this State are to be founded, and will, at the end of seven years, be sufficient to redeem them with gold and silver, and pay the intervening interest.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 20 June, 1780.

Sir,—

Last evening I received the letter, an extract of which I have the honor to inclose. 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.

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.

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.

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(Extract Inclosed.)

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 5 May, 1780.

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 fifty-five. The advantage of this plan will be great to the landholder, inasmuch as the national debt, including certificates and foreign demands, does not now much exceed five millions sterling, which is but a trifling sum compared with the two hundred millions of pounds 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 realized; 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. So much for the value and stability of the medium.

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 indeed very heavy, but the collection goes on, and, I doubt not that 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, lately suffered much by the cruisers of the enemy, who have the command of the sea-coast.

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 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 could 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.

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 forty-five for one, and will be higher, in consequence of the great risk of sending vessels from the Eastern States to the Southern for produce.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation. 1)

Versailles, 21 June, 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.

According to the latter 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. In reading that resolution, I had convinced myself 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 resume its currency according as circumstances should give it a greater or less degree of credit. What would have 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 very letter which you, sir, have been pleased to communicate to me, I have reason to believe that the intention of congress is to maintain the paper money invariably at the exchange of forty for one, and to redeem on that footing all the paper which it has thrown into circulation, in order to reduce insensibly the two hundred millions of dollars, for which it finds itself indebted, to about five millions.

I shall take great care, sir, not to criticize this operation in itself, because I have no right to analyze or comment upon the internal arrangements which congress may consider just and useful; moreover, I readily agree that there may be some situations critical enough to force even the best regulated and longest established governments to adopt extraordinary measures to repair their finances, and to put themselves in a condition to answer the public expenses; and this I am persuaded has been the principal reason that has induced congress to depreciate the money which itself had created.

But while I admit, sir, that that assembly could have recourse to the expedient above-mentioned, in order to lighten the load of its debt, I am far from agreeing that it is just and 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 should have been confined to Americans alone, and that an exception should have been made in favor of those same strangers, or, at least, that some means should have been devised to indemnify these for the losses they may suffer by the general law.

In order to make you sensible of this truth, I will not tell you, sir, that it is for the Americans alone to support the expense which may be caused by the defence of their liberty, and that they ought to consider the depreciation of their paper money purely as a tax which ought to be concentrated upon themselves, as the paper money was at first established only to relieve them from the necessity of paying one. I shall content myself to remark to you that the French, if they should be obliged to submit to the reduction proposed by congress, would find themselves victims of the zeal, and I may say of the rashness, with which they have exposed themselves in furnishing the Americans with arms, ammunition, and clothing; in a word, with all things of the first necessity, of which the Americans stood in the most urgent need. You will agree with me, sir, that this is not the fate which the subjects of the King ought to expect; and that very far from dreading, after escaping the dangers of the sea and the vigilance of the English, to see themselves plundered in America, they might, on the contrary, have counted on the thanks of congress and of the whole American people, and have believed their property as secure and as sacred in America as in France itself. It was with this persuasion, and in a reliance on the 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 same paper overturns their calculations, at the same time that it ruins their fortune. I ask you, sir, if these consequences induce you to believe that this operation of congress is fitting to advance the credit of the United States, to inspire confidence in their promises, to invite the European nations to share in 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 make it a duty to communicate them to you with 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 retrace its steps, and do justice to the subjects of the King.

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

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 22 June, 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.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 22 June, 1780.

Sir,—

I this day acknowledged 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 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 thirty-nine 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.

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 seventy-five, 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 their work and their produce at the rate they 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?

The amount of 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 can 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 fifty-five 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 any thing 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 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 have passed the difference at which they passed between them and silver.

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 tenor 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.

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, 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 the paper honestly worth? What will it fetch at market? And this is the only just rule of redemption.

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.

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 every thing else, and had a great profit besides, receiving the bills at the current, not the nominal value.

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 Lorient and Nantes, forty-five 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. Millinery 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 twenty-five 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 twenty-five 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.

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 connections 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 stigmatize this as an act of bankruptcy. On the contrary, they were satisfied with it.

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 interests of 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, 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.

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.

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 has 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.

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 entreat 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 every thing 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 connections.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.[1](#)

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Paris, 23 June, 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 expedited. 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.

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.

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TO THOMAS DIGGES.

24 June, 1780.

Yours of the 26th and 29th ultimo I have received, and another with the Court Gazette with the capitulation of Charleston; I have also received the box of books, and all the bundles of newspapers and pamphlets. I thank you most sincerely for your care. I beg your pardon, sir, for sending you half of the report of the committee; 1 I thought it entire when I sent it; it is now printed in the papers, so that there is no necessity of sending another if I had it, but I have none left.

The pamphlets have been a feast to me. But what can be said of those written by—? Such a mass of falsehood! The *Cool Thoughts on the Consequences of American Independence*, 1 should have been entitled, “A Demonstration that it is the Interest and Duty of America to support her Independence at all Events: and that it is equally the Interest and Duty of all the rest of Europe to support her in it.” It seems as if Providence intended to give success enough to lead on the English nation to their final and total destruction. I am sorry for it; I wish it not; but it must come, if they pursue this war much further. The conquest of Charleston will only arouse America to double exertion and fourfold indignation. The English nation knows not the people they have to do with, and that has been the fatal cause of their misconduct from first to last. Governor Pownall knows, although he dares not say in parliament what he knows. It is the decree of the destinies that the southern parts of the continent should be brought to as much experience in war as the northern. This will remove the only cause of jealousy, and strengthen the Union beyond a possibility of breaking it. It will make them taste equally, too, the bitter cup of British inhumanity. In short, the English, so far from gaining any thing by the acquisition of Charleston, will only double their expenses; their army will moulder away, and they will be in danger of losing both that and New York. Those who imagine that this will discourage anybody in America, have no idea of that people. The blubbing babies in Europe, who give up all for lost, upon every disaster, are no Americans. The last are men.

Yours, With Great Regard,

F. R. S.

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QUERIES BY B. FRANKLIN.

Mr. Adams, after having perused the inclosed papers, is desired to give his opinions on the following questions.

1st. Whether Captain Landais, accused as he is of capital crimes, by his senior and late commanding officer, after having apparently relinquished the command of the Alliance frigate, by withdrawing his effects from the same, after having asked and received money by order of the minister plenipotentiary, in order to transport himself to America, and take his trial there upon the said accusation, and after having for that purpose, *in writing*, requested a passage to be procured for him, was entitled, *at his pleasure*, to retake the command of the Alliance (contrary to the positive order of the minister plenipotentiary, whose orders the said Landais was by the navy board instructed to obey,) and to dispossess his successor, the oldest naval officer of the United States in Europe, who had commanded the said frigate near eight months, and brought her to the port where she now is?

2d. Whether the conduct of Captain Landais, at Lorient, in exciting the officers and seamen of the Alliance to deny the authority of Captain Jones, under whose command they had voluntarily come, and remained there, and encouraging the said seamen to make unlawful demands on the minister plenipotentiary for the United States, and to enter into a mutinous combination, not to put to sea with the Alliance till said demands should be complied with, thereby retarding the departure of the said frigate, and of the public stores on board, be not highly culpable?

3d. Whether, after Captain Landais's late conduct, and the manner in which he has retaken the command of the frigate Alliance, it be consistent with good order, prudence, and the public service, to permit him to retain the direction of her, and of the public stores intended to be sent with her, accused as he is of capital crimes, by his late commodore, and for which, if he arrives in America, he must of course be tried?

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ANSWER TO THE QUERIES.

Paris, 26 June, 1780.

I have read over all the papers in the bundle left with me, numbered to thirty-seven. I have also read the three queries stated to me.

These queries I apprehend can legally be answered only by congress, or a court-martial; and, therefore, it would be improper in me to give any answer to them, because the papers will appear before congress or a court-martial, who can judge of them better than I. They will also hear Captain Landais in his defence, which I cannot do. My opinion, therefore, would have no weight either before the one or the other tribunal; or, supposing it to be admitted to be read, and to have any weight, it ought not to be given, because I cannot be legally either a witness or a judge.

I cannot, however, think that the instructions of the navy board to Captain Landais to obey the orders of the minister plenipotentiary, contain authority to remove him, without his consent, from the command of a ship committed to him by congress, because the navy board themselves had not, as I apprehend, such authority.

Since those instructions were given, as I was informed at Boston, congress has given to the navy board power, upon any misbehavior of an officer, to suspend him, stating to congress at the same time a regular charge against him. But I do not find among these papers such authority given to any body in Europe, nor do I find that any regular charge against Captain Landais has been stated to congress.

There has seldom, if ever, been in France a sufficient number of officers at a time to constitute a court-martial, and our code of admiralty laws is so inadequate to the government of frigates for any length of time in Europe, that it is presumed congress will in future either omit to put frigates under any direction in Europe, or make some additions to the laws of the admiralty adapted to such cases. For there is an end of all order, discipline, and decency, when disputes arise, and there is no tribunal to decide them, and when crimes are committed, or alleged, and there is no authority to try or to punish them.

I have not observed among these papers any clear evidence of Captain Landais's consent to leave the command of the ship; and, therefore, upon the whole, rather than bring the present dispute about the Alliance to any critical and dangerous decision here, where the law is so much at loose, and there can be no legal tribunal to decide, I should think your Excellency would be most likely to be justified in pursuing the mildest measures, by transmitting all the papers and evidence to congress, or the navy board, for a trial by a court-martial, and ordering the commanding officer of the Alliance, with the stores and convoy, as soon as possible to America.

I give this opinion to your Excellency, to make what use of it you think proper.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 26 June, 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, and endeavored to convince him of the rectitude of the measure. He desired me to converse with his first secretary, which I did particularly.

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, a copy of which and of my answer are inclosed. Yesterday, Mr. Trumbull, of Connecticut, favored me with the law of that 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.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 29 June, 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 the other parts of Europe, especially concerning the designs and the forces of the enemy. This is business enough for the wisest and most laborious man the United States have in their service, aided by an active, intelligent, and industrious 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.

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 from a want of knowledge of our language, our laws, customs, and even the humors of our people, for even these must be considered, they never would be able to give satisfaction or to do 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 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, Lorient, 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.

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 that tranquillity and security, which would have resulted from a total expulsion of the English from the United States and the West India Islands.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Paris, 29 June, 1780.

My Dear Sir,—

Mr. Mazzei called on me last evening to let me know he was this morning, at three, to set off on his journey to Italy. He desired me to write you that he has communicated to me the nature of his errand, but that his papers being lost, he waits for a commission and instructions from you; that being limited to five per cent., and more than that being given by the powers of Europe, and, indeed, having been offered by other States, and even by the ministers of congress, he has little hopes of succeeding at so low an interest; that he shall, however, endeavor to prepare the way in Italy for borrowing, and hopes to be useful to Virginia and the United States.

I know nothing of this gentleman, but what I have learned of him here. His great affection for you, Mr. Wythe, Mr. Mason, and other choice spirits in Virginia, recommended him to me. I know not in what light he stands in your part; but here, as far as I have had opportunity to see and hear, he has been useful to us. He kept good company, and a good deal of it. He talks a great deal, and is a zealous defender of our affairs. His variety of languages, and his knowledge of American affairs, gave him advantages, which he did not neglect.

What his success will be in borrowing money, I know not. We are impatient to learn whether Virginia and the other States have adopted the plan of finances recommended by congress on the 18th of March. I think we shall do no great things at borrowing, unless that system or some other, calculated to bring things to some certain and steady standard, succeeds.

Before this reaches you, you will have learned the circumstances of the insurrections in England, which discover so deep and so general a discontent and distress, that no wonder the nation stand gazing at one another in astonishment and horror. To what extremities their confusions will proceed, no man can tell. They seem unable to unite in any principle, and to have no confidence in one another. Thus it is, when truth and virtue are lost. These, surely, are not the people who ought to have absolute authority over us, in all cases whatsoever. This is not the nation which is to bring us to unconditional submission.

The loss of Charleston has given a rude shock to our feelings. I am distressed for our worthy friends in that quarter. But the possession of that town must weaken and perplex the enemy more than us.

By this time you know more than I do, of the destination and the operations of French and Spanish armaments. May they have success, and give us ease and liberty, if the English will not give us peace!

I Have The Honor To Be, With Affectionate Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Paris, 29 June, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose 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 any thing, 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.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 30 June, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 22d instant, 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 analyze this resolution, insofar as it respects the citizens of the United States, nor to examine whether circumstances authorize 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 between us on this subject will be needless, and I content myself to remark to you, that if the King's council regards the resolution of congress in a false point of view, as you maintain, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who is on the spot, will not fail to elucidate it; and that 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 the reasons upon which they will rest their refusal. Should these be well founded, the King will take them into consideration, his Majesty demanding nothing but the most exact justice. In the opposite case, 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 by so much the more persuaded that congress will give their whole attention to this business, that that assembly, to judge by their reiterated assurances of the fact, value differently from yourself, sir, the union which subsists between France and the United States, and that they will assuredly feel that the French may deserve some preference over the other nations, who have no treaty with America, and who have not even as yet acknowledged her Independence.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 1 July, 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 incontestable, 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.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 2 July, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose a Boston paper of the 1st of May, containing an account of the arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette; an extract of a letter from London; and another from a letter of Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, once a member of congress, and a gentleman of very good intelligence. He speaks the French language very well; was, about ten years ago, in Paris, and is a correspondent of Dr. Dubourg.

This letter was brought me by two young gentlemen, natives of Philadelphia, graduates in the university there, of Quaker families, who are students in medicine, and are come to Paris to complete their education in the faculty. They confirm Dr. Rush's sentiments very fully. Two other gentlemen, just arrived from New England, confirm the same in the Eastern States.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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(Inclosed Extract.)

B. RUSH TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 28 April, 1780.

Our affairs wear their usual checkered aspect. Our governments are daily acquiring new strength. Our army, which I saw a few weeks ago at Morristown, has improved greatly in discipline since our former correspondence, in economy and healthiness. The number of our soldiers is small, occasioned not by a decay of military or whiggish spirit among us, but by the want of money to purchase recruits. The new scheme of congress for calling in the circulating money at forty for one will, I believe, be adopted with some alterations by the States. This will, we hope, restore to our counsels and arms the vigor of 1775.

The French alliance is not less dear to the true whigs than independence itself. The Chevalier de la Luzerne has made even the tories forget in some degree, in his liberality and politeness, the *mischianzas*¹ of their British friends. M. Gérard is still dear to the faithful citizens of America. We call him the “republican minister.”

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WILLIAM LEE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Brussels, 8 July, 1780.

Sir,—

I have been prevented by indisposition, otherwise should have had the honor of writing to you sooner on a subject which appears to affect the honor of America, of congress, and of its agents in Europe. The copy of General Clinton's letter that was intercepted, which you sent here to Mr. Jenings, having afterwards appeared in most of the public papers, there was a formal contradiction of its authenticity, first in the Hague Gazette, and inserted in such a manner as to make the world believe that this contradiction came from Sir Joseph Yorke, the English minister. The Leyden Gazette confirmed in some measure this contradiction, in which it was followed by the Courier du Bas-Rhin, though it had before given the letter at length, as having been originally published by order of congress; but, after the intelligence of the surrender of Charleston, this same gazetteer,—namely, the Courier du Bas-Rhin, in No. 51, of 24 June, 1780,—positively states that letter to have been a forgery, and concludes in these injurious terms,—“*Done il vaut mieux se bien défendre et se bien battre que de supposer des lettres qui ne peuvent abuser le public qu'un moment.*” You must be sensible of the injury it will bring to America and the cause of liberty, if the world is permitted to be impressed with the idea that congress and its agents are base enough to be guilty of such a mean and pitiful conduct as to forge and publish the grossest falsehoods as solid truths.

Mr. Dumas, who is styled by Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane the American agent at the Hague, and who is actually paid with the money of America, has a particular connection with the editor of the Leyden Gazette, and, I have reason to believe, has a correspondence with the Bas-Rhin; therefore, one would naturally imagine, as it was his duty, he would have taken some measures to prevent such a censure on America, &c. from spreading further than in the same circle in which the Hague Gazette circulates. ¹ The Bas-Rhin Gazette, as well as that of Berlin, is generally looked on as a Prussian Court gazette, being printed in the capital of the Prussian dominions on the Rhine, and, I have no doubt, if the Prussian minister at Paris was spoken to on the subject, a repetition of such conduct would at least be prevented in the editor of that gazette.

As Don Solano has returned to Cadiz with his squadron, leaving only four ships of the line to convoy the fleet to the West Indies, all my pleasing prospects of peace, from the hopes of the enemy suffering some capital loss there in this campaign, are totally vanished; for on the arrival of Graves and Walsingham, who have been permitted to go unmolested, the superiority of the enemy at sea will be so decided, that France will be fortunate, if she loses no more than those islands she had before taken from the English. Hitherto, Rodney has only shown his superiority in the art of boasting, which is certainly his forte.

The original force, intended to go under M. Ternay, has unhappily been diminished one half; no effectual, offensive operation can be expected from that expedition; and if it is true, as it is reported, that in the fall M. Ternay goes to the West Indies, the progress of the enemy northward, from South Carolina, may be greater, during the fall, winter, and spring, than most people imagine; when, in the course of a campaign or two, the four Eastern States and France may too late repent, one for supporting, and the others for not crushing in the bud the dangerous and alarming designs that began to appear in Philadelphia and congress eighteen months ago; if it is expected that M. Ternay is to render any effectual service to America, it is most clear to me, that he ought to winter in Chesapeake Bay, in Virginia, where, with very great ease, he may be secure against a very superior force, and prevent any attempt of the enemy for enlarging their quarters northward from Carolina. If the Court of Versailles should approve of such a plan, orders accordingly cannot be sent out too soon to M. Ternay; and if the squadron in the West Indies is to be reinforced or relieved, that should be done with clean and fresh ships from Europe.

From this, you will perceive that a speedy peace is not in my view. Indeed, it is not. I know the enemy too well; they will not seriously think of peace (though they will never cease in their attempts to divide and disunite the parties, which, I well know, they are endeavoring at now) while they have the least glimmering of hope left, unless it is on the terms of America again submitting to the British yoke, and France relinquishing the islands she has taken. Such a peace, I presume, will never take place. I am sure it cannot while America continues united.

It is said that young Mr. Laurens was gone from Carolina to congress, and as Mr. Laurens the elder has not yet arrived there seems to be too much reason to apprehend his having met with some unhappy accident at sea.

Adieu.

W. Lee.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 11 July, 1780.

The inclosed resolutions and commission will explain themselves;¹ and we have only to add a request that, in the event of your not being able to undertake the business to which they point, you will furnish Mr. Dana with the papers, as we have not time to make out or procure other copies for him.

We Are, Sir, &C.

James Lovell,

William Churchill Houston.

In Committee of Foreign Affairs, 12 July, 1780.

Sir,—

Inclosed you have a description of the bills of exchange, concerning which we have written you. The secret checks accompany it. They are just furnished us by the treasury board, and we are sorry that the paper is so indifferent, but hope it will answer the purpose of information. We are assured the copy is exact. It is, however, necessary to observe that, unless the impression of the bills is very fine and clean, it will be very difficult to discover the whole of the secret checks perfectly.

We Are Sir, &C.

James Lovell,

William Churchill Houston.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 11 July, 1780.

Sir,—

Your letters, one of the 3d and three of the 4th of April, were received in congress yesterday. We are to thank you for the intelligence they contain, and are, sir,

Your Very Humble Servants,

James Lovell,

William Churchill Houston.

1 August, 1780.

P. S. Your various letters by Mr. Izard were this day read, of dates from March 20 to 29. That of the 24th, respecting two points on which you wish for instructions, is committed specially to five.¹

J. L.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 13 July, 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 counsels 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 counsels, 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 government 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 the 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 connection with France.

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 acquiring 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 their 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 their 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 any thing decisive from their operations, although they should be instructed to coöperate 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, it is 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 post 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.

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 or 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 there by the guns of their men-of-war; and they 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 coöperate 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.

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 imputation 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.

The English are in possession of Canada, a province vastly extensive, and in which there is a great number of posts, 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 posts, more than four thousand men.

The English are in possession of Nova Scotia; they have in Halifax and the other posts 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, perhaps NA 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 enroll 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 NA 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.

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.

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 every thing 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 fifty-six guns which is nearly ready for sea. The State of Massachusetts has two frigates and several 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.

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 Bay.

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.

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 strongholds, without the most absolute command of the sea, I fear it will end in disappointment and disgrace.

There is the more urgent reason 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 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, namely,—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, 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.

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 character of her people, the extent, variety, and fertility of her soil, her commerce, and her skill and materials for ship-building, 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; and to believe me to be. &c.

John Adams.

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DAVID HARTLEY TO JOHN ADAMS.

London, 17 July, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Inclosed I send you a copy of a conciliatory bill which I moved in parliament on the 27th of the last month.

You will perceive by the tenor of it that it is drawn up in very general terms, containing a general power to treat, with something like a sketch of a line of negotiation. As the bill was not accepted by the ministers in this country, I have nothing further to say relating to it. As to my own private sentiments and endeavors, they always have been, and ever will be, devoted to the restoration of peace upon honorable terms. I shall be always ready, and most desirous to conspire in any measures which may lead to that end.

I Am, Dear Sir, Your Most Obedient Servant,

D. Hartley.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 17 July, 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 authorize you to negotiate a treaty of commerce with the Court of London, I think it will be prudent not to communicate them to anybody whatever, and to take all possible precautions, that the British ministry may not have a premature knowledge of them. You will, surely, of yourself, 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.
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 counsels 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 any thing 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 have 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.

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 Germaine. 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 wish 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.

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; and I remain with great respect and attachment, &c.

John Adams.

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TO WILLIAM LEE.

Paris, 20 July, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

Yours of the 8th I received in due course of post. The letter from Clinton arrived first at Lorient, in a Philadelphia newspaper, which had been sent to Mr. Jay. Mr. Wharton, I think, copied it, and sent it to Dr. Franklin, who communicated it soon after it appeared in Boston and other newspapers, without a hint of its want of authenticity. Within a few days past, I have seen a gentleman from America, who says it was a mere *jeu d'esprit*, written by an officer in the army, upon the North River. I have been all along afraid that our countrymen would at length imitate their enemies in this kind of imposition; and I always thought that, whenever they did, they would be ingenious at it. It must be agreed this is ingeniously done, and conveys a great deal of solid truth and important instruction under this fiction. Yet, I cannot think the ingenuity of it a justification or excuse. We have no need of such aids as political lies. Our character for truth, sincerity, and candor, is more real strength, than ever can be derived from such impostures, however artfully performed. The influence this practice has upon the world, in destroying confidence, and in poisoning the morals of the people, the pure and single source of which is truth, ought to induce us to discountenance the practice by all means. The liberty of the press by no means includes a right of imposing on mankind by such detestable forgeries. I cannot, therefore, think that the reflection you quote from the newspaper was too severe. All that we can do, is to write to congress and beseech them to suppress such practices. The signature of Charles Thomson, hitherto sacred, will no longer be credited, if something is not done to discountenance such abuses.

Don Solano has not returned to Cadiz; but what will be done in the West Indies, time alone can discover. Whether M. de Ternay will go to the West Indies, stay in America, or come to Europe, I know not. I have not contented myself with giving my sentiments of what ought to be done, by word of mouth, but I have stated it in writing, with my reasons at large, to more than one minister, and of all this I shall inform congress in detail, who will see and judge who is right.

You say that a speedy peace is not at present in your view. This is so far from being surprising to me, that I wonder you ever should have had any pleasing prospects of peace, from the enemy's suffering some capital loss in the West Indies. They are in such a sulky, mulish, suicidal temper, that they would not make peace, if you took every island they have. This is my opinion. The suppression of the riots, committees, associations, correspondences and all, have given ministry more giddy confidence, than even the taking of Charleston. I fear America must reconcile herself to the thought of growing up in the midst of war, and find her resources in labor, patience, and economy, where she may have them in sufficient abundance.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 20 July, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 13th of this month. I feel very sensibly the confidence with which you have reposed in me 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 have been sent with the express design which makes the subject of your letter. They will concert their operations with congress and M. Washington. And as the King has given them no precise orders with regard to their return to Europe, but has, on the contrary, left them at liberty to act as they shall judge useful for the relief of the United States, 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 may judge, sir, by this detail, that the King is very far from abandoning the cause of America, and that his Majesty, without having been solicited by congress, has, on the contrary, taken effectual measures to support it. I flatter myself, sir, that proceedings thus generous will be felt in America, and that they will prevail over the falsehoods which the common enemy and his wicked adherents propagate there, in order to make France suspected, and to induce the Americans to take resolutions which would terminate in their slavery and dishonor.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 21 July, 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 a 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 the Americans, the King's determined benevolence to the American cause.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 23 July, 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 sevensight, 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 any thing 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’Almodovar, 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 Germaine, 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.”

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 some equivocal appearances of negotiation. 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 well 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, have now given them such exultation, and confidence 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 majority of the people in America will not agree to, in order to divide us, to make a few gentlemen apostates and some soldiers deserters.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 25 July, 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 it on the margin of each paragraph which seemed to require observations on my part. You will there see, sir, that I persist in thinking the time to communicate your full powers to Lord Germaine 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 with me. But if that should not be the case, I pray you, and even require you, in the name of the King, to communicate your letter and my answer to the United States, and to suspend, until you shall receive orders from them, all steps relating to the English ministry. I shall, on my part, transmit my observations to America, in order that M. de la Luzerne may make the members of congress possessed of them; and I dare to believe that that assembly will consider the opinion of the ministry of France worthy of some attention, and that they will not be afraid of going astray or of betraying the interests of the United States, by adopting it as a rule of their conduct. [1](#)

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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OBSERVATIONS ON MR. ADAMS'S LETTER OF 17TH JULY, 1780.

(Translation.)

I.2 The reasons, which determined the Count de Vergennes to give Mr. Adams that advice are as plain as they appear absolutely decisive.

1st. To be busy about a treaty of commerce, before peace is established, is like being busy about the ornament of 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 her system of tyranny, her cruelties, and her perfidy are forgotten, is discovering much weakness, or at least much simpleness; it is inviting her to believe that the Americans have an irresistible predilection for her; it is fortifying her in the opinion she entertains, that the American patriots will submit through weariness, or through fear of the preponderating influence of the tories.

3d. To propose a treaty of commerce, which must be founded on confidence, and on a connection 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 has ever entertained, 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 so long as Great Britain shall furnish no pretext for breaking them?

II. A person may be furnished with plenipotentiary powers, in a certain event, without being under the necessity of publishing them before 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 joined in one act. It requires no more to show 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 this acknowledgment should serve as a foundation for a treaty of peace. Not until after that is obtained, can Mr. Adams 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 is chimerical, and would be taking a step which it would hold as a mockery. 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 have permitted Mr. Adams to announce, are those which authorize him to take a part in the negotiations for peace.

The two other powers will have no value until the conclusion of that peace; so that it would be at least useless to produce them at present, and, consequently, Mr. Adams will not act inconsistently with the design and nature of his powers, by concealing them from the Court of London. Although the Count de Vergennes is unacquainted with the tenor of 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 has been observed, that the English ministry would consider that communication as a mockery; hence it is voluntarily seeking to blind one's self to suppose, that it will engage them to enter into any conference, or to say any thing 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 shall have returned to their former allegiance. Therefore, it would be at least superfluous to draw upon one's self such an answer, nor can the United States need it, to know the present sentiments of the Court of London, still less, to prepare themselves by counsels and armies to resist it. It is astonishing to talk of preparations of counsels and armies, when the war is raging in all its fury, when it has now lasted six years, and England has not yet made the smallest overture to the Americans, that can authorize 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 needlessly expose one's self to insult, and thereby become 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 one due 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 steadily considers the Americans as rebellious subjects. With such an opinion, how could Lord Germaine receive a letter from Mr. Adams, assuming 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 know and to appreciate 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.

V. The silence or the answer of the English ministry, whichever it might be, will neither alarm nor arouse the people of England. That people, without doubt, desire peace and an accommodation with America. But we have heard as yet only some individuals speak of independence, and these, more from a spirit of contradiction, 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 of the embarrassment into which the announcing of his powers might 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 officially, 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 full powers of Mr. Adams will disclose nothing new in this respect, either to England or to the other powers of Europe. Hence the false impression which he thinks the Court of London has in this matter can be no obstacle to a peace. If any such obstacle existed, the English ministry would themselves seek to remove it, if they were determined to make the peace depend thereon.

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

VIII. This reflection is very wise. It proves that Mr. Adams himself feels that there are circumstances which place him under a necessity 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 well persuaded that from this time forward they will have such a treaty with America whenever they shall judge convenient. 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.

IX. This paragraph has just been answered. 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 to persuade not merely an Englishman, but any thinking being, that by granting independence in exchange for these advantages, the Court of London were making an honorable and advantageous peace, would be a hard task to perform. If this was the real sentiment of the people of England, why have they for these six years past, without murmuring, furnished ruinous contributions in order to subdue America?

X. The English ministry either have sincere intentions of making peace, or they mean only 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 will assuredly forget nothing which they think will forward peace, and, once agreed upon independence, their first care will be, without doubt, to be placed on an equality with France in regard to commerce. On the contrary, if the English ministry mean only to amuse Spain, to penetrate her designs, and to slacken her preparations for war, Mr. Adams should do the ministry of Madrid the justice to believe that they have sagacity enough to

discover all these views, and 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 desire to make peace on terms equally agreeable to France and America, to what purpose now communicate to them 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 deem it 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 full powers. In the mean time, it is necessary to labor for the establishment of the foundation of the 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 COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 27 July, 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."

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, 1779,¹ 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. 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 every thing 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 well assured they would not hesitate a moment to make it. But 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 every thing that appears to me of importance to the common cause, in which I can do it with any propriety. And these 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 any thing that relates to the United States, or the common cause, whenever they shall be asked.

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 any thing 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, and 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 cooperate with France and the United States in the system of keeping up a constant superiority of naval power, both upon the coast 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 powers the advantage.

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.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 29 July, 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 MM. 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 more of the kind, 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.

For the rest, sir, I ought to observe to you, that the passage in my letter on which you have thought it your duty to extend your reflections related 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 direct his attention to the interests of the United States.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 30 July, 1780.

Sir,—

Since your arrival in Europe I have been favored with your several despatches of the 11th and 16th of December last, the 16th of January, the 15th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 25th, 27th, and 29th of February, the 8th, 18th, 19th, and 23d of March.

It is probable the committee of foreign affairs may have acknowledged the receipt of these despatches, and several duplicates which have also been received.

I presume they have given you particular intelligence of all material occurrences in America since your departure, it being properly in their department, and a business which my present engagements will by no means admit me to undertake in so ample a manner as is necessary or would be agreeable to your wishes. Before this comes to hand, you will doubtless have received the disagreeable intelligence of the capitulation and surrender of Charleston, in which the brave General Lincoln with about two thousand continental troops, officers included, were made prisoners.

On the evening of the 10th instant, the French squadron, under the command of the Chevalier de Ternay, arrived off Newport. The Count de Rochambeau has since landed his troops on Conanicut. Three days after their arrival, Admiral Graves, with a British squadron, arrived at New York, and being joined by the ships there, soon put to sea; and we have just received advice, that Graves with his whole squadron, since their junction, is cruising off Newport. The exact number and strength of his squadron I cannot learn; but it is thought equal, if not superior to Ternay's.

Without a decisive superiority of naval strength in these seas, we cannot expect to expel the enemy from New York this campaign, where we have been plagued with them long enough.

We have been waiting some time in anxious expectation of intelligence from the West Indies; but by the latest advices from thence nothing capital had been done as late as the 15th instant.

I have the pleasure to inform you that the State of Massachusetts have established their constitution; a desirable and important event.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Samuel Huntington.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 14 August, 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 inclose 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, authorized 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 any thing 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.

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 neuters, 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.[1](#)

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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DAVID HARTLEY TO JOHN ADAMS.

London, 14 August, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I take the liberty to introduce to your acquaintance my friend and relation, Mr. Samuel Hartley. Some business carries him to Paris, and he is desirous of that opportunity of being made known to you. Give me leave at the same time to tell you, on my own account, that I wish not to lose any occasion of expressing my personal respects to you. I heartily wish, likewise, that any fortunate events might bring us together in the negotiation of public and universal peace. All my political thoughts and views are comprised in that one word,—peace. I understand that it is the object of your appointment, and a most honorable one it is. I heartily wish success to it, and, in my limited situation, I should be happy to assist and to concur in that end. War cannot last forever. I will not therefore despair. Let peace and friendship return hand in hand together.

I Am, Dear Sir, &C.

David Hartley.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 17 August, 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 connection 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 connection 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.

To the fourth I say, that their paradox is like several others,—namely, 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.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN LUZAC.1

Amsterdam, 5 September, 1780.

Sir,—

Inclosed is an abridgment of a pamphlet published in London last winter.2 I beg your attentive perusal of it, and your candid opinion, whether it would be of service to our cause, which is the cause of mankind, and especially of Europe, to publish it, and in what manner. You will please to return it to me, if you do not make any use of it, because there is not in the world another copy.

It is an abridgment of a real pamphlet. This you may depend on.

Yours Respectfully,

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 5 September, 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.

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 connection 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.

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, and to be, &c.

John Adams.

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

Hotel Valois, Rue Richelieu, Paris, 8 September, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I had the pleasure of yours of the 30th of last month, on the 4th instant; but my eyes being again in a bad state, and being otherwise unwell, I desired Mr. Thaxter to acknowledge the receipt of it. My first misfortune I have not yet entirely recovered from, nor do I expect to till I shall be able wholly to lay aside both the book and the pen, for a considerable length of time. I had begun upon the business you mentioned some time before your departure, and had made a considerable progress in it, but my eyes have obliged me to stop short of my purpose. This misfortune (without a pun) frequently casts a gloomy shade over my future prospects. 'Tis really the source of much melancholy contemplation, but I will trouble you no more with it.

Mr. Thaxter communicated to you all our intelligence of a public nature; but as this letter will be handed to you by Mr. Austin, who sets off to-morrow evening for Amsterdam, I shall communicate some other parts of Mr.—'s letter to me.

“You doubtless know, that Mr. Cumberland, one of Lord George Germaine's secretaries, has been here some time. His mission, as well as admission, has given cause to many conjectures. I am not apprehensive that Spain will make a separate peace; but I by no means think it prudent to receive the spies of Britain into their capital, and even into their palaces. There are a great many wheels in our business, and the machine won't work easily, unless the great wheel be turned by the waters of the Mississippi, which I neither believe, nor wish, will be the case. Success in America would give it motion.”

“My adventurers” (you will understand him here) “are in a most perilous suspense; God grant them a happy deliverance.”

You will want no comments upon these texts. I shall only say, Spain having secured to herself a free commerce with America, hath now nothing to ask of her. Behold the effects of precipitate concession! If a young politician of a young country might presume to give his opinion upon matters of such high importance, he would say, that should America, in the end, feel herself constrained to comply with the claims of Spain, that alone would be the cause of bringing on the extinction of the Spanish dominion, on the east of the great river. As a Spaniard, therefore, he would think it unsafe and highly impolitic to urge the claim, or even to accept of the *exclusive* right. It is to be hoped, that the late important success of the combined fleets on the commerce of Britain will not only teach them that similar ones are easily to be obtained, but that they are also among the most eligible, as they most effectually distress and disable the common enemy. Such, however, is the force of habit, that he

who should urge such policy might be told, you are but of yesterday, and know nothing.

I am happy to learn you spent your time so agreeably in Amsterdam, and find so much good-will to our cause and country; and I lament with you, that our worthy friend has not arrived there. Ministers at the courts you mention would doubtless render the councils and influence of our country more extensive and more independent, but these are things rather to be wished for, than expected.

I am glad to hear you have my form of our constitution; when you have done with it, please to forward it by the first private hand. I have a letter from that worthy character, Judge Sargeant; among other things, he says,—“In the course of our travelling, we have the pleasure to find a remarkable candor in the people with respect to the new form of government, excepting the third article about religion. There will be, as far as we can learn, almost an unanimous vote in favor of *it*, and more than two thirds in favor of *that*. This appears to be the case at the northward and southward, and in the middle counties where we have been; and the eastward counties were always in that disposition.” Thus, sir, I hope we shall have cause to rejoice in the candor and good sense of our countrymen, and in seeing them happy under a generous and free form of government.

I Am, Dear Sir,

Francis Dana.

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TO DAVID HARTLEY.

Amsterdam, 12 September, 1780.

Sir,—

I am obliged to you for a letter of the 14th of August which was this day delivered me by your friend.

You was not misinformed when you heard that the object of my appointment was peace. Nor do I differ from your opinion, that this appointment was honorable, although I see no prospect at all of ever acting in virtue of it. War will not last forever, it is true; but it will probably last long enough to wear you and me out, and to make room for our sons or grandsons to become the blessed peacemakers.

Peace will never come but in company with faith and honor; ¹ and when these can be allowed to live together, let friendship join the amiable and venerable choir. Peace seems to be flying away. The new parliament will drive her to the distance of seven years at least, and every year of the continuance of war will add some new humiliation to the demands upon a certain country. So the fates have ordained, and we mortals must submit.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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JOHN LUZAC TO JOHN ADAMS.

Leide, le 14 Septembre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

Je viens d'achever la lecture de la brochure, au sujet de laquelle vous avez bien voulu demander mon avis. La partie du style est excellente. Il me paroît seulement, que dans les huit ou dix premiers feuillets il y a des fautes de langage, faciles à corriger, mais néanmoins trop remarquables. Quant aux choses, elle est fortement pensée; et quoiqu'une brillante imagination puisse avoir porté l'auteur à orner peut-être un peu trop le tableau des effets de la révolution Americaine, je suis convaincu pourtant, que le fond de ses idées est très vrai, et que ses principes ne méritent pas moins l'attention des philanthropes que ses vues sur l'avenir. Ainsi je pense qu'elle mérite à tous égards d'être rendue publique par l'impression, et que cette publication ne peut qu'inspirer des sentimens favorables aux intérêts de l'Amérique.

Je ne saurois néanmoins vous dissimuler un petit scrupule que j'ai à ce sujet. L'auteur trace avec un pinceau vigoureux la révolution que l'indépendance de l'Amérique opérera dans le système commercial de l'Europe. Mais en faisant ce tableau il peint la Russie dépouillée de son commerce exclusif du bois de construction, et des autres munitions navales; la Suède de celui du fer; la Hollande de son cabotage et de son monopole d'épiceries, etc. Je crains que cette perspective n'effarouche les esprits. L'auteur tâche ensuite, il est vrai, de prouver que cette concurrence, cette liberté générale, cette réduction de toutes les nations à un niveau commun, seroient un bien; que la possession de colonies lointaines est un mal; que l'avantage d'un commerce exclusif n'est qu'un préjugé, etc. Mais, monsieur, ces préjugés sont trop profondément enracinés pour qu'ils n'opèrent pas encore en ce moment, Moi-même, en plaidant la cause de l'Amérique, et en soutenant que l'Europe étoit intéressée à son indépendance, j'ai vingt fois rencontré cette objection de la part de personnes sensées et instruites. "Oui, mais si l'Amérique devient libre, elle fera un jour la loi à l'Europe. Elle nous enlèvera nos îles, et nos colonies de la Guyane; elle s'emparera de toutes les Antilles; elle engloutira le Mexique, le Pérou même, le Chili et le Brésil; elle nous enlèvera notre commerce de fret; elle payera ses bienfaiteurs d'ingratitude etc." J'y ai toujours répondu dans les mêmes principes que notre auteur; mais je n'en suis pas moins resté persuadé, que cette jalousie influe ici sur beaucoup d'esprits; et quiconque connoît *the selfishness*, qui malheureusement ne fait que trop la base de la politique, pourra craindre, qu'elle n'ait aussi son effet chez les puissances du nord.

Il seroit néanmoins dommage qu'on touchât à la brochure en la châtrant; mais il me semble, qu'on pourroit dans une préface jeter un voile sur ces vérités trop nues et dont certains yeux pourroient s'offenser. Si vous le souhaitez, monsieur, je me chargerai bien volontiers du poste d'éditeur; et je trouverai aisément un libraire. Mais dans ce cas, s'il se pouvoit, je serois charmé d'avoir aussi entre les mains la brochure originale.

Je demande pardon de ne vous pas renvoyer encore les Gazettes de Pensylvanie. Il nous en est venu quelques autres d'un autre côté; et comme notre feuille ne peut tout contenir à la fois, je me propose d'en faire successivement usage d'une manière, qui, à ce que je me flatte, ne vous sera pas désagréable. Vous en verrez quelques échantillons dans les feuilles ci-jointes, ainsi que le commencement de la traduction de l'adresse de la convention de Massachusetts Bay.

Je Vous Prie, &C. &C.

J. Luzac.

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TO JOHN LUZAC.

Amsterdam, 15 September, 1780.

Sir,—

I have just now received yours of the 14th, and I wish I had time to write you a sheet or two on the subject of it. I am very glad to find you will undertake to be the editor; and I beg the favor of you to place such a preface as you like, and to correct the language whenever it has occasion. I hope to see it public as soon as possible.

I have met often in Europe with the same species of reasoners that you describe; but I find they are not numerous. Among men of reflection the sentiment is generally different, and that no power in Europe has any thing to fear from America. The principal interest of America for many centuries to come will be landed, and her chief occupation agriculture. Manufactures and commerce will be but secondary objects, and always subservient to the other. America will be the country to produce raw materials for manufactures; but Europe will be the country of manufactures, and the commerce of America can never increase but in a certain proportion to the growth of its agriculture, until its whole territory of land is filled up with inhabitants, which will not be in some hundreds of years.

Russia and the northern powers are too well informed to fear that America will interfere with them in the articles of their commerce. America will demand of them in hemp, duck, cordage, sailcloth, linens, and other articles, more than they will ever interfere with them in the trade of tar, iron, and timber. In fact, the Atlantic is so long and difficult a navigation, that the Americans will never be able to afford to carry to the European market great quantities of these articles. They have other productions of greater profit in a smaller compass, in such numbers and variety, that they never can interfere with the northern powers. As to iron, we shall import it in bars from Sweden as we ever did. We used to import Swedish iron from England.

But, supposing we should interfere, should we interfere less under the government of England than under our own government?

I have not the original “Memorial to the sovereigns of Europe,” but I can get it from London.

The question to your antagonists should be, can Europe prevent the independence of America? If united, perhaps they might; but can they be united? If Europe cannot prevent, or rather, if any particular nations of Europe cannot prevent the independence of America, then, the sooner her independence is acknowledged, the better; the less likely she will be to become warlike, enterprising, and ambitious. The truth is, however, that America can never unite in any war but a defensive one.

I have been much obliged to you for your favorable representation of the news from America and of our affairs in general.

And Am, With Great Respect And Esteem, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 16 September, 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 may take no measures inconsistent with their and our interests 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 admiralty will probably discharge them, and the ministry will give up the point of *free ships 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 fifty-five 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 by any people whatsoever; and it is by cutting off supplies, not by attacks, sieges, or assaults, that I expect deliverance from our 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.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 19 September, 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,¹ 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 mis, taken 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.

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.[1](#)

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TO M. VAN VOLLENHOVEN.

22 September, 1780.

A stranger having particular occasion to speak with the broker who, some time since, negotiated in this city a loan of money for the city of Dantzic, begs the favor of M. Van Vollenhoven to communicate his name and place of abode, in writing, to the bearer.

(Reply on a Slip of Paper.)

Hendrik Van Blomberg, op de blomgragt.

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FROM M. VAN BLOMBERG.

Amsterdam, 25 September, 1780.

Sir,—

Messrs. Van Vollenhoven, notwithstanding all the credit they have for the United States of North America, cannot accept of the commission which you have done them the honor to propose, for reasons that their branch of commerce being fixed to the Baltic, they cannot well extend it so far as North America.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

H. V. Blomberg.

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FROM M. VAN BLOMBERG.

Amsterdam, 26 September, 1780.

Sir,—

I waited yesterday for a second time on Messrs. Van Vollenhoven, after the receipt of your favor. The affair in question is too extended to decide by letters, for which reason I beg the favor of you to do me the honor to call on me this evening at six o'clock, when I shall have a person with me, with whom we can speak in confidence.

I Am, With Great Regard, Sir, &C.

H. V. Blomberg.

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FROM M. MYLIUS.

Amsterdam, 29 September, 1780.

M. Mylius's compliments to the Honorable Mr. Adams. Whereas M. Van Blomberg is out of the city and doth not return before Monday next, and hath ordered his clerk to bring any word which might come from you, sir, to me, so I did take the liberty to open your billet for M. Van Blomberg, and saw thereby that you desired another evening's conversation in company only with me, for which honor I am much obliged to you; whereupon, I can say that I think it will be next Tuesday evening, the time nearer to be appointed.

(Memorandum in the same Handwriting.)

When the loan is of three millions guilders, there is

The provision for negotiating the capital,	2 per cent.
For the undertakers to furnish the capital,	2 per cent.
Brokerage,	$\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
Expenses of stamped paper for the bonds, printing, and proto collating the same, &c.,	$\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
	5 per cent.

And for the yearly paying off of 10 per cent., as is stipulated, and which shall be prolonged or continued again for ten years,

For provision to the house of the loan,	1 per cent.
The undertakers,	1 per cent.
Brokerage,	$\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
	$2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

And in case there might be more negotiated than the prolongation of 10 per cent., then the expenses of that greater part are as above, 5 per cent.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 2 October, 1780.

Sir,—

By all our late advices from America, the hopes you expressed, that our countrymen, instead of amusing themselves any longer with delusive dreams of peace, would bend the whole force of their minds to find out their own strength and resources, and to depend upon themselves, are actually accomplished. All the accounts I have seen, agree that the spirit of our people was never higher than at present, nor their exertions more vigorous.

Inclosed I send you extracts of some letters from two French officers, a colonel and lieutenant-colonel in the army of M. de Rochambeau, which are the more pleasing, as they not only give a good character of our troops, but show the good understanding that subsists between them and those of our allies. I hope we shall soon hear of something decisive performed by their joint operations, for your observation is just, that speculations and disputations do us little service. Our credit and weight in Europe depend more on what we do than on what we say; and I have long been humiliated with the idea of our running about from court to court begging for money and friendship, which are the more withheld the more eagerly they are solicited, and would perhaps have been offered, if they had not been asked. The supposed necessity is our only excuse. The proverb says, “God helps them that help themselves,” and the world, too, in this sense, is very godly.

As the English papers have pretended to intelligence, that our troops disagree, perhaps it would not be amiss to get these extracts inserted in the Amsterdam Gazette.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir,

Your Excellency’S Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

B. Franklin.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 4 October, 1780.

Sir,—

I have just received your favor of the 3d, and thank you for the early information of the arrival of the courier from the plenipotentiaries of this republic at Petersburg. I hope that this republic will agree, without delay, to the armed neutrality; but I should be glad to see a copy of the despatches, if possible, or at least as exact an account of their substance as may be. I should be glad also to learn, whether the object of the congress is simply to form a plan for supporting each other and making a common cause in defence of those principles only which the three northern powers have already adopted, or whether they have in contemplation a more extensive regulation of maritime affairs.

I do not see how this congress can have a peace between the belligerent powers for its object, when the parties who compose it have already so positively declared for a neutrality. I wish with all my heart that another republic had a minister at the congress, or at least at the Court of Petersburg. Neither the cause nor the country of America are understood in any part of Europe, which gives opportunity to the English to represent things as they choose. *Onesta è sempre la causa di colui che parla solo.*

I do not expect peace so soon as next spring. And I should dread the interposition of the congress at Petersburg in the business. They understand not the subject. It is impossible they should. America is not represented there, and cannot be heard. If they should take into consideration the affair of peace. I should be apprehensive of some recommendations to save the pride, or what they would call the dignity of England, which would be more dangerous and pernicious to America than a continuance of the war. I do not dread a continuance of war; I should dread a truce ten times more.

If all the powers at the congress at Petersburg would agree together to acknowledge American independency, or agree to open a free commerce with America and admit her merchant ships and vessels of war into their ports, like those of the other belligerent powers, this I think would be just. Indeed, that perfect neutrality which they profess, requires it. Refusing admittance to the American flag while they admit that of England, is so far from a neutrality, that it is taking a decided part in favor of England and against one of the belligerent powers; a power, too, which in point of numbers, wealth, industry, capacity, military, and naval power, as well as commerce, is quite as respectable as several of those which are or will be represented in the congress at Petersburg.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TWENTY-SIX LETTERS UPON INTERESTING SUBJECTS RESPECTING THE REVOLUTION OF AMERICA, WRITTEN IN HOLLAND, IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXX

The following is the account of the composition of these letters, as given by Mr. Adams.

“At dinner one day, with a large company, at the house of a great capitalist, I met the giant of the law in Amsterdam, Mr. Calkoen. He was very inquisitive concerning the affairs of America, and asked me many ingenious questions. But he had spent his life in such ardent study of his institutes, codes, nouvelles, and pandects, with his immensely voluminous comments upon them, that he had neglected entirely the English language, and was very inexpert in the French. Interpreters were, therefore, necessary; but conversation that requires interpreters on both sides, is a very dull amusement. Though his questions were always ready, and my answers not less so, yet the interpretation was very slow and confused. After some time, one of the gentlemen asked me if I had any objection to answering Mr. Calkoen’s questions in writing. I answered, none at all. It was soon agreed, that the questions and answers should be written. Accordingly, in a few days, Mr. Calkoen sent me his questions in Dutch, Mr. Le Roy, now of New York, was obliging enough to translate them for me into English, and I wrote an answer to each question in a separate letter. They gave so much satisfaction to Mr. Calkoen, that he composed, from the information contained in them, a comparison between the revolt of the low countries from Spain, and the Revolution of the United States of America, in which his conclusion was, that as it was a kind of miracle that the former succeeded, it would be a greater miracle still if the latter should not. This composition was read by him to a society of gentlemen of letters, about forty in number, who met at stated times in Amsterdam; and by that means, just sentiments of American affairs began to spread, and prevail over the continual misrepresentations of English and Stadtholderian gazettes, pamphlets, and newspapers.

“The publications of General Howe and General Burgoyne, in vindication of themselves, were procured to be translated into French, and propagated, together with many other pamphlets, which assisted in the same design, and contributed to excite the citizens to those applications, by petition to the regencies of the several cities, which finally procured the acknowledgment of American independency, the treaty of commerce, and a loan of money.”

These letters were collected and printed in London, in 1786, by Mr. Adams, but not published. They were reprinted in 1789, in New York, and published with the title here prefixed, by John Fenno, and they also make a part of the volume published in Boston, in 1809, under the title, *Correspondence of the late President Adams*.

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TO MR. CALKOEN.

Amsterdam, 4 October, 1780.

Sir,—

You desire an exact and authentic information of the present situation of American affairs, with a previous concise account of their course before, during, and after the commencement of hostilities.

To give a stranger an adequate idea of the rise and progress of the dispute between Great Britain and America would require much time and many volumes; it comprises the history of England and the United States of America for twenty years; that of France and Spain for five or six; and that of all the maritime powers of Europe for two or three. Suffice it to say, that immediately upon the conquest of Canada from the French in the year 1759, Great Britain seemed to be seized with a jealousy against the Colonies, and then concerted the plan of changing their forms of government, of restraining their trade within narrower bounds, and raising a revenue within them by authority of parliament, for the avowed or pretended purpose of protecting, securing, and defending them. Accordingly, in the year 1760, orders were sent from the board of trade in England to the custom-house officers in America, to apply to the supreme courts of justice for writs of assistance to enable them to carry into a more rigorous execution certain acts of parliament called the acts of trade (among which the famous act of navigation was one, the fruit of the ancient English jealousy of Holland) by breaking open houses, ships, or cellars, chests, stores, and magazines, to search for uncustomed goods. In most of the Colonies these writs were refused. In the Massachusetts Bay the question, whether such writs were legal and constitutional, was solemnly and repeatedly argued before the supreme court by the most learned counsel in the Province.

The judges of this court held their commissions during the pleasure of the governor and council; and the chief justice dying at this time, the famous Mr. Hutchinson was appointed, probably with a view of deciding this cause in favor of the crown, which was accordingly done. But the arguments advanced upon that occasion by the bar and the bench, opened to the people such a view of the designs of the British government against their liberties and of the danger they were in, as made a deep impression upon the public, which never wore out.

From this moment, every measure of the British court and parliament and of the king's governors and other servants confirmed the people in an opinion of a settled design to overturn those constitutions under which their ancestors had emigrated from the old world, and with infinite toil, danger, and expense, planted a new one. It would be endless to enumerate all the acts of parliament and measures of government; but, in 1764, Mr. George Grenville moved a number of resolutions in parliament, which passed, for laying a vast number of heavy duties upon stamped paper; and, in 1765,

the act of parliament was made, called the stamp act. Upon this, there was a universal rising of the people in every Colony, compelling the stamp-officers by force to resign, and preventing the stamped papers from being used, and, indeed, compelling the courts of justice to proceed in business without them. My Lord Rockingham perceiving the impossibility of executing this statute, moved, by the help of Mr. Pitt, for the repeal of it, and obtained it, which restored peace, order, and harmony to America; which would have continued to this hour, if the evil genius of Great Britain had not prompted her to revive the resistance of the people by fresh attempts upon their liberties and new acts of parliament imposing taxes upon them.

In 1767 they passed another act of parliament laying duties upon glass, paper, and painters' colors, and tea. This revived the discontents in America; but government sent over a board of commissioners to oversee the execution of this act of parliament and all others imposing duties, with a multitude of new officers for the same purpose; and, in 1768, for the first time, it sent four thousand regular troops to Boston, to protect the revenue officers in the collection of the duties.

Loth to commence hostilities, the people had recourse to nonimportation agreements and a variety of other measures, which, in 1770, induced parliament to repeal all the duties upon glass, paper, and painters' colors, but left the duty upon tea unrepealed. This produced an association not to drink tea. In 1770, the animosity between the inhabitants of Boston and the king's troops grew so high, that a party of the troops fired upon a crowd of people in the streets, killing five or six and wounding some others. This raised such a spirit among the inhabitants, that, in a body, they demanded the instant removal of the troops; which was done, the governor ordering them down to Castle Island, some miles from the town.

In 1773, the British government, determined to carry into execution the duty upon tea, empowered the East India Company to export it to America. They sent some cargoes to Boston, some to New York, some to Philadelphia, and some to Charleston. The inhabitants of New York and Philadelphia sent the ships back to London, and they sailed up the Thames, to proclaim to all the nation, that New York and Pennsylvania would not be enslaved. The inhabitants of Charleston unloaded it and stored it in cellars where it could not be used, and where it finally perished. The inhabitants of Boston tried every measure to send the ships back, like New York and Philadelphia; but not being permitted to pass the castle, the tea was all thrown into the sea.

This produced several vindictive acts of parliament,—one for starving the town of Boston by shutting up the port; another for abolishing the constitution of the Province by destroying their charter; another for sending persons to England to be tried for treason, &c.

These acts produced the congress of 1774, who stated the rights and grievances of the Colonies, and petitioned for redress. Their petitions and remonstrances were all neglected, and treated with contempt. General Gage had been sent over with an army to enforce the Boston port bill and the act for destroying the charter. This army, on the 19th of April, 1775, commenced hostilities at Lexington, which have been continued to this day.

You see, sir, by this most imperfect and hasty sketch, that this war is already twenty years old. And I can truly say, that the people, through the whole course of this long period, have been growing constantly every year more and more unanimous and determined to resist the designs of Great Britain.

I should be ashamed to lay before a gentleman of Mr. Calkoen's abilities so rude a sketch, if I had not an equal confidence in his candor and discretion, which will induce me, as I may have leisure, to continue to sketch a few observations upon your questions.

5 October.

Your first proposition is, "to prove, by striking facts, that an implacable hatred and aversion reigns throughout America."

In answer to this, I beg leave to say, that the Americans are animated by higher principles, and better and stronger motives, than hatred and aversion. They universally aspire after a free trade with all the commercial world, instead of that mean monopoly, in which they were shackled by Great Britain, to the disgrace and mortification of America, and to the injury of all the rest of Europe; to whom it seems as if God and nature intended that so great a magazine of productions, the raw materials of manufactures, so great a source of commerce, and so rich a nursery of seamen, as America is, should be open. They despise, sir, they disdain the idea of being again monopolized by any one nation whatsoever; and this contempt is at least as powerful a motive of action as any hatred whatsoever.

Moreover, sir, they consider themselves contending for the purest principles of liberty, civil and religious; for those forms of government, under the faith of which their country was planted; and for those great improvements of them, which have been made by their new constitutions. They consider themselves not only as contending for these great blessings, but against the greatest evils that any country ever suffered; for they know, if they were to be deceived by England, to break their union among themselves, and their faith with their allies, they would ever after be in the power of England, who would bring them into the most abject submission to the government of a parliament the most corrupted in the world, in which they would have no voice nor influence, at three thousand miles distance from them.

But if hatred must come into consideration, I know not how to prove their hatred better, than by showing the provocations they have had to hatred.

If tearing up from the foundation those forms of government under which they were born and educated, and thrived and prospered, to the infinite emolument of England; if imposing taxes upon them, or endeavoring to do it, for twenty years, without their consent; if commencing hostilities upon them, burning their towns, butchering their people, deliberately starving prisoners, ravishing their women, exciting hosts of Indians to butcher and scalp them, and purchasing Germans to destroy them, and hiring negro servants to murder their masters;—if all these, and many other things as bad, are not provocations enough to hatred, I would request Mr. Calkoen to tell me

what is or can be. All these horrors the English have practised in every part of America, from Boston to Savannah.

2. Your second proposition is “to show that this is general, at least so general, that the tories are in so small a number, and of such little force, that they are counted as nothing.”

If Mr. Calkoen would believe me, I could testify as a witness; I could describe all the sources, all the grounds, springs, principles, and motives to toryism through the continent. This would lead me into great length; and the result of all would be, my sincere opinion, that the tories throughout the whole continent do not amount to the twentieth part of the people. I will not, however, obtrude my testimony, nor my opinion; I will appeal to witnesses who cannot be suspected, General Burgoyne and General Howe. Burgoyne has published a Narrative of his Proceedings, in which he speaks of the tories. I left the pamphlet at Paris, but it may easily be had from London.

General Howe has also published a Narrative relative to his Conduct in America, to which the reader is referred.[1](#)

I have quoted to you General Howe’s words; and one would think this was sufficient to show how much or how little zeal there is for the British cause in North America. When we consider that, in the period here mentioned, the English army had been in possession of the cities of Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia, and that they had marched through the Jerseys, part of Maryland, and Pennsylvania, and with all their arts, bribes, threats, and flatteries, which General Howe calls their efforts and exertions, they were able to obtain so few recruits, and very few of these Americans, I think that any impartial man must be convinced that the aversion and antipathy to the British cause is very general; so general, that the tories are to be accounted but a very little thing.

The addresses which they have obtained to the King and his generals, when their army was in Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Savannah, and Charleston, show the same thing. It is well known that every art of flattery and of terror was always used to obtain subscribers to these addresses. Yet the miserable numbers they have obtained, and the still more despicable character of most of these small numbers, show that the British cause is held in very low esteem. Even in Charleston, the capital of a Province which contains two hundred thousand whites, they were able to obtain only two hundred and ten subscribers, and among these there is not one name that I ever remember to have heard before.

I am sorry I have not Burgoyne’s Narrative, which shows in the same point of light the resources the English are likely to find in the tories to be nothing more than a sure means of getting rid of a great number of their guineas.

To learn the present state of America, it is sufficient to read the public papers. The present state of Great Britain and its dependencies may be learned the same way. The omnipotence of the British parliament, and the omnipotence of the British navy, are like to go the same way.

6 October.

Your third proposition is “to show that America, notwithstanding the war, daily increases in strength and force.”

It is an undoubted fact that America daily increases in strength and force; but it may not be so easy to prove this to the satisfaction of a European who has never been across the Atlantic; however, some things may be brought into consideration, which may convince, if properly attended to.

1. It may be argued from the experience of former wars, during all which the population of that country was so far from being diminished or even kept at a stand, that it was always found at the end of a war that the numbers of people had increased during the course of it, nearly in the same ratio as in time of peace. Even in the last French war, which lasted from 1755 to 1763 (during which time the then American Colonies made as great exertions, had in the field as great a number of men, and put themselves to as great an expense in proportion to the numbers of people, as the United States have done during this war) it was found that the population had increased nearly as fast as in times of peace.

2. If you make inquiry into the circumstances of the different parts of America at this day, you find the people in all the States pushing their settlements out into the wilderness upon the frontiers, cutting down the woods, and subduing new lands with as much eagerness and rapidity as they used to do in former times of war or peace. This spreading of the people into the wilderness is a decisive proof of the increasing population.

3. The only certain way of determining the ratio of the increase of population is, by authentic numerations of the people and regular official returns. This has, I believe, never been done generally in former wars, and has been generally omitted in this. Yet some States have made these returns. The Massachusetts Bay, for example, had a valuation about the year 1773 or 1774, and again the last year, 1779, they had another. In this period of five years, that State was found to have increased, both in number of people and in value of property, more than it ever had grown before in the same period of time. Now the Massachusetts Bay has had a greater number of men employed in the war, both by land and sea, in proportion to the numbers of her inhabitants, than any other State of the thirteen. She has had more men killed, taken prisoners, and died of sickness, than any other State; yet her growth has been as rapid as ever, from whence it may be fairly argued that all the other States have grown in the same or a greater proportion.

4. It has been found by calculations, that America has doubled her numbers, even by natural generation alone, upon an average, about once in eighteen years. This war has now lasted near six years; in the course of it, we commonly compute in America that we have lost by sickness and the sword and captivity about five-and-thirty thousand men. But the numbers of people have not increased less than seven hundred and fifty thousand souls, which give at least an hundred thousand fighting men. We have not less, probably, than seventy thousand fighting men in America more than we had on

the day that hostilities were first commenced, on the 19th of April, 1775. There are near twenty thousand fighting men added to the numbers in America every year. Is this the case with our enemy, Great Britain? Which then can maintain the war the longest?

5. If America increases in numbers, she certainly increases in strength. But her strength increases in other respects,—the discipline of her armies increases; the skill of her officers increases by sea and land; her skill in military manufactures, such as those of saltpetre, powder, firearms, cannon, increases; her skill in manufactures of flax and wool for the first necessity increases; her manufactures of salt also increase; and all these are augmentations of strength and force to maintain her independence. Further, her commerce increases every year,—the number of vessels she has had this year in the trade to the West Indies; the number of vessels arrived in Spain, France, Holland, and Sweden, show that her trade is greatly increased this year.

But, above all, her activity, skill, bravery, and success in privateering increase every year; the prizes she has made from the English this year will defray more than one half of the whole expense of this year's war. I only submit to your consideration a few hints which will enable you to satisfy yourself by reflection how fast the strength and force of America increase.

7 October.

Your fourth question is,—“Whether America, in and of itself, by means of purchasing or exchanging the productions of the several provinces, would be able to continue the war for six, eight, or ten years, even if they were entirely deprived of the trade with Europe; or their allies, exhausted by the war, and forced to make a separate peace, were to leave them?”

This is an extreme case. And where is the necessity of putting such a supposition? Is there the least appearance of France or Spain being exhausted by the war? Are not their resources much greater than those of England, separated as she is from America? Why should a suspicion be entertained that France or Spain will make a separate peace? Are not these powers sufficiently interested in separating America from England? All the world knows that their maritime power and the possession of their Colonies depend upon separating them. Such chimeras as these are artfully propagated by the English to terrify stockjobbers; but thinking men and well-informed men know that France and Spain have the most pressing motives to persevere in the war. Besides, infractions so infamous of solemn treaties made and avowed to all mankind are not committed by any nation. In short, no man who knows any thing of the real wealth and power of England on one hand, and of the power and resources of France, Spain, and America on the other, can believe it possible, in the ordinary course of human events, and without the interposition of miracles, that France and Spain should be so exhausted by the war as to be forced to make a separate peace.

The other supposition here made is equally extreme. It is in the nature of things impossible that America should ever be deprived entirely of the trade of Europe. In opposition to one extreme, I have a right to advance another. And I say, that if all the

maritime powers of Europe were to unite their navies to block up the American ports and prevent the trade of Europe, they could not wholly prevent it. All the men-of-war in Europe would not be sufficient to block up a seacoast of two thousand miles in extent, varied as that of America is by such an innumerable multitude of ports, bays, harbors, rivers, creeks, inlets, and islands; with a coast so tempestuous, that there are many occasions in the course of the year when merchant vessels can push out and in, although men-of-war cannot cruise. It should be remembered that this war was maintained by America for three years before France took any part in it. During all that time, the English had fifty men-of-war upon that coast, which is a greater number than they ever will have again; yet all their vigilance was not sufficient to prevent American trade with Europe. At the worst time we ever saw, one vessel in three went and came safe. At present, there is not one in four taken. It should also be remembered, that the French navy have never, until this year, been many days together upon the American coast. So that we have in a sense maintained the trade of the continent five years against all that the English navy could do, and it has been growing every year.

Why then should we put cases that we know can never happen? However, I can inform you that the case was often put before this war broke out; and I have heard the common farmers in America reasoning upon these cases seven years ago. I have heard them say, if Great Britain could build a wall of brass a thousand feet high all along the seacoast, at low-water mark, we can live and be happy. America is, most undoubtedly, capable of being the most independent country upon earth. It produces every thing for the necessity, comfort, and conveniency of life, and many of the luxuries too. So that, if there were an eternal separation between Europe and America, the inhabitants of America would not only live but multiply, and, for what I know, be wiser, better, and happier than they will be as it is.

That it would be unpleasant and burthensome to America to continue the war for eight or ten years is certain. But will it not be unpleasant and burthensome to Great Britain too? There are between three and four millions of people in America. The kingdom of Sweden, that of Denmark, and even the republic of the United Provinces, have not each of them many more than that number; yet these States can maintain large standing armies even in time of peace, and maintain the expenses of courts and governments much more costly than the government of America. What then should hinder America from maintaining an army sufficient to defend her altars and her firesides? The Americans are as active, as industrious, and as capable as other men.

America could undoubtedly maintain a regular army of twenty thousand men forever. And a regular army of twenty thousand men would be sufficient to keep all the land forces, that Great Britain can send there, confined to the seaport towns, under cover of the guns of their men-of-war. Whenever the British army shall attempt to penetrate far into the country, the regular American army will be joined by such reinforcements from the militia, as will ruin the British force. By desertions, by fatigue, by sickness, and by the sword, in occasional skirmishes, their numbers will be wasted, and the miserable remains of them Burgoyned.

V.

9 October.

The fifth inquiry is, “Whether a voluntary revolt of any one or more of the States in the American confederation is to be apprehended: and if one or more were to revolt, whether the others would not be able to defend themselves?”

This is a very judicious and material question. I conceive that the answer to it is easy and decisive. There is not the least danger of a voluntary revolt of any one State in the Union. It is difficult to prove a negative, however; and still more difficult to prove a future negative. Let us, however, consider the subject a little.

Which State is the most likely to revolt, or submit? Is it the most ancient Colony, as Virginia, or the Massachusetts? Is it the most numerous and powerful, as Virginia, Massachusetts, or Pennsylvania? I believe nobody will say, that any one of these great States will take the lead in a revolt or a voluntary submission.

Will it be the smallest and weakest States that will be most likely to give up voluntarily? In order to satisfy ourselves of this, let us consider what has happened; and by the knowledge of what is passed, we may judge of what is to come.

The three smallest States are Rhode Island, Georgia, and Delaware.

The English have plainly had it in view to bring one of these States to a submission, and have accordingly directed very great forces against them.

Let us begin with Rhode Island. In the latter end of the year 1776, General Howe sent a large army of near seven thousand men, by sea, under a strong convoy of men-of-war, detached by Lord Howe, to take possession of Newport, the capital of Rhode Island. Newport stands upon an island. It was neither fortified nor garrisoned sufficiently to defend itself against so powerful a fleet and army, and, therefore, the English made themselves masters of the place. But what advantage did they derive from it? Did the Colony of Rhode Island, small as it is, submit? So far from it, that they were rendered the more eager to resist; and an army was assembled at Providence, which confined the English to the prison of Rhode Island, until the fall of the year 1779, when they were obliged to evacuate it, and our army entered it in triumph.

The next little State which the English attempted, was Delaware. This State consists of three counties only, situated upon the river Delaware, below Philadelphia, and is the most exposed to the English men-of-war of any of the States, because they are open to invasion not only upon the ocean, but all along the river Delaware. It contains not more than thirty thousand souls. When the English got possession of Philadelphia, and had the command of the whole navigation of the Delaware, these people were more in the power of the English than any part of America ever was, and the English generals, admirals, commissioners, and all the tories, used all their arts to seduce this little State, but they could not succeed; they never could get the appearance of a

government erected under the King's authority. The people continued their delegation in congress, and continued to elect their governors, senate, and assemblies, under their new constitution, and to furnish their quota to the continental army, and their proportion to the militia, until the English were obliged to evacuate Philadelphia. There are besides, in this little State, from various causes, more Tories, in proportion, than in any other. And as this State stood immovable, I think we have no reason to fear a voluntary submission of any other.

The next small State that was attempted was Georgia. This State is situated at the southern extremity of all, and at such a distance from all the rest, and such difficulties of communication, being above an hundred miles from Charleston, in South Carolina, that it was impossible for the neighboring States to afford them any assistance. The English invaded this little State, and took the capital, Savannah, and have held it to this day; but this acquisition has not been followed by any submission of the province; on the contrary, they continue their delegation in congress, and their new officers of government. This Province, moreover, was more immediately the child of England than any other; the settlement of it cost England more than all the rest, from whence one might expect they would have more friends here than any where.

New Jersey is one of the middling-sized States. New Jersey had a large British army in Philadelphia, which is on one side, and another in New York, which is on the other side, and the British army has marched quite through it; and the English have used every policy of flattery, of terror, and severity, but all in vain, and worse than in vain; all has conspired to make the people of New Jersey some of the most determined against the English, and some of the most brave and skilful to resist them.

New York, before the commencement of hostilities, was supposed to be the most lukewarm of the middling States, in the opposition to the designs of the English. The English armies have invaded it from Canada and from the ocean, and have long been in possession of three islands, New York Island, Long Island, and Staten Island; yet the rest of that Province has stood immovable, through all the varieties of the fortune of war, for four years, and increases in zeal and unanimity every year.

I think, therefore, there is not even a possibility, that any one of the thirteen States should ever voluntarily revolt or submit.

The efforts and exertions of General Howe in New York, Long Island, Staten Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, to obtain recruits; the vast expense that he put his master to in appointing new corps of officers, even general officers; the pains they took to enlist men, among all the stragglers in those countries, and among many thousands of prisoners which they then had in their hands; all these measures obtaining but three thousand six hundred men, and very few of these Americans, according to General Howe's own account, shows, I think, to a demonstration, that no voluntary revolt or submission is ever to be apprehended.

But even supposing that Rhode Island should submit, what could this small colony of fifty thousand souls do, in the midst of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire?

Supposing Delaware, thirty thousand souls, should submit, what influence could it have upon the great States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, among which it lies?

If Georgia, at the extremity of all, should submit, what influence could this little society of thirty thousand souls have upon the two Carolinas and Virginia? The Colonies are at such vast distances from one another, and the country is so fortified every where, by rivers, mountains, and forests, that the conquest or submission of one part has no influence upon the rest.

10 October.

The sixth task is to show, “that no person in America is of so much influence, power, or credit, that his death, or corruption by English money, could be of any namable consequence.”

This question is very natural for a stranger to ask; but it would not occur to a native American, who had passed all his life in his own country; and upon hearing it proposed, he could only smile.

It should be considered, that there are in America no kings, princes, or nobles; no popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, or other ecclesiastical dignitaries. They are these, and such like lofty subordinations, which place great bodies of men in a state of dependence upon one, which enable one or a few individuals, in Europe, to carry away after them large numbers, wherever they may think fit to go. There are no hereditary offices, or titles, in families; nor even any great estates that descend in a right line to the eldest sons. All estates of intestates are distributed among all the children; so that there are no individuals nor families who have, either from office, title, or fortune, any extensive power or influence. We are all equal in America, in a political view, and as much alike as Lycurgus’s haycocks. All public offices and employments are bestowed by the free choice of the people, and at present, through the whole continent, are in the hands of those gentlemen who have distinguished themselves the most by their counsels, exertions, and sufferings, in the contest with Great Britain. If there ever was a war, that could be called *the people’s war*, it is this of America against Great Britain; it having been determined on by the people, and pursued by the people in every step of its progress.

But who is it in America that has credit to carry over to the side of Great Britain any numbers of men? General Howe tells us that he employed Mr. Delancey, Mr. Cortland Skinner, Mr. Chalmers, and Mr. Galloway, the most influential men they could find; and he tells you their ridiculous success.

Are they members of congress who, by being corrupted, would carry votes in congress in favor of the English? I can tell you of a truth there has not been one motion made in congress, since the declaration of independency, on the fourth of July, 1776, for a reconciliation with Great Britain; and there is not one man in America of sufficient authority or credit to make a motion in congress for a peace with Great Britain, upon any terms short of independence, without ruining his character forever.

If a delegate from any one of the thirteen States were to make a motion for peace upon any conditions short of independency, that delegate would be recalled with indignation by his constituents as soon as they should know it. The English have artfully represented in Europe that congress have been governed by particular gentlemen; but you may depend upon it it is false. At one time the English would have made it believed that Mr. Randolph, the first President of Congress, was its soul. Mr. Randolph died, and congress proceeded as well as ever. At another time, Mr. Hancock was all and all. Mr. Hancock left the congress, and has scarcely been there for three years; yet congress has proceeded with as much wisdom, honor, and fortitude as ever. At another time, the English represented that Mr. Dickinson was the ruler of America. Mr. Dickinson opposed openly, and upon principle, the declaration of independency; but, instead of carrying his point, his constituents differed with him so materially that they recalled him from congress, and he was absent for some years; yet congress proceeded with no less constancy; and Mr. Dickinson lately, finding all America unalterably fixed in the system of independency, has fallen in like a good citizen, and now supports it in congress with as much zeal as others. At another time, the English have been known to believe that Dr. Franklin was the essential member of congress; but Dr. Franklin was sent to France in 1776, and has been there ever since; yet congress has been as active and as capable as before. At another time, Mr. Samuel Adams was represented as the man who did every thing; yet Mr. Samuel Adams has been absent for the greatest part of three years, attending his duty as Secretary of State in the Massachusetts Bay; yet it does not appear that Mr. Adams's absence has weakened the deliberations of congress in the least. Nay, they have sometimes been silly enough to represent your humble servant, Mr. John Adams, as an essential member of congress; it is now, however, three years since congress did him the honor to send him to Europe, as a Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Versailles, and he has never been in congress since; yet congress have done better since he came away than they ever did before.

In short, sir, all these pretences are the most ridiculous imaginable. The American cause stands upon the essential, unalterable character of the whole body of the people; upon their prejudices, passions, habits, and principles, which they derived from their ancestors, their education, drew in with their mothers' milk, and have been confirmed in by the whole course of their lives; and the characters whom they have made conspicuous, by placing them in their public employments,

Are but bubbles on the sea of matter borne;
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

The same reasoning is applicable to all the governors, lieutenant-governors, secretaries of state, judges, senators, and representatives of particular states. They are all eligible, and elected every year by the body of the people; and would lose their characters and influence the instant they should depart, in their public conduct, from the political system that the people are determined to support.

But are there any officers of the army who could carry over large numbers of people? The influence of these officers is confined to the army; they have very little among the citizens. But if we consider the constitution of that army, we shall see that it is

impossible that any officer could carry with him any numbers, even of soldiers. These officers are not appointed by a king, or a prince, nor by General Washington; they can hardly be said to be appointed by congress. They have all commissions from congress, it is true; but they are named and recommended, and are generally appointed, by the executive branch of government in the particular State to which they belong, except the general officers, who are appointed by congress. The continental army consists of the quotas of officers and troops furnished by thirteen different States. If an officer of the Massachusetts Bay forces, for example, should go over to the enemy, he might, possibly, carry with him half a dozen soldiers belonging to that State; yet I even doubt, whether any officer whatever, who should desert from that State, could persuade so many as half a dozen soldiers to go with him.

Is it necessary to put the supposition, that General Washington should be corrupted? Is it possible, that so fair a fame as Washington's should be exchanged for gold or for crowns? A character so false, so cruel, so blood-thirsty, so detestable as that of Monk might betray a trust; but a character so just, so humane, so fair, so open, honorable, and amiable as Washington's, never can be stained with so foul a reproach.

Yet I am fully of opinion, that even if Mr. Washington should go over to the English, which I know to be impossible, he would find none or very few officers or soldiers to go with him. He would become the contempt and execration of his own army as well as of all the rest of mankind.

No, sir! the American cause is in no danger from the defection of any individual. Nothing short of an entire alteration in the sentiments of the whole body of the people can make any material change in the councils or in the conduct of the arms of the United States; and I am very sure that Great Britain has not power or art sufficient to change essentially the temper, the feelings, and the opinions of between three and four millions of people at three thousand miles distance, supported as they are by powerful allies.

If such a change could ever have been made, it would have been seven years ago, when offices, employments, and power in America were in the hands of the King. But every ray of royal authority has been extinguished now between four and five years, and all civil and military authority is in hands determined to resist Great Britain to the last.

VII.

Your seventh inquiry is,—“Whether the common people in America are not inclined, nor would be able to find sufficient means to frustrate by force the good intentions of the skilful politicians?”

In answer to this, it is sufficient to say, that the commonalty have no need to have recourse to force to oppose the intentions of the skilful; because the law and the constitution authorize the common people to choose governors and magistrates every year; so that they have it constantly in their power to leave out any politician, however skilful, whose principles, opinions, or systems they do not approve.

The difference, however, in that country, is not so great as it is in some others, between the common people and the gentlemen; for noblemen they have none. There is no country where the common people, I mean the tradesmen, the husbandmen, and the laboring people, have such advantages of education as in that; and it may be truly said, that their education, their understanding, and their knowledge are as nearly equal as their birth, fortune, dignities, and titles.

It is therefore certain, that whenever the common people shall determine upon peace or submission, it will be done. But of this there is no danger. The common people are the most unanimously determined against Great Britain of any; it is the war of the common people; it was undertaken by them, and has been, and will be supported by them.

The people of that country often rose in large bodies against the measures of government while it was in the hands of the King. But there has been no example of this sort under the new constitutions, excepting one, which is mentioned in General Howe's Narrative, in the back part of North Carolina. This was owing to causes so particular, that it rather serves to show the strength of the American cause in that State than the contrary.

About the year 1772, under the government of Tryon, who has since made himself so obnoxious to all America, there were some warm disputes in North Carolina concerning some of the internal regulations of that Province; and a small number of people in the back parts rose in arms, under the name of Regulators, against the government. Governor Tryon marched at the head of some troops drawn from the militia, gave battle to the regulators, defeated them, hanged some of their ringleaders, and published proclamations against many others. These people were all treated as having been in rebellion, and they were left to solicit pardon of the Crown. This established in the minds of those regulators such a hatred towards the rest of their fellow-citizens, that in 1775, when the war broke out, they would not join with them. The King has since promised them pardon for their former treasons, upon condition that they commit fresh ones against their country. In 1777, in conjunction with a number of Scotch Highlanders, they rose; and Governor Caswell marched against them, gave them battle, and defeated them. This year they have risen again, and been again defeated. But these people are so few in number, there is so much apparent malice and revenge, instead of any principle, in their disaffection, that any one who knows any thing of the human heart will see that, instead of finally weakening the American cause in North Carolina, it will only serve to give a keenness and an obstinacy to those who support it.

Nothing, indeed, can show the unanimity of the people throughout America in a stronger light than this,—that the British army has been able to procure so few recruits, to excite so few insurrections and disturbances. Nay, although the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech are carried to as great lengths in that country as in any under the sun, there has never been a hint in a newspaper, or even in a handbill, nor a single speech or vote in any assembly, that I have heard of, for submission, or even for reconciliation.

VIII.

16 October.

The eighth inquiry is,—“What England properly ought to do to force America to submission, and preserve her in it? How much time, money, and how many vessels would be wanted for that purpose?”

I assure you, sir, I am as much at a loss to inform you in this particular as Lord George Germaine would be. I can fix upon no number of men, nor any sum of money, nor any number of ships that I think would be sufficient. But most certainly no number of ships or men which Great Britain now has, or ever can have, nor any sum of money that she will ever be able to command, will be sufficient.

If it were in the power of Great Britain to send a hundred thousand men to America, and they had men-of-war and transports enough to convey them there in safety amidst the dangers that await them from French, Spanish, and American men-of-war, they might possibly get possession of two or three provinces, and place so many garrisons in various parts as to prevent the people from exercising the functions of government under their new constitutions; and they might set up a sham appearance of a civil government under the King; but I do not believe that a hundred thousand men could gain and preserve them the civil government of any three States in the Confederation. The States are at such distances from one another, there are such difficulties in passing from one to another by land, and such a multitude of posts are necessary to be garrisoned and provided in order to command any one Colony, that an army of a hundred thousand men would soon find itself consumed in getting and keeping possession of one or two States. But it would require the armies of Semiramis to command and preserve them all.

Such is the nature of that country, and such the character of the people, that if the English were to send ever so many ships, and ever so many troops, they never would subdue all the Americans. Numbers, in every State, would fly to the mountains, and beyond the mountains, and there maintain a constant war against the English. In short, if the English could conquer America, which they never can, nor any one State in it, it would cost them a standing army of an hundred thousand men to preserve their conquest; for it is in vain for them ever to think of any other government's taking place again under the King of England, but a military government.

As to the number of ships, it must be in proportion to the number of troops; they must have transports enough to carry their troops, and men-of-war enough to convoy them through their numerous French, Spanish, and American enemies upon the seas.

As to the sums of money, you will easily see, that adding two hundred millions more to the two hundred millions they already owe, would not procure and maintain so many ships and troops.

It is very certain the English can never send any great numbers more of troops to America. The men are not to be had; the money is not to be had; the seamen, and even the transports, are not to be had.

I give this to Mr. Calkoen as my private opinion concerning the question he asks. As Mr. Calkoen observes, this is a question that had better not be publicly answered; but time will show the answer here given is right. It would, at present, be thought extravagance or enthusiasm. Mr. Adams only requests Mr. Calkoen to look over this letter a few years hence, and then say what his opinion of it is. Victories gained by the English, in taking seaport towns, or in open field fighting, will make no difference in my answer to this question. Victories gained by the English will conquer themselves sooner than the Americans. Fighting will not fail, in the end, to turn to the advantage of America, although the English may gain an advantage in this or that particular engagement.

IX.

The ninth question is, “how strong the English land force is in America? How strong it was at the beginning? And whether it increases or diminishes?”

According to the estimates laid before parliament, the army under General Howe, General Carleton, and General Burgoyne, amounts to fifty-five thousand men, besides volunteers, refugees, tories, in short, all the recruits raised in Canada, and all other parts of America, under whatever denomination. If we suppose that all these, in Canada and elsewhere, amounted to five thousand men, the whole, according to this computation, amounted to sixty thousand land forces.

This estimate, however, must have been made from the number of regiments, and must have supposed them all to be full.

General Howe, himself, however, in his Narrative, page 45, tells us, that his whole force, at the time when he landed on Long Island, in 1776, amounted to twenty thousand one hundred and twenty-one rank and file, of which one thousand six hundred and seventy-seven were sick.

By a regular return of General Burgoyne’s army, after its captivity in 1777, it amounted, in Canadians, Provincials, British and German troops, to upwards of ten thousand men. We may suppose, that four thousand men were left in Canada for the garrison of Quebec, Montreal, and the great number of other posts in that Province. To these numbers if we add the officers, we may fairly allow the whole land force at that time to be forty thousand combatants.

This is all the answer that I am able to give from memory to the question “How strong the British army was?”

In order to give an answer to the other,—“How strong it is?”—let us consider—

1. There has been no large reinforcement ever sent to America since that time. They have sent some troops every year; but these never amounted to more than recruits, and, probably, rather fall short of filling up the vacancies which were made in the course of the year by desertion and death, by sickness and by the sword; so that, upon the whole, I think it may be safely said, that the army never has been greater than it was in 1776.

But we must deduct from this ten thousand men taken with Burgoyne, one thousand Hessians taken at Trenton and Princeton, and indeed many more, taken by two or three hundred at a time, upon other occasions.

In the next place, we must deduct, I suppose, about ten thousand more sent since the French war to Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and the other West India Islands.

So that, upon the whole, I think we make an ample allowance, if we state the whole number now in New York, Carolina, and Georgia, including all refugees, &c., at twenty thousand men, officers included.

This is, in part, an answer to the question, "Whether their force increases or diminishes?" But it should be further considered that there is a constant and rapid consumption of their men. Many die of sickness, numbers desert, there have been frequent skirmishes, in which they have ever had more men killed and wounded than the Americans; and now, so many of their troops are in Carolina and Georgia, where the climate is unhealthy, that there is great reason to expect the greatest part of that army will die of disease. And whoever considers the efforts the English have made in Germany, Ireland, Scotland, and England, as well as America, for seven years successively, to raise men, the vast bounties they have offered, and the few they have obtained; whoever considers the numbers they must lose this year by the severity of duty and by sickness, in New York, Carolina, Georgia, and the West India Islands, and the numbers that have been taken going to Quebec, North America, the East and West Indies, will be convinced that all the efforts they can make, will not enable them for the future to keep their numbers good.

X.

The tenth head of inquiry is, "How great is the force of America? The number of men? Their discipline, &c., from the commencement of the troubles? Is there a good supply of warlike stores? Are these to be found partly or entirely in America? Or must they be imported?"

The force of America consists of a regular army, and of a militia; the regular army has been various at different times. The first regular army, which was formed in April, 1775, was enlisted for six months only; the next was enlisted for one year; the next for three years; the last period expired last February. At each of these periods, between the expiration of a term of enlistment, and the formation of a new army, the English have given themselves airs of triumph, and have done some brilliant exploits. In the winter of 1775-6, indeed, they were in Boston; and although our army, after the expiration of the first period of enlistment for six months, was reduced to a small

number, yet the English were not in a condition to attempt any thing. In the winter of 1776-7, after the expiration of the second term of enlistment, and before the new army was brought together, the English marched through the Jerseys. After the expiration of the last term of enlistment, which was for three years, and ended last January or February, the English went to their old exultations again, and undertook the expedition to Charleston. In the course of the last spring and summer, however, it seems the army has been renewed; and they are now enlisted, in general, during the war.

To state the numbers of the regular army according to the establishment, that is, according to the number of regiments at their full complement, I suppose the continental army has sometimes amounted to fourscore thousand men. But the American regiments have not often been full, any more than the English. There are in the war office, at Philadelphia, regular monthly returns of the army, from 1775 to this day, but I am not able, from memory, to give any accurate account of them; it is sufficient to say, that the American regular army has been generally superior to that of the English; and it would not be good policy to keep a larger army, unless we had a prospect of putting an end to the British power in America by it. But this, without a naval superiority, is very difficult, if not impracticable; the English take possession of a seaport town, fortify it in the strongest manner, and cover it with the guns of their men-of-war, so that our army cannot come at it. If France and Spain should cooperate with us so far as to send ships enough to maintain the superiority at sea, it would not require many years, perhaps not many months, to exterminate the English from the United States. But this policy those courts have not adopted, which is a little surprising, because it is obvious that by captivating the British fleet and army in America, the most decisive blow would be given to their power, which can possibly be given in any quarter of the globe.

What number of regular troops General Washington has at this time under his immediate command, I am not able precisely to say; I presume, however, that he has not less than twenty thousand men, besides the French troops under the Comte de Rochambeau. Nor am I able to say, how many General Gates has to the southward.

But besides the regular army, we are to consider the militia, Several of the Colonies were formed into a militia, from the beginning of their settlement. After the commencement of this war, all the others followed their example, and made laws, by which all the inhabitants of America are now enrolled in a militia, which may be computed at five hundred thousand men. But these are scattered over a territory of one hundred and fifty miles in breadth, and at least fifteen hundred miles in length, lying all along upon the sea-coast. This gives the English the advantage, by means of their superiority at sea, to remove suddenly and easily from one part of the continent to another, as from Boston to New York, from New York to Rhode Island, from New York to Chesapeake or Delaware Bay, or to Savannah or Charleston; and the Americans the disadvantage, of not being able to march either the regular troops or the militia to such vast distances, without immense expense of money and of time. This puts it in the power of the English to take so many of our seaport towns, but not to make any long and successful marches into the interior country, or make any permanent establishment there.

As to discipline, in the beginning of the war there was very little, either among the militia or the regular troops. The American officers have, however, been industrious; they have had the advantage of reading all the books which have any reputation concerning military science; they have had the example of their enemies, the British officers, before their eyes a long time, indeed, from the year 1768; and they have had the honor of being joined by British, German, French, Prussian, and Polish officers, of infantry and cavalry, of artillery and engineering; so that the art of war is now as well understood in the American army, and military discipline is now carried to as great perfection, as in any country whatever.

As to a supply of warlike stores: at the commencement of hostilities, the Americans had neither cannon, arms, or ammunition, but in such contemptible quantities as distressed them beyond description; and they have all along been straitened, at times, by a scarcity of these articles, and are to this day.

They have, however, at present, an ample field artillery; they have arms and powder; and they can never be again absolutely destitute, because the manufactures of all sorts of arms, of cannon of all sorts, of saltpetre and powder, have been introduced and established. These manufactures, although very good, are very dear, and it is difficult to make enough for so constant and so great a consumption. Quantities of these articles are imported every year; and it is certain they can be imported and paid for by American produce, cheaper than they can be made.

But the Americans, to make their system perfect, want five hundred thousand stands of arms, that is,—one at least for every militia man, with powder, ball, and accoutrements in proportion. This, however, is rather to be wished for than expected. The French fleet carried arms to America; and if the communication between America and France and Spain should become more frequent by frigates and men-of-war, and, especially, if this republic should be compelled into a war with England, America will probably never again suffer much for want of arms or ammunition.

The English began the war against the northern Colonies; here they found the effects of ancient militia laws; they found a numerous and hardy militia, who fought and defeated them upon many occasions. They then thought it necessary to abandon these, and fall upon the middle Colonies, whose militia had not been so long formed; however, after several years' experience, they found they were not able to do any thing to the purpose against them. They have lastly conceived the design of attacking the southern Colonies; here, the white people, and consequently the militia, are not so numerous, and have not yet been used to war. Here, therefore, they have had some apparent successes; but they will find in the end their own destruction in these very successes. The climate will devour their men; their first successes will embolden them to rash enterprises; the people there will become inured to war, and will finally totally destroy them; for, as to the silly gasconade of bringing the southern Colonies to submission, there is not even a possibility of it. The people of those States are as firm in principle, and as determined in their tempers against the designs of the English, as the middle or the northern States.

XI.

17 October.

Your eleventh question will give an opportunity of making some observations upon a subject that is quite misunderstood in every part of Europe. I shall answer it with great pleasure, according to the best of my information, and with the utmost candor.

The question is,—

“How great is the present debt of America? What has she occasion for yearly to act defensively? Are those wants supplied by the inhabitants themselves, or by other nations? If in the latter case, what does America lose of her strength by it? Are they not, in one manner or other, recompensed again by some equivalent advantage? If so, in what manner? What would be required to act offensively, and by that means shorten the war?”

All Europe has a mistaken apprehension of the present debt of America. This debt is of two sorts,—that which is due from the thirteen United States, in congress assembled; and that which is owing from each of the thirteen States in its separate capacity. I am not able to say, with precision, what the debt of each separate State is; but all these added together, fall far short of the debt of the United States.

The debt of the United States consists of three branches:—1. The sums which have been lent them by France and Spain, and by M. Beaumarchais & Co. These have been for purchasing some supplies of cannon, arms, ammunition, and clothing for the troops; for assisting prisoners escaped from England, and for some other purposes. But the whole sum amounts to no great thing.

2. The loan-office certificates, which are promissory notes given to individuals in America who have lent paper money to the congress, and are their securities for the payment of the principal and interest. These the congress have equitably determined shall be paid, according to the value of the paper bills, in proportion to silver, at the time of their dates.

3. The paper bills which are now in circulation, or which were in circulation on the 18th day of March last. These bills amounted to the nominal sum of two hundred millions of dollars; but the real value of them to the possessors is estimated at forty for one, amounting to five millions of Spanish dollars, or one million and a quarter sterling. This is the full value of them, perhaps more; but this estimation of them has given satisfaction in America to the possessors of them, who certainly obtained them in general at a cheaper rate.

These three branches of debt, which are the whole (according to a calculation made last May, and sent me by a member of congress who has been four years a member of their treasury board, and is perfect master of the subject) amount in the whole to five millions sterling and no more. The national debt of America then is five millions sterling.

In order to judge of the burden of this debt, we may compare it with the numbers of people. They are three millions. The national debt of Great Britain is two hundred millions. The number of people in England and Scotland is not more than six millions. Why should not America, with three millions of people, be able to bear a debt of one hundred millions as well as Great Britain, with six millions of people, a debt of two hundred millions?

We may compare it with the exports of America. In 1774, the exports of America were six millions sterling. In the same year the exports of Great Britain were twelve millions. Why would not the exports of America, of six millions, bear a national debt of one hundred millions, as well as the twelve millions of British exports bear a debt of two hundred millions?

We may compare it in this manner with the national debt of France, Spain, the United Provinces, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, and you will find that it is but small in comparison.

We may compare it in another point of view. Great Britain has already spent in this war sixty millions sterling; America, five millions. Great Britain has annually added to her national debt more than the whole amount of her annual exports; America has not added to hers in the whole course of five years' war a sum equal to one year's exports.

The debt of Great Britain is, in a large proportion of it, due to foreigners, for which they must annually pay the interest by sending cash abroad. A very trifle of the American debt is yet due to foreigners.

Lord North borrowed last year twelve millions; and every future year of the war must borrow the same or a larger sum. America could carry on this war a hundred years by borrowing only one million sterling a year.

The annual expense of America has not hitherto exceeded one million a year; that of Great Britain has exceeded twenty millions some years. America may therefore carry on this war a hundred years, and at the end of it will be no more in debt, in proportion to her present numbers of people and her exports in 1774, than Great Britain is now.

There is another consideration of some weight; the landed interest in America is vastly greater, in proportion to the mercantile interest than it is in Great Britain. The exports of America are the productions of the soil *annually*, which increase every year. The exports of Great Britain are manufactures, which will decrease every year while this war with America lasts.

The only objection to this reasoning is this,—that America is not used to great taxes, and the people there are not yet disciplined to such enormous taxation as in England. This is true; and this makes all their perplexity at present; but they are capable of bearing as great taxes in proportion as the English; and if the English force them to it, by continuing the war, they will reconcile themselves to it; and they are in fact now

taxing themselves more and more every year, and to an amount, that a man who knew America only twenty years ago would think incredible.

Her wants have hitherto been supplied by the inhabitants themselves, and they have been very little indebted to foreign nations. But, on account of the depreciation of her paper, and in order to introduce a more stable currency, she has now occasion to borrow a sum of money abroad, which would enable her to support her credit at home, to exert herself more vigorously against the English, both by sea and land, and greatly assist her in extending her commerce with foreign nations, especially the Dutch. America would not lose of her strength by borrowing money; but, on the contrary, would gain vastly. It would enable her to exert herself more by privateering, which is a mine of gold to her. She would make remittances in bills of exchange to foreign merchants for their commodities; and it would enable many persons to follow their true interest in cultivating the land, instead of attending to manufactures, which, being indispensable, they are now obliged more or less to follow, though less profitable. The true profit of America is the continual augmentation of the price and value of land. Improvement in land is her principal employment, her best policy, and the principal source of her growing wealth.

The last question is easily answered. It is,—“What would be required to act offensively, and by that means shorten the war?”

To this I answer, nothing is wanted but a loan of money and a fleet of ships.

A fleet of ships, only sufficient to maintain a superiority over the English, would enable the infant Hercules to strangle all the serpents that environ his cradle. It is impossible to express in too strong terms the importance of a few ships of the line to the Americans. Two or three French, or Dutch, or Spanish ships of the line, stationed at Rhode Island, Boston, Delaware River, or Chesapeake Bay, would have prevented the dreadful sacrifice at Penobscot. Three or four ships of the line would have prevented the whole expedition to Charleston. Three or four ships of the line more, added to the squadron of the Chevalier de Ternay, would have enabled the Americans to have taken New York.

A loan of money is now wanted, to give stability to the currency of America; to give vigor to the enlistments for the army; to add alacrity to the fitting out privateers; and to give an ample extension to their trade.

The Americans will labor through, without a fleet, and without a loan. But it is ungenerous and cruel to put them to such difficulties, and to keep mankind embroiled in all the horrors of war, for want of such trifles, which so many of the powers of Europe wish they had, and could so easily furnish. But if mankind must be embroiled, and the blood of thousands must be shed, for want of a little magnanimity in some, the Americans must not be blamed; it is not their fault.

XII.

We are now come to your twelfth head of inquiry, which is, “What countenance have the finances? How much does the expense exceed the yearly income? Does the annual revenue, deriving from the taxes, increase or diminish, in the whole, or in any particulars? and what are the reasons to be given for it?”

Here I am apprehensive I shall find a difficulty to make myself understood, as the American finances, and mode of taxation, differ so materially from any that I know of in Europe.

In the month of May, 1775, when the congress came together, for the first time, after the battles of Lexington and Concord, they found it necessary to raise an army, or, rather, to adopt an army already raised, at Cambridge, in order to oppose the British troops, and shut them up in the prison of Boston. But they found that the Colonies were but just got out of debt, had just paid off the debts contracted in the last French war. In the several treasuries of the Colonies they found only a few thousand pounds. They had before them a prospect of a stagnation, or interruption of their trade, pretty universally, by the British men-of-war. They had a thousand perplexities before them, in the prospect of passing through thirteen revolutions of government, from the royal authority to that under the people. They had armies and navies to form; they had new constitutions of government to attend to; they had twenty tribes of Indians to negotiate with; they had vast numbers of negroes to take care of; they had all sorts of arms, ammunition, artillery, to procure, as well as blankets and clothing and subsistence for the army; they had negotiations to think of in Europe, and treaties to form, of alliance and commerce; and they had even salt to procure, for the subsistence of the inhabitants, and even of their cattle, as well as their armies.

In this situation, with so many wants and demands, and no money or revenues to recur to, they had recourse to an expedient, which had been often practised in America, but nowhere else; they determined to emit paper money.

The American paper money is nothing but bills of credit, by which the public, the community, promises to pay the possessor a certain sum in a limited time. In a country where there is no coin, or not enough, in circulation, these bills may be emitted to a certain amount, and they will pass at par; but as soon as the quantity exceeds the value of the ordinary business of the people, it will depreciate, and continue to fall in its value, in proportion to the augmentation of the quantity.

The congress, on the 18th of March last, stated this depreciation at forty for one. This may be nearly the average, but it often passes much lower. By this resolution, all the bills in circulation on that day (and none have been emitted since) amount to about one million and a quarter sterling. To this if you add the money borrowed upon loan certificates, and the debt contracted abroad in France and Spain, the whole does not amount to but little more than five millions.

Yearly income we have none, properly speaking. We have no imposts or duties laid upon any articles of importation, exportation, or consumption. The revenue consists

entirely in grants annually made by the legislatures, of sums of money for the current service of the year, and appropriated to certain uses. These grants are proportioned upon all the polls and estates, real and personal, in the community; and they are levied and paid into the public treasury with great punctuality, from whence they are issued in payments of the demands upon the public.

You see then that it is in the power of the legislatures to raise what sums are wanted, at least as much as the people can bear; and they are usually proportioned to the public wants, and the people's abilities. They are now constantly laying on and paying very heavy taxes, although for the first three or four years of the war the obstructions of trade, &c., made it difficult to raise any taxes at all. The yearly taxes, annually laid on, have increased every year for these three years past, and will continue to be increased in proportion to the abilities of the people. This ability, no doubt, increases in proportion as population increases, as new lands are cultivated, and as property is in any way added to the common stock; it will also increase as our commerce increases, and as the success in privateering increases.

But by the method of taxing, you see that it is in the power of the legislature to increase the taxes every year, as the public exigencies may require; and they have no other restraint or limit than the people's ability.

XIII.

26 October.

Your thirteenth inquiry is, "What resources might America hereafter still make use of?"

There are many resources, yet untried, which would certainly be explored, if America should be driven to the necessity of them.

1. Luxury prevails in that young country, notwithstanding all the confident assertions of the English concerning their distress, to a degree, that retrenching this alone would enable them to carry on the war. There are expenses in wheel carriages, horses, equipage, furniture, dress, and the table, which might be spared, and would amount to enough to carry on the war.
2. The Americans might, and, rather than the English should prevail against them, they would, be brought to impose duties upon articles of luxury and convenience, and even of necessity, as has been done by all the nations of Europe. I am not able at present, and upon memory, to entertain you with accurate calculations; but in general it may be said, with certainty, that, if as heavy duties were laid upon articles of consumption and importation as are laid in England, or even in Holland, they would produce a revenue sufficient to carry on this war without borrowing at all. I hope, however, they will never come to this. I am clear they need not. Such systematical and established revenues are dangerous to liberty; which is safe, while the revenue depends upon annual grants of the people, because this secures public economy.

3. If there should be hereafter any accession to the population of America, by migrations from Europe, this will be a fresh resource; because, in that country of agriculture, the ability to raise a revenue will bear a constant proportion to the numbers of people.
4. There are immense tracts of uncultivated lands. These lands are all claimed by particular States; but if these States should cede these claims to the congress, which they would do in case of necessity, the congress might sell these lands, and they would become a great resource; no man can say how great, or how lasting.
5. There is a great deal of plate in America; and if she were driven to extremities, the ladies, I assure you, have patriotism enough to give up their plate to the public, rather than lose their liberties, or run any great hazard of it.
6. There is another resource still. The war may be carried on by means of a fluctuating medium of paper money. The war has been carried on in this manner hitherto; and I firmly believe, if the people could not find a better way, they would agree to call in all the paper, and let it lie as a demand upon the public, to be hereafter equitably paid, according to its fluctuating value, in silver; and emit new bills to depreciate, and carry on the war in the same way. This, however, would occasion many perplexities and much unhappiness; it would do injustice to many individuals, and will and ought to be avoided, if possible.
7. A loan in Europe, however, would be the best resource, as it would necessarily extend our trade, and relieve the people from too great a present burden. Very heavy taxes are hurtful, because they lessen the increase of population, by making the means of subsistence more difficult.
8. There are resources of agriculture, manufactures, and labor, that would produce much, if explored and attempted.
9. The resources of trade and privateering ought to be mentioned again. The real cause of our doing so little hitherto, is this:—The congress, in 1774, agreed upon a non-exportation, to begin in September, 1775. This induced the merchants in every part of America to send their ships and sailors to England, from whence the most of them never returned. The consequence of which was, that the Americans have been distressed for want of ships and seamen ever since. But the number of both has increased every year, in spite of all that the English have taken and destroyed. The vast number of ships and seamen taken this year will repair those losses; and no man can say to what an extent trade and privateering will be carried the next and the succeeding years.

XIV.

The fourteenth question is,—“What is the quantity of paper money in circulation? What credit the inhabitants have for it in their daily business? What designs the inhabitants have, by maintaining its credit? What by preventing its increase? And in what manner do they realize it?”

The quantity of paper bills in circulation on the 18th of March last, was two hundred millions of paper dollars.

The congress then stated the value of it, upon an average, at forty for one; amounting in the whole to five millions of silver dollars, or one million and a quarter sterling. This they did, by resolving to receive one silver dollar in lieu of forty paper ones, in the payment of taxes. This was probably allowing more than the full value for the paper; because, by all accounts, the bills passed from hand to hand, in private transactions, at sixty or seventy for one.

The designs of the inhabitants, in preserving its credit as much as they can, are very good and laudable. The designs are, that they may have a fixed and certain medium, both for external and internal commerce; that every man may have an equal profit from his industry and for his commodities; that private and public debts may be justly paid; and that every man may pay an equal and proportional share of the public expenses. And this is their design in preventing its increase; because it is impossible, if the quantity is increased, to prevent the depreciation of the whole in circulation.

They realize it in various ways. Some have lent it to the public, and received loan-office certificates for it, upon interest, which are to be paid in proportion to their value in silver at the time of their dates. Some purchase with it the produce of the country, which they export to the West Indies and to Europe; and, by this means, supply the French and Spanish fleets and armies, both upon the continent of America and in the West India Islands. Others purchase merchandises imported with it; others purchase bills of exchange upon France, Spain, &c.; others purchase silver and gold with it; and others purchase houses and lands. Others have paid their debts with it, to such a degree, that the people of America were never so little in debt, in their private capacities, as at present.

XV.

Your fifteenth quære is, “Does not the English army lay out its pay in America? At how much can the yearly benefit be calculated? Are not the prisoners provided for in America? Who has the care of their maintenance? How was Burgoyne’s army supplied?”

When the English army was in Boston, they bought all that they could, and left considerable sums there in silver and gold. So they did at Rhode Island. Since they have been in New York, they have purchased every thing they could, of provisions and fuel, on Long Island, Staten Island, New York Island, and in those parts of the States of New York and New Jersey where they have been able to carry on any clandestine traffic. When they were in Philadelphia, they did the same; and General Howe tells you, that he suspects that General Washington, from political motives, connived at the people’s supplying Philadelphia, in order essentially to serve his country, by insinuating it into large sums of silver and gold. They are doing the same now, more or less, in South Carolina and Georgia; and they cannot go into any part of America, without doing the same.

The British prisoners, in the hands of the Americans, receive their clothing chiefly from the English; and flags of truce are permitted to come out from their lines, for this purpose. They receive their pay, also, from their master, and spend the most of it where they are; they also purchase provisions in the country, and pay for them in hard money.

I am not able to ascertain exactly the yearly benefit; but it must be considerable; and the addition now of a French fleet and army to supply, will make a great addition of cash and bills of exchange, which will facilitate commerce and privateering. And the more troops and ships Great Britain and France send to America, the greater will this resource necessarily be to the Americans.

XVI.

The sixteenth inquiry is, “Who loses most by desertion? Do the English and German deserters serve voluntarily and well in the American army? How can those who do not enter into the army subsist?”

These questions I answer with great pleasure. There has been, from the beginning of the war to this day, scarcely an example of a native American’s deserting from the army to the English. There have been, in the American army, some scattering Scotch, Irish, and German soldiers; some of these have deserted, but never in great numbers; and among the prisoners they have taken, it is astonishing how few they have ever been able to persuade, by all their flatteries, threatenings, promises, and even cruelties, to enlist into their service.

The number of deserters from them has been all along considerably more. Congress have generally prohibited their officers from enlisting deserters; for some particular services permission has been given, and they have served well.

Those who do not enlist into the army have no difficulty to subsist. Those of them who have any trades, as weavers, tailors, smiths, shoemakers, tanners, curriers, carpenters, bricklayers, in short, any trade whatsoever, enter immediately into better business than they ever had in Europe, where they gain a better subsistence and more money; because tradesmen of all denominations are now much wanted; those who have no trade, if they are capable of any kind of labor, are immediately employed in agriculture, &c., labor being much wanted, and very dear.

I am not able to tell the precise numbers that have deserted; but if an hundred thousand were to desert, they would find no difficulty in point of subsistence or employment, if they can and will work.

XVII.

The seventeenth inquiry is, “Whether we have any information that we can rely on, concerning the population? Has it increased or diminished, since the war?”

In some former letters, I have made some observations upon the subject of the increase of mankind in America.

In the year 1774 there was much private conversation among the members of congress, concerning the number of souls in every Colony. The delegates of each were consulted, and the estimates made by them were taken down as follows:—

In New Hampshire	150,000
Massachusetts	400,000
Rhode Island	59,678
Connecticut	192,000
New York	250,000
New Jersey	130,000
Pennsylvania and Delaware	350,000
Maryland	320,000
Virginia	640,000
North Carolina	300,000
South Carolina	225,000
Total	3,016,678

This, however, was but an estimate, and some persons have thought there was too much speculation in it. It will be observed, that Georgia was not represented in the first congress, and, therefore, is not included in the estimate.

In a pamphlet published in England about a year ago, entitled, “A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, on the present State of Affairs, between the Old and New World,” written by Mr. Pownall, a member of parliament, and formerly Governor of Massachusetts, and Lieutenant-Governor of New Jersey, we are told, that “The Massachusetts had, in the year 1722, ninety-four thousand inhabitants; in 1742, one hundred and sixty-four thousand; in 1751, when there was a great depopulation, both by war and the smallpox, one hundred and sixty-four thousand four hundred and eighty-four; in 1761, two hundred and sixteen thousand; in 1765, two hundred and fifty-five thousand five hundred; in 1771, two hundred and ninety-two thousand; in 1773, three hundred thousand.

In Connecticut, in 1756, one hundred and twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-four; in 1774, two hundred and fifty-seven thousand three hundred and fifty-six. These numbers are not increased by strangers, but decreased by wars and emigrations to the westward and to other States; yet they have nearly doubled in eighteen years.

In New York, in 1756, ninety-six thousand seven hundred and seventy-six; in 1771, one hundred and sixty-eight thousand and seven; in 1774, one hundred and eighty-two thousand two hundred and fifty-one.

In Virginia, in 1756, one hundred and seventy-three thousand three hundred and sixteen; in 1764, two hundred thousand; in 1774, three hundred thousand.

In South Carolina, in 1750, sixty-four thousand; in 1770, one hundred and fifteen thousand.

In Rhode Island, in 1738, fifteen thousand; in 1748, twenty-eight thousand four hundred and thirty-nine.

As there never was a militia in Pennsylvania before this war, with authentic lists of the population, it has been variously estimated on speculation. There was a continual importation for many years of Irish and German emigrants, yet many of these settled in other provinces; but the progress of population, in the ordinary course, advanced in a ratio between that of Virginia and that of Massachusetts. The city of Philadelphia advanced more rapidly,—it had, in 1749, two thousand and seventy-six houses; in 1753, two thousand three hundred; in 1760, two thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine; in 1769, four thousand four hundred and seventy-four; from 1749 to 1753, from sixteen to eighteen thousand inhabitants; from 1760 to 1769, from thirty-one thousand three hundred and eighteen to thirty-five thousand.

There were, in 1754, various calculations and estimates made of the numbers on the continent. The sanguine made the numbers one million and a half; those who admitted less speculation into the calculation, but adhered closer to facts and lists as they were made out, stated them at one million two hundred and fifty thousand. Governor Pownall thinks that two million one hundred and forty-one thousand three hundred and seven would turn out nearest to the real amount in 1774. But what an amazing progress, which in eighteen years has added a million to a million two hundred and fifty thousand, although a war was maintained in that country for seven years of the term! In this view, one sees a community unfolding itself, beyond any example in Europe.

Thus, you have the estimates made by the gentlemen in congress, in 1774, and that of Governor Pownall for the same epocha. That made in congress is most likely to be right. If, in their estimate, some States were rated too high, it has been since made certain that others were too low.

But, admitting Mr. Pownall's estimate to be just, the numbers have grown since 1774 so much, notwithstanding the war and the interruption of migrations from Europe, that they must be wellnigh three millions. If the calculation made by the members of congress was right, the numbers now must be nearer four millions than three millions and a half.

I have observed to you, in a former letter, that the Massachusetts Bay has been lately numbered, and found to have increased in numbers as much as in former periods, very nearly.

I now add, that in Delaware, which in 1774 was estimated at thirty thousand, upon numbering the people since, they appeared to be forty thousand.

Pennsylvania is undoubtedly set too low in both estimates.

XVIII.

Question eighteenth. “Do sufficient tranquillity, contentment, and prosperity reign in those places where the war does not rage? Can one sufficiently subsist there without feeling the oppression of the taxes? Does plenty abound there? Is there more than is necessary for consumption? Are the people well affected and encouraged to pursue the war and endure its calamities? or is there poverty and dejection?”

There has been more of this tranquillity and contentment, and fewer riots, insurrections, and seditions throughout the whole war, and in the periods of its greatest distress, than there was for seven years before the war broke out, in those parts that I am best acquainted with. As to subsistence, there never was or will be any difficulty. There never was any real want of any thing but warlike stores and clothing for the army, and salt and rum both for the army and the people; but they have such plentiful importations of these articles now, that there is no want, excepting of blankets, clothing, and warlike stores for the army.

The taxes are rising very high, but there never will be more laid on than the people can bear, because the representatives who lay them tax themselves and their neighbors in exact proportion. The taxes indeed fall heaviest upon the rich and the higher classes of people.

The earth produces grain and meat in abundance for the consumption of the people, for the support of the army, and for exportation.

The people are more universally well affected and encouraged to pursue the war than are the people of England, France, or Spain, as far as I can judge.

As to poverty, there is hardly a beggar in the country. As to dejection, I never saw, even at the time of our greatest danger and perplexity, so much of it as appears in England or France upon every intelligence of a disastrous event.

The greatest source of grief and affliction is the fluctuation of the paper money; but this, although it occasions unhappiness, has no violent or fatal effects.

XIX.

Question nineteenth. “Is not peace very much longed for in America? Might not this desire of peace induce the people to hearken to proposals, appearing very fair, but which really are not so, which the people might be too quick in listening to, and the government forced to accept?”

The people, in all ages and countries, wish for peace; human nature does not love war; yet this does not hinder nations from going to war, when it is necessary, and often indeed for frivolous purposes of avarice, ambition, vanity, resentment, and revenge. I have never been informed of more desire of peace in America than is common to all

nations at war. They in general know that they cannot obtain it, without submitting to conditions infinitely more dreadful than all the horrors of this war.

If they are ever deceived, it is by holding out to them false hopes of independence, and Great Britain's acknowledging it.

The people of America are too enlightened to be deceived in any great plan of policy. They understand the principles and nature of government too well to be imposed on by any proposals short of their own object.

Great Britain has tried so many experiments to deceive them, without effect, that I think it is scarcely worth her while to try again. The history of these ministerial and parliamentary tricks would fill a volume. I have not records nor papers to recur to; but if Mr. Calkoen desires it, I could give him a sketch from memory of these artifices and their success, which, I think, would convince him there is no danger from that quarter.

XX.

Question twentieth. "Have there not been different opinions in congress, with regard to this (that is,—to proposals appearing fair which were not so,) from whence animosities have arisen?"

There has never been any difference of sentiment in congress since the declaration of independency, concerning any proposals of reconciliation. There have been no proposals of reconciliation made since the 4th of July, 1776, excepting twice.

The first was made by Lord Howe, who, together with his brother, the General, were appointed by the King commissioners for some purpose or other. The public has never been informed what powers they had. Lord Howe sent a message by General Sullivan to congress, desiring a conference with some of its members. There were different sentiments concerning the propriety of sending any members until we knew his Lordship's powers. A majority decided to send. Dr. Franklin, Mr. John Adams, and Mr. Rutledge were sent. Upon their report, there was a perfect unanimity of sentiment in congress.

The second was the mission of Lord Carlisle, Governor Johnstone, and Mr. Eden, in 1778. Upon this occasion again there was a perfect unanimity in congress.

Before the declaration of independency, Lord North moved several conciliatory propositions in parliament, in which a good deal of art was employed to seduce, deceive, and divide. But there was always an unanimity in congress upon all these plans.

There were different opinions concerning the petition to the King, in the year 1775; and before that, concerning the nonexportation agreement. There have been different opinions concerning articles of the confederation; concerning the best plans for the conduct of the war; concerning the best officers to conduct them; concerning

territorial controversies between particular States, &c.; but these differences of opinion, which are essential to all assemblies, have never caused greater animosities than those which arise in all assemblies where there is freedom of debate.

XXI.

27 October.

Question twenty-first. "Are there no malcontents in America against the government, who are otherwise much inclined for the American cause, who may force the nation, or congress, against their resolutions and interests, to conclude a peace?"

There is no party formed in any of the thirteen States against the new constitution, nor any opposition against the government, that I have ever heard of, excepting in Pennsylvania, and in North Carolina. These by no means deserve to be compared together.

In Pennsylvania there is a respectable body of people, who are zealous against Great Britain, but yet wish for some alteration in their new form of government; yet this does not appear to weaken their exertions; it seems rather to excite an emulation in the two parties, and to increase their efforts.

I have before explained the history of the rise and progress of the party, in North Carolina, consisting of regulators and Scotch Highlanders; and General Howe has informed you of their fate. This party has ever appeared to make North Carolina more stanch and decided, instead of weakening it.

The party in Pennsylvania will never have an inclination to force the congress, against their interests, to make peace; nor would they have the power, if they had the will.

The party in North Carolina, whose inclination cannot be doubted, is too inconsiderable to do any thing.

XXII.

Questions twenty-second and twenty-third. "General Monk repaired the King's government in England: Might not one American general or another be able, by discontent or corruption, to do the same? Would the army follow his orders on such an occasion? Could one or more politicians, through intrigues, undertake the same with any hopes of success, should even the army assist him in such a case?"

I have before observed, that no politicians, or general officers, in America, have any such influence. Neither the people nor the soldiers would follow them. It was not attachment to men, but to a cause, which first produced, and has supported, the revolution; it was not attachment to officers, but to liberty, which made the soldiers enlist. Politicians in America can only intrigue with the people; these are so numerous, and so scattered, that no statesman has any great influence but in his own

small circle. In courts, sometimes, gaining two or three individuals may produce a revolution; no revolution in America can be accomplished without gaining the majority of the people; and this not all the wealth of Great Britain is able to do, at the expense of their liberties.

Question twenty-fourth. "The revolution must have made a great change in affairs, so that many people, though at present free of the enemy's incursions, have lost their daily subsistence. Have the occupations, which come instead of their old ones, been sufficient to supply their wants?"

All the difficulties which were ever apprehended, of this sort, are long since past. In 1774, some were apprehensive that the fishermen, sailors, and shipwrights would be idle; but some went into the army, some into the navy, and some went to agriculture; and if there had been twice as many, they would all have found employment. The building of frigates and privateers has employed all the carpenters. Manufactories, besides, have been set up, of cannon, arms, powder, saltpetre, salt. Flax and wool have been raised in greater quantities, and coarse manufactures of cloth and linen been increased. In short, the greatest difficulty is, that there are not hands enough. Agriculture alone, in that country, would find employment enough for millions, and privateering for thousands, more than there are.

XXIII.

Question twenty-fifth. "Do they who have lost their possessions and fortunes by the war, endure it patiently, as compatriots, so that nothing can be feared from them?"

Losing fortunes in America has not such dreadful consequences, to individuals or families, as it has in Europe. The reason is obvious; because the means of subsistence are easier to be obtained, so that nobody suffers for want. As far as I am acquainted with the sufferers, they have borne their losses, both of property and relations, with great fortitude; and, so far from producing in their minds a desire of submission, they have only served to irritate them, to convince them more fully of the precarious and deplorable situation they would be in under the government of the English, and to make them more eager to resist it.

Question twenty-sixth. "How has it gone with the cultivation of the land before the troubles, at their commencement, and at present? What change has taken place?"

Agriculture ever was, and ever will be, the dominant interest in America. Nevertheless, before this war, perhaps, she ran more into commerce than was for her interest. She depended too much, perhaps, upon importations for her clothing, utensils, &c., and indulged in too many luxuries. When the prospect opened, in 1775, of an interruption of her commerce, she applied herself more to agriculture; and many places that depended upon the lumber trade, the fishery, &c., for the importation of even their bread, have turned their labor and attention to raising corn, wool, flax, and cattle, and have lived better, and advanced in wealth and independence faster, than ever they did. For example, the towns in the neighborhood of the sea, in the Massachusetts Bay, used to depend upon the fishery and commerce to import them

their wheat and flour from Philadelphia, Maryland, and Virginia, and rice from South Carolina and Georgia; the communication being interrupted by sea since the war, they have planted their own corn.

The eastern parts of the Massachusetts Bay, before the war, depended on the commerce of lumber for the West India market, and of masts, yards, and bowsprits for the royal navy of Great Britain, to procure them clothes, meat, and strong liquors. Since the war, they have cultivated their lands, raised their own corn, wool, flax, and planted the apple tree instead of drinking rum, in consequence of which, they are more temperate, wealthy, and independent than ever.

North Carolina depended upon the commerce of pitch, tar, and turpentine and tobacco, for the importation of many things. Since the war, they have turned their labor to raise more of the things which they wanted.

Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina depended upon the trade of tobacco to import coarse cloths for their negroes. Since the war, they have raised less tobacco, and more wheat, wool, and cotton, and made the coarse cloths themselves.

So that, upon the whole, the lessening of commerce, and the increase of agriculture, have rendered America more independent than she ever was.

XXIV.

Question twenty-seventh. "How was the situation of manufactures, manual art, and trade in general, at the beginning of this war? What change have they suffered?"

Manufactures in general never flourished in America. They were never attended only by women and children who could not work in the field, and by men at certain seasons of the year, and at certain intervals of time, when they could not be employed in the cultivation of the lands; because that labor upon land, in that country, is more profitable than in manufactures. These they could import and purchase, with the produce of their soil, cheaper than they could make them. The cause of this is the plenty of wild land. A day's work, worth two shillings, upon wild land, not only produced two shillings in the crop, but made the land worth two shillings more. Whereas, a day's work of the same price, applied to manufactures, produced only the two shillings.

Since the war, however, freight and insurance have been so high, that manufactures have been more attended to. Manufactures of saltpetre, salt, powder, cannon, arms, have been introduced; clothing, in wool and flax, has been made, and many other necessary things; but these, for the reason before given, will last no longer than the war or than the hazard of their trade.

America is the country of raw materials, and of commerce enough to carry them to a good market; but Europe is the country for manufactures and commerce. Thus Europe and America will be blessings to each other, if some malevolent policy does not frustrate the purposes of nature

XXV.

Question twenty-eight. "Has America gained, or lost, by the mutual capture of ships? How much is the benefit or prejudice of it, by calculation?"

America has gained. She took early, from the English, ordnance and ammunition ships, and supplied herself in that way with those articles when she had them not, and could not otherwise obtain them; she has taken, in this way, a great number of British and German soldiers; she has taken a vast number of seamen, who have generally enlisted on board our privateers; she has taken great quantities of provisions, clothing, arms, and warlike stores; she has taken every year more and more, since 1775, and will probably continue to take more and more every year, while the war lasts. I have certain intelligence, that there have been this year carried into Boston and Philadelphia only, ninety-nine vessels, in the months of July and August. On board of these vessels there were not less than eight hundred seamen; many of the ships were very rich. The vessels the English have taken from the Americans were of small value; this year they have been few in number.

I am not able to give you an exact calculation. The Quebec ships were worth from thirty to forty thousand pounds sterling each, and there were two-and-twenty of them in number.

Privateering is a great nursery of seamen; and if the Americans had not imprudently sacrificed such a number of their frigates and privateers in the attack and defence of places, these alone would, by this time, wellnigh have ruined the British commerce, navy, and army.

XXVI.

I believe you will be pleased, when I tell you, that we are now come to the twenty-ninth, and last question, which is, "What are the real damages sustained, or still to be suffered, by the loss of Charleston? And what influence has it had upon the minds of the people?"

An interruption of the commerce of indigo and rice; the loss of many negroes, which the English will steal from the plantations, and send to the West India islands for sale; a great deal of plunder of every sort; much unhappiness among the people; and several lives of very worthy men will be lost; but the climate will be death to European troops; and, at an immense expense of men and money, they will ravage for a while, and then disappear.

The effect of the surrender of Charleston, and the defeat of Gates, has only been to awaken the people from their dreams of peace.

The artifices of the English, holding out ideas of peace, seem to have deceived both the Americans and their allies, while they were only contriving means to succor Gibraltar, and invade Carolina. The people are now convinced of their mistake, and

generally roused. But these disasters will have no more effect towards subduing America, than if they had taken place in the East Indies.

I Have The Honor To Be, Sir,
Your Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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M. BICKER TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Amsterdam, 6 October, 1780.

Sir,—

I am much mortified to find that the visit which you paid at my instigation has met with no better success. ¹The significant, positive, and reiterated expressions used by that house, lead me to believe that you should abandon the idea of opening the affair in question to it at all. It does not surprise me that you should not have found there so much confidence in the solidity of your United States as you would like to guarantee to us. I have had the honor already, Monsieur, to remark to you that this can spring up only through much patience, and after the appearance of some person properly accredited. I might indeed direct you to others; but the meeting too many refusals, sometimes of itself ruins an excellent project. The broker, Blomberg, is engaged. He might be asked if he could not find, perhaps, another person than the one named (J. D. B.) who would be willing warmly to enlist in such an enterprise; and before you shall address yourself to him, I will offer to you my unbiased opinion upon his solidity and his habits of thinking.

In the mean time, I have the honor to be,

With The Most Perfect Consideration,

H. Bicker.

P. S. Under the seal of secrecy, I must say to you, that the house of Staphorst has favored me with a visit, in order to beg me to recommend it to you.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 8 October, 1780.

Sir,—

I received the letter you did me the honor of writing by Mr. Andrews, and shall render him every service I can in his application.

We begin to be in pain for Mr. Laurens, who was to have sailed three days after Mr. Searle. If that took place, he has been out ten or eleven weeks. I hope he did not sail so soon, otherwise it is probable that he is either lost or taken.

I do not just now recollect my having written, as from myself, any letter to the grand pensionary. I drew indeed the letter that was sent by the commissioners, acquainting him with the treaty of commerce, to which we had no answer. But I will search, and if I can find such a one, will send you a copy with a copy of the other.

I shall be glad to hear if you are like to make any progress in the affair of a loan, which I understand Mr. Laurens was charged with. I send you inclosed a copy of a note of congress, respecting your salaries. I hope you will be able to do without my assistance; if not, I must furnish you. But I have been obliged to accept M. Neufville's bills, on account of his acceptances of those drawn on Mr. Laurens, and I shall, with some difficulty, be able to pay them; though these extra demands often embarrass me exceedingly.

We hear that the Alliance is arrived at Boston.

I beg leave to recommend to your civilities Mr. Searle, a member of congress for Pennsylvania, with whose conversation you will be pleased, as he can give you good information of the state of our affairs when he left America.

I ought to acquaint you, *a governo*, as the merchants say, that M. le Comte de Vergennes, having taken much amiss some passages in your letters to him, sent the whole correspondence to me, requesting that I would transmit it to congress. I was myself sorry to see those passages. If they were the effects merely of inadvertence, and you do not, on reflection, approve of them, perhaps you may think it proper to write something for effacing the impressions made by them. I do not presume to advise you, but mention it only for your consideration. The vessel is not yet gone that carries the papers.

With Great Regard, I Have The Honor To Be, Sir,
Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

B. Franklin.

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TO THOMAS DIGGES.

Amsterdam, 14 October, 1780.

Sir,—

Yours of the 6th and 10th are received. Upon what principle is it that they confine Mr. Laurens as a prisoner of State, after so many precedents as have been set? Sullivan, Sterling, Lee, Lovell, and many others have been exchanged as prisoners of war.

Mr. Laurens was in England when hostilities commenced, I believe. He came into public in America, after the declaration of independence; after the extinction of all civil authority under the crown; and after the formation of complete new governments in every State. To treat a citizen of a State thus completely in possession of a sovereignty *de facto*, is very extraordinary. Do they mean to exasperate America, and drive them to retaliation? Are these people governed by reason at all, or by any principle, or do they conduct according to any system? or do they deliver themselves up entirely to the government of their passions and their caprice? I saw so many contradictions in the papers about Mr. Laurens, that I hoped your first account was a mistake, but your letter of the 20th makes me think the first account right.

Pray inform me constantly of every thing relative to him, and let me know if any thing can be done for him, by way of France or any other.

Cornwallis's and Tarlton's gasconade serves to diminish the esteem of mankind for the people of England, by giving fuel to their passions, and making them throw off the mask. I do not believe that his advantage is half so great, nor the American loss half so much, as they represent. Time you know is the mother of truth. *Audi alteram partem*, and wait the consequences. Fighting is the thing. Fighting will do the business. Defeats will prove the way to victories. Patience! Patience! *Il y en a beaucoup, en Amérique.*

F. R. S.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 14 October, 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 any thing 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 of mark to exchange for him? After exchanging so many military men as prisoners of war, it is pitifully spiteful to use Mr. Laurens as they do; but they cannot conceal the meanness of their character.

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 any thing 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 of 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 abominable lies 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.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Appeltern, 16 Octobre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

Ayant appris que le congrès vous a muni des mêmes pouvoirs qu'il avoit confié au Colonel Laurens dont la fâcheuse catastrophe me désolé, et qu'entre autres votre mission a pour but une négociation pour l'Amérique Unie, je prends la liberté de vous prier de m'en envoyer le plutôt possible les conditions; un parent m'ayant témoigné de l'inclination d'y placer 20,000 florins de Hollande.

Si vous cherchez quelque correspondant à Rotterdam je puis vous recommander mon ami Adriaan Valck, négociant, demeurant, si je ne me trompe sur le Leuvenhave. Il mérite toute votre confiance, et est très zélé pour la bonne cause. Le digne *Tegelaar* vous est connu, de même que mon intime Van der Kemp. Ce dernier peut à l'avenir être de grande utilité pour le congrès. Il a beaucoup de connoissances, de la droiture, et une intrepidité que l'on ne chercheroit pas chez un prédicateur mennonite.

Du reste, monsieur, si je puis vous servir dans ma petite sphère, soyez persuadé que c'est avec un dévouement parfait à la cause Américaine et la plus haute considération pour votre personne, que j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur, votre très humble, très obéissant serviteur,

J. D. Van der Capellen.[1](#)

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 20 October, 1780.

Sir,—

Understanding that in case of Mr. Laurens's absence you are charged with the affair of procuring a loan in Holland, I think it right to acquaint you, that by a letter from Mr. Jay of the 12th instant, from Madrid, we are informed that the King of Spain has been so good as to offer his guaranty for the payment of the interest and principal of a loan of money for the use of the United States. Mr. Grand thinks that no considerable use can be made here of that guaranty, on account of the considerable loan Mr. Necker is about to make; but that possibly it may have weight in Holland. Orders will be sent to the Spanish ambassador here, by the next post, respecting this matter. I regret much the taking of Mr. Laurens. His son, I understand, sailed a fortnight after him for France, but has not yet arrived.

The Ariel has been at sea, but meeting with a terrible storm which carried away all her masts, has returned into port to refit.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

B. Franklin.

P. S. By a former letter from Mr. Jay, I find the sum to be one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, for which the King of Spain would be answerable, payable in the space of three years.

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TO BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN.

Amsterdam, 22 October, 1780.

Sir,—

I have this day received the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 16th instant. I beg you, sir, to accept of my sincere thanks for this instance of your attention to the United States of America. I have long desired the honor of an acquaintance with the Baron Van der Capellen, whose virtuous attachment to the rights of mankind and to the cause of America, as founded in the clearest principles, has been long long known and admired in America.

I beg leave to communicate to you in confidence, as I have done to a very few as yet in this place, that, although Mr. Laurens was destined to this country on an important negotiation for the United States, yet the congress, lest an accident might happen to Mr. Laurens, have been pleased to send to me a commission in part at least of the same import, although I had before a commission for another service. I have kept my commission secret in hopes of Mr. Laurens's arrival. But all hopes of this, by the barbarous severity of the English, are now at an end; and I must set myself in earnest about the business of my commission.

I have not yet settled the conditions, nor determined upon a house. I should be happy, sir, to have your advice in respect to both.

You give me great pleasure, by informing me that a relation of yours has discovered an inclination to place twenty thousand florins in the American funds. As soon as a house is chosen, and the terms fixed, I shall with pleasure accept the offer.

I shall give great attention, sir, to the gentlemen you are so good as to recommend to me.

Mr. Trumbull is, as I believe, in London. He will doubtless pay his respects to you when he comes this way.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 24 October, 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's arrival, and wishing him to judge for himself, I have not decided upon some questions that necessarily arise. I am not able to promise any thing, but I am led to hope for something. The contents of Mr. Jay's letter 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 every thing 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 any thing be done in Europe for his comfort or relief?

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 27 October, 1780.

Sir,—

It seems to be now certain, that some of Mr. Laurens's 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.¹ 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's captivity, but I cannot. The rigor of his imprisonment, and the severity of their behavior towards him, are not at all abated.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

28 October, 1780.

Dear Sir,—

I shall endeavor to write largely to you, *en ami*, but I will not risk the sailing of the vessel for that purpose at this moment. It is reported 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 to my letters.

Your Friend And Humble Servant,

James Lovell, *Committee of Foreign Affairs.*

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 1 Novembre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

Quoique j'aie eu l'honneur de vous écrire depuis la faveur de votre lettre du 4e, je dois néanmoins me souvenir que je n'y ai proprement pas répondu. Je n'ai pu me procurer une copie de la dépêche de Petersbourg, parceque les plénipotentiaires ont exigé qu'elle ne fût point communiquée. Mais elle porte en substance,—1o. Une convention proposée par l'Impératrice de Russie, où, aux cinq articles connus entre les cours du nord, cette princesse dans deux ou trois articles de plus, sans vouloir proprement rien garantir à la république, lui assure néanmoins son secours au cas qu'elle soit attaquée en haine de la dite convention. 2o. Que l'envoyé d'Angleterre à Petersbourg a déclaré à l'Impératrice, que la Grande Bretagne respectera la navigation de la neutralité armée, pourvu que cette république ici en soit exclue. 3o. Que l'envoyé de Prusse les a assurés que le roi son maître accédera à la neutralité armée. 4o. Un article séparé de la convention, que, lorsque la neutralité armée aura pris toute sa consistance, elle pourra procurer la paix en offrant sa médiation aux puissances belligérantes.

Au reste, il n'y a pas encore de congrès formé à Petersbourg; mais il n'est pas impossible qu'il s'y en forme un, lorsque les choses seront parvenues à une certaine maturité; et dans ce cas il seroit certainement nécessaire qu'il y eût, comme vous dites, un ministre Américain, dès qu'il s'y agiroit d'une pacification générale, c'est-à-dire, de l'ancien et du nouveau monde. Mais, encore une fois, il n'y a pas encore de congrès à Petersbourg, et jusqu'ici il n'en a pas même été question. Je vous ai seulement marqué, dans celle de mes lettres qui a occasioné la vôtre, qu'il regne un *concert* (ou une intelligence) manifeste entre les ministres étrangers (excepté celui d'Angleterre) et le Cabinet de Petersbourg, pour parvenir au grand but de l'impératrice, qui est d'affranchir toutes les mers de la prétention de toute puissance qui voudroit dominer seule, et inquiéter la navigation des neutres toutes les fois qu'elle seroit en guerre.

J'apprendrai avec bien du plaisir, monsieur, que vous jouissez d'une parfaite santé; et j'espère d'en être témoin oculaire, dès que l'assemblée d'Hollande ici se sera séparée; ce qui vraisemblablement aura lieu dans peu de jours.

Au reste, vous aurez déjà appris la résolution prise par la province d'Hollande, d'accéder à cette neutralité. Il s'agit que les six autres prennent la même résolution. Deux ou trois l'ont déjà fait. Mais il faut que les autres le fassent aussi, sans quoi rien ne pourra se conclure.

Je Suis, Monsieur, Avec Un Grand Respect,

Dumas.

P. S. Si vous savez quelque chose de l'état de M. Laurens, depuis qu'il est enfermé à la Tour, je vous supplie de m'en faire part.

Americanus sum, nec quidquam Americani a me alienum puto. Patior cum illis, ita ut olim gavisurus cum iisdem.

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TO M. VAN BLOMBERG.

Amsterdam, 3 November, 1780.

Mr. Adams presents his compliments to Mr. Van Blomberg; hopes his health continues to return to him; wishes to know the answer of Mr. Bowens;¹ because Mr. Adams has delayed the business already so long, that it is become necessary to come to a conclusion as soon as possible.

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FROM M. VAN BLOMBERG.

Amsterdam, 4 November, 1780.

M. Van Blomberg returns his respect to Mr. Adams, will send immediately to the gentleman who called on Mr. Adams yesterday, desiring him still this afternoon, not doubting but he will, if he can. M. Van Blomberg must beg to be excused being present at the conference, as his ill state of health will not permit him to do any business.

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TO M. BICKER.

Amsterdam, 6 November, 1780.

Sir,—

M. Blomberg is so ill that he cannot speak upon business, which obliges me to beg the favor of your advice, whether I ought to give more than according to the following plan.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| A. Interest, | 5 per cent. per annum for 10 years. |
| To the house for negotiating the capital, | 1 per cent. |
| To the undertakers to furnish the capital, | 1 per cent. |
| Brokerage, | ½ per cent. |
| And for the yearly paying off of ten per cent. | |
| To the house of the loan, | 1 per cent. |
| B. To the undertakers, | 1 per cent. |
| C. Brokerage, | ¼ per cent. |

I had the pleasure of half an hour's conversation with M. Bowens, who desired me to consult with M. Blomberg, and send him my conditions.

A gentleman of great worth and skill advised me not to give more than four per cent. interest. America is willing, however, to give a just interest, and all other reasonable terms, but she would not, like a young spendthrift heir, give any thing, to get money.

I am sorry to give you so much trouble, amidst the sickness in your family; but the sickness of several persons upon whom I depended obliges me to do it, and to request your answer as soon as convenient.

With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 7 Novembre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

Vous aurez pu voir par le supplément de la Gazette de Leyde de ce jour, que je vous ai ponctuellement obéi, en faisant insérer les extraits concernant M. Laurens. On a seulement omis les deux ou trois dernières lignes, où *white eyes* est chargé de la bassesse du traitement indigne qu'éprouve M. Laurens, parce qu'on n'auroit pu les mettre sans s'exposer. Du reste, je vous suis très obligé, monsieur, de cette communication, dont j'ai fait bon usage ici avant que cela ait paru en public; ce qui n'est pas indifférent. Je me recommande pour cette raison, et aussi pour la part intime que je prends au sort de M. Laurens, à la continuation de votre bonté, à mesure que vous recevrez de ses nouvelles; et je vous promets de les publier ou supprimer, selon que vous le jugerez nécessaire pour le bien de M. Laurens, dont la mauvaise santé est ce qui m'inquiète le plus. J'espère de pouvoir faire un petit voyage à Amsterdam, et de vous y voir en parfaite santé; en attendant je suis, avec un trèsgrand respect, &c. &c.

Dumas.

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FROM M. BICKER.

(Translation.)

Amsterdam, 7 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I am very glad that you have had an interview with M. Bowens; but grieved that his broker Blomberg should be so ill that you find yourself constrained to have recourse to another. Upon this point you will permit me to recommend you to consult Mr. Bowens himself, or else let his bookkeeper find some one through whom you may gain intelligence. Whether there be any who speak French or English, I do not know, for such persons are rare. Mortier and Meerkemaer are among the highest in repute, but they act under Messrs. Staphorst for Mr. A. G.

I return your plan with some remarks which I submit for the consideration of the person or persons who will some day have the honor to become your agents, to wit:—

A. Five per cent. is not, in my opinion, too high a rate of interest, inasmuch as all the great sovereigns as well as the powers of the north eagerly take money at that price.

bc1 Two conditions until now never known to me, and, therefore, superfluous. They must have been suggested to you by some venal or interested soul.

On the other hand I see no condition specified for the payment of the annual interest, a duty which requires the most labor and well deserves the compensation of one per cent. Let me explain myself. Bonds to the amount of one million, yield fifty thousand as annual interest, one per cent. on which makes but five hundred florins. On that account I have always been paid two per cent.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

H. Bicker.

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TO M. BOWENS.

Amsterdam, 7 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I waited on M. Blomberg yesterday, but found him too ill to speak upon business. I must, therefore, request you to recommend to me another broker for the present, one who speaks French or English, if possible. I don't mean to quit M. Blomberg, whom I esteem very much, but I suppose it will not be amiss to have two. Messrs. Mortier and Meerkemaer have been mentioned to me.

Meantime I will venture to propose to M. Bowens's consideration the following plan.

Interest	5 per cent. per annum for ten years.
To the house for negotiating the capital,	1 per cent.
To the undertakers to furnish the capital,	1 per cent.
Brokerage,	$\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
For the yearly paying off of ten per cent.	
To the house of the loan,	1 per cent.
To the same for paying off the annual interest,	1 per cent of the interest.

I should be glad of your sentiments, as soon as may be convenient.

I Am, With Great Respect, Sir,
Your Very Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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(Memorandum On The Foregoing Letter.)

10 November, 1780.

Returned to me, on the 10th of November, at one o'clock, by M. Bowens's bookkeeper, with an answer that he had made some inquiries, and could not see any hopes of success, and, therefore, declined the trust.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 9 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor of yours of the 7th. Inclosed are a few more extracts concerning the treatment of Mr. Laurens; you will publish such parts as you judge proper. This event will have more serious and lasting consequences than are imagined; it is therefore proper that the facts should be preserved. It may be prudent to observe a delicacy concerning *white eyes*; [1](#) but Europe, in general, is much mistaken in that character; it is a pity that he should be believed to be so amiable; the truth is far otherwise. *Nerone neronior* is nearer the truth. I shall be very happy to see you at Amsterdam, and am with much respect, &c.

John Adams.

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TO M. BICKER.

Amsterdam, 10 November, 1780.

I wrote three days ago to M. Bowens, and proposed to him my conditions, and had no answer till this moment.

M. Bowens's bookkeeper has this moment called upon me with M. Bowens's answer,—that he has made some inquiry, and cannot see any hopes of success, and therefore declines accepting the trust.

I am now at a full stand. I should be very much obliged to you for your further advice.

The gentleman advises me to Messrs. Christian Tenkate and M^m. Van Vlooten as brokers. I should be glad of your opinion of them.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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FROM M. BICKER.

(Translation.)

Amsterdam, 11 November, 1780.

Sir,—

The brokers Tenkate, when I was in business, had free entry at my house. I think them capable; but I found them so liable to influence through their own interests, that I never could close with them. As to Mr. Van Vlooten, I think his residence is at Utrecht, and that he has fair opportunities of placing the money of citizens of that Province, who are not however capitalists to set agoing the negotiation in question.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

H. Bicker.

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TO COMMODORE GILLON.

Amsterdam, 12 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me the 12th of November.

It would give me great pleasure to do any thing in my power consistent with the duty I owe to my constituents, to assist you; but the advices you allude to are as great an obstruction to you as to me. I have left no measure unattempted that prudence could justify, but have neither procured any money, nor obtained the least hope of obtaining any. I have heretofore entertained hopes of obtaining something, but these hopes are all at an end. There are bills of exchange already here that must, I fear, be protested, and others on their way that must share the same fate, as Mr. Franklin cannot accept them, and no one else has any prospect.

In this situation I should be criminal to comply with the request in your letter. Indeed, if there was money of the United States here at my disposal, and more than enough to answer the bills drawn and to be drawn, I could not justify lending it to any particular State without express instructions. There are commissioners now in Europe from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts, who would have similar reasons for requesting my aid. But a precedent of this sort should never be set without the highest authority for it. If there could be any State for which I should hazard such an irregularity, it would be South Carolina, on account of her suffering situation.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 16 November, 1780.

Sir,—

On the 10th of this month Sir Joseph Yorke presented to the states-general the following memorial.¹

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 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 insurance cannot be had even to St. Eustatia, since this memorial was made public, under twenty or twenty-five 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.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 17 November, 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 connections. And after my arrival here, I had the opinion of persons who 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 have 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.

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.

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 a right to claim and demand the prerogatives and privileges of a minister plenipotentiary, in case any thing should turn up which might require it. It would make him considered as the centre of American affairs, and it would assist, if any thing 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.

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TO BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN.

Amsterdam, 20 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose a small pamphlet lately published, which in this critical moment may do some good.¹

The hour draws nigh when this republic is to determine whether it will accede to the armed neutrality; but let their determination of that question be as it will, if they do not disavow the conduct of Amsterdam, and punish M. Van Berckel and the burgomasters, the King of Great Britain has threatened, and, if I am not deceived by his past conduct, he will attempt to carry his threat into execution. If he declares war, or, which is more probable, commences hostilities without a declaration, it will be on pretence of an insult and an injury, committed by beginning a correspondence and a treaty with his subjects in rebellion, although they were at that time as completely in possession of an independence and a sovereignty *de facto* as England or Holland were.

I hope for the honor of your answer to the proposal I made you, by the time limited, and am,

With The Utmost Respect,

John Adams.

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TO M. JOHN LUZAC.

Amsterdam, 20 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received your obliging letter and a dozen copies of the “Pensées.” I am much obliged to you, sir, for these copies, and for an excellent preface, which is worth more than the book.

I should be glad to pay for a couple of dozens more of these pamphlets. They come out in the critical moment to do good, if ever. If the impression they make now should not be deep, it will sink deeper ere long; for I see plainly by a certain “memorial,” that the King of England and his ministers have in their hearts war against this republic; join or not join the armed neutrality, it will come, if, after a long experience of those characters, I have not mistaken them. They do not charge faction, cabal, &c. &c. &c., but in earnest.

I Am, Sir, With Great Esteem, Your Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 24 November, 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 any thing can be done, and I fear that he deceives himself.

I hope by this time your Excellency's health is restored, and have the honor to be, &c.

John Adams.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Zwol, 28 Novembre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

J'étois sur le point de vous écrire lorsque je me vis honoré de votre lettre du 20 du courant. Je vous ai beaucoup d'obligation de la brochure Française, que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer. Elle ne manquera pas de guérir bien des préjugés; mais aussi, à ce que j'ai déjà remarqué, elle alarmera les peuples commerçans, qui craignent qu'ils ne seront pas en état de soutenir la concurrence des Américains ni dans les pêcheries, ni dans le commerce de cabotage et de fret, ni dans celui des Indes. C'est une remarque qu'un ami très éclairé me fit après la lecture de la dite brochure.

Quant à la proposition dont vous m'avez honoré; j'en ai pesé le *pour* et le *contre* avec cette prévention en faveur du premier, qui est l'effet naturel de mon zèle pour le bonheur des deux peuples, et de mon désir ardent de les voir se rapprocher, se lier, s'unir, malgré les efforts de ceux, qui, malheureusement avec trop de succès, ne cessent d'accumuler obstacle sur obstacle, afin de prévenir, pour toujours, s'il leur est possible, un événement si désirable. J'ai consulté sur cette affaire délicate mes meilleurs amis, et le résultat a été; qu'entamer ouvertement en mon nom une négociation en faveur des États Unis seroit donner de gaieté de cœur dans les embûches que mes ennemis ne cessent de dresser sous mes pas. Et sûrement, monsieur, la persécution entamée contre Monsieur Van Berckel et ses *complices*, c'est à dire contre tous ceux qui ont eu quelque correspondance avec les Américains, montre ce que j'aurois à attendre, si je me rendois coupable de ce que le roi d'Angleterre ne manqueroit pas de faire valoir comme un acte, par lequel j'aurois favorisé et soutenu la rébellion dans ses états. Quelle ne seroit pas la satisfaction que l'on demanderoit d'une part, et que, sans hésiter, l'on donneroit de l'autre, contre un magistrat obligé de maintenir les traités avec la Grande Bretagne, que notre république, chérissant ses fers, n'a pas encore trouvé bon de révoquer; contre un individu, qui, déjà l'objet de la haine la plus effrénée, réclamant depuis si longtems vainement la protection des loix, seroit *seul* responsable de ses actions, sans pouvoir, comme M. Van Berckel et autres, se retrancher sur les ordres de ses supérieurs, dont ils n'ont été que les exécuteurs!

D'ailleurs, monsieur, je suis persuadé que mon nom ne contribueroit en rien à la réussite. Jamais le crédit de l'Amérique n'a été si bas qu'à cette heure. La prise de Charleston, l'invasion de la Georgie et de la Caroline méridionale; la défaite du Général Gates, échecs que les Américains n'ont pas encore compensés par aucun avantage de quelque considération; l'inaction des flottes combinées de Solano et Guichen; la supériorité décidée des Anglais aux Indes Occidentales et à New York; la défection d'Arnold revue, corrigée et augmentée par les novellistes Anglais. Voilà plus qu'il n'en faut pour faire chanceler un crédit même établi. Ajoutez à ceci la crainte d'être enveloppé comme complice de M. Van Berckel, et, ce qui restera à

jamais un obstacle chez bien des gens dans ce pays, la peur que l'on a de désobliger le Prince d'Orange; et calculez s'il y a *pour le présent* la moindre espérance pour la réussite d'une négociation à laquelle je me serois prêt, s'il eût été faisable, avec tout le zèle dont je suis animé pour la cause de la liberté générale du genre humain. J'avois même tracé un plan, qui auroit beaucoup facilité l'entreprise. Monsieur Tegelaar auroit administré le comptoir général et je vous aurois proposé d'employer trois ou quatre personnes *d'influence* et de *probité* dans les différentes provinces pour y recevoir les deniers de l'emprunt, et y payer deux fois par an les intérêts. Pour les profits je les aurois cédés entièrement aux employés, me contentant d'un simple dédommagement. Mon plan de conduite dans le monde politique exige ce renoncement, afin de tenir, comme je l'ai pu faire jusqu'ici, mes ennemis dans l'impossibilité de m'attribuer les motifs par lesquels ils agissent eux mêmes.

Cependant, monsieur, je vous prie de ne pas trop presser votre départ. Les affaires de la république sont dans une violente crise. Le temps seul pourroit dans peu lever une grande partie des empêchements susdits. Le congrès lui même peut y contribuer beaucoup en ne nous laissant pas, comme jusqu'ici, sans informations *authentiques* touchant le véritable état des affaires de l'Amérique. C'est d'elle que dépend tout son crédit. Il n'acquerra jamais de la consistance dans ce pays, si longtemps que l'on n'y sera point guéri des ses préjugés touchant la faiblesse de l'Amérique et en faveur de la toute puissance de la Grand Bretagne. Le congrès devrait envoyer régulièrement une ou deux fois par mois de petits paquebots, uniquement afin de ne jamais laisser le champ libre au novellistes Anglois. Lorsque Henri IV. fit arrêter le Maréchal de Biron il envoya des couriers par toute l'Europe, et jusqu'ici (d'autant que je sache) l'on n'a de la défection d'Arnold que les récits sûrement exagérés du ministre Britannique.

Je crains d'abuser de votre attention; mais je ne saurois, avant de finir, m'empêcher de vous avertir de vous méfier de la jalousie qui dévore les négocians de ce pays. Rabattez toujours quelque chose des informations que l'on vous donne à leur sujet. Je suis sûr que la réussite de la négociation ne dépend pas autant que l'on veut vous persuader du choix de la maison qui s'en charge, que des causes sus-mentionnées. Il est très indifférent pour les prêteurs de qui ils reçoivent les contrats, signés d'ailleurs en forme requise, et les intérêts. Ce qui les intéresse plus, c'est que ce soit le plus près possible du lieu de leur demeure, pour éviter les frais de transport. Vous connoissez mieux que moi les affaires de M. Tegelaar. Mais si celui ci ne convient pas (ce dont je ne saurois juger) je ne vois aucune objection pour ne pas confier l'entreprise à Monsieur J. de Neufville. Il a fait autrefois de fortes dépenses. Il a essuyé des pertes, mais avec tout cela il est entré dans le commerce avec un million de florins. Il a fait de grandes affaires et les fait aujourd'hui plus grandes que jamais. Il est un des plus anciens et des plus zélés amis de l'Amérique. Il jouit de la confiance et de la considération de la régence de Amsterdam. La confiance qu'elle a eu en lui de l'employer dans cette négociation secrète lui donne du relief, lequel joint à un peu d'imprudence de sa part lui attire de la jalousie, et peut-être de *l'envie*. La maison qu'il seroit le plus naturel d'employer seroit celle de Fizeaux et Grand. Mais la connection du dernier avec un Général Anglois servant en Amérique mérite sûrement réflexion.

Quant à la conduite des Anglais, je crains que leur but (outre celui en général d'amuser la république par des négociations et des mémoires de part et d'autre) ne soit de nous entraîner en guerre *avant* d'être admis à la neutralité armée, afin de donner occasion aux puissances confédérées de pouvoir nous refuser comme n'ayant pas la qualification requise, savoir, d'être une *puissance neutre*. Ou bien, si cela leur manque, de nous faire la guerre sous le prétexte spécieux d'avoir violé la neutralité par notre correspondance avec les *rebelle de la couronne*, afin de fournir aux puissances liguées une anse pour pouvoir, s'ils le veulent ou si l'influence des Anglais les y porte, nous refuser les secours stipulés sous prétexte de la non-existence du *casus fæderis*. La république, même la Province de Hollande, à ce que l'on débite, va faire un désaveu formel de ce que la ville d'Amsterdam a fait. C'est tout ce que je crois être en son pouvoir, car de faire punir les *complices de ce compl?t* est au dessus de leurs forces. Si donc le mémoire de Monsieur Yorke n'est pas une simple rodomontade, la guerre est inévitable, et une guerre *quasi vero* pour un démêlé, qui n'est pas du ressort de la neutralité armée.

J'espère de retourner à Amsterdam dans trois semaines, et je suis, en attendant, avec tout le respect possible, monsieur,

Votre Très Humble, &C.

Capellen de Pol.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 30 November, 1780.

Sir,—

I was duly honored with your Excellency's letter of the 8th of October, by Mr. Searle.

I thank you, sir, for inclosing the resolution of congress respecting my salary and Mr. Dana's. I wish I could see a prospect of relieving you from this burden, as well as that of the bills of exchange drawn upon Mr. Laurens, but at present there is not a prospect of obtaining a shilling. What turn affairs may take, it is impossible to foresee. Some gentlemen tell me, that a few months, or, indeed, weeks, may produce events which will open the purses to me; but I think our want of credit here is owing to causes that are made permanent. I never had any just idea of this country, until I came here, if, indeed, I have now. I have received money of the house of Horneca, Fizeaux, and Grand, on account of Mr. F. Grand, of Paris, for my subsistence, and, if you have no objection, I will continue in this way.

Mr. Searle's conversation is a cordial to me. He gives a charming, sanguine representation of our affairs, such as I am very well disposed to believe, and such as I should give myself, if interrogated according to the best of my knowledge. But we have a hard conflict yet to go through.

The correspondence you mention between his Excellency the Count de Vergennes and me, I transmitted regularly to congress in the season of it, from Paris, and other copies since my arrival in Amsterdam, both without any comments.

The letter I mentioned, I believe was from your Excellency to M. Dumas, who informs me that there has been none to the grand pensionary, but the one which your Excellency wrote when I was at Passy, which I remember very well.

The republic, it is said, for it is hard to come at the truth, have, on the one hand, acceded to the armed neutrality, and, on the other, have disavowed the conduct of Amsterdam.

This, it is hoped, will appease all nations for the present; and it may, for what I know. We shall see.

I should be the less surprised at Great Britain treating the United Provinces like an English Colony, if I did not every day hear the language and sentiments of English colonists. But if she treats all her Colonies with equal tyranny, it may make them all, in time, equally independent.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

P. S. A gentleman here has received a commission from England, to hire as many vessels as he possibly can, to carry troops to America. This I have certain information of. It is also given out, that Sir J. Yorke has demanded and obtained permission of the States to do it; but this, I believe, is an English report. It is also said that the burgomasters of the city have signified abroad, that it would be disagreeable if anybody should hire the ships. But this may be only *bruit*. It shows the English want of shipping, their intention to send troops, and their cunning to get away from this nation both their ships and seamen.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 30 November, 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. 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 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 thirty-four thousand three hundred and fifty-eight 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.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN.

Amsterdam, 9 December, 1780.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me, on the 28th ultimo. The pamphlet which I took the liberty to send you may possibly excite in some minds a curiosity to read the original *memoire*, and turn the attention of many to a subject that deserves a serious consideration. It is very probable that Mr. Pownall meant to alarm this republic, and, perhaps, other nations, by several things which he has inserted in his work, for he is by no means a friend of America. The truths he tells of America do not come from a willing witness.

These little alarms and jealousies, of merchants or of nations, are not much to be regarded. The American question, one of the greatest that was ever decided among men, will be determined by the cabinets of Europe, according to great national interests. But let these decide as they will, America will be independent. It is not in the power of Europe to prevent it. Little mercantile apprehensions, and less family competitions and alliances among princes, may light up a general war in Europe. It is possible that a jealousy of the house of Bourbon may enkindle a war of several powers against those nations who follow the several branches of that family. But this would promote, rather than retard, American independence. American independence is no longer a question with one man of sense in the world, who understands any thing of the subject.

That merchant must be a very superficial thinker, indeed, who dreads the rivalry of America independent, in the fisheries, in freight, and in the coasting trade, and yet would not be afraid of it connected with Great Britain. The possibility of America's interfering with any nations in any of these things, will certainly be retarded by her independence.

I believe with you that the credit of America was never lower in the low countries, than at this hour; but I am unfortunate enough to differ from your opinion concerning the causes of it. The tales of Gates and Arnold, and the French and Spanish fleets, &c., are ostensible reasons. The true one is the apparent obstinacy and fury of England, manifested several ways, particularly in the treatment of Mr. Laurens, and the rage at the discovery of his papers; these have intimidated everybody. Every one dreads the resentment of the English party, and no one dares to stand forth in opposition to it. So be it. Let them go on lending their money and hiring their ships to England, to enable her to murder people, of whom neither the lender nor the borrower is worthy. Time will show them how much wisdom there is in their unfeeling sacrifice of every sentiment and every principle, upon the altar of mammon. The less America has to do with such people, the better it will be for her.

As to authentic informations, sir, no information from America would alter sentiments, which are formed upon motives, which lie altogether in Europe. No information from America could alter the constitution of this republic; give the Stadtholder less decisive influence in it, or destroy the relations between the families of Hanover and Orange. I should not, therefore, think it wise nor honest in me to deceive America with any kind of hopes of assistance, in any way, from this republic.

There are a few, very few individuals, among the foremost of whom, you, sir, will ever be remembered, who would wish, from generous motives, to do us service, but they are so overborne by the opposite party, that they never will be able to do much, excepting in a case, in which we should have no need of their assistance.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 12 December, 1780.

Sir,—

In addition to other papers respecting your ministration, I now forward an act of congress of this day.¹

You know it has been much, if not entirely, the practice of the committee of foreign affairs to let the resolves which they transmit speak for themselves. In the present case, however, there is no danger of a too warm expression of the satisfaction of congress, even if, in performing singly the duty of our whole committee, I should write in the approving language of a personally affectionate and very partial friend.

James Lovell,*for the Committee of Foreign Affairs.*

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 14 December, 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, those 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 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.

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 certainty 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 successes. I say,—

“Careat successibus opto
Quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat.”

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 18 December, 1780.

Sir,—

You will receive herewith inclosed a duplicate of my letter of the 30th of July, with a list of the original letters and duplicates which I have had the honor to receive from you since that time.

The pleasure and satisfaction which I have received from the perusal of those letters, especially that of the 26th of June, with the despatches accompanying it, makes me lament the want of leisure to answer your correspondence. But necessity compels me to confide in the committee of foreign affairs, to give you the needful and particular intelligence from this part of the world. It is expected a secretary for foreign affairs will soon be established, and constantly devoted to the business proper for such department; which will remedy many disadvantages we at present labor under.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Samuel Huntington.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Zwol, 24 Décembre, 1780.

Monsieur,—

J'aurois déjà eu le plaisir de répondre de bouche a votre honorée de ce mois si la gelée m'avoit permis de m'embarquer, Mardi passé, comme je l'avois projeté.

Je prendrai la liberté d'en suivre le fil dans celle-ci. Si Gouverneur Pownall peut avoir eu dessein d'alarmer cette république, et peut-être d'autres nations, il eût été plus prudent de ne pas publier la brochure en Français sans quelque antidote en forme de note sur les passages les plus dangereux. Vous vous rappellerez, monsieur, que cela a été mon opinion lorsque j'eûs l'honneur de vous en parler à Amsterdam.

Pour ce qui est du crédit de l'Amérique, j'avois pris la liberté de vous tracer dans ma dernière cumulativement toutes les causes qui coöperent à son abaissement actuel. L'invasion de la Georgie et de la Caroline Méridionale, la prise de Charleston, la perte des frégates continentales, la défaite de Gates, l'inaction des flottes combinées de Guichen et de Solano, la supériorité décidée des Anglais aux isles et à New York même, la défection d'Arnold, le mécontentement de l'armée et la jalousie entre elle et le corps politique, l'état toujours fluctuant de Monsieur Necker et l'incertitude de la durée du phénomène d'une bonne administration en France, et enfin, ce qui est plus que tout ceci et que j'avois oublié par mégarde d'ajouter à ma précédente, la dépréciation monstrueuse des papiers Américains, dépréciation qui ne peut qu'aboutir à une banqueroute nationale si le congrès ne trouve pas le moyen de les sauver par de la monnaie sonnante; tout ceci, monsieur, ne sont nullement des *tales*. Ce sont des faits qui influent sur la nation en général; qui même font trembler les amis de l'Amérique, parmi lesquels j'en connois de très éclairés, qui appréhendent beaucoup les suites d'une annihilation totale du cours des papiers. Ils craignent que l'Angleterre ne saisisse les momens où l'armée, faute de paye, n'existera plus ou sera fort affoiblie; où la milice pour la même raison ne sera pas assemblée en nombre suffisant; ils redoutent les troubles, les dérangemens, la confusion, que doit occasioner une banqueroute nationale dans toutes les classes du peuple, et ils tremblent à la perspective, qu'à la fin ce peuple se lassera de soutenir une guerre qui entraine avec elle des calamités qu'aucun peuple n'a jamais éprouvées, savoir, un manque total d'espèces et tout ce qui résulte d'une si terrible situation. Il en coûte moins de verser son sang pour sa patrie, que de souffrir à la longue l'indigence pour l'amour d'elle. Si le peuple Américain trouve encore dans sa vertu et dans son patriotisme une ressource contre cette épreuve, sûrement c'est un peuple encore unique à cet égard comme il est à bien d'autres. Vous concevez, monsieur; toutes ces inquiétudes ne sont pas les miennes. C'est la façon dont ma nation envisage les affaires de l'Amérique que je dépeins.

Tout crédit, soit d'un peuple, soit d'un particulier, dépend uniquement de deux choses, savoir, de l'opinion que l'on a de la bonne foi de l'emprunteur, et de la possibilité où il se trouve de faire face à ses engagements. Quant à l'Amérique, le premier article n'est jamais révoqué en doute; mais je suis mortifié de ne pas pouvoir en dire autant du second, et je puis vous assurer, monsieur, que selon la nature de la chose, ce ne sera que par des *informations* authentiques du véritable état des affaires dans le nouveau monde que vous réussirez à persuader les capitalistes du vieux de lui prêter leur argent. N'attendez pas qu'on le fasse par principes. Une telle générosité surpasseroit les bornes de la vertu du gros des hommes. Cependant je puis vous assurer que la grande pluralité de ma nation, certainement plus de quatre-cinquièmes parties, aime les Américains et souhaite une bonne réussite. Etant du pays, parlant la langue, fréquentant toutes les classes de mes concitoyens, je suis plus à même de former un jugement juste là-dessus, que ceux qui sont privés de ces moyens d'information. Ce n'est que les gens attachés à la cour que l'on ne gagnera jamais; mais, grâce à dieux, ce ne sont pas les seuls; ce sont même les moindres de ceux de qui l'on a quelque chose à espérer. Je vous conjure pour cela, monsieur, de ne pas donner à vos seigneurs et maîtres une idée de la situation des affaires dans ce pays, et surtout de la façon de penser de ses habitans en général, laquelle, à la fin, pourroit ne pas se trouver justifiée par l'événement, et occasioner des mesures qui éloigneroient de plus en plus les deux républiques faites l'une pour l'autre, et que je souhaiterois ardemment de voir plus en plus s'unir. La nôtre est dans une violente crise, dont en bonne politique, avant de se déterminer, on doit absolument attendre l'issue, qui peut tourner du bon côté. Une guerre avec les Anglais me paroît inévitable. S'ils ne la cherchoient pas, ils ne hasarderoient pas de nous pousser à bout par des outrages, qui ne leur sont utiles à rien, que jamais peuple n'a avalé, ni enduré si longtemps que nous avons été contraints de le faire. C'est bien dommage, dans ces circonstances, que la saisie des papiers de Monsieur Laurens a fourni aux Anglais un prétexte specieux à maltraiter la république, ou plutôt la ville d'Amsterdam, que l'on veut perdre à tout prix, et de qui je crains que l'influence de la cour n'empêche les autres membres de l'état de prendre la défense. Mais quoiqu'il arrive, la lumière peut naître des ténèbres mêmes. L'Amérique ne peut se tirer d'affaires sans notre argent. Il faut donc, pour favoriser ses intérêts, attendre patiemment et saisir avec adresse le moment favorable pour l'attraper. Tôt ou tard il se présentera, peut-être plutôt que l'on s'y attend. On doit prendre les hommes comme ils sont.

J'ai reçu par le canal de son Excellence John Jay une lettre du Gouverneur Livingston du 15 Mars. Elle me renvoie pour des détails à la lettre du Gouverneur Trumbull (qui paroitra dans peu) et ne contient d'ailleurs aucune nouvelle, n'étant proprement que l'accusation de la réception de la mienne. "The chief difficulty we have now to struggle with" (ce sont les paroles du gouverneur) "is the depreciation of our currency; but as congress has lately most assiduously applied to financiering, I hope they will discover some way to extricate us out of that *perplexity*."

Je crois que jamais ces papiers ne seroient tombés si bas, je crois même qu'ils se seroient parfaitement soutenus, si, à chaque émission, le congrès avoit pu imposer des taxes proportionnelles; dans ce cas les papiers auroient circulé. L'État les recevant toujours au juste prix, les particuliers n'auroient pas osé ou pu les refuser à pari, et ces taxes les auroient tour à tour fait rentrer dans la caisse de l'état, qui par ce moyen là

auroit pu trouver les nouvelles sommes dont il avoit besoin en empruntant sans intérêts les papiers déjà en circulation au lieu d'être dans la nécessité de faire toujours de nouvelles émissions, et d'augmenter plus qu'il ne falloit la quantité de ces papiers. Il y a moins d'argent dans le monde que l'on ne pense. La même pièce se représente, et pour ainsi dire se reproduit plusieurs fois, et l'Amérique ne me paroît pas avoir besoin de 200 millions de dollars pour suffire à tous ses objets de guerre ou de commerce intérieur.

J'assure de mes respects Messrs. Searle, Gillon, Dana, et le gentilhomme que j'ai eu l'honneur de voir souvent chez vous sans pouvoir me rappeler son nom; et j'ai l'honneur d'être avec une profonde vénération, monsieur, &c.

Capellen de Pol.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 25 December, 1780.

Sir,—

Affairs are still in suspense. This day being Christmas, and yesterday 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 holydays, 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, 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 unavoidable. The stockjobbers, Englishmen, and others at the coffee-houses had very melancholy countenances and more than common 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 yet 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.¹

I Have The Honor, To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 31 December, 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 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 fæderis*, 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 authorized to represent the United States to all the neutral courts, might be of use.

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 remedy; these are a sure and infallible one; 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.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 1 January, 1781.

Sir,—

You will receive herewith inclosed 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, and likewise a resolve of congress relative to the declaration of the Empress of Russia, respecting the protection of neutral ships, &c.

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. &C.

Samuel Huntington,*President.*

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

Hotel Valois, Rue Richelieu, Paris, 1 January, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I will no longer omit to acquaint you of my safe arrival here; I should have done it before, but I wished first to obtain the sight of the British declaration against the Dutch, which I could not effect, till the last evening. Will the Dutch remain firm, and in good earnest set about the equipment of their navy? If they will, we may hope something from their exertions. Let me have your sentiments upon this important event, so far, at least, as it may in any way effect our particular business. It appears to me to have thrown open the door wide; and let us enter without hesitation. If the second matter is necessary to accomplish the first, I would, if in your case, undertake it provisionally. All circumstances considered, I am persuaded such a step would meet with the approbation of those whom it immediately concerns. It is sometimes necessary to step over a prescribed line, and when this is done with a sincere intention to promote the general interest of one's country, by seizing upon an *unexpected* event, the man who will not suffer it to pass away unimproved, is entitled to much merit. He hazards something, but it is with the purest views. I have presumed to offer to your consideration these hints, not doubting but you will take them in good part; besides, I sincerely wish the honor of effecting both these matters may be yours; and it really appears to me vain to expect one, without being willing to do the other. Would they hesitate upon this provisional ground? Is it not easy to give them assurances that it is safe and firm? But I have said, perhaps, more than enough on this subject. I shall hope for your sentiments in return.

I have some reason to wish you would give a gentle hint to a certain gentleman of our acquaintance, about whom we do not differ in opinion, to be somewhat more upon the reserve.

Soon after my arrival here, which was on the evening of the 23d, I had a visit from *Francisco*, a long one, during which we went over much political ground, which convinced me every thing we had heard of the very extraordinary conversation of this man, was strictly true.¹ Our country, according to him, was already conquered; the power of Great Britain rising above all control; that of her enemies almost spent; Holland absolutely to be crushed in the course of three months; the armed neutrality in consequence annihilated; the British manifesto extolled for its cogent reasons above all the similar acts of the belligerent powers; all Europe blind to their own interests, which, in fact, were in direct repugnance with those of America, particularly those of Holland and all the northern powers; congress a mere cipher, having lost all its influence everywhere in America; and to crown the whole, an apology for the infamous apostate Arnold. I kept my temper and heard him out. You may easily conjecture what my feelings were on such an occasion, and I manifested them in some part of my replies.

I have read General C.'s letter to Governor Greene, in Mr. Luzac's Leyden paper, of the 27th of last month. What does he mean by this reflection? Referring to the part of the letter which speaks of Vermont, "Vu que l'issue en sera probablement de porter le nombre des États-Unis à quatorze, *au cas qu'aucun de ceux qui composent actuellement l'Union Américaine n'en soit finalement démembré à la paix.*" It is holding up an idea which ought not to appear, and I do not see that it was natural in this place. I am at a loss, therefore, how it came to be inserted by M. Luzac.

If the commodore has not sailed, I presume the change of public affairs has cleared away all difficulties. You will please to present my regards to him, Mr. Searle, Mr. Thaxter, and any others who you think care about me, not forgetting the young gentlemen.

No news yet of Comte d'Estaing, de Guichen, and convoy. The winds have been favorable several days, and 'tis probable they are at this time at Brest. I cannot yet learn what assistance America may hope for the approaching campaign. I pray God she may not be again flattered by any false hopes. Let our allies give essential aid or withdraw all they have sent; when our country will see they must work out their own political salvation. I wish to write you much more largely, but I have several letters besides this to copy into my book, and have not time. Yours to the doctor, I delivered to him yesterday; he read it, but said nothing. Its contents I know nothing of.

I Am, With The Greatest Respect, &C.

Fra. Dana.

P. S. I wish you to give me a secret address.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 5 January, 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.

28th November. A formal disapprobation of the states-general, of the conduct of the Regency of Amsterdam.

12th December. 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.

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 a 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.

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THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

In Congress, 10 January, 1781.

Sir,—

Congress consider 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 of England 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 ministers would produce a change of measures; they therefore hope you will be very cautious of admitting your measures to be influenced by presumptions of such events or their probable consequences. NA (By order of congress.)

I Am, Sir, With Great Respect, &C.

Samuel Huntington,*President.*

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Amsterdam, 18 January, 1781.

My Dear Sir,—

Yesterday I had the pleasure of yours of the 7th; both the packets came safe and in good order.

As to a secret address, you may address under cover, à Madame la veuve de M. Henry Schorn, op de Agterburg wal, by de Hoogstraat, Amsterdam.

It is not possible to suppress all suspicions, after the conversation you heard; but your own coolness and judgment will be sufficient, without any hint from me, to be cautious about mentioning these suspicions until evidence shall appear.

The newspapers are all paid for a year from the time of subscription, which was in the spring; it is not worth while to subscribe anew for the Gazette de France, nor for more than one foreign gazette. As I take the English papers here at a horrid expense, I wish you would pay Mr. Genet, and let me know the amount. My most cordial respects to that gentleman, for whom I have the highest esteem; I think you may depend upon his friendship and sincerity. My respects to Dr. Folke, and thanks for the newspaper. I have conceived a great esteem for that young gentleman. Mr. Edwards is gone to France; I shall get published the contents of his newspaper.

This nation can hardly yet believe that the English are or will be at war with them. Instead of depending upon themselves, they now look up to Russia and the northern powers; if these should fail them, which I think however they cannot, I know not what would be the consequence.

But I shall never get a ducat until it is decided whether the neutral union will support the republic. Every party, and every man almost, is afraid to do the least thing that England can complain of and make a noise about, lest the blame of involving the country in war should be thrown upon them. What I shall do, I know not. Congress draws upon me, but I shall have no resource but from Dr. Franklin to pay a farthing; if that fails me, I am undone. I wish our countrymen would assume courage enough to augment the taxes upon themselves, and reduce the needless expenses, so as to do without succors which are unattainable.

At least I think nothing will ever be done here, until a treaty is concluded between the two republics. There are a million jealousies about the *Escaut*, about trade with the Emperor's dominions, about the succession of the empire, or rather another election in the House of Austria, &c. Individuals dare nothing in this country until the countenance of government is given, nor in any other part of Europe. A treaty with

this country is so great a work that it would require time, and this is said not to be the proper time to talk about it.

Affectionately Yours,

John Adams.

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TO BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN.

Amsterdam, 21 January, 1781.

Sir,—

I have not been able to find an opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of the esteemed favor with which you honored me on the 24th of December, until now.

I think it very probable that the several causes you have enumerated coöperate to lessen the credit of the United States; but I think, at the same time, it is because the facts are misrepresented and exaggerated by the friends of England. Let us consider them for a few moments one by one.

The invasion of Georgia and South Carolina is the first. But why should the invasion of these two States affect the credit of the thirteen, more than the invasion of any two others? Massachusetts and Rhode Island have been invaded by armies much more formidable. New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, have been all invaded before. But what has been the issue? Not conquest, not submission. On the contrary, all those States have learned the art of war and the habits of submission to military discipline, and have got themselves well armed, nay, clothed and furnished with a great deal of hard money by these very invasions. And what is more than all the rest, they have got over the fears and terrors that are always occasioned by a first invasion, and are a worse enemy than the English; and besides, they have had such experience of the tyranny and cruelty of the English as have made them more resolute than ever against the English government. Now, why should not the invasion of Georgia and Carolina have the same effects? It is very certain, in the opinion of the Americans themselves, that it will. Besides, the unexampled cruelty of Cornwallis has been enough to revolt even negroes; it has been such as will make the English objects of greater horror there than in any of the other States.

The capture of Charleston is the second. But why should the capture of Charleston have a greater effect than that of Boston or Philadelphia, the latter of which was of vastly more importance to the common cause than Charleston?

The loss of the continental frigates. This is a grief to be sure; but why were these four or five frigates of so much more importance than several times that number that we had lost before? We lost several frigates with Philadelphia, and shipping to a much greater value than at Charleston. We lost frigates with New York; but, above all, we lost at Penobscot armed vessels to five times a greater amount than at Charleston. But all these losses have been suddenly repaired, insomuch that our armed vessels in the course of the last summer have taken more prizes than they ever did, by half. They did more damage to the English than the whole maritime power of France and Spain have done from the beginning of the war. We can afford to lose a great many frigates,

because they cost us nothing. I am assured, from an accurate calculation from the public accounts, the prizes taken by the continental navy have amounted to a large sum, more than the whole sum expended in building, equipping, manning, victualling, and paying the ships from the beginning of the war.

The defeat of Gates. But why should this defeat discourage America, or weaken her credit in Europe, more than the defeat on Long Island, the loss of Fort Washington, the defeat at Brandywine, at Germantown, the loss of Canada, Ticonderoga, &c.; much greater defeats and more deplorable losses?

The inaction of the combined fleet of De Guichen and Solano. But if we consider that the Spaniards got their fleet and army and artillery safe to America to put their dominions there in a state of safety; that the French have convoyed home safe their merchant fleets; that De Guichen fought Rodney twice or three times on equal terms, and the English gained no advantage; and the French fleet is now at Brest under D'Estaing to keep the English in awe; perhaps it is better for the common cause than if they had put more to hazard.

The decided superiority of the English in the islands. But if we consider the French and Spanish ships that are still in the West Indies, and the disabled condition of the English fleet, their want of men, and especially the weakness of their garrisons in their islands, and the strength of the French and Spanish garrisons, we are sure the English are not in a condition to attempt any thing against them.

The superiority of the English at New York is but just sufficient to prevent their enemies from destroying them.

The defection of Arnold will be considered by every man who considers all the circumstances that attended it, as a proof of the weakness of the English, and the decisive strength and confidence of the Americans.

When we consider the crimes he had committed, and the unpopularity into which he had justly fallen; when we consider that an officer of his high rank, long services, and brilliant reputation was not able to carry over with him a single officer or soldier, nor even his own valet, nor his wife, nor his child; when we consider the universal execration in which his treason is held by the whole army and the whole continent; when we consider the firmness and dignity with which Andre was punished, we must conclude that the American army and people stand strong; as strong against the arts and bribes as the arms and valor of their enemies.

The discontent of the army. There never was an army without anxiety and a constant agitation of hopes and fears. When the officers think their pay is not enough, what can they do but represent them to government for redress? This has constantly been done. But what are the discontents in the English army and navy? Much greater I assure you than in the American service.

The jealousy between the army and the body politic is not to be dreaded; it only shows that the spirit of liberty is still alive and active in the people. The Baron Van

der Capellen, I am sure, will applaud the people for keeping a watchful eye over the army, to see that it does not ravish from them that liberty for which all have been contending.

Mr. Necker seems to stand upon firm ground; and the changes in the French ministry probably have been for the better. But it is scarcely possible to believe that any change in the French ministry should do any considerable injury to the common cause. The changes already made were because enough was not done. France's importance, nay her existence as a maritime and commercial power, is so much at stake in this business, that it is impossible she should forsake the cause.

The depreciation of the paper money is the most difficult to be answered, because it is the most difficult to explain to a gentleman who has not been in the country and seen its operation. The depreciation of the money has been a real advantage, because it is a tax upon the people, paid as it advances, and, therefore, prevents the public from being found in debt. It is true it is an unequal tax, and therefore causes what your friend, G. Livingston, justly calls perplexity, but by no means disables or weakens the people from carrying on the war. The body of the people lose nothing by it. The merchant, the farmer, the tradesman, the laborer loses nothing by it. They are the moneyed men, the capitalists, those who have money at interest and live upon fixed salaries,—that is, the officers of government,—who lose by it, and who have borne this tax. This you see is an ease and relief to the people at large. The consequence of this depreciation has been, that while England has increased her national debt sixty millions by this war, ours is not a tenth part of it, not six millions. Who then can hold out longest?

This depreciation has no tendency to make the people submit to Great Britain, because that submission would not relieve, but increase the perplexity; for submission would not procure us peace. We must raise men and money to fight France, Spain, Holland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. The congress, instead of attempting to save the paper money by hard cash, has ordered it all in at the depreciated value, and this measure is adopted by the States without any difficulty, which is the only method of justice or policy.

Nobody need fear that the English will seize the moments when our army shall be feeble for want of pay. There have been several moments when our army has been reduced to almost nothing, not for want of pay, but from the expiration of their periods of enlistment. These moments the English seized, before they had sent half their army to the West India Islands. But what was the consequence? When our army was reduced to a few hundreds, and theirs more than double what it is now, they marched through the Jerseys, and what was the consequence? Their post at Trenton was attacked and taken, another body of their troops was attacked and defeated at Princeton, and General Washington took post at Morristown in their rear, and they dared not move another step the whole winter.

The affairs of Trenton, Bennington, and, lately, of the summit of King's Mountain, prove beyond reply, that if our army is reduced ever so low, and theirs extend themselves ever so far, their necessary advanced posts are in our power, in the power

even of a handful of militia. No, sir; their power to hurt us lies more in keeping hid in a fortified seaport town, protected by their men-of-war, than by marching into the country.

As to a total failure of specie, we are in no danger of it. The English are furnishing us with silver and gold every day. What is become of all the millions they have sent to America during this war? What, of all the cash that France sends to pay and subsist her fleet and army? The truth is that silver and gold now circulate freely in America, and there are greater quantities of it than anybody in Europe imagines.

As to the danger of the people's submitting from indigence, the danger of that, if ever there was any, is past. In 1776 and 1777, the people suffered very much, and the army, too, for want of salt, sugar, rum, and clothing. But at this day their trade is so far extended, they make such numbers of prizes, and have introduced and established so many necessary manufactures, that they have a plentiful supply. We have been more distressed for want of salt and powder than any thing else; but there is now an abundance of both manufactured in the country and imported too.

As to the ability of America to pay. It depends upon a few words. America has between three and four millions of people. England and Scotland have between five and six. The lands in America produce as much as any other lands. The exports of America in 1774 were twelve millions, including too a great part of the commodities of the growth of America. England is two hundred millions in debt. America is six millions. England has spent sixty millions in this war. America six. Which people then are the ablest to pay? Yet England has credit, America not. Is this from reasoning or prejudice?

Numbers of people, their industry, the quantity and quality of their lands and the value of their exports, are the only rules that I know of to judge of the ability of a people to pay taxes and debts. In all these respects American credit will bear the most rigorous examination.

The country that sends them money will get the most by it; their principal and interest will be safe, and what is more, their money will be laid out among them in the purchase of clothing and supplies, so that the trade will be promoted by it.

When England and every other nation of Europe is obliged to borrow money every year to carry on war, England to the amount of her whole annual exports, it is not to be wondered that America has occasion to borrow a sum after six years war, equal to a twelfth or a twenty-fourth part of her annual exports. With such a loan we could carry on the war more at our ease; our poor soldiers would be more warm and comfortable; but if we cannot obtain it, we shall not have it to pay; and I am positively certain we can carry on the war longer without a loan than Great Britain can with.

You may depend upon it, sir, I shall be cautious, and maintain the most severe regard to truth in my representations to congress. But I dare not deceive them with false hopes. No man living has more at heart than I have a friendly and a lasting connection between the two republics. The religion, the government, and the commerce of the

two countries point out such a connection. Old prejudices and habits of veneration for Holland in the minds of all Americans, who have ever considered the Dutch as their friends and allies, (for it should be remembered that we have been as long in alliance and friendship with this country as England, and have as good a right, for what I know, to the benefit of the treaties as the English) make the Americans rivals for such a connection. And, therefore, if the truth will not warrant me in representing to congress so much zeal and warmth in this nation for a connection with America as I could wish, it will not be my fault, but my misfortune and my grief.

I Am, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 25 January, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 15th and 24th, the latter inclosing a letter to congress, which I will do myself the honor to inclose with my first despatches. This method will be very agreeable to me, if you choose to continue it.

There are bruits here of a seventy-four gunship with six homeward bound East Indiamen taken from the English by some French men-of-war near the Cape of Good Hope. The report comes from Lisbon, but waits confirmation.

I do not see or hear any thing of the manifesto yet, nor about another thing that gives me more anxiety than any other,—the determination of the court of justice of Holland upon the conduct of Amsterdam.

I have fixed my eye upon that court of justice, because I think that the full justification of the regency of Amsterdam ought to be inserted in the manifesto. The British manifesto cannot be answered without it. The world will never think the republic in earnest until this is done. Keeping it in suspense is considered as a design to leave open a passage to retreat. It is treating *notre ami* with great indignity, and in some measure depriving the public of his counsel and assistance at a time when it is most wanted. It is suffering the spirit of the people to subside and their passions to cool, a matter of the last importance in war.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”

However, the maxims of government here are different from most other countries; and the nation itself and its rulers must be the best judges of its interest, duty, and policy.

My mind has a long habit of looking forward, and guessing what future events will be the consequence of those that are past; and although we are very shortsighted, yet we can sometimes reason upon sure principles, and prophesy with a good degree of certainty. Upon this plan, then, what will be the conduct of the neutral union, and what that of England? I cannot see but the neutral confederacy must demand restitution of all the Dutch ships, upon pain of war. And England must, unless she departs from every maxim that has governed her, not only throughout this reign, but several others before it, unless she departs from the character of the nation too, as well as the maxims of the court, refuse to restore the Dutch ships. The consequence will be,—Russia, Sweden, Holland, France, Spain, and America, all at war against England at once. A rare and curious phenomenon to be sure!

But what will be the consequence of this? Peace? By no means.

The neutral union moving slowly, and unused to war at sea, will depend upon England's giving up, and will not exert themselves. England, whose navy has lived among flying balls for some time, will be alert and active and do a great deal of mischief before her enemies are properly aroused. I think, in the end, they will be aroused, and the consequence of it will be, that England will be ruined and undergo a terrible convulsion. Say, are these reveries wholly chimerical? You are sensible that our country, America, has two objects in view,—one is a treaty of amity and commerce, at least, with this republic; the other is a loan of money. You will be so good as to keep these points always in view, and inform me if you discover any disposition towards both or either in persons capable of effecting it or putting things in a train for that purpose. The court is supposed to be decided against America; but is this certain? It has had an inclination towards England, but having got over that, why should it be against America? I am persuaded that nothing can be done without the court.

Do you think it would be prudent in me to endeavor to get introduced to one or more persons in power, the grand pensionary of Holland, or any members of the states-general, in order to have some conversation upon American affairs? Do you suppose I should succeed, if I were to attempt to obtain such a conference? If it is the interest of the two republics to connect themselves together, as you and I believe it to be, it would not be amiss to have these interests explained mutually, and objections, if there are any, considered and obviated.

I Am, Sir, Respectfully And Affectionately Yours,

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 28 Janvier, 1781.

Honored And Dear Sir,—

J'ai l'honorée vôtre du 25e, dont le contenu m'a fait grand plaisir, non seulement par l'approbation que vous donnez, de vous adresser de temps en temps des lettres pour le Congrès, mais aussi par l'entretien agréable que m'ont procuré les matières intéressantes dont elle est remplie.

Il faudra attendre, que la prise des vaisseaux des Indes Anglais près du cap de Bonne Espérance, par l'escadre Française, se confirme, pour la croire.

Il est apparent que le manifeste ne paroitra ici, qu'après la réponse de Pétersbourg au courier dépêché d'ici le 29 Décembre pour donner connoissance à l'impératrice de celui du Roi d'Angleterre, et pour demander le secours de cette princesse, &c. En attendant, il n'y a pas grand mal que cette pièce n'ait pas encore paru; on ne m'en a pas dit grand bien; et l'on espère qu'on la changera en mieux.

La décision de la cour d'Hollande ne pourra avoir lieu qu'autour du milieu de Février; et l'on n'en est nullement en peine. Du reste, je pense comme vous, que toutes ces lenteurs sont mauvaises, et qu'on s'en trouvera mal.

Vos réflexions sur la conduite que tiendront les nouveaux alliés d'un côté, et l'Angleterre de l'autre, ont beaucoup plu à un membre des États Généraux, à qui je n'ai pu refuser d'en donner un extrait en Français; car il n'entend pas l'Anglais.

Je ne perdrai pas un instant de vue les deux objets dont vous me parlez, monsieur; et plût à dieu, que je pusse dès ce moment vous inviter ici. Il faut voir le tour que prendront les choses 1o. Entre cette république et l'Angleterre. 2o. Entre la même et la Russie, &c. Je crois que vous avez décidé le premier de ces points, et que l'Angleterre ne se relâchera point vis-a-vis de la république. Je pense aussi comme vous quant à l'autre; et que l'impératrice ne peut plus reculer, mais qu'elle prendra hautement le parti de la république, et par conséquent, qu'il y aura guerre entre elle et l'Angleterre. Dans ce cas là, et dès que cette guerre auroit éclatée, il conviendrait d'agir auprès de l'impératrice comme chef de l'alliance, pour faire reconnoître l'Amérique à la fois par les quatre puissances; et mon opinion est que cela ne seroit pas difficile alors, du moins de la part de l'impératrice. Mais tant qu'il y a encore quelque possibilité à raccommoier les choses, de manière que cette république reste neutre avec les trois couronnes du Nord, on ne peut rien entamer de pareil. Voyons donc arriver le nouveau courier de Pétersbourg; et selon le tour que prendront les choses, il ne me sera peut-être pas difficile de vous ménager une entrevue, en lieu tiers, qui pourra conduire plus loin.

Le second objet dépend en grande partie du premier; et la facilité à cet égard seroit infiniment plus grande, lorsqu'il existeroit un traité d'amitié, &c.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 2 February, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

Nulla dies sine lineâ, said a great geometrician, and you are so good an American that you will agree with me that we ought to let no day nor hour pass, in which we can do any service to our country, without embracing the opportunity. Such an occasion is the present, when the popular affections and even the sentiments of men in power seem to be turning towards America.

When I landed in Spain, I was told by the viceroy of Galicia that he had received orders from the Court of Madrid to treat all Americans who should arrive within his government as the best friends of Spain.

Would it not be wisdom and policy, as well as humanity, for their High Mightinesses to publish some permission to Dutch men-of-war, privateers, letters of marque, and even merchantmen, to carry their prizes into American ports, and even to trade with that country? And also some permission to American privateers and other vessels to come freely into the ports of this republic, bring in their prizes, sell them, and even have them condemned in the courts of admiralty? What reasonable objection or argument can there be against this? What damage can it do the republic? Cannot we contrive to have this suggested to all the northern courts?

By the tenth article of the treaty of alliance with France, the Most Christian King and the United States agree to invite or admit other powers who may have received 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.

Is not this a proper opportunity for congress to propose to the King of France to join in such an invitation to all the neutral powers, as we yet call them, though it seems they are all within a hair's breadth of being belligerent powers? What think you of this?

Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. JOHN DE NEUFVILLE AND SONS.

Amsterdam, 2 February, 1781.

Gentlemen,—

Having adjusted the form of the obligations to be given in the proposed loan, nothing remains but to agree upon the other terms, respecting the commission to be allowed to your house for receiving the money from the lenders and paying it out upon the drafts of congress, and paying the interest half-yearly to the lenders, and finally paying off and discharging the obligations.

I have had much conversation upon this subject with several gentlemen of character and experience, and am advised that one per cent. to the house for receiving the money and paying it to the orders of congress, one per cent. for paying off the interest, and one per cent. for paying off the principal finally to the lenders, is a just and reasonable allowance. This I am willing to allow.

There is the affair of brokerage, also, which will require some explanation between us. I should be glad if you would inform me how much you expect to be allowed for brokerage, when you engage and employ the broker.

But there is one point I beg leave to reserve to myself and to any other minister or agent who may be sent here in my stead; it is this,—that I, while I stay, and my successor after me, shall have a right to employ any broker that I or he may choose; and, whenever one or the other may think proper, to dispose of the obligations, or as many of them as I or he may think proper, and to allow what brokerage we shall find necessary, the money, however received upon them, to be paid into the hands of your house.

I should be glad of your answer as soon as may be, and, in the mean time, I have no further objection to your getting the form of the obligations and coupons translated into Dutch and printed with all expedition.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.¹

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 6 February, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I have received your favors of the 3d and 5th with their inclosures all in good order. I have but one copy of the treaty of alliance, otherwise I would send you one with pleasure. I am of your opinion that no propositions should be yet made to the states-general as a body; but hints and ideas may be suggested to individuals, in order to prepare men's minds by familiarizing them with such speculations. It is very true there are critical moments, after which things go of themselves; but it is necessary to prepare things for a crisis, that every thing may be ready when it arrives. The act of the midwife often assists the birth, and avoids fatal dangers in constitutions the most vigorous. And the *corps diplomatique*, with all their superb pomp, are but a company of grannies.

Mr. Searle declares that congress gave Mr. Laurens a commission of minister plenipotentiary, and they gave me the same. But if Mr. Searle is not mistaken, which I rather believe, the full powers to me were omitted to be sent me by some neglect. For I tell you candidly I have no other powers but a commission to borrow money.

As to Mr. Franklin's power, the matter stands thus:—The three commissioners at the Court of Versailles,—Dr. Franklin, Mr. Lee, and myself,—had full power, by a resolution of congress, to treat and make a treaty of commerce with any power in Europe. Whether the dissolution of that commission annuls that full power, may be a question; but the subsequent appointment of Mr. Laurens, with full powers to treat with this republic, would, I suspect, be legally or diplomatically considered as a *supersedeas* of that authority here. So that, considering things candidly, I am afraid there is nobody now in Europe fully authorized to treat with this republic but Mr. Laurens.

The accessions of the nations which compose the neutral confederacy to the treaty of alliance, would, however, be an event so brilliant and decisive for America that there is not a doubt to be made that congress would joyfully ratify it in the first moment, whether it was made by Dr. Franklin or me, or even if it was made by the King of France without consulting either of us, upon equitable conditions. I find the people are alike in some particulars in every part of the world. This nation is now flattering itself with hopes of peace. They think that when England sees the neutral union going to war with her, she will give up, beg pardon, change the ministry, make peace, rise in arms against the ministry, &c. &c. &c. Alas! There will be no such thing. There must fly a great many cannon-balls first. I should have thought this cool, penetrating nation more intimately acquainted with the English heart. The pride, the self-conceit, the vanity of that people is infinite. Nine in ten of that whole people fully and firmly believe themselves able to fight and beat all the maritime powers of the world. Their

imaginations are all on fire. They think of nothing but drowning Holland, sinking the whole Russian, Danish, and Swedish fleets, exhausting the finances of France and Spain, and, above all, of Americans loving, admiring, and adoring them so much, as very soon humbly to implore their King to take them under his gracious protection without even making a condition.

No, sir. Combinations, political arrangements, and magnificent parade will not do with the English in their present state of intoxication. Nothing but hard blows, taking their fleets of merchant ships, and burning, taking, sinking, or destroying their men-of-war, will bring them to reason. Nor this neither, until it is carried to such a length as to deprive so many of the people of their subsistence as to make them rise in outrages against the government. I am sorry that things must go to such an extremity, but I have not the least doubt that they will.

With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Amsterdam, 8 February, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving two letters from you,—one dated February 1st, and one without a date,—but I suppose written the day before. With these, I received the packets, but there are in them no letters from my wife. The resolution of congress of the 12th of December, gives me great pleasure, as it proves that we had the good fortune to be possessed of the true principles of congress, and to enter fully into their views in the resolutions of last March, respecting the paper money; but I cannot recollect what were the two papers in the duplicate, more than in the original; there is no minute in the book to show.

I assure you, sir, I have not had more satisfaction in the resolution, than in the affectionate manner in which Mr. Lovell and you have communicated it to me. I am prepared in my own mind to receive from congress resolutions of a different nature; but of these we will say nothing until we see them.

I must beg you to send a key to the ciphers; the letter is wholly unintelligible to me for want of one. I see by the journals that we are authorized to accede to the principles of the Empress of Russia; but I find no commission for that purpose, nor any resolution of congress authenticated by the secretary, or the committee. Will you talk with *D. D.* and *Fun* about what is proper to be done?¹

All accounts from all parts of America show that a great spirit reigns triumphant; a vigor, an elasticity appears in all parts, notwithstanding the croaking of Sullivan, Pickering, and Francisco; the last has been here, and gone away without doing me the honor of a visit. Rodney's and Vaughan's repulse is a grand stroke, a balance for five or six Jersey affairs. All things, in all quarters, conspire to show that the English will have their fill of glorious war. Gillon's hour of sailing is uncertain; not for a long time, I fear. Do you learn any thing of Davis's arrival, or capture or loss? If I had a commission as minister here, I verily believe I could borrow money. Without it, no man ever will, in any considerable quantity.

John Adams.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 15 February, 1781.

This morning, the house of Botereau & Co. of this city presented to me sixty-six 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 these bills. Without your warranty they must be protested; for I have not yet obtained a single ducat, nor any certain assurance of one.

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 certainty 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, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. BICKER.

Amsterdam, 20 February, 1781.

Sir,—

Your questions to me to-day have induced me to communicate to you a copy of my commission.

You see that I have not the title of ambassador nor of minister plenipotentiary by virtue of this commission, nor have I, in express words, power to make a treaty of amity and commerce, much less a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive.

My power is to negotiate a loan; but it may be negotiated with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate; and the congress promises in good faith to ratify and confirm whatever shall be done by me in the premises or relating thereto.

Dr. Franklin, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Lee, who made a treaty of amity and commerce and another treaty of alliance offensive and defensive with the King of France, had not, by their commission, the title of ambassadors nor of ministers plenipotentiary.

Now, if it is necessary to make a treaty in order to obtain a loan, I suppose I have power to do it; and accordingly I would readily enter into conferences upon the subject, and if we could agree on the terms, one article of which should be a loan, I would not hesitate to execute a treaty, and I should have no doubt of the ratification of congress.

You have, however, a copy of my commission, and you may judge for yourself how extensive the powers are which it contains. I have no objection to your showing it to such person or persons as you think proper, in confidence.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. BICKER TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 21 Fevrier, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Pour que je ne fusse trop préoccupé de mon système, j'ai profité de votre permission de consulter autrui, quoique seulement une personne, mais qui en valait bien dix en fait de connoissances, sur votre commission du congrès des treize États; mais malgré que messieurs Franklin, Deane, Lee, n'ont eu d'autres titres que vous, monsieur, nous n'y pouvons trouver d'autre autorité ni d'autres agrémens que de lever de l'argent, et cela par toute l'Europe et principalement parmi des particuliers; car il est un peu recherché de vouloir expliquer et étendre les paroles, *with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate*, qu'il seroit par là sous-entendu de pouvoir traiter avec des souverains ou avec des membres d'iceux.

Pardonnez ma franchise, monsieur, et croyez moi avec une parfaite considération, &c. &c.

Bicker.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 22 February, 1781.

Sir,—

I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me the 15th instant, respecting bills presented to you for acceptance, drawn by congress in favor of N. Tracy for ten thousand pounds sterling, payable at ninety days' sight; and desiring to know if I can furnish funds for the payment.

I have lately made a fresh and strong application for more money. I have not yet received a positive answer. I have, however, two of the Christian graces,—faith and hope. But my faith is only that of which the apostle speaks,—the evidence of things not seen. For, in truth, I do not see at present how so many bills drawn at random on our ministers in France, Spain, and Holland, are to be paid, nor that any thing but omnipotent necessity can excuse the imprudence of it. Yet I think the bills drawn upon us by the congress ought at all risks to be accepted. I shall accordingly use my best endeavors to procure money for their honorable discharge against they become due, if you should not in the mean time be provided. And if those endeavors fail, I shall be ready to break, run away, or go to prison with you, as it shall please God.

Sir George Grand has returned to me the remainder of the book of promises, signed by us, which his house had not an opportunity of issuing. Perhaps the late change of affairs in that country may open a way for them. If, on consulting him, you should be of that opinion, I will send them to you.

Late advices from congress mention that Colonel Laurens is coming over as envoy extraordinary to this Court, and Colonel Palfrey as consul-general. They may be expected every day.

With Great Respect, &C. &C.

B. Franklin.

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TO M. BICKER.

Arms of Amsterdam, 1 March, 1781.

Sir,—

I received your letter at Leyden inclosing the copy I had the honor to send you, and thank you for your candid judgment of its extent and import.

I have now the honor to inform you that on my return to Amsterdam the 25th of February, I received a letter from congress inclosing another commission in proper form, containing full powers to treat with their High Mightinesses, and to conclude and sign a treaty. I received also authority to accede to the principles of the armed neutrality.

I should now be still more obliged by your candid opinion, what is the best course for me to take.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 1 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

The letters I received at Leyden obliged me to leave you sooner than I intended; but I shall soon see you again at the Hague.

I have received important despatches from congress, upon which I want your advice. I hope it is no bad news. You will say nothing, reflect well upon the times, and be prepared to answer me serious questions upon public affairs; nothing personal, nor selfish, nor little. I shall see you in the course of next week, if nothing turns up to prevent it, which I do not foresee. Do not raise your expectations too high. Remember *nil admirari*.

Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Leyden, 8 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I send you the letters; if any thing is necessary to be added to the memorial before the signature, you will be so good as to add it. I should be obliged to you for a line by the bearer in return, and the news if any. My first *démarche*, you see, is on the Prince's birthday, which is, no doubt, a good omen both to his highness and your servant. You will please to put a wafer under the seals. [1](#)

John Adams.

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A 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, 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 beg leaves 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, 8 March, 1781.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRINCE DE GALITZIN, MINISTER OF THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

Leyden, 8 March, 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 inclose 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 Saphorin, 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.

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TO M. VAN BERCKEL, FIRST COUNSELLOR
PENSIONARY OF THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM.

Leyden, 8 March, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose a resolution of congress of the 5th 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.

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE AT THE HAGUE.

Leyden, 8 March, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose 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.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, Vendredi à 4½ heures 9 Mars, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Le principal personnage par lequel je dois commencer, n'étant pas chez lui ce matin, et ne devant rentrer que tard, je dois différer jusqu'à demain matin à dix heures, qui est le temps qu'on m'a dit où je le trouverai chez lui. Dès que j'aurai fait ma commission chez lui, &c., j'aurai l'honneur de vous en rendre compte. En attendant, je suis avec un grand respect, monsieur,

Dumas.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 10 Mars, 1781.

Monsieur,—

J'ai porté ce matin vos divers paquets, en commençant, selon vos ordres, par le President de L. H. P. Sur les questions qu'il m'a faites, d'où elle venoit? quel en étoit le contenu? &c., je vous ai nommé, ainsi que le lieu actuel de votre séjour, et votre qualité de ministre plénipotentiaire des États Unis en Europe. J'ai dit le contenu en substance; et je lui ai laissé mon nom sur une carte, et ma demeure. Quant aux trois ministres du Nord, comme c'est aujourd'hui leur jour de courier, je n'ai pu être admis que chez celui de Danemarck, qui m'a chargé de vous assurer, monsieur, qu'il enverra votre lettre à sa cour. J'ai laissé aux deux autres, avec une carte, celles qui étoient pour eux. M. le Duc de la Vauguyon m'a dit qu'il vous répondroit. J'envoie ce soir à notre ami celle qui lui est destinée.

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

Dumas.

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TO MESSRS. JOHN DE NEUFVILLE AND SONS.

Leyden, 11 March, 1781.

Sir,—

I received this morning your favor of yesterday with the inclosures. You seem to think that the loan has been opened too soon; but I am not of that opinion. Better too soon than too late. If it had been too late, you see, the time would have been passed and could never be recalled. But if it is only too soon, there is nothing wanting but a little patience to wait, and the true time will come in its course.

I should be obliged to you to send along the obligations as soon as convenient, that I may sign them and dispose of them. I can find persons in my travels who will take them and give me the money for them. I think to stand my own broker, undertaker, and banker. I should be obliged to you, if you would countersign some of the obligations before you send them to me, because there are persons ready to take some of them. Do not be amused. *The mediation of Russia cannot interrupt or retard our affairs.* If that mediation produces nothing, and the war goes on, it will not affect our loan. If it produces an acknowledgment of American independence and of the rights of neutral vessels, as it is given out that it will, surely this will not retard our loan. In all cases, be not deceived. I will not be. *My business is to try the experiment, and to know whether we have credit and friends or not.* If we find we have not, there is no harm done. Every one in that case will follow his own taste, which you know there is no disputing.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.¹

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Leyden, 12 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I do not know whether I have acknowledged yours of the 12th of February; that of the 25th came to me yesterday. The letter inclosed was from Mr. I. Smith, of 18 December. He says they were busily employed in raising their quota for the army during the war or for three years, and that the other provinces were doing the same. He says Mrs. Dana was well a few days before; that Davis had arrived after having thrown over his letters, being chased by an American. This is all. I have letters from the president and from Lovell, the last unintelligible, in ciphers but inexplicable by his own cipher; some dismal ditty about my letters of 26th of July; I know not what.

But, my dear sir, I hasten to the most interesting part of your letter,—your project of a repassage of the mountains,—I shudder at the thoughts of it, when I consider what a bad traveller you are, and that robbers by the way may take you to their dens. I do not know how to part with you. I want your advice constantly now, every day, yet I think you are doing more good where you are than you could here. I know that by conversation with A. Z.¹ you might do good; but there are so many hazards that I dare not advise you. I think with you that we shall have nothing to do in our principal department, yet the mediations of the Emperor and Empress seem to require attention from us, although I am persuaded it is only the artifice of England to embroil all Europe. I will commit to you a secret; let it be kept so. I have received a commission, dated 28 December, for this republic. I want your advice; but I can ask it by letter while you are at Paris. I suppose it was the intention of congress that I should employ Dumas as my secretary here; but I have no orders or hints about it; there is no commission to him, which makes me think A. Z. intended I should be at liberty to employ him or not, as I shall judge proper. I suppose A. Z. intended to leave the way open to employ him, by their not sending a commission to you. Upon the whole, I do not know how to advise you. We will consider of it a little longer, if you please.

I can give you no assurances or lively hopes of money or friendship in this country. They are furious for peace. Multitudes are for peace with England at any rate, even at the expense and risk of joining them in the war against France, Spain, America, and all the rest. They are in a torpor, a stupor such as I never saw any people in before; but they cannot obtain peace with England on any other terms than joining her in the war; and this they will not, because they cannot do. I sometimes think that their affections would lead them to do it, if they dared.

John Adams.

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THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, ce 14 Mars, 1781.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, ainsi que la copie de la résolution du congrès des États Unis de l'Amérique septentrionale qui y étoit jointe; vous m'annoncez que vous avez donné une communication ministerielle au président de l'assemblée des états généraux ainsi qu'aux envoyés des cours de Pétersbourg, Stockholm, et Copenhagen, et vous me priez d'appuyer cette démarche de mes bons offices. Je suis persuadé, monsieur, que vous sentez parfaitement l'impossibilité de la seconder sans un ordre exprès du roi, quelque soit mon zèle personnel pour les vrais intérêts de l'Amérique septentrionale. Recevez, monsieur, l'assurance très sincère des sentimens de la considération la plus distinguée, &c. &c.

Le Duc de la Vauguyon.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 17 Mars, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Je n'eus le temps hier au soir que de vous envoyer la lettre que S. E. M. l'Ambassadeur de France m'avoit fait remettre pour vous en réponse de celle du 8e courant, que je lui avois remise de votre part. Messrs. les P. d'A., D., et II., m'ont tous chargé de vous témoigner leur reconnoissance de la bonté que vous avez eu de leur communiquer la résolution du congrès; et ceux d'A. en particulier leur regret de ce que les circonstances actuelles ne leur permettent pas de répondre formellement aux lettres que vous leur avez écrites. Celui de D. étoit convenu avec moi, que nous ferions aujourd'hui un tour à Leide ensemble, et que j'aurois l'honneur de vous le présenter pour faire connoissance. Mais il a dû partir hier pour Dort. Ainsi ce sera pour une autre fois.

Le contre-manifeste de la république à celui du roi Britannique vient enfin de paroître. Vous le verrez bientôt paroître traduit dans les Gazettes Françaises; ainsi je puis me dispenser de vous l'analyser. Il est long. Est il aussi vigoureux que long? C'est ce dont vous jugerez. Je suis avec un grand respect, &c.

Dumas.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Leyden, 17 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I received this morning your favor of the 16th, inclosing a polite letter from the Duke de la Vauguyon.

I hope to receive another from you this evening, and that it will contain an account of the fate of my memorial. Has it been laid before their High Mightinesses, or not? and what was done with it? Pray, has the president, by the constitution of this country, a right to pocket, suppress, or deliver to the stadtholder papers addressed to their High Mightinesses?

Is the delusion almost over? When will mankind cease to be the dupes of the insidious artifices of a British minister and stockjobber? Peace is a tub easily thrown out for the amusement of the whale, while the minister opens his budget, concert his taxes, and contracts for his loan, and it never fails to be taken for a fish.

This is the best place for business in the world. I have written my name eight or nine thousand times to papers since I saw you. Pray do you know if M. de Neufville has any person at the Hague to dispose of my obligations? If he has not, will you think of a proper person, as a broker or undertaker, or both, and inform me?

I Am, With Great Esteem, Your Servant,

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Leyden, 19 March, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received your Excellency's letter of the 1st of January, with the commission and instructions inclosed. I am very sensible of this fresh instance of the confidence of congress, and shall do every thing 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.

In this perfect chaos of sentiments and systems, principles and interests, it is no wonder there is a 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.

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.

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 mean time, 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.

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, who is at this time if ever one was, *hostis humanigeneris*.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Leyden, 19 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

The inclosed extracts are of so much importance, that I send them to you for your opinion, whether it is prudent to communicate them to the Russian minister or not. The intelligence is such that I can make no official communication; if you think it will do any good and no harm, or at least more good than harm, you may communicate it in confidence to friends. Mr. Dana's commission, which perhaps is to treat with any or all the northern powers, is to come by Colonel Palfrey, and duplicates by young Colonel Laurens, as I conjecture. I have read the manifesto [1](#) with pleasure, because it is a reasonable and a manly performance; it would have been better perhaps without the last clause, which will be taken both by friends and enemies as a sigh for peace with England; but much may be said in excuse of it. I wish, too, they had left out their disapprobation of Amsterdam, which was not necessary, and never did their High Mightinesses any honor; at least I venture to think so.

Adieu.

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Leyden, 22 March, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I have received several letters from you, but have been so busy signing my name that I could not answer.

I give you joy of Laurens's arrival. It is a great event. I hope he brought you an important paper, which Lovell mentions in his letter to you, and Gerry in an excellent one to me. I rejoice, sir, in your honor and in the public good, but I feel myself weakened and grieved at the personal loss of a treasure of advice and ability. I hope to see you here in your route. Pray commit to writing all your observations on our first errand, and give them to me. I hope your old commission is not superseded. In case of negotiation, of which however there is no likelihood for years, I shall summon you. Mr. Laurens must have letters and important papers for me. I hope to have them soon. There is no one knows the banking commission but M. de Neufville and me; it is not more however than precedents; but let them lie about it if they will; I am not afraid of their lies. Statia is gone, and the Dutch yet dead; when they will come to life, I know not.

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. JOHN DE NEUFVILLE AND SONS.

Leyden, 27 March, 1781.

Gentlemen,—

I have just received yours, inclosing the *Lettres Hollandaises*, and thank you for your attention. You give me great joy by your account of the arrival of a vessel from Boston. I hope we shall soon hear of more.

As to the loan, I am not indifferent about its success. My own reputation with some people, in Europe and America, will depend in some measure upon it. But this has little weight with me. It is of importance to America to have a comptoir or banker in Amsterdam upon whom congress could occasionally draw, as they have at Paris and Madrid. And my instructions from congress are such as rendered it my indispensable duty to open a loan and try the experiment. If it does not succeed I shall have done my duty. But the same duty requires that I should write an account to congress and to Dr. Franklin of its success; to congress that they may draw their bills in future upon Paris and Madrid; to Dr. Franklin, that he may be able to obtain the money of the Court of Versailles to discharge the bills I have already accepted. In this case, Mr. Grand, the banker in Paris, will give orders, as I expect, to the house of Horneca, Fizeaux, & Co., at Amsterdam, to pay the bills. This, you see, will make it public that my loan has not succeeded. And the whole will divert that part of the trade of America which would naturally have flowed to Amsterdam to France and Spain. I shall be mortified at this; but there will be one consolation; we shall have no interest to pay but what we please and when we please; for the money obtained of those courts has been generously granted without any terms whatsoever, respecting the terms of interest or the time of payment of interest or principal.

We shall be under more obligations at Paris and Madrid, and less elsewhere. I am not therefore anxious, nor will I depart a single doit from the terms, if the whole falls through. I have already gone farther than will be for the good of my reputation, or promote the intercourse between the two countries.

The secret intelligence you give me I am rejoiced to hear. It shall remain a secret with me. I have a great deal of news, too, which I must keep a secret at present, but which holds out hopes of great and good things to our righteous cause. I expect to learn more of it every hour.

I Am, With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Leyden, 28 March, 1781.

Sir,—

It is so long since I wrote you, that I am almost ashamed to recollect. I have been in the most curious country, among the most incomprehensible people, and under the most singular constitution of government in the world. I have not been able to write you what could or would be done here, because I was not able to discover, nor did I ever yet find one man in the country who would pretend to say what course the republic would take. At this moment, although I think there cannot be a peace between them and England, yet I do not see a probability of their being in earnest in the war for some time.

I can tell you one thing, however, for certain,—that the conduct of Spain has great influence here. Her delay in acknowledging our independence, contributes amazingly to the indecision of the republic. If Spain had fully entered into the system, this country would soon follow. I must, therefore, beg of you to communicate to me as much concerning this subject as you are at liberty to do. All nations it is to be feared will wait for Spain, and thus prolong the evils of war to unnecessary lengths. My best compliments to your family, and believe me to be, with great esteem, sir,

Your Most Obedient Servant,

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 6 April, 1781.

Sir,—

This day the skipper of a treck-schuyt brought me your Excellency's important despatches by Colonel Laurens. The Colonel delivered them to Mr. Dana at Paris, with perfect propriety. Mr. Dana, with equal propriety, delivered them to a gentleman of character, who undertook to deliver them at Amsterdam, but unfortunately forgot them at Valenciennes; from Valenciennes, they travelled partly by post, partly by the diligence, and partly by the treck-schuyt, that is, the barks which ply in this country in the canals, and by a kind of miracle arrived safe. I had been apprised of them and their misfortune long before they reached me, and suffered torments enough on their account, although I took all the precautions in my power to recover them. Their wonderful preservation affords some hopes that they are destined to do good. Yet the prospect is but distant.

I am very sensible of the honor done me by these fresh instances of the confidence of congress, and most sincerely wish it were in my power to give any encouragement of success. But my proposals for a loan, although apparently well received by the public, have as yet had no success, and I have no power to discharge the bills of exchange drawn upon Mr. Laurens and me, and accepted, but from Mr. Franklin. The war has struck such a damp and gloom, excited so great a fermentation and so many apprehensions of popular commotion and many other dangers, some real and some imaginary, that I think still as I have constantly written to congress, we shall find no private credit, until we are publicly received by the States and by the Prince; and when that will be, I know not. I fear it will be long, but shall soon try the experiment. The powers and credentials are perfect, and Mr. Dana's appointment to Russia will aid me, if any thing can. The delay of Spain is an obstruction to us here and everywhere.

If one were to judge by the paragraphs which appear in the English newspapers, and in the *Courier du Bas Rhin*, one would think that there was a most malignant spirit against Mr. Van Berckel and the burgomasters of Amsterdam, and a determination to sacrifice him, if possible. I rather think, however, that these paragraphs are the fabrication of some of the old instruments of Sir Joseph Yorke. They are not most certainly the sense of this nation, in whose estimation, in general, the gentlemen of Amsterdam stand high.

I will not dissemble, however, to congress. The councils of this people are the most inscrutable of any I ever saw. There is a standing army, and that is marched and cantoned about in new places. This army, and every civil officer in public trust, is supposed to have a decided inclination to England, and against America, but especially against France. There are mutual suspicions of designs of innovation, but I

hope not well founded. All this, together with the novelty of war, and the defenceless state of the nation, intimidates everybody.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Leyden, 10 April, 1781.

Sir,—

Relying on your virtues and graces of faith and hope, I accepted the bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling, drawn in favor of Mr. Tracy.

I have received advice from congress, of more bills drawn upon me. When they arrive and are presented, I must write you concerning them, and desire you to enable me to discharge them; for I am sorry to be obliged to say, that although I have opened a loan, according to the best plan I could, and the plan and the loan seem to be countenanced by the public, yet there is little money obtained, scarcely enough to defray the expense of obligations and stamps; and it is daily more and more clear to me, that we shall never obtain a loan here, until our independence is acknowledged by the States. Till then, every man seems to be afraid that his having any thing to do in it, will be made the foundation of a criminal process, or a provocation to the resentment of the mob.

The time is very near when some of the bills I accepted become payable. I must entreat your Excellency's answer to this as soon as convenient, and to point out to me whether you choose that the house of Fizeaux, Grand & Co., or any other, should pay the money. It is a most grievous mortification to me to find that America has no credit here, while England, certainly, still has so much; and to find that no gentleman in public life here dare return me a visit, or answer me a letter, even those who treated me when I first arrived here with great politeness. I am entreated, however, to keep this secret, but have no motive to secrete it from you; on the contrary, you ought to know it.

I am told there will be great alterations very soon. But I have seen by experience that no man in this country knows what will be in the morrow.

Let me ask the favor of you, sir, to give my best respects to Colonel Laurens and Mr. Franklin.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 14 Avril, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Quoique je n'aie encore vu personne, je prends néanmoins la plume pour avoir l'honneur de vous dire, qu'après y avoir bien mûrement pensé depuis que nous nous sommes quittés il me semble que vous ne pourrez vous passer, pour éviter tout blâme et inimitié, lorsque vous viendrez ici pour la démarche en question, de faire votre première visite chez M. l'ambassadeur de France, afin de lui *donner connoissance verbale de votre dernière commission et lettres de créance, et de la nécessité indispensable où vous vous trouvez d'en donner connoissance directe et immédiate à ceux à qui elles s'adressent.* Ainsi, sans soumettre la démarche même et son détail essentiel à d'autre vue et détermination que la vôtre seule, vous conserverez l'amitié et les bons offices personnels (qu'il faut bien distinguer des ministériels, pour lesquels il faudroit un ordre de sa cour) que pourra vous rendre la seule personne qui soit dans le cas, pour le présent, de les avouer et témoigner hautement. Au lieu que l'omission de cette politesse diplomatique et l'aveu froid qui s'ensuivroit inmanquablement vis-à-vis de ceux ici, qui déferent de plus en plus aux avis de l'ambassadeur, qu'on n'a aucune connoissance de votre mission, &c., feroit sûrement un effet plus ou moins nuisible et mortifiant, en détruisant, ou du moins reculant pour long temps, ce que nous voulons avancer. Voilà, monsieur, ce que je crois devoir vous conseiller positivement, tant pour votre agrément personnel dans la suite, que pour le bien de la chose, comme une chose qui ne sauroit être d'aucune mauvaise conséquence, ni ce que vous appelez *aprecedent.*

On me mande de Paris, “nous allons vous envoyer une escadre au Texel. Elle sera bien commandée. Nous commençons à espérer que les cinq vaisseaux de ligne et les deux mille hommes que nous envoyons au cap, y arriveront avant Johnston qui d'ailleurs n'est pas de force à se mesurer avec nos cinq vaisseaux.”

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

Dumas.

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Leyden, 16 April, 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.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Leyden, 16 April, 1781.

Sir,—

I yesterday had the honor of yours of the 7th. The letter inclosed is a bitter satire on the nation which produced it. Is it possible that Arnold should show his face among men, after such a letter? If it is not a bribe, it is robbery committed in the American service, for it is well known that Arnold had no such sum when the war began. He is now employed in stealing tobacco and negroes; so is Cornwallis. A fair employment for peers, for Arnold is the peer of them all. I think the Southern States will have the honor, after all, of putting the continent in a right way to finish the business of the war; there has been more sheer fighting there, in proportion, than anywhere.

All the papers, English, French, and Dutch, assure the world that I have succeeded in a loan. I wish they would prove their words. I am told it will do by and by. So I am, that the nation will act vigorously by and by. I wish both may prove true; but I have not one grain of your faith nor hope. There are capitalists who believe us able and honest to pay, and that we shall prevail, and they have inclinations enough they say to the loan; but the true motive of their conduct is fear of being pointed out, to mobs and soldiers, as persons who have contributed to the commencement or continuance of the war with England. I wrote you some days ago, that I had not succeeded at all, and requesting your orders how the bills accepted should be paid. Some of them become payable the beginning of May, and on the 15th of that month the sixty-six bills, amounting to ten thousand pounds sterling, which were drawn in favor of Mr. Tracy, become due. I congratulate you on your success at Versailles. If Spain would make a treaty with Mr. Jay, it would assist us here. Everybody asks, why does Spain delay. You and I know very well, but cannot tell. But so it is. One always negotiates ill, when one is not in a condition to make one's self feared. If America could dissemble enough to threaten other nations with a return to Great Britain, they would be ready to hang themselves to prevent it. But America is too honest and sincere to play this game. England would have all the mountains of Mexico and Peru in a few years, if America should join her. Yet we are slighted. God forgive them, and enable America to forget their ungenerosity.

America has fought Great Britain and Ireland six years, and not only Great Britain, but many States of Germany, many tribes of Indians, and many negroes, their allies. Great Britain has been moving earth and hell to obtain allies against us, yet it is improper in us to propose an alliance! Great Britain has borrowed all the superfluous wealth of Europe, in Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and some in France, to murder us, yet it is dishonorable in us to propose to borrow money! By heaven, I would make a bargain with all Europe, if it lay with me. Let all Europe stand still, neither lend men nor money nor ships to England nor America, and let them fight it out alone. I would give my share of millions for such a bargain. America is treated

unfairly and ungenerously by Europe. But thus it is, mankind will be servile to tyrannical masters, and basely devoted to vile idols.

With Great Respect, Your Obedient Servant,

John Adams.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, ce 17 Avril, 1781.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, la lettre par laquelle vous m'informez que le congrès des États Unis de l'Amérique septentrionale vous a revêtu du caractère de son ministre plénipotentiaire auprès des États généraux des Provinces Unies. J'ignore si vous vous proposez de présenter vos lettres de créance à leurs hautes puissances dans ce moment, mais si telle est votre intention je désirerois bien avoir l'honneur de vous entretenir auparavant et vous communiquer des vues qui me paroissent intéresser mutuellement la cause commune.

Soyez bien persuadé, je vous prie, monsieur, de la vérité des sentimens inviolables de la considération distinguée avec, &c.

Le Duc de la Vauguyon.

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

Leyden, 18 April, 1781.

I feel myself happy that congress have made it my duty to consult your Excellency upon the mission with which they have charged me for the Court of Petersburg. To this end I have already laid before you all the papers which I have received from congress any way relating to it, and also my correspondence with his Excellency the Comte de Vergennes, and Dr. Franklin, upon the same subject, as well as my letters to the president of congress, from the time I received this commission. From all these, your Excellency will be fully instructed in the several matters on which I wish to have your advice; but to bring some of them more immediately under your view, I beg leave to state the following questions:—

Whether, all circumstances considered, your Excellency thinks it expedient for me to proceed to Petersburg in the character of a private citizen of the United States only, and to wait there for a favorable moment to announce my public character?

Whether, previous to my going in such a character, you judge it expedient for me to communicate my design to Prince Galitzin, the Russian Ambassador at the Hague (secreting from him at the same time my public character) and to take his opinion thereon, according to the intimation given to me by the Comte de Vergennes at our conference?

Whether it is advisable to communicate my real character to the Court of Petersburg, and to ask their permission before I undertake the journey?

Whether, in case you think it advisable for me to proceed to Petersburg in a private character only, without further communications to any one, you conceive it to be the intention of congress that I should present their resolutions relative to the rights of neutral vessels to the Court of Petersburg on my arrival there, or whether this is left to my discretion, to be regulated by the then state of affairs at that Court?

Your Excellency will readily perceive the propriety of my writing to you on this business, although we have already had a conference upon it, and of my requesting your sentiments in writing also.

I shall be happy to make a more particular communication of my own sentiments and views in further conversation, if you think it needful, before you give me yours.

I Am, With The Greatest Respect And Esteem, &C.

Francis Dana.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Leyden, 18 April, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I am at no loss what advice to give you in answer to the questions in your letter of this day, because they relate to a subject on which I have long reflected, and have formed an opinion as fully as my understanding is capable of. I think, then, it is necessary for you to prepare for a journey to St. Petersburg, without loss of time; that you travel in the character of a gentleman, without any distinction of public or private, as far as the publication of your appointment already made in France will permit.

I should think it altogether improper to communicate to the ambassador your design of travelling to St. Petersburg as a private gentleman, secreting from him at the same time your public character. It would expose you to something very disagreeable. The ambassador would ask you why you asked his advice, when it is well known that private gentlemen travel in every country in Europe without molestation. Besides, the ambassador, I have reason to believe, would not give you any advice without instructions from his Court; and this would require so much time, that the most favorable opportunity which now presents itself would be lost. And, after applying to the ambassador, and being advised against the journey, or to postpone it for instructions from his Court, it would be less respectful to go than to go now, when the circumstances of the times are very favorable.

The same reason applies equally against writing to the Court beforehand. The best opportunity would be lost, and the Court would never encourage you to come until they had determined to receive you, and you would have no opportunity to assist the deliberations upon the subject, by throwing in any light, by answering objections, or explaining the views of congress.

After your arrival at St. Petersburg, I should advise you, unless upon the spot you discover reasons against it, unknown to us at present, to communicate your character and mission to NA or the minister of foreign affairs in confidence, asking his advice, but at the same time presenting him a memorial ready prepared for the NA . If he informs you, it is best for you to reside there as a private gentleman, or to travel for a time into Sweden or Denmark, or to return here to Holland, where I shall be happy to have your company and counsels, take his advice.

The United States of America have nothing dishonorable to propose to any court or country. If the wishes of America, which are for the good of all nations as they apprehend, are not deemed by such courts or nations consistent with their views and interest, of which they are the supreme judges, they will candidly say so, and there is no harm done. On the contrary, congress will be applauded for their candor and good intentions. You will make your communication to the French ambassador of course

according to your instructions. This method was taken by this republic in her struggle with Spain; nay, it was taken by the republican parliament in England, and by Oliver Cromwell. It was taken by Switzerland and Portugal in similar cases with great success. Why it should be improper now, I know not.

I conceive it to be the intention of congress, that you should communicate their resolutions relative to the rights of neutral vessels; and I am the more entirely of this opinion, because I have already communicated those resolutions to their High Mightinesses, the states-general, and to their Excellencies the ministers of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, at the Hague, in pursuance of the letters I had received from the president; and I should now think it improper in me to sign a treaty according to those resolutions, if invited thereto, because it would be interfering with your department.

America, my dear sir, has been too long silent in Europe. Her cause is that of all nations and all men; and it needs nothing but to be explained, to be approved. At least, these are my sentiments. I have reasons in my mind which were unknown to their Excellencies the Count de Vergennes and Dr. Franklin, when you consulted them; reasons which it is improper for me to explain at present. But the reasons I have given appear to me conclusive. No measure of congress was ever taken in a more proper time, or with more wisdom, in my opinion, than the appointment of a minister at the Hague and at St. Petersburg. The effects of it may not appear in sudden and brilliant success, but the time was exactly chosen, and the happy fruits of it will appear in their course.

Although I shall be personally a sufferer by your appointment, yet I sincerely rejoice in it for the public good. When our enemies have formed alliances with so many princes in Germany and so many savage nations against us, when they are borrowing so much of the wealth of Germany, Italy, Holland, and Switzerland, to be employed against us, no wise court or reasonable man can blame us for proposing to form relations with countries whose interest it is to befriend us. An excess of modesty and reserve is an excess still. It was no dishonor to us to propose a treaty to France, nor for our ministers to reside there more than a year without being acknowledged. On the contrary, all wise men applauded the measure, and I am confident the world in general will now approve of an application to the maritime powers, although we should remain without a public reception as long as our ministers did in France and Spain; nay, although we should be rejected. In this case, congress and their constituents will all be satisfied. They will have neglected no duty in their power; and the world will then see the power and resources of three or four millions of virtuous men inhabiting a fine country, when contending for every thing which renders life worth supporting. The United States will then fix a medium, establish taxes for the payment of interest, acquire the confidence of their own capitalists, and borrow money at home; and when this is done, they will find capitalists abroad willing enough to venture in their funds.

With ardent wishes for your health and success,

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 18 Avril, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Je fus hier au soir chez un ami de poids, qui, sur ce que je lui témoignai ma surprise de ce que votre mémoire avoit été remis au Greffe, c'est à dire, comme *jeté* ou *rejeté*, comme on me l'avoit fait entendre, me dit, que l'expression étoit outrée, et que ce qui étoit remis là étoit considéré comme déposé jusqu'a nouvel ordre.

On attend tous les jours des dépêches de Petersbourg; et l'on est assuré davance qu'elles seront satisfaisantes. J'espère d'en savoir d'avantage Vendredi au soir.

On me fit demander hier au soir votre adresse; ainsi je ne doute pas que vous n'ayez reçu aujourd'hui une lettre de certaine part, et qu'elle ne soit cordiale et polie. Je n'ai pas encore fait visite à cette part là. Je vous en dirai la raison quand nous nous verrons; et vous l'approuverez. Je persiste dans ce que je vous en ai écrit dernièrement.

Je viens d'apprendre que Messrs. Searle et Dana sont avec vous. Si vous avez la bonté de me donner demain de vos nouvelles et des leurs, je me ferai un devoir de vous visiter et de les complimenter Samedi matin. Mais je voudrois être sûr auparavant que nous ne nous manquerons, ni ne croiserons; or l'un ou l'autre pourroit arriver, si vous veniez ici, ou si vous alliez à Amsterdam dans le temps que j'irois a Leide.

Je crois que les États d'Hollande se sépareront Vendredi pour un peu de temps.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO PETER VAN BLEISWYCK.

Leyden, 19 April, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to your Excellency a copy of a memorial to their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces.

With The Greatest Respect And Consideration,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. FAGEL.

Leyden, 19 April, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to your Excellency a copy of a memorial to their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the low countries.

With The Greatest Respect And Consideration,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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MEMORIAL 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.

At the times 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 their 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 enterprise; 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 fifty-five 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, placart, 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 has 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 organized 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. 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 these 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. This independence stands upon so broad and firm a bottom of the people's interests, honor, conscience, and affections, that it will not be affected by any successes the English may obtain, either in America, or against the European powers at war, nor 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 revolutions, 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 connections 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.

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 connections 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 connections, 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.

If there was ever among nations a natural alliance, one may be formed between the two republics. The first planters of the four northern States found in this country an asylum from persecution, and resided here from the year one thousand six hundred and eight to the year one thousand six hundred and twenty, twelve years preceding their migration. They ever entertained, and have transmitted to posterity, a grateful remembrance of that protection and hospitality, and especially of that religious liberty they found here, having 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 connections 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 of 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.

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 connection 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 fomenting there, than from any other quarter, the two nations resemble each other more than any others.

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 any thing 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 connection with her very 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 in America of the manufactures of Europe, of 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 connection 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 colonists. There is now an opportunity offered to both, to shake off this shackle for ever. If any consideration whatever could have induced them to have avoided a war with your High Mightinesses, it would have been the 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 connection once completely formed. 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 Dutch East India Company, by carrying their effects directly to the American market; or 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 benefited by building and purchasing ships there; how much the number of seamen might be increased, or how much advantage to both countries would arise from having their ports mutually opened to their men-of-war and privateers and their prizes.

If, therefore, an analogy of religion, government, original, manners, and the most extensive and lasting commercial interests can form a ground and an invitation to political connections, 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 will never 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 been long 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 the 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?

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 insurance in voyages across the Atlantic are so high, and the price of labor in America so dear, that tar, pitch, turpentine, and ship timber never can 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 may be imported from Amsterdam, or even from Petersburg and Archangel, cheaper than they can be raised at home. America will, therefore, be for ages a market for these articles of the Baltic trade.

Nor is there more solidity in another supposition propagated by the English to prevent other nations from pursuing their true interests, that the colonies of other nations will follow the example of the United States. Those powers who 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 deep 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 monopolized or governed 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 independency immediately. If such benevolent policy should be adopted, the new world will be a proportional blessing to every part of the old.

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 every thing 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 his mission, by

John Adams.¹

Leyden, 19 April, 1781.

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MEMORIAL TO THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

Leyden, 19 April, 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 every thing 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 have adhered steadfastly through every trial to those principles which formed and supported the connection, principles which founded and have supported this republic, while others have wantonly abandoned them.

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.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 21 April, 1781.

Sir,—

Agreeable to my faith I have obtained a promise of money sufficient to pay the bills you have accepted, and shall accordingly accept those you draw on me for that purpose. I request only that you would send me immediately a list of the bills, and of the times of their becoming due, that I may be always provided, and that as the money will come gradually into my hands, you would not draw upon me for the whole sum at once, but for the sums as they become demandable of you. Mr. Grand will write by this courier to the house of Fizeaux & Grand to take your bills in that way, and furnish you with the money. Mr. Neufville has written to me about another bill that is come into his hands, which he desires me to accept, or engage to pay. There seems to me a risk in doing so without seeing the bill, as our enemies are not too honest to attempt counterfeiting. I wish, therefore, that you would look at it, and if you find it good, accept it.

I must now beg you would concur with me, in writing earnestly to congress, to hazard no more drafts where they have no funds. I believe there is hardly another instance in the world of a people risking their credit so much, who, unfortunately, have so little, and who must by this proceeding, if continued, soon have none at all. The necessity of their affairs is the only excuse for it. This court is our firm friend, but the best friends may be wearied and worn out, by too frequent and unexpected demands.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 26 Avril, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Je n'ai rien, pour le coup, de nouveau à vous marquer, si ce n'est que je viens d'apprendre qu'un certain nombre de marchands de la grande ville fera enfin la basse démarche auprès du ministère Britannique d'envoyer des députés à Londres négocier la restitution de ce qui leur appartient des effets capturés à Saint Eustache. Quelques bons patriotes, quoiqu'ils y perdent aussi, ont refusé de souscrire à cette députation, à la tête de laquelle sera M. H. Ceux de R—m ont refusé aussi de participer à cette petitesse. J'espère que votre démarche, dans la première semaine du mois prochain, relevera par ses bons effets le courage des autres. Je viens de mettre au net ma traduction, pour l'avoir prête à remettre à l'imprimeur dès que vous le jugerez à propos après la démarche faite. J'en suis toujours plus content; et je me persuade de plus en plus, que vous avez raison de ne pas vouloir différer d'avantage. Il est bon d'ailleurs que cela se fasse lorsque les États d'Hollande se trouveront assemblés ici. Or ils le seront le 4 du mois prochain. Ayez la bonté, monsieur, de vouloir m'avertir quand vous quitterez Amsterdam, et quand vous comptez de vous rendre ici pour la démarche. J'écris ce soir à Bruxelles à une maison dont on m'a donné l'adresse, et qui se charge ordinairement de faire venir des effets de Paris à bon compte par des rouliers, afin de savoir leurs conditions, et l'adresse de leur correspondant à Paris. Dès que j'aurai réponse, je vous en ferai part; et alors vous pourrez avoir vos coffres quand vous voudrez et sûrement.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUYON.

Leyden, 1 May, 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.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Leyden, 3 May, 1781.

Sir,—

On the 1st of May I went to the Hague, and wrote to his Excellency, Peter Van Bleiswyck, 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, but—. 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.”

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.

To-morrow 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.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 6 May, 1781.

Monsieur,—

La même personne qui m'avoit donné l'avis, que vous m'aviez en partant laissé le maître de suivre, me dit hier matin qu'après y avoir bien pensé, il y trouvoit un si grand inconvenient qu'il me le déconseilloit très serieusement, comme une démarche incompatible avec le caractère que vous venez de déployer; en un mot qu'il ne convient pas que vous vous abaissiez à faire parvenir ainsi indirectement la pièce en question, qui paroîtroit cependant manifestement venir de votre part. J'ai donc pris, avec son avis et approbation, un autre parti, qui remplira également le but de faire connoître à la nation la parole qu'on lui porte. Des 500 exemplaires, j'en remettrai 300 au libraire qui a soin de l'imprimer, avec permission d'en faire son profit, en les envoyant à ses correspondants dans toutes les provinces, et les distribuant aussi ici. En même temps j'en ferai parvenir des copies aux Gazetiers, afin qu'ils puissent en faire usage. Il restera 200 exemplaires, dont je vous réserve cent, et j'en garderai cent pour en distribuer à ceux qu'il est à propos qui en aient d'abord. L'impression sera achevée Mercredi; et j'attend l'honneur de votre prompte réponse, pour savoir si vous approuvez ce parti, que je crois le plus convenable; afin de le mettre en exécution sans perte de temps.

La même personne m'a dit, que la délibération dans les provinces sur la note en question ne se fera pas avant trois ou quatre semaines. Par la même raison susdite, et de l'avis de la même personne, j'ai omis la commission; mais je la montrerai aux amis sûrs. Je suis curieux de savoir ce qui s'est passé entre vous, monsieur, et la dernière personne que vous avez visitée avant de partir. S'il vous arrive de bonnes nouvelles, je me recommande. Permettez-moi de placer ici mes respects pour M. Searle, pour M. Dana, et pour M. Gillon.

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 7 May, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I have this moment received yours of the 6th. I have no objection against your plan. I informed the grand pensionary and the president that I should think it my duty to publish my memorial. I persist in the same opinion. The manner is indifferent to me. I shall avow the publication. Your omission of the commission will be agreeable to me.

I communicated to the last person I saw at the Hague all that I had done. He still persisted in the opinion, that the time was a little too early; but this point apart, approved of every step I had taken, and promised to support it "*comme homme*." I never had a more agreeable or satisfactory interview with him.

I shall be agreeably surprised, if the Provinces determine so soon as in three or four weeks. The time for them to take is their own. I shall wait it with entire respect, if it should be eight or ten weeks.

If other people will allow me to judge for myself in what I am responsible for, they will always find me willing to allow them the same prerogative.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 7 May, 1781.

Sir,

On the 4th of May, I did myself the honor to wait on Peter Van Bleiswyck, 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 any thing 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 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.” I thanked his Excellency for this information, and departed.

I then waited on the president of their High Mightinesses for the week, the Baron Linden 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 facts and to inclose 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.

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, took 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.

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.¹

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TO JOHN LAURENS.

Amsterdam, 8 May, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me on the 28th of April. I sincerely congratulate you on the most essential aid you have obtained from the Court of Versailles, who upon this occasion have done as much honor to their own policy as essential service to the United States. By a conduct like this, which it is easy for France to hold, and which does as much service to the common cause as the same sum of money possibly could in any other way, a foundation will be laid of affection and confidence which will last long after this war shall be finished. I wish that other nations had as much wisdom and benevolence as France, indeed, as much knowledge of their own true interests; in this case, the burden upon France would be less.

I accept with pleasure the trust with which you honor me; but I shall not think myself at liberty to draw any bills in consequence of it, until the invoices and vouchers are produced to me, to the satisfaction of Major Jackson, who will be so good as to give me his approbation in writing. I am very happy to find it is in your power to assist Commodore Gillon upon this occasion, whose industry and skill and perseverance have merited every assistance that can be legally given him.

Major Jackson, sir, shall have every advice and assistance in my power to afford him; and I am much mortified that I am not to have an opportunity of showing you in person the respect which I have for your character, as well as that affection which I feel for the son of one of the worthiest friends I ever had. Alas! when will he be able to obtain his own liberty, who has so nobly contended for that of others?

I have communicated my credentials to the states-general, who, after the deliberations which the form of their constitution requires, will determine whether they can receive them or not. It will probably be long before they decide. It is of vast importance to obtain, if possible, an acknowledgment of our independence by the maritime powers before the conferences for peace shall be opened. Otherwise, it is not possible to foresee how many intrigues and how much chicanery we may have to encounter.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUYON.

Amsterdam, 14 May, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose copies of the Memorials which I promised your Excellency; and I beg pardon for not having done it sooner.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 16 Mai, 1781.

J'ai reçu, monsieur, avec la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser le 14 de ce mois, les copies des deux Mémoires dont elle étoit accompagnée.

J'Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C. &C.

Le Duc de la Vauguyon.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 16 May, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose 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. 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.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 16 May, 1781.

Sir,—

There has been much said in the public papers concerning conferences for peace, concerning the mediation of the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia, &c. &c. &c.

I have never troubled congress with these reports, because I have never received any official information or intimation of any such negotiation, either from England or France, or any other way. If any such negotiation has been going on, it has been carefully concealed from me. Perhaps something has been expected from the United States, which was not expected from me. For my own part, I know from so long experience, at the first glance of reflection, the real designs of the English government, that it is no vanity to say they cannot deceive me, if they can the Cabinets of Europe. I have fully known, that all their pretensions about peace were insidious, and therefore have paid no other attention to them, than to pity the nations of Europe, who, having not yet experience enough of British manœuvres, are still imposed on to their own danger, disgrace, and damage. The British ministry are exhausting all the resources of their subtilty, if not of their treasures, to excite jealousies and divisions among the neutral, as well as belligerent powers. The same arts precisely, that they have practised so many years to seduce, deceive, and divide America, they are now exerting among the powers of Europe; but the voice of God and man is too decidedly against them to permit them much success.

As to a loan of money in this republic, after having tried every expedient, and made every proposition that I could be justified or excused for making, I am in absolute despair of obtaining any, until the states-general shall have acknowledged our independence. The bills already accepted by me are paying off as they become due, by the orders of his Excellency Dr. Franklin; but he desires me to represent to congress the danger and inconvenience of drawing before congress have information that their bills can be honored. I must entreat congress not to draw upon me, until they know I have money. At present I have none, not even for my subsistence, but what I derive from Paris.

The true cause of the obstruction of our credit here is fear, which can never be removed but by the states-general acknowledging our independence; which, perhaps, in the course of twelve months they may do, but I do not expect it sooner. This country is indeed in a melancholy situation; sunk in ease, devoted to the pursuits of gain, overshadowed on all sides by more powerful neighbors, unanimated by a love of military glory, or any aspiring spirit, feeling little enthusiasm for the public, terrified at the loss of an old friend and equally terrified at the prospect of being obliged to form connections with a new one, incumbered with a complicated and perplexed

constitution, divided among themselves in interest and sentiment, they seem afraid of every thing. Success on the part of France, Spain, and especially of America, raises their spirits, and advances the good cause somewhat, but reverses seem to sink them much more.

The war has occasioned such a stagnation of business, and thrown such numbers of people out of employment, that I think it is impossible things should remain long in the present insipid state. One system or another will be pursued; one party or another will prevail; much will depend on the events of the war. We have one security, and I fear but one, and that is the domineering character of the English, who will make peace with the republic upon no other terms, than her joining them against all their enemies in the war; and this I think it is impossible she ever should do.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 18 May, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Depuis ma dernière du 13e qui en renfermoit une de France pour vous, je serois en peine de son sort, si je ne savois que Messrs. de Neufville ont reçu le paquet qui la contenoit.

Le mémoire est présentement suffisamment connu par toute la république, et par toute l'Europe, tant par les envois du libraire, que par les Gazetiers qui l'ont répété à l'envi l'un de l'autre. Le Courier du Bas Rhin a doublé sa feuille pour ne pas morceler, dit il, cette pièce intéressante. Les réflexions qu'il y a ajoutées, comme, que le président a accepté le mémoire et lui a servi de parrain, sont de son cru, et nullement du mien, qui lui ai simplement recommandé de ne rien changer.

Du reste, la pièce est généralement approuvée, même par ceux à qui elle ne fait pas plaisir; et l'homme que j'ai apposté pour me rapporter ce qu'on en dit, m'a protesté n'avoir pas entendu un mot de critique, mais beaucoup d'éloges. Quant aux suites qu'elle pourra avoir, tout le monde garde là-dessus un profond silence.

Ce matin Messieurs d'Amsterdam ont fait à l'assemblée d'Hollande une forte et sérieuse remontrance, qui, parfaitement inattendue et imprévue, a consterné les uns et fait plaisir à d'autres. J'en aurai copie demain ou après demain, et ne manquerai pas de vous faire part de son contenu.

En attendant, je dois finir malgré moi, pour ne pas manquer la poste.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 19 May, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I have received two letters from you, one covering a letter from Leghorn.

In the English copy of the Memorial, there are several errors of the press, and one which is very material; the word *treaties* with France and Spain instead of the word *relations*.

Please to give my compliments to Mr. Manson, the *Rédacteur* of the *Courier du Bas Rhin*, for the honor he has done to this Memorial in giving an additional sheet to his subscribers for the sake of it, and for the respectful manner in which he mentions it.

It has been very well received here; but whether it will ever have any other effect than a little applause in words, I know not. One thing I know; if it is disregarded, the posterity of this people will wish that their ancestors had laid it more at heart; for it is no rash opinion, that not only the prosperity, but the existence of this republic, depends upon an early connection with America.

This will be thought extravagant by that national pride and self-sufficiency which is common to all; but those who have reflected upon the combination of causes and effect in the political and commercial world, and who have looked forward to see how these must operate in futurity, will easily see that this republic will be totally overshadowed and exhausted on both sides, that of France as well as that of England, if she does not, by forming an early connection with America, turn a share of its commerce into this channel. After a peace with England, it will not be in the power of policy to affect it. Now, it might be easily done by a treaty and by a loan.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 23 May, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor of your letter of the 19th with its inclosures, and I thank your Excellency for the pains you have taken to communicate the news from America, which I think can scarcely be called bad, though General Greene lost the field. I had before received and published in the Amsterdam Gazette the same accounts. The gazetteers are so earnest after American news, that I find it the shortest method of communicating the newspapers to all.

I have received from congress their resolution of the 3d of January, 1781, to draw bills upon me in favor of Lee & Jones, at six months sight, for the full amount of the balance due on the contract made with them for a quantity of clothing for the army. I have also a letter from Mr. Gibson, of the treasury office, of January 28th, which informs me that the amount of Jones & Lee's account is sixteen thousand two hundred and forty-four pounds one shilling sterling.

I have just received from Gottenburg the inclosed letters,—one to your Excellency and one to Mr. Jay. I received both unsealed, with a direction to take copies. I have put my own seal upon that to your Excellency, and request the favor of you to put yours upon that to Mr. Jay, and to convey it in the safest manner. It contains matter of great importance, which ought to be carefully concealed from every eye but yours and Mr. Jay's; for which reason I should be cautious of conveying it, even with the despatches of the Spanish ambassador, especially as there are intimations in Mr. Lovell's letter of too much curiosity with regard to Mr. Jay's despatches, and as Mr. Jay himself complains that his letters are opened. I hope this instruction will remove all the difficulties with Spain, whose accession to the treaty would be of great service to the reputation of our cause in every part of Europe.

It seems to me of vast importance to us to obtain an acknowledgment of our independence from as many other sovereigns as possible, before any conferences for peace shall be opened; because, if that event should take place first, and the powers at war with Great Britain, their armies, navies, and people, weary of the war and clamoring for peace, there is no knowing what hard conditions may be insisted on from us, nor into what embarrassments British arts and obstinacy may plunge us.

By the tenth article of the treaty of alliance, the contracting parties agree to invite or admit other powers who may have received injuries from Great Britain to accede to that treaty. If Russia and the northern powers, or any of them, should be involved in the war in support of the Dutch, would it not be a proper opportunity for the execution of this article? Or, why would it not be proper now to invite the Dutch?

I have the honor to inclose a memorial to their High Mightinesses. My mission is now a subject of deliberation among the regencies of the several cities and the bodies of nobles who compose the sovereignty of this country. It is not probable that any determination will be had soon. They will probably confer with Russia and the northern powers about it first. Perhaps, if these come into the war, nothing will be done but in concert with them. But if these do not come into the war, this republic, I think, in that case, will readily accede to the treaty of alliance between France and America; for all ideas of peace with England are false and delusive. England will make peace with the Dutch upon no other condition than their joining her in the war against all her enemies, which it is impossible for them to do, even if their inclinations were that way, which they are not. The public voice here is well decided against England.

I have the honor to be much of your Excellency's opinion respecting duties. I mentioned tobacco, to show what duties America was able to bear. Whatever sums a people are able to bear in duties upon exports or imports upon the decencies, conveniences, or necessaries of life, they are undoubtedly able to raise by a dry tax upon polls and estates, provided it is equally proportioned. Nay, more, because the expense of collecting and guarding against frauds is saved.

Our countrymen are getting right notions of revenue; and whenever these shall become general, I think there can be no difficulty in carrying on the war.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 1 June, 1781.

Sir,—

Inclosed are two letters,—one to the president of their High Mightinesses, and the other to the secretary of the Prince,—which, after you have perused, I should be obliged to you to superscribe, seal, and deliver, yourself, or send by the post, as you shall judge most proper. The way of the post would avoid all questions and disagreements, and, therefore, perhaps is best.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

Amsterdam, 1 June, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received from my sovereign, the United States of America, in congress assembled, their express instructions to notify to their High Mightinesses, the states-general, the complete and final ratification of the confederation of the Thirteen United States, from New Hampshire to Georgia, both included, on the 1st day of March last.

I do myself the honor to inclose an authentic copy of this important act, and to request the favor of you, sir, to communicate it to their High Mightinesses in such a manner as you shall judge most convenient; as in the present circumstances of affairs I know of no more proper mode of discharging this part of my duty.¹

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. BÉRENGER TO JOHN ADAMS.

A La Haie, le 5 Juin, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Je viens de recevoir une lettre de M. le Comte de Vergennes par laquelle il m'ordonne d'avoir l'honneur de vous dire, que les intérêts des États Unis exigent votre présence à Paris, et qu'il désireroit que vous voulussiez bien vous y rendre, aussitôt que vos affaires en Hollande vous le permettront. Je vous supplie, monsieur, de me faire part de vos intentions à cet égard, afin que je puisse en informer M. le Comte de Vergennes. J'ose me flatter que vous me donnerez cette marque de bonté, et que vous serez bien persuadé du plaisir que j'ai à saisir cette occasion de vous offrir l'hommage du dévouement et du respect avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être, monsieur, &c.

Bérenger,*Secrétaire de l'Ambassade de France.*

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 6 Juin, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Selon vos ordres du 1^{er} du courant, j'ai cacheté de mon cachet la lettre que vous m'avez envoyée pour M. le Président de Leurs Hautes Puissances, et mis de ma main l'adresse en Hollandois, avec le nom de celui qui préside, et qui est le Baron Pallant de Glinthuisen; et je la lui portai hier matin, en lui disant que je l'avois reçue de M. Adams avec ordre de la lui remettre. Il la reçut sans la décacheter, en me disant de revenir le lendemain, pour apprendre ce qu'il avoit à faire après avoir consulté là-dessus avec ceux dont il devoit prendre l'avis. Je me rendis ce matin chez lui. Il avoit à la main le couvert décacheté, et les papiers. Il me dit que l'adresse, qu'il apprenoit être de ma main, et mon annonce que la lettre étoit de M. Adams, sans ajouter *Plenipo.* comme elle étoit signée, l'avoit trompé; que si l'on vouloit écrire, c'étoit à L. H. P. et comme particulier, en forme de requête, qu'on devoit le faire; qu'il ne pouvoit se charger de ces papiers; que je devois les reprendre; et sur mon refus, il les a mis dans mon chapeau, en me disant que j'avois tort de vous aviser d'aller si vite.

A moins d'attirer sur moi personnellement une noise des plus inégales, je ne pouvois que le laisser faire. J'ai cru seulement devoir lui observer, que vous ne pouviez mettre vous même une adresse que vous ignoriez; et que c'étoit par votre ordre que j'avois mis ce qui m'avoit paru convenir; qu'une preuve que je ne pensois pas à le surprendre, c'est que je lui avois porté moi-même la lettre, démarche qui m'avoit paru plus franche, et plus respectueux de ma part à tous égards, que la voie de la poste, dont vous m'aviez laissé l'alternative; que vous ne faisiez point ces démarches de votre chef, encore moins par mon avis, mais par les ordres de votre souverain; qu'il me paroissoit, qu'organe de la parole qu'adresse une nation à l'autre, vous aviez saisi les seules méthodes qui, jusqu'ici, avoient été en votre pouvoir pour la faire parvenir; qu'il me sembloit qu'une preuve authentique de la confédération Américaine finalement complétée et perfectionnée, devoit être regardée par la république comme une pièce importante pour elle-même, et propre à l'éclairer sur les vraies dispositions des États Unis contre l'ennemi de cette république; enfin que je vous ferois, monsieur, un rapport fidèle de ce qui venoit de se passer au sujet de ces papiers; et que j'ignorois ce que vous jugeriez à propos d'en faire ultérieurement.

La personne à qui j'avois fait tenir l'autre lettre, m'a fait prier de passer chez lui cet après-dîner; et après m'avoir reçu avec beaucoup de politesse et de cordialité m'a dit et répété expressément, que la restitution qu'il avoit ordre de faire entre mes mains, de la lettre que vous lui aviez écrite, avoit sa raison, ainsi que celle que le président avoit faite de ce qui lui étoit adressé, dans la qualité que vous aviez prise de ministre plénipotentiaire; et que, comme votre admission, en cette qualité, étoit en délibération parmi les provinces respectives, le Prince devoit attendre à cet égard une résolution de L. H. P., comme elles-mêmes devoient attendre là-dessus les instructions de leurs

commettants. En un mot, que c'étoit une affaire de pure étiquette; que je devois bien le comprendre, et vous le faire comprendre aussi, avec les égards qu'on a d'ailleurs pour vous, monsieur, personnellement.

Il me reste à attendre vos ordres, pour savoir si vous jugez à propos que je vous renvoie les deux lettres et les deux copies, ou que je les garde en dépôt; et d'ajouter que le président m'a dit, que si la lettre lui étoit arrivée par la poste, il n'auroit pu que la supprimer, sans en faire aucun usage.

J'espère qu'en tout ceci vous approuverez la conduite de celui qui est toujours avec le plus grand respect, &c.

C. W. F. Dumas.

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TO M. BÉRENGER.

Amsterdam, 8 June, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 5th of this month, informing me that you have received a letter from the Count de Vergennes, by which his Excellency directs you to tell me that the interests of the United States require my presence at Paris, and that he should desire that I would go there as soon as my affairs in Holland will permit me.

I should be extremely obliged to you, sir, if you would confide to me the nature of the business that requires me at Paris, that I might be able to form some judgment, whether it is of so much importance and so pressing as to make it necessary for me to go forthwith.

His Excellency Dr. Franklin, and Colonel Laurens, have arranged affairs in such a manner, that the accounts of the Indian are to be produced to me, and I am to draw bills to discharge them, so that it would retard the departure of that interesting vessel, if I were to go now; and it is of some importance to the public that I should complete my despatches to go to congress by her. I am also unfortunately involved in a good deal of business, in accepting and discharging bills of exchange, a course of business which would be put into some confusion, if I were to go immediately; and the general affairs of congress in this republic might suffer somewhat by my absence. But, notwithstanding all, if I were informed that it is any thing respecting a general pacification, or an invitation of this republic to accede to the alliance between France and the United States, or any other affair of sufficient weight to justify my quitting this post immediately, I would do it. Otherwise, it would, as I humbly conceive, be more for the public interest that I should wait until some of the business that lies upon me here is despatched, and the rest put into a better order. Let me beg the favor of your sentiments, sir. Whenever I go, I must beg the favor of you to furnish me with a passport.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 15 June, 1781.

Sir,—

The long expected courier has at last arrived at the Hague from St. Petersburg. The contents of his despatches are not public, but all hopes of assistance from the armed neutrality seem to be dissipated. The question now is, what is to be done next. Some are for alliances with the House of Bourbon and America; but a thousand fears arise. France, the Emperor, and the Republic, have Provinces so intermixed together in Brabant and Flanders, that it is supposed the Emperor would be much alarmed at an alliance between France and Holland, lest they should soon agree to divide his Provinces between them. The people in these Provinces would, it is supposed, have no objection. They all speak the French language, are of the same religion, and the policy of France in governing conquered Provinces, according to their ancient usages, and with great moderation, has taken away all aversion to a change of masters.

Some people think that an alliance between France and Holland would occasion a general war. This, I think, would be an advantage to America, although philanthropy would wish to prevent the further effusion of human blood.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 23 June, 1781.

Sir,—

The answer from St. Petersburg, as it is given to the public, is this:—

“Her Majesty, the Empress of all the Russias, declares, that, as much as she has been satisfied with the zeal with which their High Mightinesses have accepted her mediation, so much and more has her compassionate heart been affected with the difficulties formed by the Court of London, in referring the reconciliation with the Republic to a subsequent and general negotiation of peace between all the belligerent powers, under the combined mediation of her Imperial Majesty, and his Majesty the Roman Emperor. As soon as this negotiation shall take place, her Majesty promises beforehand to the Republic all the assistance which depends upon her, to the end that the Republic may, without delay, return into the rank of neutral powers, and thereby enjoy entirely, and without restraint, all the rights and advantages which her accession to the engagements between her Imperial Majesty and the Kings, her high allies, ought to assure to her.

“In this expectation, the intention of her Imperial Majesty is, conjointly with their Majesties, to make immediately a new attempt at the Court of London to persuade that Court to that moderation and those pacific sentiments which their High Mightinesses on their part have manifested. The Empress flatters herself that the times, and the events which may unexpectedly happen, will bring forth circumstances of such a nature as will put her in a situation to make appear, in a manner the most efficacious, her good will and her affection, of which she sincerely desires to be able to give proofs to their High Mightinesses.”

This answer gives great scope to speculation and conjecture; but I shall trouble congress with a very few remarks upon it.

1. In the first place, and without insinuating her opinion concerning the justice or injustice of the war between Great Britain and the United Provinces, she imputes the ill-success of her mediation between them to the Court of London, and not at all to the Republic.

2. She applauds the moderation and pacific sentiments of their High Mightinesses, and implicitly censures the Court of London for opposite dispositions.

Thus far the declaration is unfavorable to the English, and a pledge of her imperial honor, at least not to take any part in their favor.

3. It appears that the Court of London has proposed a negotiation for peace between all the belligerent powers, under the mediation of the Empress and the Emperor. But,

as it is certain the Court of London does not admit the United States of America to be one of the belligerent powers, and as no other power of Europe, except France, as yet admits it to be a power, it is very plain to me, that the British ministry mean nothing but chicanery, to unman and disarm their enemies with delusive dreams of peace, or to intrigue them or some of them into a peace separately from America, and without deciding our question.

4. The declaration says not, that the Empress has accepted this mediation, nor upon what terms she would accept it. Here we are left to conjecture. The Dutch ambassadors at St. Petersburg wrote last winter to the Hague, that the Empress would not accept of this mediation with the Emperor but upon two preliminary conditions, namely,—that the Court of London should acknowledge the independence of America, and accede to the principles of the late marine treaty, concerning the rights of neutrals. To this she may have since added, that Holland should previously be set at peace and become a neutral power, or she may have altered her sentiments. Here, we can only conjecture.

5. It appears that the Kings of Denmark and Sweden have joined, or are to join, the Empress in a new effort with the Court of London, to persuade it to make peace with Holland. But how vigorous or decisive this effort is to be, or what will be the conduct, if they should still be unsuccessful, is left only to conjecture.

6. There are hints at future events, and circumstances which her Majesty foresees, but the rest of the world do not, which may give her occasion to show her good will. Here is nothing declared, nothing promised, yet it leaves room to suppose that her Majesty and her high allies may have insisted on conditions from the Court of London, which accepted, may give peace to the Republic, or rejected, may oblige Russia, Sweden, and Denmark to join Holland in the war. But all this is so faint, reserved, and mysterious, that no dependence whatever can be placed upon it. I am sorry to see the idea of a negotiation for a general peace held up, because I am as well persuaded it is only an insidious manœuvre of the British ministry, as I am that many powers of Europe, and especially Holland, will be the dupe of it. I confess I should dread a negotiation for a general peace at this time, because I should expect propositions for short truces, *uti possidetis*, and other conditions, which would leave our trade more embarrassed, our union more precarious, and our liberties at greater hazard than they can be in a continuance of the war; at the same time, it would put us to as constant, and almost as great an expense. Nevertheless, if proposals of peace, or of conferences and negotiations to that end should be proposed to me, which they have not as yet been from any quarter, it will be my duty to attend to them with as much patience and delicacy, too, as if I believed them sincere.

Americans must wean themselves from the hope of any signal assistance from Europe. If all the negotiations of congress can keep up the reputation of the United States so far as to prevent any nation from joining England, it will be much. But there are so many difficulties in doing this, and so many deadly blows are aimed at our reputation for honor, faith, integrity, union, fortitude, and power, even by persons who ought to have the highest opinion of them and the tenderest regard for them, that I confess myself sometimes almost discouraged, and wish myself returning through all

the dangers of the enemy to America, where I could not do less, and possibly might do more, for the public good.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 23 Juin, 1781.

Monsieur,—

Je me proposois d'avoir l'honneur de vous écrire demain. Mais S. E. M. l'ambassadeur de France m'ayant fait chercher dans ce moment, pour me dire de vous écrire, que comme vous aviez demandé à M. de Bérenger, Chargé des Affaires de France, les raisons pour lesquelles on souhaitoit votre présence et un entretien avec vous en France, il savoit ces raisons, et que si vous voulez vous donner la peine de venir ici à la Haie, il vous les communiquera,

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

Dumas.

P. S. Il se passe ici des choses très-intéressantes touchant l'état interne de cette république, dont vous avez sans doute oui parler. C'est une vraie crise, qui se décidera cette semaine ou la prochaine. Je ne crois pas sûr de confier rien de plus au papier sur une affaire aussi délicate, ou d'ailleurs l'Amérique n'est point intéressée, si ce n'est par les suites que peut avoir sa décision. Nous pourrons en causer, si vous venez ici.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.1

Versailles, 7 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inform your Excellency, that upon an intimation from you, signified to me by M. Bérenger, and afterwards by the Duc de la Vauguyon, that the interests of the United States required me here, I arrived last night in Paris, and am come to-day to Versailles, to pay my respects to your Excellency, and receive your further communications. As your Excellency was in council when I had the honor to call at your office, and as it is very possible that some other day may be more agreeable, I have the honor to request you to appoint the time which will be most convenient for me to wait on you.

I Have The Honor To Be, With Great Respect, Sir,
Your Most Obedient, And Most Humble Servant,

John Adams.

The foregoing letter I sent by my servant, who waited until the Count descended from council, when he delivered it into his hand. He broke the seal, read the letter, and said he was very sorry he could not see Mr. Adams, but he was obliged to go into the country immediately after dinner; that Mr. Adams *seroit dans le cas de voir M. de Rayneval*, who lived at such a sign in such a street. After dinner, I called on M. Rayneval, who said,—M. le Duc de la Vauguyon has informed me, that there is a question of a pacification, under the mediation of the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia, and that it was necessary that I should have some consultations at leisure with the Count de Vergennes, that we might understand each other's views; that he would see the Count to-morrow morning, and write me when he would meet me; that they had not changed their principles or their system; that the treaties were the foundation of all negotiation. I said,—that I lodged at the hotel de Valois, where I did formerly; that I should be ready to wait on the Count when it would be agreeable to him, and to confer with him upon every thing relative to any propositions which the English might have made. He said the “English had not made any propositions, but it was necessary to consider certain points, and make certain preparatory arrangements, to know whether we were British subjects, or in what light we were to be considered, &c.” smiling. I said, I was not a British subject, that I had renounced that character many years ago, forever; and that I should rather be a fugitive in China or Malabar, than ever reassume that character.

On the 9th, was brought me by one of the Count de Vergennes's ordinary commissaries, the following billet.

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M. DE RAYNEVAL TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 9 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inform you, that the Count de Vergennes would like to have an interview with you, and that it would give him pleasure if you would meet him here on Wednesday next, at nine o'clock in the morning.

Expecting the honor to see you, I have that of being, &c.

Gerard de Rayneval.

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TO M. DE RAYNEVAL.

Paris, 9 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have this moment the honor of your billet of this day's date, and will do myself the honor to wait on his Excellency the Count de Vergennes at his office, on Wednesday next, at nine o'clock in the morning, according to his desire.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

Accordingly, on Wednesday, I went to Versailles, and met the Count at his office, with M. de Rayneval, at nine o'clock, who communicated to me the following articles proposed by the two Imperial Courts; 1 that Spain had prepared her answers; that of France was nearly ready; did not know that England had yet answered.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 11 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have only time by Major Jackson, to inform congress, that upon information from the Count de Vergennes, that questions concerning peace, under the mediation of the two Imperial Courts, were in agitation, that required my presence here, I undertook the journey, and arrived here last Friday night, the 6th of the month, and have twice waited on the Count de Vergennes at Versailles, who this day communicated to me the inclosed propositions.

These propositions are made to all the belligerent powers, by the Courts of Petersburg and Vienna, in consequence of some wild propositions made to them by the Court of London, “that they would undertake the office of mediators, upon condition that the league, as they call it, between France and their rebel subjects in America should be dissolved, and these left to make their terms with Great Britain, after having returned to their allegiance and obedience.”

France and Spain have prepared their answers to these propositions of the Empress and Emperor, and I am desired to give my answer to the articles inclosed. It is not in my power at this time to inclose to congress my answer, because I have not made it, nor written it, but congress must see, that nothing can come of this manœuvre, at least for a long time. Thus much I may say, that I have no objection to the proposition of treating with the English separately, in the manner proposed, upon a peace, and a treaty of commerce with them, consistent with our engagements with France and Spain; but that the armistice never can be agreed to by me. The objections against it are as numerous as they are momentous and decisive. I may say further, that as there is no judge upon earth, of a sovereign power, but the nation that composes it, I can never agree to the mediation of any powers, however respectable, until they have acknowledged our sovereignty, so far at least as to admit a minister plenipotentiary from the United States, as the representative of a free and independent power. After this, we might discuss questions of peace or truce with Great Britain, without her acknowledging our sovereignty, but not before.

I fancy, however, that congress will be applied to for their sentiments, and I shall be ever ready and happy to obey their instructions, because I have a full confidence, that nothing will be decided by them, but what will be consistent with their character and dignity. Peace will only be retarded by relaxations and concessions, whereas firmness, patience, and perseverance will insure us a good and lasting one in the end. The English are obliged to keep up the talk of peace, to lull their enemies, and to sustain their credit. But I hope the people of America will not be deceived. Nothing will obtain them real peace, but skilful and successful war.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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Articles To Serve As A Basis To The Negotiation For The Reestablishment Of Peace.

(Translation.)

ARTICLE I.

The reestablishment of peace in America shall be negotiated between Great Britain and the American Colonies, but without the intervention of any of the other belligerent parties, not even that of the two Imperial Courts, unless their mediation should be formally asked and granted upon this object.

ARTICLE II.

This separate peace cannot, however, be signed, but conjointly and at the same time with that of the powers whose interests shall have been negotiated by the mediating courts. With that proviso, although each peace may be separately treated, yet, since they cannot be concluded without each other, care shall be taken to inform the mediators constantly of the progress and state of that which regards Great Britain and the Colonies, to the end that the mediation may be able to regulate itself for the guidance of the negotiation under its own protection, by the state of that relating to the Colonies; and both of the pacifications, which shall have been concluded at the same time, although separately, shall be solemnly guaranteed by the mediating courts, and every other neutral power, whose guaranty the belligerent parties may think proper to claim.

ARTICLE III.

To render the negotiations for peace independent of the events of war, always uncertain, which might put a stop to, or at least retard their progress, there shall be a general armistice between all parties during the term of one year, reckoning from NA of the month of NA of the present year; or of NA years, reckoning from NA of the month of NA of the year 1782. Should it happen that peace should not be reestablished in the first period, and during either of these periods, all things shall remain in the state in which they shall be found to have been on the day of signing the present preliminary articles.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 13 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to your Excellency some remarks upon the articles to serve as a basis of the negotiation for the reëstablishment of peace, which you did me the honor to communicate to me.

As I am unacquainted, whether you desired my sentiments upon these articles merely for your own government, or with a design to communicate them to the Imperial Courts, I should be glad of your Excellency's advice concerning them. If your Excellency is of opinion there is any thing exceptionable, or which ought to be altered, I should be glad to correct it; or if I have not perceived the points, or questions, upon which you desired my opinion, I shall be ready to give any further answers.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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Answer Of The Minister Plenipotentiary Of The United States Of America, To The Articles To Serve As A Basis To The Negotiation For The Reëstablishment Of Peace.

Article i. The United States of America have no objection, provided their allies have none, to a treaty with Great Britain, concerning the reëstablishment of peace in America, or to another concerning the reëstablishment of commerce between the two nations, consistent with their obligations to France and Spain, without the intervention of any of the other belligerent parties, and even without that of the two Imperial Courts; at least, unless their mediation should be formally demanded and granted upon this object, according to the first article communicated to me.

Article ii. The United States have nothing to say, provided their allies have not, against the second article.

Article iii. To the armistice, and the *statu quo*, in the third article, the United States have very great objections; which, indeed, are so numerous and decisive, and at the same time so obvious, as to make it unnecessary to state them in detail.

The idea of a truce is not suggested in these articles; but as it is mentioned in some observations shown me by his Excellency the Count de Vergennes, it may be necessary for me to add, that the United States are so deeply impressed with an apprehension, that any truce whatsoever would not fail to be productive of another long and bloody war at the termination of it, and that a short truce would be in many ways highly dangerous to them, that it would be with great reluctance that they should enter into any discussion at all upon such a subject.

Two express conditions would be indispensable preliminaries to their taking into consideration the subject of a truce at all. The first is,—that their allies agree, that the treaties now subsisting remain in full force during and after the truce, until the final acknowledgment of their independence by Great Britain. The second is,—the antecedent removal of the British land and naval armaments from every part of the United States. Upon these two express conditions as preliminaries, if a truce should be proposed for so long a period, or for an indefinite period, requiring so long notice, previous to a renewal of hostilities, as to evince that it is on the part of Great Britain a virtual relinquishment of the object of the war, and an expedient only to avoid the mortification of an express acknowledgment of the independence and sovereignty of the United States, they, with the concurrence of their allies, might accede to it.

It is requisite, however, to add; first, that the United States cannot consider themselves bound by this declaration, unless it should be agreed to before the opening of another campaign. Secondly, that it is not in the power of the Crown of Great Britain, by the constitution of that kingdom, to establish any truce, or even armistice with the United States, which would not be illusory without the intervention of an act of parliament, repealing or suspending all their statutes, which have any relation to the United States,

or any of them. Without this, every officer of the navy would be bound by the laws, according to the maxims of their constitution, to seize every American vessel that he should find, whose papers and destination should not be found conformable to those statutes, and every French, Spanish, Dutch, or other foreign vessel, which he should find going to, or coming from America, notwithstanding any convention that it is in the power of the Crown to make.

After all, the greatest difficulty does not lie in any thing as yet mentioned. The great question is, in what character are the United States to be considered? They know themselves to be a free, sovereign, and independent State, of right and in fact. They are considered and acknowledged as such by France. They cannot be represented in a congress of ministers from the several powers of Europe, whether their representative is called ambassador, minister, or agent, without an acknowledgment of their independence, of which the very admission of a representative from them is an avowal. Great Britain cannot agree with their representative upon a truce or even an armistice, without admitting their freedom and independence.

As there is upon earth no judge of a sovereign State but the nation that composes it, the United States can never consent that their independence shall be discussed or called in question by any sovereign or sovereigns, however respectable, nor can their interests be made a question in any congress in which their character is not acknowledged and their minister admitted. If, therefore, the two Imperial Courts would acknowledge and lay down as a preliminary the sovereignty of the United States, and admit their minister to a congress, after this, a treaty might be commenced between the minister of Great Britain and the minister of the United States, relative to a truce, or peace and commerce in the manner proposed, without any express acknowledgment of their sovereignty by Great Britain, until the treaty should be concluded.

The sovereigns of Europe have a right to negotiate concerning their own interests, and to deliberate concerning the question, whether it is consistent with their dignity and interests to acknowledge expressly the sovereignty of the United States, and to make treaties with them by their ministers in a congress or otherwise, and America could make no objection to it; but neither the United States nor France can ever consent that the existence of their sovereignty shall be made a question in such congress; because, let that congress determine as it might, their sovereignty, with submission only to Divine Providence, never can, and never will be given up.

As the British Court, in first suggesting the idea of a congress to the Imperial Courts, insisted upon the annihilation of the league, as they were pleased to call it, between France and their rebel subjects, as they were pleased again to phrase it, and upon the return of these to their allegiance and obedience, as preliminaries to any congress or mediation, there is too much reason to fear that the British ministry have no serious intentions or sincere dispositions for peace, and that they mean nothing but amusement. Because the support of the sovereignty of the United States was the primary object of the war on the part of France and America; the destruction of it, that of Great Britain. If, therefore, the treaty between France and America were annulled, and the Americans returned to the domination and monopoly of Great Britain, there

would be no need of troubling all Europe with a congress to make peace. All points between France, Spain, and Great Britain might be easily adjusted among themselves. Surely the affairs of Great Britain are in no part of the world so triumphant, nor those of any of their enemies so adverse, as to give this ministry any serious hopes that France and America will renounce the object of the war. There must, therefore, be some other view.

It is not difficult to penetrate the design of the British ministry upon this, any more than upon many former occasions. They think that a distrust of them, and a jealousy that they would not adhere with good faith to the propositions of reconciliation which they have made from time to time, were, in the minds of the Americans, the true cause why these propositions were not accepted. They now think, that, by prevailing on the two Imperial Courts and other Courts, to warranty to the Americans any similar terms they may propose to them, they shall remove this obstacle; and, by this means, although they know that no public authority in America will agree to such terms, they think they shall be able to represent things in such a light as to induce many desertions from the American army and many apostacies from the American independence and alliance. In this way they pursue their long practised arts of seduction, deception, and division. In these again, as in so many former attempts, they would find themselves disappointed, and would make very few deserters or apostates. But it is to be hoped that the powers of Europe will not give to these superficial artifices, with which that ministry have so long destroyed the repose of the United States and of the British dominions at home and abroad, and disturbed the tranquillity of Europe, so much attention as to enable them to continue much longer such evils to mankind.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Paris, 15 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose a copy of a letter to the Count de Vergennes, and of certain articles and their answers. The British Court proposed to the Imperial Courts, a congress, upon two preliminary conditions, the rupture of the treaty with France, and the return of America to their obedience. The two Imperial Courts have since proposed the inclosed articles. Spain and France have prepared their answers. England has not answered yet, and no ministers are yet commissioned or appointed by any power. If she accepts the terms, I should not scruple to accept them too, excepting the armistice and the *statu quo*. I mean I should not insist upon a previous explicit acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the United States, before I went to Vienna. I see nothing inconsistent with the character or dignity of the United States, in their minister going to Vienna, at the same time when ministers from the other powers are there, and entering into treaty with a British minister without any explicit acknowledgment of our independence before the conclusion of the treaty. The very existence of such a congress would be of use to our reputation.

But I cannot yet believe that Britain will waive her preliminaries. She will still insist upon the dissolution of the treaty, and upon the return of the Americans under her government. This, however, will do no honor to her moderation or pacific sentiments, in the opinion of the powers of Europe.

Something may grow out of these negotiations in time, but it will probably be several years before any thing can be done. Americans can only quicken these negotiations by decisive strokes. No depredations upon their trade, no conquests of their possessions in the East or West Indies will have any effect upon the English to induce them to make peace, while they see they have an army in the United States, and can flatter themselves with the hope of conquering or regaining America; because they think that with America under their government, they can easily regain whatever they may lose now in any part of the world. Whereas, the total expulsion of their forces in the United States would extinguish their hopes, and persuade them to peace, sooner than the loss of every thing else. The belligerent powers and the neutral powers may flatter themselves with the hopes of a restoration of peace, but they will all be disappointed while the English have a soldier in America. It is amazing to me that France and Spain do not see it, and direct their forces accordingly.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.¹

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 16 July, 1781.

Sir,—

Since my letter of the 13th, upon further reflection, I have thought it necessary to explain myself a little more particularly in some points, to your Excellency. If I comprehend the facts, the British Court first proposed to the Imperial Courts a congress and a mediation, upon two conditions. 1st. The dissolution of the treaties between France and the United States. 2d. The return of the Americans under the British government.

In consequence of this proposal from the Court of St. James, the two Imperial Courts have made the proposition of the articles which were shown to me to the Courts of France, Spain, and England, neither of which has yet given its answer. Their Imperial Majesties have omitted the two conditions which the British Court insisted on as preliminaries, and mean to admit a representative of the United States to the congress to negotiate separately with the British minister, without ascertaining the title or character of the American representative, until the two pacifications shall be accomplished.

I am in my own mind apprehensive, though I devoutly wish I may be mistaken, that the British Court, in their answer to the articles, will adhere to their two preliminaries. It is very convenient for the English to hold up the idea of peace; it serves them to relieve their credit at certain times, when it is in distress; it serves to disconcert the projects of the neutral powers, to their disadvantage; it enables their friends in the United Provinces to keep the Dutch nation in that state of division, sloth, and inactivity, from which they derive so much plunder with so much safety. But I cannot persuade myself that the English will soberly think of peace while they have any military force in the United States, and can preserve a gleam of hope of conquering or regaining America. While this hope remains, no depredations on their commerce, no loss of dominions in the East or West Indies, will induce them to make peace; because they think, that with America reunited to them, they could easily regain whatever they may now lose. This opinion of theirs may be extravagant and enthusiastical, and they would not find it so easy to recover their losses; but they certainly entertain it, and while it remains, I fear they will not make peace.

Yet it seems they have negotiated themselves into a delicate situation. If they should obstinately adhere to their two preliminaries, against the advice of the two Imperial Courts, this might seriously affect their reputation, if they have any, for moderation and for pacific dispositions, not only in those Courts, but in all the Courts and countries of Europe; and they would not easily answer it to their own subjects who are weary of the war. Peace is so desirable an object, that humanity, as well as policy, demands of every nation at war a serious attention to every proposition which seems

to have a tendency to it, although there may be grounds to suspect that the first proposer of it was not sincere. I think that no power can judge the United States unreasonable in not agreeing to the *statu quo* or the armistice. But perhaps I have not been sufficiently explicit upon another point.

The proposal of a separate treaty between the British minister and the representative of the United States seems to be a benevolent invention to avoid several difficulties; among others, first, that England may be allowed to save her national pride, by thinking and saying that the independence of America was agreed to voluntarily, and was not dictated to her by France or Spain; secondly, to avoid the previous acknowledgment of American independence and the previous ascertaining the title and character of the American representative, which the Imperial Courts may think would be a partiality inconsistent with the character of mediators and even of neutrals, especially as England has uniformly considered any such step as a hostility against them; though I know not upon what law of nations or of reason.

I cannot see that the United States would make any concession or submit to any indignity, or do any thing inconsistent with their character, if their minister should appear at Vienna or elsewhere with the ministers of other powers, and conduct any negotiation with a British minister, without having the independence of the United States, or his own title and character acknowledged or ascertained by any other power, except France, until the pacification should be concluded. I do not see that America would lose any thing by this, any more than by having a minister in any part of Europe with his character unacknowledged by all the powers of Europe. In order to remove every embarrassment, therefore, as much as possible, if your Excellency should be of the same opinion, and advise me to it, I would withdraw every objection to the congress on the part of the United States, and decline nothing but the *statu quo* and the armistice, against which such reasons might be given, as I think would convince all men that the United States are bound to refuse them. If your Excellency should think it necessary for me to assign these reasons particularly, I will attempt some of them; but it is sufficient for me to say to your Excellency that my positive instructions forbid me to agree either to the armistice or *statu quo*.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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COUNT DE VERGENNES TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 18 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 13th instant. It was owing to the confidence I placed in your information and in your zeal for your country, that I intrusted to you the propositions of the two Imperial Courts, and requested that you would make such observations as you might think them susceptible of. Things are not yet sufficiently advanced to admit of communicating them to the two mediating Courts. As you have seen in the sketch of our answer, there are preliminaries to be adjusted with respect to the United States, and, so long as they are not adjusted, you cannot appear, and, consequently, you cannot permit yourself the smallest ministerial act in the face of the two mediators. By so doing, you would expose yourself to the risk of compromising to no purpose (*en pure perte*) the character with which you are invested.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De Vergennes.¹

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 18 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write me this day. I assure your Excellency I never had a thought of appearing upon the scene, or of taking ministerially or otherwise any step towards the two mediators. I must confess to your Excellency that I have too many jealousies of the motives, and too many apprehensions of the consequences of this negotiation, to be willing to take any part in it without an express vocation. The English are tottering on such a precipice, and are in such a temper, that they will not hesitate at any measure which they think can move every latent passion, and awaken every dormant interest in Europe in order to embroil all the world. Without looking much to consequences, or weighing whether the quarrels they wish to excite will be serviceable to them or not, they seem to think the more confusion they can make the better; for which reason my fears from the proposed mediation are greater than my hopes.

Nevertheless, if properly called upon, it will be my duty to attend to every step of it; but there are many questions arise in my mind, upon which, in due time, I should wish to know your Excellency's opinion.

The two Imperial Courts have proposed that there should be an American representative at the congress. This is not merely by implication, but expressly acknowledging, that there is a belligerent power in America of sufficient importance to be taken notice of by them and the other powers of Europe. One would think after this, that the two Imperial Courts would have communicated their propositions to congress. The propositions they have made and communicated to the Courts of France, Spain, and England, imply that America is a power, a free and independent power, as much as if they had communicated them also to congress at Philadelphia. Without such a formal communication and an invitation to the United States in congress, or to their representative here, by the two Imperial Courts, I do not see how an American minister can, with strict propriety, appear at the proposed congress at Vienna at all. I have never heard it intimated that they have transmitted their propositions to Philadelphia; certainly I have received no instructions from thence, nor have I received any intimations of such propositions from any minister of either of the mediating Courts, although, as my mission has been long public and much talked of, I suppose it was well known to both that there was a person in Europe vested by America with power to make peace. It seems, therefore, that one step more might have been taken, perfectly consistent with the first, and that it may yet be taken, and that it is but reasonable to expect that it will be.

How is the American minister to know that there is a congress, and that it is expected that he should repair to it? and that any minister from Great Britain will meet him

there? Is the British Court or their ambassador to give him notice? This seems less probable than that the mediators should do it.

The dignity of North America does not consist in diplomatic ceremonials or any of the subtleties of etiquette; it consists solely in reason, justice, truth, the rights of mankind, and the interests of the nations of Europe, all of which, well understood, are clearly in her favor. I shall, therefore, never make unnecessary difficulties on the score of etiquette, and shall never insist upon any thing of this sort which your Excellency or some other minister of our allies does not advise me to as indispensable; and, therefore, I shall certainly go to Vienna or elsewhere, if your Excellency should invite or advise me to go. But, as these reflections occurred to me upon the point of propriety, I thought it my duty to mention them to your Excellency.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 19 July, 1781.

Sir,—

In my letter of the 18th I had the honor to mention some things which lay upon my mind; but still I am apprehensive that, in a former letter, I have not conveyed my full meaning to your Excellency.

In my letter of the 16th I submitted to your Excellency's opinion and advice, whether an American minister could appear at the congress at Vienna without having his character acknowledged by any power more expressly than it is now. This was said upon the supposition, and taking it for granted, that it was the intention of the mediating Courts to admit a representative of the United States to the congress with such a commission and such a title as the United States should think fit to give him, and that during his whole residence and negotiations at Vienna, whether they should terminate in peace or not, he should enjoy all the prerogatives which the law of nations has annexed to the character, person, habitation, and attendants of such a minister. It is impossible that there should be a treaty at Vienna between Great Britain and the people of America, whether they are called United States or American Colonies, unless both nations appear there by representatives, who must be authorized by commissions or full powers, which must be mutually exchanged, and consequently admitted to be what upon the face of them they purport to be.

The commission from the United States for making peace, which has been in Europe almost two years, is that of a minister plenipotentiary; and it authorizes him to treat only with ministers vested with equal powers. If he were to appear at Vienna, he would certainly assume the title and character of a minister plenipotentiary, and could enter into no treaty or conference with any minister from Great Britain, until they had mutually exchanged authentic copies of their full powers. This, it is true, would be an implied acknowledgment of his character and title and of those of the United States too; but such an acknowledgment is indispensable, because without it there can be no treaty at all. In consequence, he would expect to enjoy all the prerogatives of that character; and the moment they should be denied him, he must quit the congress, let the consequences be what they might.

And, I rely upon it, this is the intention of the two Imperial Courts; because, otherwise, they would have proposed the congress upon the basis of the two British preliminaries,—a rupture of the treaty with France, and a return of the Americans to their submission to Great Britain; and because I cannot suppose it possible that the Imperial Courts could believe the Americans capable of such infinite baseness as to appear upon the stage of the universe to acknowledge themselves guilty of rebellion, and supplicate for grace; nor can I suppose they meant to fix a brand of disgrace upon the Americans in the sight of all nations, or to pronounce judgment against them; one

or all of which suppositions must be made before it can be believed that these Courts did not mean to protect the American representative in the enjoyment of the privileges attached to the character he must assume; and because, otherwise, all their propositions would be to no effect, for no congress at Vienna can make either the one or the other of the two proposed peaces without the United States.

But, upon looking over again the words of the first article, there seems to be room for dispute, of which a British minister, in the present state of his country, would be capable of taking advantage. The terms used seem to be justly exceptionable. There are no “American Colonies” at war with Great Britain. The power at war is the United States of America. No American Colonies have any representative in Europe, unless Nova Scotia or Quebec or some of the West India Islands may have an agent in London. The word *colony*, in its usual acceptation, implies a metropolis, a mother country, a superior political governor, ideas which the United States have long since renounced forever.

I am therefore clear in my own opinion that a more explicit declaration ought to be insisted on, and that no American representative ought to appear without an express assurance that, while the congress lasts, and in going to it and returning from it, he shall be considered as a minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America, and entitled to all the prerogatives of such a minister from a sovereign power. The congress might be to him and to his country but a snare, unless the substance of this is *bonâ fide* intended; and, if it is intended, there can be no sufficient reason for declining to express it in words.

If there is a power upon earth that imagines that America will ever appear at a congress before a minister of Great Britain or any other power, in the character of repenting subjects, soliciting an amnesty or a warranty of an amnesty, that power is infinitely deceived. There are few Americans who would hold their lives upon such terms. I know of none who would not rather choose to appear upon a scaffold in their own country or in Great Britain. All such odious ideas ought to be laid aside by the British ministry before they propose mediations. The bare mention of such a thing to the United States by Great Britain would be considered only as another repetition of injury and insult. The proposal of a rupture of the treaty is little less to France. But it is possible, that in the future course of this negotiation there may be a proposal of a congress of ministers of the several mediating and belligerent powers, exclusive of the United States, to deliberate on the question, in what character the United States are to be considered, whether a representative of the people of North America can be admitted, and what shall be his title and privileges.

All that I can say to this case at present is this. The United States have assumed their equal station among the nations. They have assumed a sovereignty which they acknowledge to hold only from God and their own swords. They can be represented only as a sovereign; and, therefore, although they might not be able to prevent it, they can never consent that any of these things shall be made questions. To give their consent, would be to make the surrender of their sovereignty their own act.

France has acknowledged all these things, and bound her honor and faith to the support of them, and, therefore, although she might not be able to prevent it, she can never consent that they should be disputed. Her consent would make the surrender of the American sovereignty her act. And what end can it answer to dispute them, unless it be to extend the flames of war? If Great Britain had a color of reason for pretending that France's acknowledgment of American independence was a hostility against her, the United States would have a stronger reason to say, that a denial of their sovereignty was a declaration of war against them. And as France is bound to support their sovereignty, she would have reason to say, that a denial of it is a hostility against her. If any power of Europe has an inclination to join England and declare war against France and the United States, there is no need of a previous congress to enable her to do it with more solemnity, or to furnish her with plausible prettexts. But, on the other hand, if the powers of Europe are persuaded of the justice of the American pretensions, and think it their duty to humanity to endeavor to bring about peace, they may easily propose that the character of the United States shall be acknowledged and their minister admitted.

I cannot but persuade myself that the two Imperial Courts are convinced of the justice of the American cause, of the stability of the American sovereignty, and of the propriety and necessity of an acknowledgment of it by all the powers of Europe. This, I think, may be fairly and conclusively inferred from the propositions themselves. Was there ever an example of a congress of the powers of Europe to exhort, to influence, to overawe the rebellious subjects of any one of them into obedience? Is not every sovereign adequate to the government, punishment, or pardon of its own criminal subjects? Would it not be a precedent mischievous to mankind and tending to universal despotism, if a sovereign which has been proved to be unequal to the reformation or chastisement of the pretended crimes of its own subjects should be countenanced in calling in the aid of all or any of the other powers of Europe to assist it? It is quite sufficient that England has already been permitted to hire twenty thousand German troops, and to have the number annually recruited for seven years, in addition to her own whole force; it is quite sufficient that she has been permitted to seduce innumerable tribes of savages, in addition to both, to assist her in propagating her system of tyranny, and committing her butcheries in America, without being able to succeed. After all this, which is notorious to all Europe, it is impossible to believe that the Imperial Courts mean to give their influence in any degree towards bringing America to submission to Great Britain.

It seems to me, therefore, most certain that the Imperial Courts perceive that American independence must be acknowledged; and, if this is so, I think there can be no objection against ascertaining the character of the American minister before any congress meets, so that he may take his place in it as soon as it opens.

But, if any sentiments of delicacy should induce those Courts to think it necessary to wait for Great Britain to set the example of such acknowledgment, one would think it necessary to wait until that power shall discover some symptoms of an inclination that way. A congress would have no tendency, that I know of, to give her such a disposition; on the contrary, a congress in which Great Britain should be represented,

and France and the United States not, would only give her an opportunity of forming parties, propagating prejudices and partial notions, and blowing up the coals of war.[1](#)

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

Paris, 21 July, 1781.

Sir,—

Since my letter of the 19th, another point has occurred to me, upon which it seems necessary that I should say something to your Excellency before my departure for Holland, which will be on Monday morning.

An idea has, I perceive, been suggested of the several States of America choosing agents separately to attend the congress at Vienna, in order to make peace with Great Britain, so that there would be thirteen instead of one. The constitution of the United States, or their confederation, which has been solemnly adopted and ratified by each of them, has been officially and authentically notified to their Majesties, the Kings of France and Spain, and to their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, and communicated to all the other Courts and nations of the world, as far as all the gazettes of Europe are able to spread it; so that it is now as well and universally known as any constitution of government in Europe. By this constitution, all power and authority of negotiating with foreign powers is expressly delegated to the United States in congress assembled. It would, therefore, be a public disrespect and contempt offered to the constitution of the nation, if any power should make any application whatever to the governors or legislature of the separate States. In this respect the American constitution is very different from the Batavian. If the two Imperial Courts should address their articles to the States separately, no governor or president of any one of those commonwealths could even communicate it to the legislature; no president of a senate could lay it before the body over which he presides; no speaker of a house of representatives could read it to the house. It would be an error and a misdemeanor in any of these officers to receive and communicate any such letter. All that he could do, would be, after breaking the seal and reading it, to send it back. He could not even legally transmit it to congress. If such an application, therefore, should be made and sent back, it would consume much time to no purpose, and perhaps have other worse effects.

There is no method for the Courts of Europe to convey any thing to the people of America but through the congress of the United States, nor any way of negotiating with them but by means of that body. I must, therefore, entreat your Excellency, that the idea of summoning ministers from thirteen States may not be countenanced at all.

I know very well, that if each State had in the confederation reserved to itself a right of negotiating with foreign powers, and such an application should have been made to them separately upon this occasion, they would all of them separately refer it to congress, because the people universally know and are well agreed, that all connections with foreign countries must, in their circumstances, be made under one direction. But all these things were very maturely considered in framing the

confederation, by which the people of each State have taken away from themselves even the right of deliberating and debating upon these affairs, unless they should be referred to them by congress for their advice, or unless they should think proper to instruct their delegates in congress of their own accord.

This matter may not appear to your Excellency in so important a light as it does to me, and the thought of such an application to the United States may not have been seriously entertained; but as it has been mentioned, although only in a way of transient speculation, I thought I could not excuse myself from saying something upon it, because I know it would be considered in so unfavorable a light in America, that I am persuaded congress would think themselves bound to remonstrate against it in the most solemn manner. [1](#)

I Have The Honor To Be. &C. &C.

John Adams.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 21 July, 1781.

Sir,—

I do not find by President Huntington's letter-book that he has forwarded the within resolve¹ of July 12th, respecting your powers of September 29, 1779. Therefore I take the opportunity of two vessels which are to sail in a few days, to communicate it doubly.

Your Humble Servant,

James Lovell,*for the Committee of Foreign Affairs.*

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(Private. Partly In Cipher.)

The whole of the proceedings here in regard to your two commissions are, I think, ill judged; but I persuade myself no dishonor was for you intended. The business greatly, in every view, chagrins me. This you will have learned from my former letters written in a half light.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 3 August, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose copies of some papers which passed between the Count de Vergennes and me lately at Paris. The conjecture, that the British Court would insist upon their two preliminaries, is become more probable by the publication of the King's speech at the prorogation of parliament.

“The zeal and ardor which you have shown for the honor of my crown,” says the King, “your firm and steady support of a just cause, and the great efforts you have made to enable me to surmount all the difficulties of this extensive and complicated war, must convince the world that the ancient spirit of the British nation is not abated or diminished.

“While I lament the continuance of the present troubles and the extension of the war, I have the conscious satisfaction to reflect, that the constant aim of all my counsels has been to bring back my deluded subjects in America to the happiness and liberty they formerly enjoyed, and to see the tranquillity of Europe restored.

“To defend the dominions, and to maintain the rights of this country, was, on my part, the sole cause, and is the object of the war. Peace is the earnest wish of my heart; but I have too firm a reliance on the spirit and resources of the nation, the powerful assistance of my parliament, and *the protection of a just and all-ruling Providence*, to accept it upon any other terms or conditions than such as may consist with the honor and dignity of my crown, and the permanent interest and security of my people.”

We all know very well what his meaning is, when he mentions “the honor and dignity of his crown, and the permanent interest and security of his people.” Could the minister who composed this speech expect that anybody would believe him when he said, that the constant aim of all his counsels had been to bring back the Americans to the happiness and liberty they formerly enjoyed?

The whole of this speech is in a strain which leaves no room to doubt that the cabinet of St. James is yet resolved to persevere in the war to the last extremity, and to insist still upon the return of America to British obedience, and upon the rupture of the treaty with France, as preliminaries to the congress at Vienna. Thus, the two Imperial Courts will find themselves trifled with by the British. It is not to be supposed that either will be the voluntary bubble of such trickish policy. The Empress of Russia is supposed to be as sagacious as she is spirited; yet she seems to have given some attention to the pacific professions of the English. If she should see herself intentionally deceived, she will not probably be very patient.

The Emperor, in his late journey through Holland, made himself the object of the esteem and admiration of all; affable and familiar, as a great sovereign can ever allow himself to be with dignity, he gave to many persons unequivocal intimations of his sentiments upon public affairs. Patriotism seemed to be the object which he wished to distinguish. Whoever espoused with zeal the honor and interest of his own country was sure of some mark of his approbation; whoever appeared to countenance another country in preference to his own, found some symptom of his dislike; even the ladies, French or Dutch, who had any of the English modes in their dress, received from his Majesty some intimation of his disapprobation of their taste. Everybody here, since his departure, is confident of his entire detestation of the principles on which the English have conducted this war, and of his determination to take no part in it in their favor. His sentiments concerning America are inferred from a very singular anecdote, which is so well attested, that it may not be improper to mention it to congress.

His Majesty condescended in a certain company to inquire after the minister of the United States of America to their High Mightinesses; said he was acquainted with his name and character, and should be glad to see him. A lady in company asked his Majesty if he would drink tea with him at her house. He replied in the affirmative, in the character of the Count of Falkenstein. A lady in company undertook to form the party; but, upon inquiry, the American was at Paris. It is supposed, with good reason, that there could be nothing personal in this curiosity, and, therefore, that it was intended as a political signification of a certain degree of complaisance towards America.

Thus it is, that the words, gestures, and countenances of sovereigns are watched, and political inferences drawn from them; but there is too much uncertainty in this science to depend much upon it. It seems, however, that the Emperor made himself so popular here as to excite some appearance of jealousy in Prussia. For my own part, I think that the greatest political stroke which the two Imperial sovereigns could make, would be, upon receiving the answer from England adhering to her preliminaries, immediately to declare the United States independent. It would be to their immortal honor; it would be in the character of each of these extraordinary geniuses; it would be a blessing to mankind; it would even be friendship to England.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 16 August, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that I yesterday received despatches from congress refusing for the present, the dismissal I had requested, and ordering me upon an additional service, that of being joined with yourself and Messrs. Jay, H. Laurens, and T. Jefferson, in negotiations for peace. I would send you a copy of the commission, and of another which authorizes us to accept of the mediation of the Emperor and the Empress of Russia, but that I suppose you may have them in the inclosed packet. I shall be glad to learn from your Excellency what steps have already been taken in this important business.

With Great Regard, &C.

B. Franklin.

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(Inclosed In The Preceding.)

THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 20 June, 1781.

Sir,—

You will receive inclosed a letter addressed to his Most Christian Majesty, with a copy of the same for your information.

Also a commission constituting the four gentlemen therein named, in addition to yourself, our ministers for negotiating peace. Also another commission and duplicate, authorizing them to accept of the mediation of the Emperor of Germany and Empress of Russia, in one of which you will observe the Emperor is first named, and in the other the Empress. These are to be made use of as circumstances shall render expedient.¹

I have also inclosed instructions (in cipher) for your government, in addition to those formerly given you for negotiating peace with Great Britain.

You will immediately communicate the receipt of these despatches to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, to whom duplicates are also forwarded with similar directions.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Samuel Huntington,*President.*

P. S. Since writing the foregoing, for want of another conveyance, I have determined to send this by the same conveyance that carries the duplicates to Dr. Franklin. I have therefore taken out the letter to the King of France and copy mentioned in the foregoing.

S. H.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 16 August, 1781.

Sir,—

Mr. Temple has held offices of such importance, and a rank so considerable in America, before the revolution, that his return to his native country at this time, cannot fail to cause much speculation, and it is to be feared some diversity of sentiments concerning him. As he came from London to Amsterdam, and did me the honor of a visit, in which he opened to me his design of returning, and his sentiments upon many public affairs, it will be expected in America by many, although it has not been requested by Mr. Temple, that I should say something concerning him.

I was never before personally acquainted with this gentleman, but I have long known his public character and private reputation. He was ever reputed a man of very delicate sentiments of honor, of integrity, and of attachment to his native country, although his education, his long residences in England, his numerous connections there, and the high offices he held under the British government, did not even admit of a general opinion, that his sentiments were in all respects perfectly conformable to those of the most popular party in the Colonies. Nevertheless, he was never suspected, to my knowledge, of concurring in, or countenancing any of those many plots which were laid by other officers of the Crown against our liberties, but on the contrary, was known to be the object of their jealousy, revenge, and malice, because he would not. He was, however, intimate with several gentlemen, who stood foremost in opposition, particularly Mr. Otis, who has often communicated to me intelligence of very great importance, which he had from Mr. Temple, and which he certainly could have got no other way, as early I believe as 1763 and 1764, and onwards.

I cannot undertake to vindicate Mr. Temple's policy in remaining so long in England; but it will be easily in his power to show what kind of company he has kept there; what kind of sentiments and conversation he has maintained, and in what occupations he has employed his time. It is not with a view to recommend Mr. Temple to honors or emoluments, that I write this. It would not be proper for me, and congress know very well, that I have not ventured upon this practice, even in cases where I have much more personal knowledge than in this. But it is barely to prevent, as far as my poor opinion may go, jealousies and alarms upon Mr. Temple's arrival. Many may suspect that he comes with secret and bad designs, in the confidence of the British ministry, of which I do not believe him capable.

Mr. Temple, it is most certain, has fallen from high rank and ample emoluments, merely because he would not join in hostile designs against his country. This, I think, should at least entitle him to the quiet enjoyment of the liberties of his country, and to the esteem of his fellow-citizens, provided there are no just grounds of suspicion of

him. And I really think it a testimony due to truth, to say, that after a great deal of the very freest conversation with him, I see no reason to suspect his intentions.

I have taken the liberty to give Mr. Temple my own sentiments concerning the suspicions which have been and are entertained concerning him, and the causes of them, and of all parts of his conduct which have come to my knowledge, with so little disguise, that he will be well apprised of the disappointments he may meet with, if any. I hope, however, that he will meet a more friendly reception in America, and better prospects of a happy life there than I have been able to assure him. Whether any services or sufferings of Mr. Temple could support any claim upon the justice, gratitude, or generosity of the United States, or of that of Massachusetts in particular, is a question upon which it would be altogether improper for me to give any opinion, as I know not the facts so well as they may be made known, and as I am no judge if I knew the facts. But this I know; that whenever the facts shall be laid before either the great council of the United States or that of Massachusetts, they will be judged of by the worthy representatives of a just, grateful, and generous people, and, therefore, Mr. Temple will have no reason to complain if the decision should be against him.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 25 August, 1781.

Sir,—

Last evening I received your Excellency's letter of the 16th of this month, accompanied with a letter from the president of congress containing the commissions you mention.

You desire to know what steps have already been taken in this business. There has been no step taken by me in pursuance of my former commission, until my late journey to Paris, at the invitation of the Count de Vergennes, who communicated to me certain articles proposed by the mediating Courts, and desired me to make such observations upon them as should occur to me. Accordingly, I wrote a number of letters to his Excellency of the following dates,—July 13th, inclosing an answer to the articles, 16th, 18th, 19th, 21st. I would readily send you copies of the articles and of those letters; but there are matters in them which had better not be trusted to go so long a journey especially as there is no necessity for it. The Count de Vergennes will readily give you copies of the articles and of my letters, which will prevent all risk.

I am very apprehensive that our new commission will be as useless as my old one. Congress might, very safely I believe, permit us all to go home, if we had no other business, and stay there some years; at least, until every British soldier in the United States is killed or captivated. Till then, Britain will never think of peace but for the purposes of chicanery.

I see in the papers that the British ambassador at Petersburg has received an answer from his Court to the articles. What this answer is, we may conjecture from the King's speech. Yet the Empress of Russia has made an insinuation to their High Mightinesses which deserves attention. Perhaps you may have seen it; but, lest you should not, I will add a translation of it which I sent to congress in the time of it, not having the original at hand.

I must beg the favor of your Excellency to communicate to me whatever you may learn which has any connection with this negotiation; particularly the French, Spanish, and British answers to the articles, as soon as you can obtain them. In my situation, it is not likely that I shall obtain any information of consequence but from the French Court. Whatever may come to my knowledge I will communicate to you without delay.

If Britain persists in her two preliminaries, as I presume she does, what will be the consequence? Will the two Imperial Courts permit this great plan of a congress at Vienna which is public, and made the common talk of Europe, to become another sublime bubble like the armed neutrality? In what a light will these mediating Courts

appear, after having listened to a proposition of England so far as to make propositions themselves, and to refer to them in many public acts, if Britain refuses to agree to them, and insists upon such preliminaries as are at least an insult to France and America, and a kind of contempt to the common sense of all Europe? Upon my word I am weary of such roundabout and endless negotiations as that of the armed neutrality and this of the congress at Vienna. I think the Dutch have at last discovered the only effectual method of negotiation, that is, by fighting the British fleets, until every ship is obliged to answer the signal for renewing the battle by the signal of distress. There is no room for British chicanery in this. If I ever did any good since I was born, it was in stirring up the pure minds of the Dutchmen, and setting the old Batavian spirit in motion after having slept so long.

Our dear country will go fast asleep in full assurance of having news of peace by winter, if not by the first vessel. Alas! what a disappointment they will meet. I believe I had better go home and wake up our countrymen out of their reveries about peace. Congress have done very well to join others in the commission for peace who have some faculties for it. My talent, if I have one, lies in making war. The grand signor will finish the *procès des trois rois* sooner than the congress at Vienna will make peace, unless the two Imperial Courts act with dignity and consistency upon the occasion, and acknowledge American independency at once, upon Britain's insisting on her two insolent preliminaries.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, 28 August, 1781.

My Dear Sir,—

It is not through want of attention that I have omitted to this time to acquaint you of our arrival in this city. We reached it, after some perils, on the 27th of August, N. S., sufficiently fatigued, I assure you. For, from Leipsic, I began to travel day and night, and continued this practice all along the remaining distance. At Berlin we rested, or were rather stopped, nine days, by an unfortunate accident of our *voiture*'s being overthrown and broken into pieces, between Leipsic and Berlin, the first time I attempted to travel in the night. I there bought a new one, which was warranted to carry us to St. Petersburg and back again in the utmost safety. This, however, failed in essential parts, and required many repairs on the way. Notwithstanding the above accident, I found our advance so slow through the abominable defects of German posts, that I resolved to risk all again and persist in travelling in the night; fortunately, nothing of the like kind happened to us. We rested afterwards a day or two at the following places,—Dantzic, Konigsberg, Memel, Riga, and Narva,—at most of which stages our *voiture* demanded repairs. This gave me an opportunity, perhaps not wholly unprofitable to our country, to make inquiries into the commerce of these towns; for they are all of them ports. On the whole, from Amsterdam to this city, we were fifty-one days. Mr. Jenings gave me all August to get in; but for the accident to my first *voiture*, and some detentions for the repairs of my second, I should have accomplished my journey twelve or fourteen days sooner with equal fatigue.

After all, *you* will not be surprised to learn I am told in effect that I am here *too soon*; that the proper time is not yet come. In the name of common sense, I was about to ask you, what this gentry can mean? But I believe we are at no loss to answer this question. I am promised, however, in the most flattering terms, every assistance in matters touching the joint or common interests of the two houses; yet I am told not to expect it in matters that may be injurious to one without being advantageous to the other. Such frivolous reasons appeared to me to have been assigned, to show the time is not yet come, that I have presumed to question them. This, I imagine, may give offence when I would not wish to do it. But must an implicit faith be put in all things that may come from a certain quarter? Happily all our communications have hitherto been in writing, so that they, whose right it is to judge each of us, may do it understandingly. I am not disappointed in this difference of sentiments upon my main business, yet I am somewhat shocked that I have been here twelve days, since he knew in a proper way of my being in town, and have not received the least mark of attention from our *friend*, except what may be contained in civil words only. The reason of this we may conjecture, and perhaps we shall not be far from the truth. I suspect *Ishmael* may have been a little instrumental in this conduct. It cannot be without design, I think. I have candidly, and, I believe, decently, given my own sentiments upon the subject, and told our friend what measures I intended to pursue,

to endeavor at least to come at the end in view. He received my letter on the evening of the 25th; but I have yet had no answer. It was a long one, it is true; and he, not understanding English, must have it translated; so that I do not absolutely conclude that he will not answer it. He communicated to me in confidence what had been communicated to me before in the same way, touching a proposal made, to speak in plain English, by the mediators, agreeable to our utmost wishes. He did not tell me, as the other person had done, that the mediation was rejected on account of that proposition by the Court of London. This I suppose to be the truth, though not a lisp of it is to be heard yet without doors here. I wish soon to receive a confirmation of it from your hand, when I can make that use of it I now want exceedingly to make of it. I take it to be a matter of great consequence to our interests, and I build many hopes upon it in aid of my business. It seems to open the real good dispositions of those sovereigns for our cause. I have made use of an argument of this sort to our friend in my last. Do not withhold from me *a moment* any information which you think can be improved to our advantage. Let no supposition that I may be otherwise informed of it stay your hand. What comes from you, I shall think myself at liberty to make use of at my discretion. You must have gained informations on your late tour which will be of importance to me.

Your son is still with me at the Hôtel de Paris. He is desirous of my procuring him a private instructor. I should like this very much, as I should be fond of having him with me; but I cannot yet obtain proper information upon this head. I shall endeavor to do the best with him. Your sentiments on this point may not be amiss. I beg you to write to me *under cover* to Messrs. Strahlborn & Wolff, Banquiers à St. Petersburg. I had like to have forgot our news of the action between the Dutch and English; the former, it is agreed, have acquitted themselves most nobly. But why were they sent out so feeble upon so important a business?

My best regards to Mr. Thaxter and all our Amsterdam friends. Pray tell him he must write me all the public news, especially from our country. This is the finest city I have seen in Europe, and far surpasses all my expectations. Alone, it is sufficient to immortalize the memory of Peter the First. More of the real grandeur of the city and empire hereafter. In the mean time, I beg to assure you of the continuance of that high respect and warm affection I have entertained for you long since.

Your Friend, &C.

Francis Dana.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 31 August, 1781.

Sir,—

I duly received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 17th instant, inclosing a copy of one from Mr. John Ross, acquainting me with the presentation to you of fifty-one bills drawn in his favor, the 22d of June last, on Mr. Henry Laurens, for the sum of forty thousand nine hundred and fifty guilders, and desiring to know whether I will pay them.

I have already paid, or provided for the payment of all the former congress bills on Mr. Laurens, on Mr. Jay, and on yourself and me, drawn upon us when we had no funds in our hands to pay them. I have been exceedingly embarrassed and distressed by this business; and being obliged to apply repeatedly for aids to this Court, with one unexpected demand after another, I have given trouble and vexation to the ministers, by obliging them to find new funds for me, and thereby deranging their plans. They have, by their minister at Philadelphia, complained of these irregular, unfounded drafts, to congress; and I am told that he received a promise about the end of March last that no more should be issued. I have been obliged lately to apply for more money to discharge such of these bills as I had engaged for and were yet unpaid, and for other purposes, and I obtained it on a promise not to accept or engage for any that should be drawn after the end of March, if such should be drawn, which was not expected, as the congress had promised not to draw but upon known funds. I have received no advice or orders relating to those bills of Mr. Ross. I cannot conceive why they were drawn on Mr. Laurens, known to be a prisoner in the Tower. You will see, by the inclosed copy of a letter from M. de Vergennes, that I am told very fairly and explicitly, that if I accept any more such bills, I am not to expect any assistance from him in paying them. I am, therefore, obliged to be explicit with you. I cannot accept, nor have any thing to do with the acceptance of them. I have obtained what you see mentioned in the Count's letter, which I was almost ashamed to ask, and hardly expected. I cannot worry such good friends again for these new drafts. Mr. Ross's demand was near twenty thousand pounds sterling. I suppose these bills will be followed by more. You once wrote to me that you thought a few protests of such bills might be of service to our affairs in Holland. Perhaps none can arrive that may bear a protest with less inconvenience. And I think the practice will never cease, if not stopped by protesting. The bills are not drawn upon you, nor recommended to your care by congress, and unless you have reason to believe, that in the term of six months you may, by earnest application, obtain remittances to discharge, I cannot advise your accepting them.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin.

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THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 1 September, 1781.

Sir,—

Inclosed, you have some important instructions passed in congress upon the 16th of last month.¹ They will probably reach you first through our minister at Versailles, an opportunity to France having earliest presented itself. Should that not be the case, you will be careful to furnish copies to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay.

I Remain, &C.

James Lovell,*for the Committee of Foreign Affairs.*

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 4 October, 1781.

Sir,—

Since the 25th of August, when I had the honor to write to you, this is the first time I have taken a pen in hand to write to anybody, having been confined and reduced too low to do any kind of business, by a nervous fever.

The new commission for peace has been a great consolation to me, because it removed from the public all danger of suffering any inconvenience at a time when, for many days together, there were many chances to one that I should have nothing more to do with commissions of any sort. It is still a great satisfaction to me, because I think it a measure essentially right, both as it is a greater demonstration of respect to the powers whose ministers may assemble to make peace, and as it is better calculated to give satisfaction to the people of America in all parts, as the commissioners are chosen from the most considerable places in that country.

It is probable that the French Court is already informed of the alteration. Nevertheless, I should think it proper that it should be officially notified to the Count de Vergennes; and, if you are of the same opinion, as you are near, I should be obliged to you if you would communicate to his Excellency an authentic copy of the new commission.

I should think, too, that it would be proper to give some intimation of it to the public in the *Gazette* or *Mercure de France*, the two papers which are published with the consent of the Court, and, if you are of the same opinion, upon consulting the Count de Vergennes, I should be glad to see it done.

Have you any information concerning Mr. Jefferson, whether he has accepted the trust? Whether he has embarked, or proposes soon to embark? I saw a paragraph in a Maryland paper which expressed an apprehension that he was taken prisoner by a party of horse in Virginia.

I feel a strong curiosity to know the answer of the British Court to the articles to serve as a basis, &c., and should be much obliged to your Excellency for a copy of it, if to be procured, and for your opinion, whether there will be a congress or not.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 5 October, 1781.

Sir,—

I congratulate your Excellency on your recovery. I hope this seasoning will be the means of securing your future health, by accommodating your constitution to the air of that country.

Here are advices from Admiral de Grasse, which left him the 13th of August coming out of the Straits of Bahama with twenty-eight sail of the line, bound to Chesapeake Bay, unless he should meet at sea a call to New York from General Washington. He took with him, from the islands, three thousand six hundred land troops, which, with his marines, make near six thousand men capable of acting either against Cornwallis or in the siege of New York; and the eight sail, under M. de Barras, at Boston, joining him, will make a sea force superior to any expected of the enemy in those seas, so that we may hope for some good news from that quarter.

Since the letter your Excellency honored me with of the 25th of August, I have learnt nothing new of the mediation. It seems to be at present in a state of stagnation. Any farther proceedings in it that may come to my knowledge shall be immediately communicated to you. This Court appears attentive not only to the *interest* of the United States, but to their honor. England seems not yet tired enough of the war to think seriously of an accommodation, and till then our commission will hardly afford us much employment, or make it necessary for us to appoint a secretary in its service. I send, however, inclosed, a copy of the minute of congress relating to that appointment. I have not heard of Mr. Dana's arrival at Petersburg; if your Excellency has received any communicable advices from him I shall be glad to see them, and to know whether he is likely to continue there. Inclosed is a letter for him and another for yourself; they appear to me to have been opened; but they are in the state I received them under cover from Mr. Nesbitt of Lorient.

A letter from America that has been shown me, mentions a resolution of congress to exchange General Burgoyne for Mr. Laurens; but I have never seen that resolution. Do you know any thing of it? I have a letter from Mr. Burke on the subject of the General which I am at a loss to answer.

I received Mr. Thaxter's letter relating to the mast contracts, and communicated it to M. de Vergennes, who, I suppose, will write about that affair to M. de la Luzerne. Is it possible that a project of supplying England with that article from any of the United States can be executed? I have no conception of the means.

I am glad to hear that the loan from Holland is likely to succeed; for, without it, those obtained here for our service will not afford payment of the list shown me the other

day by M. Grand, of your acceptances falling due in November, December, January, and February next, amounting to Banco 217,932?. It is a demand I had no previous knowledge of, and, therefore, I hope it is not expected of me to answer it. I have accepted the bills mentioned in yours of the 24th past as drawn by you upon me on that day. But the great sum above mentioned it will be out of my power to accept, if you should draw for it, no provision being made for it in our last grants.

With Great Respect, &C.

B. Franklin.

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

St. Petersburg, October, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

This letter, together with a packet for congress, will be delivered to you by Mr. Stephen Sayer, who sets off from hence to-morrow for Amsterdam. He knows nothing from me about my business or affairs. Indeed I have had but little acquaintance with him, less than I should have had, had he not been unfortunately confined by sickness almost the whole time I have been here. The account he will be able to give you, touching the principal characters on the political stage here, will be, I believe, nearly the true one. My hopes, however, are much stronger than his. I think things are in a good train, and that we have nothing to fear but the influence of British gold upon a certain character to impede them for a while.

The packet for congress contains only duplicates of one forwarded about the 10th of September, O. S., from hence by water for Amsterdam, under cover to Messrs. de Neufville & Son, which was to be submitted to your perusal, except my letter to the president of instant. You will break it up to read that, and then be pleased to forward it by the earliest opportunity. But I shall expect you to give me your sentiments in return with your wonted integrity. I stand much in need of your friendly and substantial advice. If you find any opinions which are not just, correct them with freedom. You know me too well to suppose I shall not take this in good part. You will much oblige me by some account of matters upon your last tour. I want to know whether they wear the same aspect in that, as I have supposed them to do in this political hemisphere. These communications may serve to correct the notions of both of us concerning them. When I have said the independence of the United States *was certainly* the basis of the first plan of pacification, I have not grounded my assertion upon the propositions of the mediators. I have such assurances of this fact that I do not doubt it. What I have said of the Emperor, I think myself at present equally well founded in; and I wish you may not find my conjecture about Holland true, and that she may be earlier prepared to do as she ought to do. Does not her political pendulum still vibrate between belligerent and neutral? I have indeed more hopes of her, from the spirit with which the regency of Amsterdam seem to be now supported. If you should be called upon to negotiate a treaty with her, you will pardon my suggesting to you that the project sent to you is very defective. If the copy which Mr. Thaxter made out for me is a true one, there is no provision in it upon the following points,—the right to participate in commercial privileges granted to the most favored nation, (the second article I think does not reach this); not to disturb national fisheries; ships of war, &c., freely carrying their prizes whithersoever they please; foreign privateers fitting out or selling prizes in the ports of either party; free trade, except contraband articles, with an enemy; free ships, free goods; description of contraband and lawful effects; sea papers, in case of one party being at war; searches at sea; searches in port. Is it to be supposed all these particulars were omitted as being against us? There is a new point

which I have already mentioned to you,—the abolition of the law of Amsterdam, which prohibits a captain of a foreign nation in that port receiving on board his vessel even one of his own countrymen, either as passenger or mariner, without permission from the city magistrate, under a very heavy penalty. This law is unjust in itself, is a snare for strangers, especially under the infamous practices of their petty officers, who employ some villanous sailors to go on board strange vessels to ship themselves, and then to come away and give information to them. Some of our countrymen have already suffered severely under it. You will consider this law, I am sure, in its proper light.

There is another matter of much more consequence still, about which I am unable to give particular information, though you may obtain this, it is probable, from some of our mercantile countrymen at Amsterdam. The abominable abuse of the weigh-houses, where, after goods are weighed, certain officers (who have a good understanding with their own merchants, as some of them have confessed to me,) in a most arbitrary manner not only settle the tare, but make enormous deductions, under pretence of the goods being of an inferior quality or damaged, and this, without giving themselves the trouble of making the proper examination. Their decision is conclusive, or, at least as things stand, upon appeal, redress is sought in vain; for by this craft we make much gain, say the Dutch merchants. Those of them to whom I have talked upon this matter, have freely acknowledged the iniquity of the practice, but say there is no helping it at present; when we make a commercial treaty with you, it must be provided against. I know your views are so direct, you have the real interest of our country so much at heart, that you can never be offended at the liberty I take, or consider it as an impertinent interference in your department. We were last separated so suddenly, and my mind was too much agitated by the weight of the business that lay before me, when compared with my abilities, to recollect these things which did not immediately concern me. I am now more at ease, though I feel the want of the gentleman's company and abilities who had flattered me that I should not want them. I wish he had had the fortitude, shall I say, to face *dangers*, no, there were none in the way, but to dissipate his unpromising apprehensions. Pray tell him (for I have not time to tell him myself) that I have not once, even in my dreams, been troubled with the idea of being banished into Siberia. If my company is not welcome here, at least, I shall be permitted to return to the place from whence I came, without being compelled to go from thence to the place of execution. He that attempts nothing will accomplish nothing. And if there is nothing dishonorable in the thing attempted, and some good may come of it, why shrink from making it? Is a fear of being a little mortified, by failing of success, to deter one? If such personal considerations had prevailed everywhere, the grandest revolution that has ever taken place in the world could never have existed. When I see such instances of indecision in men of real abilities and worth, I think of an observation of yours, that no American, however well disposed he may be towards his country, and however sincerely he may wish it success, who has not been bred up in it, under the immediate influence and the early perils of this revolution, is fit to be intrusted with the management of its important affairs.

My dear sir, I am afraid I shall become tedious to you, and, besides, I have only room to express my sincere wishes that you may speedily recover from the effects of your late dangerous illness, of which I was made acquainted a few days since by a letter

from M. de Neufville. This accounts for your long silence, at which I began to be surprised. I beg you to present my regards to Mr. Thaxter, in a special manner, and to all other friends in Amsterdam, and to believe me to remain, &c.

Francis Dana.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 15 October, 1781.

Sir,—

I wish, if it were possible, to communicate to congress the present state of every affair, which they have been pleased to confide in any measure to me. I have received the new commission for peace, and the revocation of my commission and instructions of the 29th of September, 1779. To both of these measures of congress, as to the commands of my sovereign, I shall pay the most exact attention. The present commission for peace, is a demonstration of greater respect to the powers of Europe, and must be more satisfactory to the people of America, than my former one; besides that it guards against accidents, which, in my late sickness, I had reason to think may well happen. I am, however, apprehensive that this commission will lie a long time neglected, and as useless as the former one.

I am myself seriously of opinion, that the English will not treat with the United States for many years. They will see all their dominions in the East and West Indies conquered by the French and Spaniards; they will see their government reduced to the limits of their own island, before they will do it. The present ministers must die off, and the King too, before there will be any treaty between Britain and America. The nation will stand by the King and ministry through every loss, while they persevere; whereas both would sink into total contempt and ridicule, if they were to make peace. While they persevere, they are masters of the purses and commerce, too, of the whole nation. Make peace, and they lose a great part of this influence. National pride, when it has become an habitual passion by long indulgence, is the most obstinate thing in the world; and this war has been made so completely, though so artfully, the national act, as well as that of king and ministers, that the pride of the nation was never committed more entirely to the support of any thing. It is not to be supposed that the present ministry will treat with America, and if there should be a change, and the leaders of opposition should come in, they will not treat with America in any character, that she can with honor or safety assume. They might propose a peace separate from France, or they might withdraw their troops from the United States, but they would not make a general peace. The congress at Vienna will prove but a magnificent chimera, as the British ministry ever intended it should be. It has already answered their insidious ends, and now they are giving it a dismissal, by insisting upon their two preliminaries; so that upon the whole, according to the best judgment I can form, it will not be worth while for congress to be at the expense of continuing me in Europe, with a view to my assisting at any conferences for peace, especially as Dr. Franklin has given me intimations, that I cannot depend upon him for my subsistence in future.

My commission for borrowing money has hitherto been equally useless. It would fill a small volume to give a history of my negotiations with people of various stations and

characters, in order to obtain a loan; and it would astonish congress to see the unanimity with which all have refused to engage in the business, most of them declaring they were afraid to undertake it. I am told that no new loan was ever undertaken here, without meeting at first with all sorts of contradiction and opposition for a long time; but my loan is considered not only as a new one, but as entering deep into the essence of all the present political systems of the world, and no man dares engage in it, until it is clearly determined what characters are to bear rule, and what system is to prevail in this country.

There is no authority in Europe more absolute, not that of the two empires, not that of the simple monarchies, than that of the states-general is in their dominions, and nobody but M. de Neufville dares advance faster in a political manœuvre than the States. M. de Neufville has done his utmost, and has been able to do nothing; three thousand guilders, less than three hundred pounds, is all that he has obtained. Notwithstanding this, there is a universal wish that the world may be made to believe that my loan is full. It is upon 'change, by a unanimous dissimulation, pretended to be full, and there are persons (who they are I know not) who write to London, and fill the English papers with paragraphs that my loan is full. M. de Neufville has advertised in the customary form, for all persons possessed of American *coupons*, to come and receive the money at the end of the first six months. These persons cannot be more than three in number.

My letters of credence to their High Mightinesses have been taken *ad referendum* by the several Provinces, and are now under consideration of the several branches of the sovereignty of this country; but no one city or body of nobles has as yet determined upon them. None have declared themselves in favor of my admission to an audience, and none have decided against it; and it is much to be questioned whether any one will determine soon.

I have often written to congress, that I never could pretend to foretell what the states-general would do. I never found anybody here who guessed right; and upon reading over all the negotiations of Jeannin, Torcy, d'Avaux, and d'Estrades, in this country, I found every one of those ministers were, at the several periods of their residence here, in the same uncertainty. It appears to have been for this century and a half, at least, the national character, to manage all the world as long as they could, to keep things undetermined as long as they could, and, finally, to decide suddenly upon some fresh motive of fear. It is very clear to me, that I shall never borrow money until I have had an audience; and if the States pursue their old maxims of policy, it may be many years before this is agreed to I am much inclined to believe that nothing decisive will be done for two or three years, perhaps longer; yet it may be in a month. Parties are now very high, and their passions against each other warm; and to all appearance, the good party is vastly the most numerous; but we must remember, that the supreme executive is supposed to be determined on the other side, so that there is real danger of popular commotions and tragical scenes.

The question really is, whether the republic shall make peace with England, by furnishing her ships and troops according to old treaties, and joining her against all her enemies, France, Spain, America, and as many more as may become enemies in

the course of the war. The English party dare not speak out and say this openly; but if they have common sense they must know that England will make peace with them upon no other terms. They pretend that upon some little concessions, some trifling condescendencies, England would make peace with Holland separately. Some pretend that a separate peace might be had upon the single condition of agreeing not to trade with America; others, upon the condition of considering naval stores as contraband goods; but the commercial cities are almost unanimously against both of these articles. The English party are sensible of this, yet they entertain hopes, by keeping the republic in a defenceless state, that commerce will be so far ruined, and the common people in the great trading cities reduced to such want and misery, as to become furious, demand peace at any rate, and fall upon the houses and persons of those who will not promote it.

The English party, I think, will never carry their point so far as to induce the nation to join the English. There are three considerations, which convince me of this beyond a doubt. First, corrupted and abandoned as a great part of this nation, as well as every other in Europe is, there is still a public national sense and conscience, and the general, the almost universal sense of this nation is, that the English are wrong, and the Americans right, in this war. The conduct of the Americans is so like that of their venerable and heroic ancestors, it is evidently founded in such principles as are uniformly applauded in their history, and as every man has been educated in a habitual veneration for, that it is impossible for them to take a part in the war against America. This was universally conspicuous upon the publication of my memorial to the States. Secondly, the commercial part of these Provinces, I think, will never give up the American trade. Thirdly, England is so exhausted and so weak, and France, Spain, and America so strong, that joining the former against the three latter, would be the total ruin of the republic. Nevertheless, the court party will find means of delay, and will embarrass the operations of war in so many ways, that it will be long before any decisive measures will be taken in favor of America.

Whether, under all these circumstances, congress will think proper to continue me in Europe, whether it will be in their power to furnish me with the means of subsistence, as Dr. Franklin in his letter to me thinks I cannot depend upon him, and I have no hopes at all of obtaining any here, I know not, and must submit to their wisdom. But after all, the state of my health, which I have little reason to hope will be restored without a voyage home, and more relaxation from care and business than I can have in Europe, makes it very uncertain whether I shall be able to remain here. In short, my prospects both for the public and for myself are so dull, and the life I am likely to lead in Europe so gloomy and melancholy, and of so little use to the public, that I cannot but wish it may suit with the views of congress to recall me.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C. &C.

John Adams.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON TO JOHN ADAMS.

Head Quarters, near York, in Virginia, 22 October, 1781.

Sir,—

As the transmission of the inclosed paper through the usual channel of the department of foreign affairs would, on the present occasion, probably be attended with great delay, and recent intelligence of military transactions must be important to our ministers in Europe at the present period of affairs, I have thought it would be agreeable both to congress and your Excellency that the matter should be communicated immediately by a French frigate despatched by Admiral de Grasse.

Annexed to the capitulation is a summary return of the prisoners and cannon taken in the two places of York and Gloucester.

I have added, upon the principles above mentioned, a copy of General Greene's report of his last action in South Carolina.

I have the honor to be your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

George Washington.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 7 November, 1781.

Sir,—

I have been honored with the following letters from your Excellency during the last month, namely,—of the 4th, 10th, 18th, 22d, 25th, 26th, and 27th,—which I should have answered sooner, but that I waited for a safe opportunity, having reason to believe that all your letters to me by the post are opened, and apprehending the same of mine to you. I send herewith the covers and seals of those letters, that you may judge whether the impression of your seal is not, as I suppose it to be, a counterfeit. I shall now answer your letters in the order of their dates.

October 4th. I am pleased to find you are of the same opinion with me as to the proper charges in our accounts.

October 10th. I have now received the resolution of congress for exchanging General Burgoyne against Mr. Laurens, and have sent it to England, though without much hopes of success; as I believe the ministers there had rather at present have the General's absence than his company. They would keep Mr Laurens to hang him at the peace, if the war should end in their favor; and they would have no objection to Americans recalling and hanging Burgoyne.

I wonder at your being so long without hearing from Mr. Dana, and I am afraid some misfortune has happened to him.

I have communicated here your observations relating to masts, and make no doubt you have recommended to congress the taking effectual measures on their part to prevent that mischievous commerce. If the English could be removed from Penobscot, another of their means of supply would be cut off.

I have already acquainted you that I will help you to pay to your acceptances as far as you have sent me an account of them. I have even ordered a considerable remittance into the hands of Fizeaux & Grand, to facilitate those payments. But I must repeat my request to you not to accept any bills with an expectation of my paying them, that are drawn after the end of March last; and I further beg you would accept no more of the old ones drawn on Mr. Laurens, without first acquainting me with the number or value, and knowing from me whether I can provide for the payment. If the loan so long expected from Holland does at length take place, as I am now told it is likely to do, my embarrassment, occasioned by all these demands, will, I hope, be removed by it. If not, I must scuffle and shift as I can. God help us all.

October 18th. I know nothing of Beer but from Mr. Coffyn's recommendation. I am afraid he is one of those poor, helpless bodies that God throws into the world to try its

charity. I had been told that the Dutch had sent to borrow such workmen from France. I recommended it to send the escaped prisoners arriving at Dunkirk rather to Amsterdam than to Paris, because I think there arrive as many American vessels in Holland as in France, wherein they might return home; and there is not one of those prisoners who does not put us to eight or ten louis expense in his land journey, first to Paris and then to the seaports, when he might go to Holland in the track-schuyts for perhaps one or two. I am sensible that you have not, as you say, any public money in your hands, and having accepted bills for more than is in mine, my case in that respect does not differ from yours. These poor, unfortunate men must however be relieved; unnecessary expense in doing it being avoided, we can relieve more of them. We cannot do for them all we wish; we shall do the best we can. I think it quite right you should have money always at command for that purpose, and am of opinion the small sum obtained by the loan at Messrs. de Neufville's will be very properly applied in assisting the prisoners. I therefore give my advice frankly to use it in that service; and when that is expended you should undoubtedly be supplied with more, and will have the credit you desire at Messrs. Fizeaux & Grand's as long as we have any.

October 22d. By accepting a mediation, I apprehend no more is meant, than consenting to hear and consider what a common friend may propose towards accommodating a difference. A mediator is not a judge or arbitrator. When arbitrators are chosen, there is commonly an engagement to abide by their determination; but no such engagement is made with respect to a mediator. Mediations are, however, subject to this hazard,—that the mediator, piqued against the party who rejects his advice, joins with the other to compel his acceptance of it. This, perhaps, was a little the case lately in the mediation of Spain between France and England.

I have just learnt, by a letter from Commodore Gillon, that Captain Jackson has left his ship and is returning to France. I think with you, that it will be proper he should proceed immediately to Holland to take care of the goods there. But I own I have not so much confidence in his prudent conduct as to wish the business left entirely to his discretion. I still feel the mischief and absurdity of his buying goods under the notion of only filling a vacancy left in a loaded ship, and doing this to such excess as to make two ships more necessary to receive them. I had a reluctance to any concern with Gillon. I was urged into it by Colonel Laurens, on the considerations that the ten thousand pounds sterling's worth he wanted to dispose of were such as the army needed, were already shipped, and the conveyance likely to be a safe one, &c. I consented to pay for those goods, and for as much more as might be wanted to fill a remaining vacancy in the ship, not exceeding the value of five thousand pounds more. I proposed that these payments should be made on your drafts, that your Excellency might have occasion to inspect the conduct of the business, and be some check upon it. I wish I had empowered you, or requested your care more explicitly. I do not think the least blame lies on you. Captain Jackson, too, might be ignorant of the bulk of the goods till they were assembled; but methinks Messrs. Neufville might have known it, and would have advised against so enormous a purchase, if augmenting the commissions, and the project of freighting their own ships had not blinded their eyes. You will judge that it must be a monstrous surprise to me, to have an account brought against me of fifty thousand instead of five thousand pounds. I agreed, however, to accept the bills on Mr. Jackson's representation,—that the goods were bought and

shipped; that the relanding and returning, or selling them, would make a talk and discredit us; that they were such only as were absolutely necessary, &c.; and I accepted his drafts instead of yours, as he said the ship only waited his return to sail, and the obtaining your signature would occasion a delay of eight or ten days. Thus I was drawn in at the broad end of the horn, and must squeeze out at the narrow end as well as I can. I find myself confoundedly pinched, but I deserve it in some degree for my facility and credulity. At present, I am not sure of money either to buy the ships or pay their freight, as proposed in yours of the 27th, and, therefore, cannot engage to do either. When Captain Jackson shall arrive in Holland, your Excellency will be so good as to advise him, and I hope he will take your advice. I should apprehend it is now too late to go north about; and to send two slow-sailing Dutch ships down the channel, to run the gauntlet through all the frigates and privateers, seems to me nearly the same thing as to consign them directly to some port in England or Jersey. It was not to give you trouble or to avoid it myself, that I referred Messrs. Neufville to you for advice, but really because I thought you understood such business better than myself, were on the spot, and equally concerned for the advantage of our constituents. To me it seemed, that the vessels having contracted to go with their cargoes to America, ought not to have staid behind on pretence of a right to more freight, because the convoying ship had sailed without them. They might have protested, and have gone without convoy. If they had a right to more freight, I suppose they would have recovered it; and if taken, have a claim to some indemnification. I did not understand the compelling a new agreement by stopping our goods. I thought it ungenerous in Messrs. de Neufville as well as unjust. The regularity or irregularity of their proceedings being, at least, as I imagined, points of maritime law or custom, I had that additional reason for deference to your judgment.

22 October. I accepted your draft of the 22d for two thousand crowns, in favor of Fizeaux & Grand, and it will be duly paid.

25th. The letter from Dr. Waterhouse, of which you were so kind as to send me a copy, is coolly and sensibly written, and has an effect in lessening the force of what is written against Gillon by Messrs. Jackson & Searle. On the whole, I hardly know as yet what to think of the matter. If Gillon really produced to Jackson the ten thousand pounds' worth of goods, why did he keep back from him the bills of exchange that were to pay for them, and with which Gillon might have paid his debts? And if he could not produce them, why did Jackson keep the bills, carry them to sea, and not return them to me? When we see him perhaps he may explain this; at present, I am in the dark. He promised me a fuller letter by the first post; but I have not received it. Commodore Gillon writes me that Jackson & Searle are parted; that the former (with your son and some others of the passengers) is gone to France in an American privateer, and the latter in the Ariel. I hope soon to hear of their safe arrival, particularly on the child's and your account. Young Cooper is gone to Geneva. Perhaps you may think of sending your son there for the winter, in which case, if I can be of any use to you, command me.

October 26th. The reason of my thinking we could not depend on receiving any more money here, applicable to the support of congress's ministers, is given in the same letter, of August 6th, to which yours of October 26th is an answer, namely,—“that

what aids are hereafter granted, will probably be transmitted by the government directly to America.” Should that be the case, and no money be put into my hands to be at my disposal, what must I do with regard to the salaries of ministers? I cannot go to Versailles with a sneaking petition, requesting money for my subsistence, for the subsistence of Mr. Adams, of Mr. Jay, and of Mr. Dana. I believe none of the gentlemen would like my taking such a step, and I think the congress would be ashamed of it. It was, therefore, I thought it right to give the earliest notice of what I apprehended might happen, that we might all join in representing it to congress, in order to obtain the necessary remittances. You may depend that, as long as I have in my hands disposable money belonging to congress, I shall never refuse to obey their orders in paying your salary; and when I have no such money, I hope you will consider my not paying as the effect of an impossibility, and not as you express it, a *refusal*. The congress should certainly either supply their foreign ministers, or find such as can and will serve them gratis, or not send any at all. I hope you have written on this subject, and though I do not yet clearly see how our money affairs will wind up, I shall accept your draft for another quarter whenever you please to make it.

October 27th. I daily expect the return of Major Jackson, and think, as I have said above, the season over for sending those goods before winter; therefore, if I understood such affairs, I should defer a little the giving any orders about the ships freighted, or the goods he has put aboard them. I did, as you observe, stop the money Colonel Laurens was sending over in Gillon’s ship, because I saw I should want it to support the credit of congress in paying their bills. I think you might have done the same to pay your acceptances, if I had not engaged for them; and I believe you have an equal right with me to take care of the congress property vested in those goods, as their minister; and being on the spot, can better judge from circumstances of the steps proper to be taken. I therefore request you would, yourself, give such orders as you shall find necessary and think most for the public interest, remembering that I cannot undertake either to buy the ships or pay the freight. Perhaps it may be best to sell the whole, and purchase with the money the same kind of goods in France, which cannot but be more agreeable to government here, and probably they would arrive as soon.

I hope the coming winter will thoroughly establish your health.

With Great Esteem And Respect,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

B. Franklin.

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Amsterdam, 24 November, 1781.

Mr. Adams presents his most respectful compliments to his Excellency, the Duc de la Vauguyon, and begs leave to acquaint him, that by the last night's post he received from congress some important despatches, which it is his duty to communicate to the ambassador of France. Mr. Adams requests his Excellency to inform him what hour will be most convenient for him to wait on him at the Arms of Amsterdam. Meantime, he most sincerely congratulates his Excellency on the glorious news from America by the Duc de Lauzun, of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis with his whole army to the arms of the allies.

This card I sent by my secretary, Mr. Thaxter. The Duke returned for answer, that he would call upon me at my house between twelve and one, to congratulate me on the news from America. Accordingly, about one, he came and spent with me about an hour and a half.

I communicated to him my fresh instructions, and agreed to send him a copy of them to-morrow or next day, by the post-wagon (*chariot-de-poste*). He said he had not received any instructions from Versailles upon the subject, but might receive some by next Tuesday's post. He asked me what step I proposed to take in consequence of these instructions? I answered none, but with his participation and approbation; that I would be always ready to attend him at the Hague, or elsewhere, for the purpose of the most candid and confidential consultations, &c. He said that he thought that the subject was very well seen (*très bien vu*) and the measure very well concerted (*très bien combiné*) and that it would have a good effect at this time to counteract the artifice of the British ministry, in agreeing to the mediation of Russia for a separate peace with this republic.^{[1](#)}

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Amsterdam, 25 November, 1781.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose to your Excellency a copy of the fresh instructions of congress, of the 16th of August last, which I received by the post on the 23d instant. I have also received a further commission from congress, with full powers to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers by His Most Christian Majesty, and their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, of and concerning a treaty of alliance between His Most Christian Majesty, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the United States of America.

This measure was apparently concerted between the congress and the French minister residing near them, and seems to be very happily adapted to the present times and circumstances.

I beg leave to assure your Excellency, that I shall be at all times ready to attend you, at the Hague, or elsewhere, to confer with you, in the most entire confidence, respecting this negotiation, and shall take no material step in it, without your approbation and advice.

There are three ways of proposing this business to their High Mightinesses; 1st, your Excellency may alone propose it in the name of His Most Christian Majesty; 2dly, it may be proposed jointly by the minister of his Majesty, and the minister of the United States; or, 3dly, it may be proposed by the minister of the United States alone, and as a consequence of his former proposal of a treaty of commerce. I beg leave to submit these three measures to your Excellency's consideration, and shall very cheerfully comply with any, which you may most approve.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Amsterdam, 26 November, 1781.

Sir,—

By the last post I received from Lorient a set of fresh instructions from congress, dated the 16th of August, and with the more pleasure, as I am enjoined to open a correspondence with your Excellency upon the subject of them.

I presume you have a copy by the same vessel; but as it is possible it may have been omitted, I shall venture to inclose a copy, and hope it may pass unopened. I have communicated it to the French ambassador here, who says it is “*très bien vu; très bien combiné.*” I shall take no step in it, without his knowledge and approbation. I shall hope for your Excellency’s communications as soon as convenient.

The Dutch have an inclination to ally themselves to France and America, but they have many whimsical fears, and are much embarrassed with party quarrels. In time, I hope, they will agree better with one another, and see their true interests more clearly. This measure of congress is very well timed.

I congratulate you on the glorious news of the surrender of Cornwallis. Some are of opinion it will produce a congress at Vienna; but I cannot be of that sentiment. The English must have many more humiliations before they will agree to meet us upon equal terms, or upon any terms that we can approve.

What is the true principle of the policy of Spain, in delaying so long to declare themselves explicitly? Her delay has a bad effect here.

Mr. Dana has been gone northward these four months, but I have no letters from him. Whether the post is unfaithful, or whether he chooses to be talked about as little as possible at present, which I rather suspect, I do not know.

My respects to Mr. Carmichael, and to your family, if you please.

With Great Esteem, &C.

John Adams.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 26 November, 1781.

Sir,—

I presume you have a copy from congress of their instructions to me of the 16th of August last; but, as it is possible it may be otherwise, I have inclosed one. I have communicated them to the Duc de la Vauguyon. I shall do nothing in the business without communicating it beforehand to him, with the most entire confidence, and receiving his approbation and advice. He informs me, that he has not yet received any instructions from his court respecting it.

These instructions have arrived at a very proper time to counteract another insidious trick of the British ministry, in agreeing to the mediation of Russia for a separate peace with Holland.

With unfeigned joy I congratulate your Excellency on the glorious news of the surrender of Cornwallis to the arms of the allies. How easy a thing would it be to bring this war to a happy conclusion, if Spain and Holland would adopt the system of France, and coöperate in it with the same honor and sincerity! There is nothing wanting but a constant naval superiority in the West Indies, and on the coast of the United States, to obtain triumphs upon triumphs over the English, in all quarters of the globe. The allies now carry on the war in America with an infinite advantage over the English, whose infatuation, nevertheless, will continue to make them exhaust themselves there, to the neglect of all their possessions in other parts of the world.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Amsterdam, 28 November, 1781.

Sir,—

I had the honor to write to you on the 26th instant by the post, a conveyance which I am determined to try until I am certainly informed of its infidelity; in which case I will ask the favor of the French or Spanish ambassador, to inclose my despatches.

I received, by the last post, a duplicate of despatches from congress, the originals of which I received some time ago. I presume you have received the same from congress, or from Passy; but, if otherwise, I will inclose in a future letter a commission and instructions for assisting at the conferences for peace, at Vienna or elsewhere, whenever they may take place. In this commission, congress have added Mr. Franklin, President Laurens, your Excellency, and Mr. Jefferson; a measure which has taken off my mind a vast load, which, if I had ever at any time expected I should be called to sustain alone, would have been too heavy for my forces.

The capture of Cornwallis and his army is the most masterly measure, both in the conception and execution, which has been taken this war. When France and Spain shall consider the certain success, which will ever attend them while they maintain a naval superiority in the West Indies and on the coast of North America, it is to be hoped, they will never depart from that policy. Many here are of opinion that this event will bring peace, but I am not of that mind. Although it is very true that there are distractions in the British Cabinet, a formidable faction against Lord G. Germaine, and, it is said, the Bedford party are determined to move for peace, the rage of the nation is still too violent. I hope, however, that Minorca and Gibraltar will not be long after York and Gloucester in their surrender. And in this case, perhaps, when the English shall see that all the forces of France and Spain are at liberty to act against their possessions in the East and West Indies, they may begin to confess they have gone too far. Notwithstanding, there is reason to fear that their sulky obstinacy will hold out until all their dominions beyond seas are gone. Indeed, I know not whether we need regret even such an event.

It is entertaining to see the arts with which they amuse the credulity of the nation where I am. The word *peace* is the charm that dissolves all their resentment and resolution; and there is no tale too absurd or too gross to obtain immediate belief if it tend to that end. Our late triumphs, however, have had an effect here. I have received several visits of congratulation, in consequence of them, from persons of consequence from whom I did not expect them. But there are invisible fairies, who disconcert in the night all the operations of the patriots in the day.

There will, probably, be a proposal soon of a triple alliance between France, America, and Holland. If Spain would join, and make it quadruple, it would be so much the better.

General Greene's last action in South Carolina, in consequence of which that State and Georgia have both reëstablished their governments, is quite as glorious for the American arms as the capture of Cornwallis. The action was supported, even by the militia, with a noble constancy. The victory on our side was complete, and the English lost twelve hundred men.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 4 December, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received those instructions with which I was honored by congress, on the 16th of August, and communicated them forthwith to the French ambassador, to their High Mightinesses, and to the American ministers at Versailles and Madrid. The Duc de la Vauguyon was of opinion, that they were very well considered and very well timed, to counteract another trait of British policy, in agreeing to the mediation of Russia for a separate peace with Holland. The British ministry mean only to aid the stocks, and lull the Dutch.

There is no longer any talk of a congress at Vienna. The late news of General Washington's triumphs in Virginia, and of the friendly and effectual aid of the Counts de Rochambeau and de Grasse, have made a great impression here, and all over Europe. I shall punctually observe my instructions, and consult in perfect confidence with the Duc de la Vauguyon, in the execution of my late commission. A quadruple alliance, for the duration of the war, would, probably, soon bring it to a conclusion; but the Dutch are so indolent, so divided, so animated with party spirit, and, above all, so entirely in the power of their chief, that it is very certain they will take the proposition *ad referendum* immediately, and then deliberate upon it a long time.

This nation is not blind; it is bound and cannot get loose. There is great reason to fear, that they will be held inactive, until they are wholly ruined. Cornwallis's fate, however, has somewhat emboldened them, and I have received unexpected visits of congratulation from several persons of note; and there are appearances of a growing interest in favor of an alliance with France and America. If I were now to make the proposition, I think it would have a great effect. I must, however, wait for the approbation of the Duke, and he, perhaps, for instructions from Versailles, and, indeed, a little delay will, perhaps, do no harm, but give opportunity to prepare the way. The general cry at this time in pamphlets and public papers, is for an immediate connection with France and America.

The consent of Zealand is expected immediately to the loan of five millions for his Most Christian Majesty. My loan rests as it was, at a few thousand guilders, which, by the advice of Dr. Franklin, I reserve for the relief of our countrymen, who escape from prison in England in distress. I have ordered a hundred pounds for President Laurens in the tower, at the earnest solicitation of his daughter, who is in France, and of some of his friends in England; but for further supplies have referred them to Dr. Franklin. I some time since had an intimation that the British ministry were endeavoring to form secret contracts with traitorous Americans to supply masts for the royal navy. According to my information, the British navigation in all parts of the world is at present distressed for masts, especially those of the largest size. Congress will take

such measures as to their wisdom shall appear proper to prevent Americans from this wicked and infamous commerce. I wrote to Dr. Franklin upon the subject, who communicated my letter, as I requested, at court, and his Excellency supposes that the Count de Vergennes will write to congress, or to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, upon the subject.

The continental goods left here by Commodore Gillon, are detained for freight and damages &c., very unjustly as I conceive. I am doing all in my power to obtain possession of them, and send them to America, or dispose of them here, at as little loss as possible, according to the desire and advice of Dr. Franklin. It is not necessary to trouble congress to read a volume of letters upon the subject of these goods. All that can be done by me, has been and shall be done to save the public interest. This piece of business has been managed as ill as any that has ever been done for congress in Europe, whether it is owing to misfortune, want of skill, or any thing more disagreeable.

The Court of Russia does not at present appear to be acting that noble part, which their former conduct gave cause to expect. Mr. Dana is at Petersburg, but he prudently avoids writing. If he sees no prospect of advantage in staying there, he will be very silent, I believe, and not stay very long.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 6 December, 1781.

Dear Sir,—

I received your kind congratulations from Leyden, on the glorious captivity of Cornwallis, and have since received your favor of the 3d, inclosing two packets from America. You ask, what news? I answer, none. They were the originals of despatches from General Washington and General Knox, containing the capitulation and other papers which are public. A large reinforcement is gone to my friend Greene from General Washington. The French troops winter in Virginia. General Washington returns to North River, to join the body that was left on the North River under General Heath. Our countrymen will keep thanksgiving as devoutly as their allies sing *te deum*, and, I warrant you, will pass the winter as joyously and quietly.

I wrote on the 25th November to the French ambassador, and inclosed what I promised. An expression in your letter makes me suspect whether the letter has been received. Shall I beg the favor of you to ask the question, and let me know? If that letter has miscarried, there is foul play. I will come in person and deliver the duplicate, in that case, and bring you with me to Amsterdam, if you please. My new instructions are very well timed, and we shall make it do to get an answer I hope, and to cement a triple or quadruple alliance in time, which may set all the fools in Europe at defiance.

With Great Esteem, Your Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

The Hague, 7 December, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me, and the copy of the resolutions of congress, of the 16th of August last, which you have been pleased to address to me. I flatter myself that you do not doubt of my earnestness to concert with you the ulterior measures which they may require, as soon as the King shall have authorized me. But, until his Majesty shall have transmitted to me his orders on this point, I can only repeat to you the assurances of my zeal for every thing interesting to the common cause of France and North America, as well as that of the peculiar satisfaction I shall derive in all circumstances from my connections with you.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

De la Vauguyon.

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TO JOHN LUZAC.

Amsterdam, 13 December, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received your friendly letter of the 10th of this month. The new translation of the American constitutions into the Dutch language I have not yet seen, but intend to embrace the first opportunity of sending some copies of it to be placed in the principal public libraries in America, and the more willingly for the dedication of it to Mr. Van Berckel, a gentleman whose great merit and long services have been but ill requited by as base and false accusations as were ever laid to the charge of injured innocence.

Mr. Van der Kemp had the goodness to leave at my house two copies of the new translation of the constitution of the Massachusetts and the other pieces accompanying it, for which I am much obliged to him and to you. I regret very much my inability to read the comparison between the constitution of this republic and that of the Massachusetts, and the more, because the author, who has the reputation of one of the best writers, has given encouragement to hope for a comparison between the Belgic and American revolutions.

I thank you, sir, for your friendly sympathy with me in my sickness, and for your obliging wishes for the happiness of my country. My country, sir, is happy; and it is not in the power of all her enemies to make her otherwise. Whether I shall live to see her in peace and in the full enjoyment of that grandeur and glory which will inevitably be the speedy consequence of it, is a matter that I very cheerfully submit to higher powers. Whether a constitution which was never firm shall succumb under the exertions to which the times have called it, a little sooner or a little later, is not a thing of much consequence, since, as long as it lasts, I shall have the consolation to reflect that no man's forces were ever employed in a better cause.

Inclosed is a letter from General Knox which contains some things worth publishing, but does not give us very sanguine hopes of possessing Charleston this year.

Now, sir, to the subject of your friendly complaint. I very readily acknowledge your constant attachment to the principles of the American Revolution, and the respect which has been long paid, and the services rendered to the American cause in Europe by the Leyden Gazette, and, therefore, I shall not forget it nor its author. But it is not in my power to do it much service, nor does it stand in need of my assistance. It has nothing to fear from any other gazette. The extensive correspondence, its exact method, and its accuracy of style, as well as other advantages, will effectually secure it against the rivalry of any other.

It is very rarely that I receive any intelligence sooner than you do. Generally, mine arrives after you have given the same things to the public. The reason is, that almost

all my letters come by the way of Cadiz, Bilbao, Nantes, Lorient, or Brest, and are obliged to go to Paris in company with similar despatches for the French Court and to Dr. Franklin in their way to me. By this means the post commonly brings you in the Spanish and French publications the news sooner than my letters arrive to me; in two or three instances, indeed, it has been otherwise; but in the case of General Greene's letter it was nearly so.

When newspapers come to me, or letters with any intelligence of importance, here are generally fifteen or twenty American travellers in this town who think they have a right to the news from me. If I were to send them off to Leyden immediately, they would think it hard; whereas I can give them to a printer in this town who will return them at any moment when called for. Besides this, you will allow that it is of some importance to the public cause, that the French Gazette of Amsterdam should be in the good system, and that it should have some reputation. Mr. Tronchin is a total stranger to me.

M. Cerisier's talents and sentiments I esteem very much, and am very sure it is in his power, and think it is in his inclination to do signal service to the cause of truth. Yet I agree with you that he is not so accurate as some others. He writes too much, and has too many calls upon him, to be always correct. I wish, in a late instance of Greene's letter, he had eat his chicken without crying roast meat. He has no right from me to boast of any established correspondence with America, for I have promised him nothing. He has taken pains, I know, for the last twelve months to form acquaintances among the Americans here, who may have agreed to correspond with him. From them he may sometimes get news here, for they generally receive newspapers with their letters.

If I were to send every piece of fresh news to Leyden, I suppose he would make me a friendly complaint too. How shall I settle it? Shall I give it to him upon condition that he sends it to you as soon as he has translated it? Shall I send it to you upon condition that you send it to him as soon as you have copied it? The public service and my duty require of me that I should communicate to the public as soon as possible, without giving it to anybody to husband it, and deal it out by little and little for their private interest or the reputation of the gazette. I assure you I never had a thought of excluding you to your prejudice, nor shall I ever countenance any such thing. I have scarce room left to subscribe myself, sir,

Your Friend And Servant,

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Amsterdam, 14 December, 1781.

My Dear Sir,—

This day was brought me your kind favor of August 28th, the first line I have received from you since we parted. A line from my dear son of August 21st, O. S., which I received three days ago, was the first from him.

The public news from America you have before now. It is grand; and I congratulate you upon it with a grateful heart. Our allies have this year adopted a system which you and I have long prayed for, and have reason to be thankful for its triumphant success.

Soon after my return from Paris I was seized with a malignant, nervous fever which had wellnigh cost me a life. The consequences of it, in weakness, lameness, &c., are not yet gone off. I am better, but still almost incapable of that attention to business which is necessary. My son Charles sailed with Commodore Gillon, put into Corunna, went from thence to Bilbao, and is about sailing in the Cicero with Major Jackson for home. Mr. Thaxter has escaped with a very slight touch of a fever. So much for the family.

I have lately received from congress a new commission and instructions to this republic, to propose a triple or quadruple alliance with the consent and approbation of the French Court. This measure pleases me extremely, and nothing could be better timed; but I must beg you to conceal it. I have received a new commission for peace, in which J. A., B. F., H. L., J. J., and T. J., are the ministers. I have likewise received a revocation of my commission to make a treaty of commerce with Great Britain. These last novelties, I suppose, would nettle some men's feelings; but I am glad of them. They have removed the cause of envy, I had like to have said; but I fear I must retract that, since J. A. still stands before B. F. in the commission. You know from what quarter this whole system comes. They have been obliged to adopt our systems of war and politics, in order to gain influence enough by means of them to lessen us. But I will consent, upon these terms, to be diminished down to the size of a Lilliputian, or of an animalcule in pepper water. There is no present prospect of peace, or negotiation for it; and I confess I never expect to be called to act in consequence of any of these commissions about peace, and, therefore, may be the more indifferent.

When I was at Paris, the articles of the mediating Courts were given me, and my sentiments desired, which I gave in detail in a correspondence which congress have received from me in two different ways; so that they will have no expectations of a congress at Vienna, unless the late Cornwallization should excite them anew. In what a light does Nerone Neronior appear by his last speech, and by his answers to the addresses of both houses in consequence of it? Clapping his hands to his hounds and

mastiffs to persevere in worrying the innocent, although he knows they have nothing to hope for but death.

This evening were brought me your despatches to congress of the of September, with all the papers inclosed in very good order. I shall send them by Dr. Dexter by the way of France, as there is no prospect of a conveyance from here sooner. I am exceedingly pleased with this correspondence, and hope that you have still harmonized with your noble correspondent. I am afraid that he is too right in his conjectures; but I am happy to find that your sentiments upon the article are the same which I had expressed in my letters to the C. de V. upon the subject. The articles, however, are not sufficiently explicit. You have before now seen the answers of France and Spain to the Imperial Courts. Pray send me copies of them, if you can obtain them. I was told the substance, but have no copies. I was, however, happy to find France, Spain, and America so well agreed in sentiment. I am very glad to find you can make any use of your ward. I leave to your judgment every thing concerning him. Make him write to me every week by the post. I am pleased with his observations in his travels, and with his cautious prudence in his letters.

We must be patient and must humor our allies as much as possible, consistently with our other duties. I see no near hopes of your being received, any more than myself; but if, without being received, we can gain and communicate information, we shall answer a good end. I am, at present, apparently, and I believe really, upon good terms with the D. de la V.; and the miffs at Versailles and Passy seem to be wearing away. Let me entreat you to write me as often as possible.

Our country, by all accounts, is in great spirits. Paper money quite stopped; every thing conducted in silver. Trade flourishing, although many privateers and merchant vessels are taken. Crops the finest ever known. Great Britain has not lost less than twenty thousand men the last twelve months in America. They will not be able to send ten, but if they could send twenty, they would only give opportunity for more Cornwallizations and Burgoyneizations.

With Every Sentiment Of Affection And Esteem,
Your Obliged Friend And Servant,

John Adams.

P. S. December 15th. To-day Mr. S. arrived with your other letters. I shall take the best care, and answer soon. I am still more happy to find you still patient and in good spirits. We shall do very well. I think you may expect some good news from me ere long.

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JOHN JAY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Madrid, 15 December, 1781.

Sir,—

The two last posts brought me your favors of the 26th and 28th ultimo. It really gives me great satisfaction at length to see a prospect of a regular correspondence between us. The failure of my former attempts had almost discouraged me, though, from the frequent miscarriage of letters to and from me, I had reason to impute your silence more to that than to any other cause.

I have not received a syllable from congress, nor from any of its members, by the vessel which brought you the instructions of the 16th August; but I by no means infer from thence that they did not write, for on more than one occasion I *know* that letters for me have been put into the post-office, which never came to my hands; and I advise you never to write to me but under a persuasion that your letter will be inspected before I receive it.

As to the instructions, I had neither seen nor heard of them till the reception of your letter. They appear to me to be wise, and I shall be happy to see the object of them fully and speedily attained.

As to the progress of my negotiations here, I can only inform you that the last offers of America were made so long ago as July last. The Court has not as yet found it convenient to give me an answer. I could give you a particular history of delays, but it would be useless. I could also communicate to you my conjectures as to the real cause of them, but by the post it would be improper. In a word, it is not in my power to write any thing of importance but what I ought not to write by such a conveyance, unless in cipher.

Delay is, and has long been the system, and when it will cease, cannot be divined. Mr. Del Campo, the minister's first and confidential secretary, has been appointed near three months to confer with me, and yet this appointment was not announced to me till the last week. I have not yet had a conference with him. He has been sick, and it seems is not yet sufficiently recovered to do business, &c. &c. &c.

It will not be necessary to send me copies of the commission and instructions you mention. The originals intended for me were brought by Major Franks in September last. I think it probable that duplicates for me accompany those you have received; and I am the more inclined to this opinion from having lately received a packet directed by Secretary Thomson, in which I found nothing but his cipher indorsed in his handwriting, but no letter or line from him or others. It was committed to the care of Mr. Barclay, consul in France. He sent it to me by the post, and on comparing the

date of his letter to me from Lorient with the time I received it, I find it was thirteen days on the way; it had evident marks of inspection.

I am very much of your opinion, and for the same reason,—that peace is yet at a distance; and, therefore, that I cannot soon expect to have the pleasure of seeing you, which I much desire for many reasons.

As to Gibraltar and Minorca, it is difficult to conjecture when or in what manner the operations against them will terminate; for my own part, I think their fate will remain in suspense for some time yet.

The Dutch certainly do not want spirit; and I ascribe their want of vigor more to the embarrassments they experience from the nature of their government and the Anglican connections of the ruling family, than to any other cause. A national convention under the protection of France, would, in my opinion, be the most effectual remedy for these evils.

General Greene's last action does great honor to him as well as to the American arms. This and the surrender of Lord Cornwallis are most joyful and interesting events. I am anxious to know what influence they will have on the British counsels.

If the alliance in agitation should promise to take effect and draw near to a conclusion, it would have much influence here and elsewhere.

You shall have immediate advice of the first change that may happen in our affairs here.

My expectations are not very sanguine; but I confess to you that it would not surprise me, if the various delays practised here should in the end prove more advantageous than injurious to our interests.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Jay.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 18 December, 1781.

Sir,—

Having received an invitation to the Hague, in order to have some conversation with some gentlemen in the government, concerning the further steps proper for me to take in the present conjuncture, I had determined to have undertaken the journey to-day, but the arrival in town of the Duc de la Vauguyon, determined me to postpone it until to-morrow.

At noon, to-day, his Excellency did me the honor of a visit, and a long conversation upon the state of affairs, at my house. He informed me, that upon the communication I had made to him, when he was here last, in person, and afterwards by letter, of my new commission and instructions, he had written to the Count de Vergennes; that he had explained to that minister his own sentiments, and expected an answer. His own idea is, that I should go to the Hague in some week, when there is a president whose sentiments and disposition are favorable, and demand an answer to my former proposition, and afterwards, that I should go round to the cities of Holland, and apply to the several regencies.

He thinks that I may now assume a higher tone, which the late *Cornwallization* will well warrant. I shall, however, take care not to advance too fast, so as to be unable to retreat. His advice is, to go to the Hague to-morrow, and meet the gentlemen who wish to see me there, and this I shall do.

I have been very happy hitherto, in preserving an entire good understanding with this minister, and nothing shall ever be wanting on my part to deserve his confidence and esteem.

I have transmitted by two opportunities, one by Captain Trowbridge, from hence, another by Dr. Dexter by the way of France, despatches from Mr. Dana, at Petersburg, by which congress will perceive that material advantages will arise from that gentleman's residence in that place, whether he soon communicates his mission to that court or not.

The English papers, which I forward by this opportunity, will inform congress of the state of things and parties in England. The ministry talk of a new system. Perhaps they may attempt Rhode Island once more in exchange for Charleston, and try their skill at intercepting our trade.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUYON.

The Hague, 19 December, 1781.

Sir,—

It has been insinuated to me, that the Spanish ambassador here has instructions from his court to enter into negotiation with their High Mightinesses, concerning an alliance between Spain and the republic. If this fact has come to your Excellency's knowledge, and there is no inconvenience nor impropriety in communicating it to me, I should be very much obliged to you for the information, not from curiosity merely, but for my government, in the steps I may have to take.

By my late instructions, of which your Excellency has a copy, I am to inform myself concerning the progress of American negotiations at the Court of Spain, and, if an alliance shall have been entered into between his Catholic Majesty and the United States, to invite his Catholic Majesty into the alliance proposed between France, their High Mightinesses, and the congress. If no such alliance shall have been formed, to receive his Catholic Majesty, should he manifest a disposition to become a party, &c.

Congress have wisely enjoined it upon me, to confer in the most confidential manner with your Excellency, and I have made it a law to myself, to take no material step in this negotiation without your approbation; but my instructions seem to make it necessary to take some measures, at least, to sound the disposition of the Spanish ambassador. I would, therefore, beg leave to propose to your consideration, and to request your opinion, whether you think it advisable for me to do myself the honor of making a visit to the Spanish ambassador, and communicating to him the substance of my instruction, as far as it relates to the Court of Madrid; or whether it would be better to communicate it by letter; or whether your Excellency will be so good as to take upon yourself this communication, and inform me of the result of it.

I am advised here to wait on the president of their High Mightinesses as soon as possible, and demand a categorical answer to my former proposition, and then to wait on the grand pensionary and Mr. Secretary Fagel, and, in turn, upon the pensionaries of all the cities of Holland, to inform them of the demand made to the president. But I submit to your consideration, whether it will not be expedient to communicate the project of a triple or quadruple alliance, to some confidential members of the States, as to the pensionaries of Dort, Haerlem, and Amsterdam, for example, with permission to them to communicate it, where they shall think it necessary, in order to give more weight to my demand.

The Court of Great Britain are manifestly availing themselves of the mediation of Russia, in order to amuse this republic, and restrain it from exerting itself in the war, and forming connections with the other belligerent powers, without intending to make peace with her upon any conditions which would not be ruinous to her. It is, therefore,

of the last importance to Holland, as well as of much consequence to the other belligerent powers, to draw her out of the snare, which one should think might be now easily done by a proposition of a triple or quadruple alliance.

To-morrow morning, at ten, I propose to do myself the honor of waiting on your Excellency, if that honor is agreeable, in order to avail myself more particularly of your sentiments upon these points.

In The Mean Time, I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

The Hague, 20 December, 1781.

Sir,—

I have received the letter you have done me the honor to address me. I shall be very eager to have that of conversing with you on the different subjects to which it relates, and shall expect to see you at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, as you desire.

Receive, sir, my renewed assurances of the inviolable sentiments with which I have the honor to be, &c.

De la Vauguyon.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

Versailles, 30 December, 1781.

Sir,—

You desired that on my arrival at Versailles, I should communicate to the Count de Vergennes your disposition to adopt the measure you have been advised to pursue by several well-disposed members of the States of Holland, and that I should at the same time make known to him your determination not to take that step without his approbation.

The minister directs me to inform you, that he sees no objection to the visit which you wish to make to the president of the assembly of the states-general, to the ministers of the republic, and to the deputies of the principal cities of the Province of Holland, provided that, without leaving with either of them any official writing, you limit yourself to the inquiry, whether the memorial which you transmitted to them several months since has been made the subject of deliberation by their High-Mightinesses, and what answer you may communicate to the congress of the United States of North America.

I do not know the precise time of my return to the Hague, but I see no reason to suppose that my absence will be longer than I intended.

Receive, Sir, My Renewed Assurance, &C.

De la Vauguyon.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Zwol, 6 Janvier, 1782.

Votre Excellence saura de Monsieur de Neufville que j'ai l'intention de placer encore douze mille florins dans les fonds de l'Amérique. Peut-être que je serais en état d'y ajouter encore cinq mille; mais ceci n'est pas encore décidé. Je préfère l'emprunt dont votre Excellence est chargé, à celui qui se fait sous la garantie de la France et de cette république, parceque je ne prétends pas être si ridicule que mes compatriotes, qui jusqu'à cette heure n'oseroient confier leur argent à l'Amérique sans une telle caution! Aussi puis-je assurer votre Excellence que leur conduite, a tout égard, commence a me choquer. Je commence a me sentir pour eux plus que de l'indifférence. J'ai honte d'être Hollandois, et je suis fâché de la peine que j'ai si souvent prise, même avec cette chaleur qui fut l'effet de mon attachement pour les deux peuples, afin de prévenir que votre Excellence ne se formât une idée, que je croyois alors trop désavantageuse, du caractère de la nation. Je vois que j'aurois plutôt dû me rappeler la réponse de Statilius à Brutus. *Sapientis non esse propter malos et stultos in periculum et turbas se dare.* Je ne regrette point le sacrifice d'une des plus belles occasions pour faire une fortune éclatante. Je ne veux point de fortune. Mais je regrette le sacrifice de mon repos, et cela *propter malos et stultos!* Voilà tous ces marchands, qui jadis firent tant de bruit, et qui par leurs sérieuses requêtes pourroient forcer la faction Anglaise, du moins l'embarrasser extrêmement; voilà cette classe de citoyens laquelle seule est en possession de s'assembler pour délibérer sur leurs intérêts communs, sans que l'on ose leur en faire un crime; ne voit on pas tous ces négocians, même ceux qui sont ruinés, se taire comme s'ils avoient des cadenas à la bouche. Si un petit reste d'attachement pour un pays que je crois perdu sans ressource pourroit encore me faire souhaiter quelque événement, qui put servir en guise de remède que l'on donne à un mourant, ce seroit de voir votre Excellence demander d'un ton convenable à la *grandeur* de l'Amérique Unie et à l'*indignité* de l'accueil que l'on a fait à son ambassadeur, une réponse *catégorique* au mémoire, que votre Excellence a présenté de sa part à leurs Hautes Puissances. Un tel pas, dans les circonstances actuelles, feroit éclat. Beaucoup de gens éclairés le souhaitent, et vraiment il n'est plus temps de temporiser. C'est en toujours temporisant que certaine grande ville n'a jamais fait rien qui vaille. Sa conduite, surtout durant cette guerre, me paroît très peu politique. Comme les Espagnols devant Gibraltar, elle s'épuise et perd son temps en de vains efforts contre certain gros personnage, au lieu qu'avec *beaucoup moins* de ces mêmes efforts elle auroit pu nous procurer une alliance avec la France et l'Amérique, mesure dont la nécessité est reconnue de tout le monde, tandis qu'il y a toujours eu des gens, qui étoient bien éloignés d'approuver cet autre pas. D'ailleurs la retraite de ce certain personnage auroit été une suite nécessaire d'une telle alliance. Messieurs de la grande ville ont donc, à mon avis, tiré leur poudre aux moineaux!

Mais il sied très mal à un ex-politique de se mêler des affaires d'État. Je demande pardon d'avoir si longtemps occupé votre Excellence, et j'ai l'honneur d'être avec tout le respect possible, de votre Excellence le très humble, &c.

J. D. Van der Capellen.

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TO BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN.

Amsterdam, 14 January, 1782.

Sir,—

Returning last evening from the Hague, I had the pleasure to find your kind favor of the 6th of this month, and am very glad to hear of your intention to place twelve thousand florins in the American funds. I am also much pleased to find that you prefer the loan with which I am intrusted, to that made under the warranty of France and this republic, because it is a more frank and manly acknowledgment of our first pretensions, and it is treating America more in her true character.

From the decent reception I met with in the course of the last week, from all the ministers of the republic, and the deputies of all the cities of Holland, and the affectionate and friendly reception from several of them, I am much encouraged to believe, that the final resolutions of the States, although they may be too long delayed, will yet be finally just both towards this country and America. I hope I may not be mistaken. The longer a decision is delayed, the less important it will be to America, most certainly, and the more important to the republic; for it may be depended on that the cause of America will grow every day stronger, and that of her enemies every day weaker, wherever or however this nation may declare itself.

Is the answer of Statilius to Brutus perfectly just? Is it not the duty of a wise man sometimes to expose himself to dangers, even for the good of fools and knaves? Is not the sentiment in another ancient writing more just, that a whole city is worth saving for the sake of ten honest men, for five, or even for two? It is certain that a statesman can never do good to his country or city, without conferring a benefit upon some of very worthless, and even of detestable character. I am, however, far from thinking, that worthy men are in this nation so rare. It is most certain that the time approaches very fast, when the republic must decide. I agree perfectly with you, that a certain great city might have accomplished a treaty with France and America, with half the efforts which they have made in vain against a certain personage. I am a stranger to the great city, and to the characters that govern it; but if common fame is not more than commonly impudent upon this occasion, self love is the same there as I have often seen it elsewhere; and the private ambition of an individual is everywhere capable of obstructing for a time the wisest plans and most generous efforts of disinterested men. Yet I have generally observed, that well-disposed men have redoubled their ardor and exertions, upon finding themselves embarrassed by such motives of individuals.

A gentleman has had the goodness to read to me in French the preface to a certain collection lately printed in Dutch, which is a masterly composition.

With Great Esteem And Respect,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Amsterdam, 14 January, 1782.

Sir,—

Having received the advice of several gentlemen, members of the States, and also the opinion of the Duc de la Vauguyon, and the Comte de Vergennes, I went to the Hague on Tuesday, the 8th day of this month, and the next morning, at ten, waited on the president of their High Mightinesses, M. Van den Sandheuvel, of Dort, a city of Holland, to whom I made a verbal requisition in the following words:—

“The 4th of May last I had the honor of a conference with the president of their High Mightinesses, in which I informed him that I had received a commission from the United States of America, with full powers and instructions to propose and conclude a treaty of amity and commerce between the United States of America and the United Provinces of the Netherlands. I had the honor in the same conference to demand an audience of their High Mightinesses, for the purpose of presenting my credentials and full powers. The president assured me, that he would report every thing that I had told him, to their High Mightinesses, so that the matter might be transmitted to the several members of the sovereignty, to be submitted to their deliberation and decision. I have not yet been honored with an answer; and for this reason I have the honor of addressing myself to you, sir, to demand from you, as I do demand, a categorical answer, which I may transmit to my sovereign.”

The president assured me, that he would not fail to make report to their High Mightinesses. After this, I sent a servant to the Grand Pensionary Bleiswyck, to know at what hour I should have the honor of a little conversation with him. The answer returned to me, with the compliments of the grand pensionary, was, that he was sick, unable to attend the assembly of the States, and to receive any visits at home from anybody; but if my business was of a public nature, I might communicate it to his secretary, which would be as well as to himself. Upon this, I requested M. Dumas to call upon the secretary, and communicate my intentions to him, which he did.

I went next morning, at ten, to the secretary of their High Mightinesses, M. Fagel, and communicated to him the step I had taken the day before, who told me that he had already been informed of it, for that the president, according to his promise, had made his report to their High Mightinesses; that it was true, that the Baron de Lynden de Hemmen had made his report to their High Mightinesses, on the 4th of last May, of my proposition to him, and that it had been forthwith taken *ad referendum* by all the Provinces, but that no member of the sovereignty had yet returned any answer at all, either in the affirmative or negative; that my proposition of yesterday had in like manner been taken *ad referendum* by all the Provinces, and that it was necessary to wait to see what answer they would give.

The secretary, who is perfectly well with the court, as his ancestors and family have been for a long course of years, and who is as complaisant to England as any man in this country, received me with perfect politeness, and when I took leave, insisted upon accompanying me through all the anti-chambers and long entries quite to my chariot door in the street, where he waited until we entered and drove off.

After this, I went to the house of Dort, the pensionary of which city, M. Gyselaer, received me with confidence and affection; told me, that all he could say to me in his public character was, that he thanked me for the communication I had made to him, and would communicate it to the deputation and to the regency of his city, and that he hoped I should have as friendly an answer as I desired, for that he personally saw me with great pleasure, and very readily acknowledged my character, and that of my country.

I went next, at the hour agreed on, to the house of Haerlem, where I was received by the whole deputation, consisting of two burgomasters, two schepens, and a pensionary. Here passed a scene, which really affected my sensibility, and gave me great pleasure. The five gentlemen were all aged and venerable magistrates, who received me with an affection and cordiality, which discovered, in their air and countenance, the sincerity and satisfaction they felt in the words of their pensionary, when he told me, that they were only deputies; that by the constitution of Haerlem, like all the others in the republic, the sovereignty resided in their constituents, the regency; that they thanked me for the communication I had made to them, that they would communicate it to the regency of their city, and that for themselves, they heartily wished it success; for that the United States, as sufferers for, and defenders of the great cause of liberty, might depend upon the esteem, affection, and friendship, of the city of Haerlem, and that they heartily wished a connection between the two republics, and they congratulated us on the capture of Lord Cornwallis, to which we returned to them a congratulation for the recapture of St. Eustatia, and took our leave.

At the house of Leyden, we were received by the pensionary, who told us he had the orders of his burgomasters to receive me, to thank me for the communication, and to promise to communicate it to their regency.

At the house of Rotterdam, we were received by the whole deputation, consisting of two burgomasters, two schepens, or judges, and the pensionary. We received thanks for the communication, and a promise to lay it before the regency.

At the house of Gouda and the Brille, the same reception and the same answer. At another house, where the deputies of five small cities lived together, the same answer. At the house, where the deputies of Alcmæer and Enkhuisen reside we were received by the whole deputations, obtained the same answers, with the addition of professions of esteem, and wishes that in time there might be closer connections between the two nations.

Thus I had been introduced to the ministers of the republic, and to the deputies of all the cities of Holland, except Amsterdam. In my messages to the deputations, I had followed the order of the cities, according to the rank they held in the confederation. I

had sent to the house of Amsterdam in its course. The messenger, the first time, found only one of the burgomasters at home, M. Rendorp, who returned for answer, that the gentlemen were not then together, but that they would send me word at what time they would receive me; but no answer came for a day or two. I sent again. The messenger found only the same burgomaster, who returned the same answer. On Friday morning, having no answer, I sent a third time. The answer from the same burgomaster was, that the gentlemen were then setting off for Amsterdam, being obliged to return upon business, and could not then see me, but would send me word. Upon this, I concluded to return to Amsterdam too, and to make the communication there in writing to the regency; but reflecting that this step would occasion much speculation and many reflections upon Amsterdam, I desired M. Dumas to wait on M. Vischer, the pensionary, who remained in town, and consult with him. The result was, that I made my visit to the house of Amsterdam, and made the communication to M. Vischer, who received me like a worthy minister of the great city.

It may not be amiss to conclude this letter by observing, that every city is considered as an independent republic. The burgomasters have the administration of the executive, like little kings. There is in the great council, consisting of the burgomasters and counsellors, a limited legislative authority. The schepens are the judges. The deputies are appointed by the regency, which consists of the burgomasters, counsellors, and schepens; and in the large cities, the deputies consist of two burgomasters, two schepens or counsellors, and one pensionary. The pensionary is the secretary of state, or the minister of the city. The pensionaries are generally the speakers upon all occasions, even in the assembly of the States of the Province.

These operations at the Hague have been received by the public with great appearance of approbation and pleasure, and the gazettes and pamphlets universally cry against the mediation of Russia, and for an immediate alliance with France and America. But the leaders of the republic, those of them I mean who are well intentioned, wish to have the two negotiations, that for peace under the mediation of Russia, and that for an alliance with France, Spain, and America, laid before the States and the public together, not so much with an expectation of accomplishing speedily an alliance with Bourbon and America, as with a hope of checking the English party, and preventing them from accepting a peace with England, or the mediation of Russia to that end, upon dangerous or dishonorable terms. If it was in any other country, I should conclude from all appearances, that an alliance with America and France, at least, would be finished in a few weeks; but I have been long enough here to know the nation better. The constitution of government is so complicated and whimsical a thing, and the temper and character of the nation so peculiar, that this is considered every where as the most difficult embassy in Europe. But at present, it is more so than ever; the nation is more divided than usual, and they are afraid of everybody, afraid of France, afraid of America, England, Russia, and the northern powers, and, above all, of the Emperor, who is taking measures, that will infallibly ruin the commerce of this country, if they do not soon change their conduct.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 25 January, 1782.

Sir,—

Your letter of the 11th, with a copy of that of M. le Comte de Vergennes, of 31st of December, I had the honor to receive by the last post. By your leaving it to me to judge how far it is proper for me to accept further drafts on Mr. Laurens, with any expectation of your enabling me to pay them, I am somewhat embarrassed. If I accept any bill at all, it must be in full confidence of your paying it, for there is not a possibility of my getting any money here.

I lately applied to one of the first houses, an old Dutch house which has traded to America a hundred years, and whose credit is as clear and solid as any one in the republic. I asked him frankly, if he would undertake a loan for me. His answer was, sir, I thank you for the honor you do me; I know the honor and profit that would accrue to any house from such a trust; I have particular reasons of my own, of several sorts, to be willing to undertake it, and I will tell you frankly, I will make the necessary inquiries, and give you an answer in two days; and if I find it possible to succeed, I will undertake it; but there are four persons who have the whole affair of loans through the republic under their thumbs; these persons are united; if you gain one you gain all, and the business is easy; but without them, there is not one house in this republic can succeed in any loan. After the two days he called on me to give me an account of his proceedings. He said he first waited on one of the regency, and asked him if it was proper for him to put in a *requête*, and ask leave to open such a loan. He was answered he had better say nothing to the regency about it, for they would either give him no answer at all, which was most probable, or say it was improper for them to interfere, either of which answers would do more hurt than good. It was an affair of credit which he might undertake without asking leave; for the regency never interfered to prevent merchants getting money. With this answer he went to one of the undertakers, whose answer was, that at least until there was a treaty it would be impossible to get the money; as soon as that event should happen, he was ready to undertake it.

I have been uniformly told that these four or five persons had such a despotic influence over loans; I have heretofore sounded them in various ways, and the result is, that I firmly believe they receive ample salaries, upon the express condition that they resist an American loan. There is a phalanx formed by British ministry, Dutch Court, proprietors of English stocks, and great mercantile houses in the interest of the British ministry, that support these undertakers and are supported by them.

We may therefore reckon boldly that we shall get nothing here, unless in the form of the late five millions lent to the King of France, and warranted by the republic, until there is a treaty.

I believe, however, I shall venture to accept the bills, of which I have given you notice, in hopes of your succeeding better than your fears.

Yesterday was brought me one more bill drawn on Mr. Laurens on the 6th July, 1780, for five hundred and fifty guilders, No. 145. I have asked time to write to your Excellency about this too, and shall wait your answer before I accept it.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 12 February, 1782.

Sir,—

I received the honor of yours dated the 7th instant, acquainting me with the presentation of several more bills drawn on Mr. Laurens. I think you will do well to accept them, and I shall endeavor to enable you to pay them. I should be glad to see a complete list of those you have already accepted. Perhaps, from the series of numbers and the deficiencies, one may be able to divine the sum that has been issued, of which we have never been informed as we ought to have been. Ignorance of this has subjected me to the unpleasant task of making repeated demands which displease our friends by seeming to have no end. The same is the case with the bills on Mr. Jay and on myself. This has, among other things, made me quite sick of my Gibeonite office,—that of drawing water for the whole congregation of Israel. But I am happy to learn from our minister of finance, that after the end of March next no further drafts shall be made on me, or trouble given me by drafts on others.

The Duke de la Vauguyon must be with you before this time. I am impatient to hear the result of your states on the demand you have made of a categoric answer, &c. I think with you that it may be wrong to interrupt or perplex their deliberations by asking aids during the present critical situation of affairs.

I understood that the goods had all been delivered to Mr. Barclay, and I punctually paid all the bills. That gentleman now writes me that those purchased of Gillon are detained on pretence of his debts. These new demands were never mentioned to me before. It has been, and will be a villanous affair from beginning to end.

With Great Esteem And Respect, &C.

B. Franklin.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Amsterdam, 14 February, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

Yesterday the duplicate of your letter of the 23d of October was brought to me; the original is not yet arrived. It is with great pleasure I learn that a minister is appointed for foreign affairs, who is so capable of introducing into that department an order, a constancy, and an activity which could never be expected from a committee of congress, so often changing, and so much engaged in other great affairs, however excellent their qualifications or dispositions. Indeed, sir, it is of infinite importance to me to know the sentiments of congress; yet I have never known them in any detail or with any regularity since I have been in Europe. I fear congress have heard as little from me since I have been in Holland. My despatches by the way of St. Eustatia and by several private vessels and by the South Carolina have been vastly unfortunate.

My situation, sir, has been very delicate; but as my whole life, from my infancy, has been passed through an uninterrupted series of delicate situations, when I find myself suddenly translated into a new one, the view of it neither confounds nor dismays me. I am very sensible, however, that such a habit of mind borders very nearly upon presumption, and deserves very serious reflections. My health is still precarious. My person has been thought by some to have been in danger; but at present I apprehend nothing to myself or the public.

This nation will have peace with England, if they can obtain it upon honorable terms, but upon no other. They cannot obtain it upon any other, without giving offence to France, and England will not make peace upon such conditions. I shall, therefore, probably remain here in a very insipid and insignificant state a long time without any affront or answer. In the parties which divide the nation I have never taken any share. I have treated all men of all parties whom I saw alike, and have been used quite as well by the Court party as their antagonists. Both parties have been in bodily fear of popular commotions, and the politics of both appear to me to be too much influenced by alternate fears, and I must add, hopes of popular commotions. Both parties agree in their determinations to obtain peace with England, if they can; but Great Britain will not cease to be the tyrant of the ocean until she ceases to be the tyrant of America. She will only give up her claims of empire over both together.

The Dutch have an undoubted right to judge for themselves, whether it is for their interest to connect themselves with us or not. At present I have no reason to be dissatisfied. I have, in pursuance of the advice of the Count de Vergennes and the Duc de la Vauguyon, added to that of several members of the States, demanded an answer. I was received politely by all parties, though you will hear great complaints from others that I am not received well. They have their views in this; they know that this is a good string for them to touch. I stand now in an honorable light, openly and

candidly demanding an answer in my public character. But it is the republic that stands in a less respectable situation, not one member of the sovereignty having yet ventured to give an answer in the negative. The dignity of the United States is, therefore, perfectly safe, and if that of this republic is questionable, this is their own fault, not ours. Your advice, to be well with the government, and to take no measures which may bring upon me a public affront, is perfectly just. All appearance of intrigue, and all the refinements of politics, have been as distant from my conduct as you know them to be from my natural and habitual character.

Your advice, to spend much of my time at the Hague, I shall in future pursue, though I have had reasons for a different conduct hitherto. As to connections with the ministers of other powers, it is a matter of great delicacy. There is no power but what is interested directly or indirectly in our affairs at present. Every minister has at his own Court a competitor who keeps correspondences and spies to be informed of every step; and open visits to or from any American minister are too dangerous for them to venture on. It must be managed with so much art, and be contrived in third places, and with so much unmeaning intrigue, that it should not be too much indulged, and after all nothing can come of it. There is not a minister of them all that is intrusted with any thing, but from time to time to execute positive instructions from his Court.

A loan of money has given me vast anxiety. I have tried every experiment and failed in all; and am fully of opinion that we never shall obtain a credit here until we have a treaty. When this will be, I know not. If France has not other objects in view of more importance, in my opinion she may accomplish it in a short time. Whether she has or not, time must discover.

Mr. Barclay is here, doing his utmost to despatch the public effects here; but these will turn out the dearest goods that congress ever purchased, if they ever arrive safe. It has been insinuated, I perceive, that I was privy to the purchase of a parcel of English manufactures among these goods. This is a mistake. It was carefully concealed from me, who certainly should not have countenanced it, if I had known it. Mr. Barclay will exchange them all for the manufactures of Germany or Holland, or sell them here. The ordinance of congress against British manufactures is universally approved as far as I know, as a hostility against their enemies of more importance than the exertions of an army of twenty thousand men.

With Great Esteem, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Amsterdam, 19 February, 1782.

Sir,—

On the 14th instant I had the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your duplicate of the 23d of October. To-day Major Porter brought me your favor of the 20th of November, and the original of that of the 23d of October.

I congratulate you, sir, on the glorious news contained in these despatches; but I cannot be of your opinion, that, great as it is, it will defeat every hope that Britain entertains of conquering a country so defended. Vanity, sir, is a passion capable of inspiring illusions which astonish all other men; and the Britons are, without exception, the vainest people upon earth. By examining such a witness as Arnold, the ministry can draw from him evidence which will fully satisfy the people of England that the conquest of America is still practicable. Sensible men see the error; but they have seen it these twenty years, and lamented it till their hearts are broken. The intention of government seems to be to break the spirit of the nation, and to bring affairs into so wretched a situation, that all men shall see that they cannot be made better by new ministers or by the punishment of the old ones.

It is suggested that some plan of conciliation will be brought into parliament; but it will be only as deceitful as all the former ones. They begin to talk big, and threaten to send Arnold with seventeen thousand men to burn and destroy in the northern States; but this will prove but an annual vapor. I rejoice the more in Colonel Willet's glorious services, for a personal knowledge and esteem I have for that officer. Zoutman's battle on Doggerbank shows what the nation could do. But—It is somewhat dangerous to write with perfect freedom concerning the views and principles of each party as you desire. Indeed, the views of all parties are enveloped in clouds and darkness. There are unerring indications that all parties agree secretly in this principle, that the Americans are right, if they have power. There is here and there an individual who says the Americans are wrong; but these are very few. The English party are suspected to have it in view to engage the republic to join the English in the war against France, Spain, and America.

The Prince is supposed to wish that this were practicable, but to despair of it. Some of the great proprietors of English stocks, several great mercantile houses in the service of the British ministry, are thought to wish it too; but if they are guilty of wishes so injurious to their country and humanity, none of them dares openly avow them. The stadtholder is of opinion that his house has been supported by England; that his office was created and is preserved by her. But I do not see why his office would not be as safe in an alliance with France as with England, unless he apprehends that the republican party would in that case change sides, connect itself with England, and by her means overthrow him. There are jealousies that the stadtholder aspires to be a

sovereign; but these are the ordinary jealousies of liberty, and, I should think, in this case, groundless. The opposite, which is called the republican party, is suspected of desires and designs of introducing innovations. Some are supposed to aim at the demolition of the stadtholdership; others, of introducing the people to the right of choosing the regencies; but I think these are very few in number, and very inconsiderable in power, though some of them may have wit and genius.

There is another party, at the head of which is Amsterdam, who think the stadtholdership necessary, but wish to have some further restraint or check upon it. Hence the proposition for a committee to assist his Highness. But there is no appearance that this project will succeed. All the divisions of the republican party are thought to think well of America, and to wish a connection with her and France. The opposite party do not openly declare themselves against this; but peace is the only thing in which all sides agree. No party dares say any thing against peace; yet there are individuals very respectable, who think that it is not for the public interest to make peace.

As to congress' adapting measures to the views and interests of both parties, they have already done it in the most admirable manner. They could not have done better if they had been all present here, and I know of nothing to be added. They have a plenipotentiary here with instructions; they have given power to invite the republic to accede to the alliance between France and America, with a power to admit Spain. All this is communicated to the Comte de Vergennes and the Duc de la Vauguyon; and I wait only their advice for the time of making the proposition. I have endeavored to have the good graces of the leaders, and I have no reason to suspect that I do not enjoy their esteem; and I have received from the Prince repeatedly, and in strong terms by his secretary, the Baron de Larray, assurances of his personal esteem.

I wrote, sir, on the 3d and 7th of May, as full an account of my presenting my credentials, as it was proper to write, and am astonished that neither duplicates nor triplicates have arrived. I will venture a secret. I had the secret advice of our best friends in the republic to take the step I did, though the French ambassador thought the time a little too early. My situation would have been ridiculous and deplorable indeed, if I had not done it, and the success of the measure, as far as universal applause could be called success, has justified it. Those who detested the measure, sir, were obliged to applaud it in words. I am surprised to see you think it places us in a humiliating light. I am sure it raised me out of a very humiliating position, such as I never felt before, and shall never feel again, I believe. I have lately, by the express advice of all our best friends, added to that of the Duc de la Vauguyon and the Comte de Vergennes, demanded a categorical answer. I knew very well I should not have it; but it has placed the United States and their minister in a glorious light, demanding candidly an answer, and the republic has not yet equal dignity to give it. In this manner we may remain with perfect safety to the dignity of the United States and the reputation of her minister, until their High Mightinesses shall think fit to answer, or until we shall think it necessary to repeat the demand, or make a new one, which I shall not do without the advice of the French ambassador, with whom I shall consult in perfect confidence.

My motives for printing the memorial were, that I had no other way to communicate my proposition to the sovereign of the country. The gentlemen at the Hague, who are called their High Mightinesses, are not the sovereign; they are only deputies of the states-general, who compose the sovereignty. These joint-deputies form only a diplomatic body, not a legislative nor an executive one. The states-general are the regencies of cities and bodies of nobles. The regencies of cities are the burgomasters, and schepens or judges and counsellors, composing in the whole a number of four or five thousand men, scattered all over the republic. I had no way to come at them but by the press, because the president refused to receive my memorial. If he had received it, it would have been transmitted of course to all the regencies; but in that case it would have been printed; for there is no memorial of a public minister in this republic, but what is printed.

When the president said, "Sir, we have no authority to receive your memorial, until your title and character are acknowledged by our constituents and sovereigns; we are not the sovereign;" I answered, "In that case, sir, it will be my duty to make the memorial public in print, because I have no other possible way of addressing myself to the sovereign, your constituents."

The president made no objection, and there has been no objection to this day. Those who dreaded the consequence to the cause of Angloman have never ventured to hint a word against it. The Anglomans would have had a triumph if it had not been printed, and I should before this day have met with many disagreeable scenes, if not public affronts. This openness has protected me. To conciliate the affections of the people, to place our cause in an advantageous light, to remove the prejudices that Great Britain and her votaries excite, to discover the views of the different parties, to watch the motions that lead to peace between England and Holland, have been my constant aim since I have resided here. The secret aid of government in obtaining a loan I have endeavored to procure, but it can never be obtained until there is a treaty. I have hitherto kept a friendly connection with the French ambassador, and that without interruption. The new commission for peace, and the revocation of that for a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, I have received. My language and conduct are those of a private gentleman; but those members of congress who think this proper, know that I have held public places in Europe, too public and conspicuous for me to be able to remain incognito in this country; nor is it for the interest of the republic that I should attempt it.

I should be extremely obliged to you, sir, if you would let me know the dates of all the letters that have been received from me, since I have been in Holland, that I may send further copies of such as have miscarried.

The States of Holland have accepted the mediation of Russia, on condition of saving the rights of the armed neutrality. There has been a balancing between a treaty with France and the acceptance of this mediation. Amsterdam said nothing. The mediation was accepted; but several provinces have declared for a treaty with France. People of the best intentions are jealous of a peace with England upon dishonorable terms; but France will prevent this, though she does not choose to prevent the acceptance of the mediation, as she might have done, by consenting to my making the proposition of a

triple or quadruple alliance. Her ambassador says, the King must not oppose the Empress of Russia, who will be of importance in the final settlement of peace.

France has never discovered much inclination to a treaty with the republic. The demolition of the barrier towns may explain this, as well as the ambassador's opinion against presenting my memorial at the time it was done. I believe that France, too, can explain the reason of the delay of Spain, where we make a less respectable appearance than in this republic. The delay of Spain is fatal to our affairs. Yet I know the American minister there to be equal to any service, which makes me regret the more the delay of that kingdom. The constant cry is, "why is Spain silent? We must wait for Spain." Nothing gives greater advantage to the English party.

The nature of the government in an absolute monarchy, would render it improper to make any application or memorial public. The nature of this government rendered it indispensably necessary. The business must begin in the public, that is, in all the regencies. De Witt and Temple, it is true, made a treaty in five days; but De Witt risked his head by it, upon the pardon and confirmation of the regencies. But it was a time and a measure which he knew to be universally wished for. The case at present is different. M. Van Bleiswyck, though he told me he thought favorably of my first application, would not have dared to take a single step without the previous orders of his masters, as he told me.

It is the United States of America which must save this republic from ruin. It is the only power that is externally respected by all parties, although no party dares as yet declare openly for it. One half the republic nearly, declares every day very indecently against France, the other against England; but neither one nor the other declares against America, which is more beloved and esteemed than any other nation of the world.

We must wait, however, with patience. After oscillating a little longer, and grasping at peace, finding it unattainable, I think they will seek an alliance with America, if not with France. I had a week ago a visit from one of the first personages in Friesland, who promised me that in three weeks I should have an answer from that Province.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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DAVID HARTLEY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Golden Square, London, 19 February, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

I take the opportunity by means of Mr. Laurens Jr., of addressing a few lines to you, for the purpose of expressing my entire concurrence with your benevolent sentiments concerning peace and the *blessed peacemakers*. I agree with you that *peace must come in company with faith and honor*; and, when these meet, I join with you in saying,—*let friendship join the amiable and venerable choir*. It is some months since I received the favor of your letter containing these sentiments. But as the justice, humanity, and benevolence of these sentiments are eternal, I conclude that the sentiments themselves will always remain yours. My only object in writing is to say thus much to you, and to express my most sincere wish that the actual exercise of the *blessed* office of peacemakers may be called forth in the persons of those who are now in appointment to that honorable trust from America. If I should ever have it in my power to contribute to that blessed end, be assured that my utmost endeavors shall always be exercised (as they always have been) to establish peace and friendship through the paths of honor and good faith. Permit me to inquire of you who are entitled to treat on the part of America, and whether Mr. Laurens, the late president, be of the number.

I Am, Dear Sir, &C.

D. Hartley.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 20 February, 1782.

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.

Your office is certainly a disagreeable one in many respects, and mine grows every day more and more disgusting to me. I wish myself at home again every hour in the twenty-four, and I hope ere long to obtain permission to go. Affairs here are in such a situation that I could not be justified in going until congress shall appoint another or recall me, or I would ask leave to return in the Alliance. Is Mr. Laurens exchanged? If he is, and will come over here and take his own place, I would venture to go home without leave.

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. Maclaine'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 Comte de Vergennes, and by several worthy gentlemen in the government here. It was intended to bring necessarily into deliberation a connection 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.

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 acceptance. But France did not think it politic to do any thing 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 forbids 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.

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.

The affair of the goods has been a villanous affair indeed, as you observe; but they cannot be intrusted to more prudent hands than those of Mr. Barclay, where I leave them.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. DE LAFAYETTE.

Amsterdam, 20 February, 1782.

My Dear General,—

Yesterday Major Porter brought me your kind favor of the first of this month, together with some letters from America, in one of which is a resolution of congress, of the 23d of November, “That the secretary of foreign affairs acquaint the ministers plenipotentiary of the United States, that it is the desire of congress that they confer with the Marquis de la Fayette, and avail themselves of his informations relative to the situation of public affairs in the United States.” This instruction is so agreeable to my inclinations, that I would undertake a journey to Paris, for the sake of a personal interview with my dear General, if the state of my health, and the situation of affairs in which I am here engaged, did not render it improper.

Permit me, however, to congratulate you on your arrival with fresh and unfading laurels, and to wish you all the happiness, which the sight of your family, the applauses of the public, and the approbation of your sovereign, can afford you. I should be extremely happy in your correspondence, sir, and if there is any thing in this country which you would wish to know, I should be glad to inform you as far as is in my power. This republic is balancing between an alliance with France and America, on the one hand, and the mediation of Russia for a separate peace, on the other. The bias is strong for peace, but they do not see a prospect of obtaining it by the mediation. They are determined, however, to try the experiment, but are so divided about it, that all is languor and confusion. I fancy they will oscillate for some time, and, at last, finding the negotiations for a separate peace an illusion, they will join themselves to the enemies of their enemy.

Upon your return to America, I should be obliged to you, if you would say to some of the members of congress, that if they should think fit to recall me, it is absolutely necessary, in my humble opinion, that they should have some other person here invested with the same powers.

With The Sincerest Affection And Esteem,
I Have The Honor To Be, My Dear General, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Amsterdam, 21 February, 1782.

Sir,—

I know very well the name of the family where I spent the evening with my worthy friend Mr.—, before we set off, and have made my alphabet accordingly; but I am, on this occasion, as on all others hitherto, utterly unable to comprehend the sense of the passages in cipher. The cipher is certainly not taken regularly under the two first letters of that name. I have been able sometimes to decipher words enough to show that I have the letters right; but, upon the whole, I can make nothing of it, which I regret very much upon this occasion, as I suppose the ciphers are a very material part of the letter.

The friendly and patriotic anxiety with which you inquire after my motives and reasons for making the proposition of the 4th of May, and for printing the memorial, has put me upon recollecting the circumstances. If the series of my letters had arrived, I think the reasons would have appeared, but not with that force in which they existed at the time. I have never expressed, in writing, those reasons so strongly as I felt them. The hopes have never been strong in anybody, of inducing the republic to a sudden alliance with France and America. The utmost expectation, that many of the well-intentioned have entertained, has been to prevent the government from joining England. I am sorry to be obliged to say it, and if it ever should be made public, it might be ill taken. But there is no manner of doubt, that the most earnest wish of the cabinet has been to induce the nation to furnish the ships and troops to the English according to their interpretation of the treaty. Amsterdam distinguished itself; and its ancient and venerable burgomaster, Temminck, and its eldest pensionary, Van Berckel, have distinguished themselves in Amsterdam.

When Mr. Laurens's papers were discovered, they were sent forthwith to the Hague. The Prince, in person, laid them before the States. Sir Joseph Yorke thundered with his memorials against Amsterdam, her burgomasters, and pensionary. The nation was seized with amazement, and flew to the armed neutrality for shelter against the fierce wrath of the King. Instantly, Sir Joseph Yorke is recalled, and a declaration of war appears, levelled against the city, against the burgomasters, and M. Van Berckel. Sir George Rodney, in his despatches, pursues the same partiality and personality against Amsterdam. What was the drift of all this? Manifestly to excite seditions against Temminck and Van Berckel. Here then is a base and scandalous system of policy, in which the King of Great Britain, and his ministry and admiral, all condescend to engage, manifestly concerted by Sir Joseph Yorke, at the Hague, and, I am sorry to add, too much favored by the cabinet, and even openly by the Prince, by his presenting Laurens's papers to the States, to sacrifice Temminck and Van Berckel to the fury of an enraged populace.

This plan was so daringly supported by writers of the first fame on the side of the court, that multitudes of writings appeared, attempting to show that what Temminck and Van Berckel had done was high treason. All this had such an effect, that all the best men seemed to shudder with fear. I should scarcely find credit in America, if I were to relate anecdotes. It would be ungenerous to mention names, as well as unnecessary. I need only say, that I was avoided like a pestilence by every man in government. Those gentlemen of the rank of burgomasters, schepens, pensionaries, and even lawyers, who had treated me with great kindness and sociability, and even familiarity before, dared not see me, dared not be at home when I visited at their houses, dared not return my visit, dared not answer, in writing, even a card that I wrote them. I had several messages in a roundabout way, and, in confidence, that they were extremely sorry they could not answer my cards and letters in writing, because “*on fait tout son possible pour me sacrifier aux Anglomanes.*”

Not long after, arrived the news of the capture of St. Eustatia, &c. This filled up the measure. You can have no idea, sir, no man, who was not upon the spot, can have any idea, of the gloom and terror that was spread by this event. The creatures of the court openly rejoiced in this, and threatened, some of them in the most impudent terms. I had certain information, that some of them talked high of their expectations of popular insurrections against the burgomasters of Amsterdam, and M. Van Berckel; and did Mr. Adams the honor to mention him as one that was to be hanged by the mob in such company.

In the midst of this confusion and terror, my credentials arrived from Paris, through a hundred accidents and chances of being finally lost. As soon as I read my despatches, and heard the history of their escape by post, diligence, and treck-schuyts, it seemed to me as if the hand of Providence had sent them on purpose to dissipate all these vapors. With my despatches, arrived from Paris intimations of their contents, for there are no secrets kept at Paris. The people, who are generally eager for a connection with America, began to talk, and paragraphs appeared in all the gazettes, in Dutch and French and German, containing a thousand ridiculous conjectures about the American ambassador and his errand. One of my children could scarcely go to school, without some pompous account of it in the Dutch papers. I had been long enough in this country to see tolerably well where the balance lay, and to know that America was so much respected by all parties, that no one would dare to offer any insult to her minister, as soon as he should be known. I wrote my memorial and presented it, and printed it in English, Dutch, and French. There was immediately the most universal and unanimous approbation of it expressed in all companies, pamphlets, and newspapers, and no criticism ever appeared against it. Six or seven months afterwards a pamphlet appeared in Dutch, which was afterwards translated into French, called *Considerations on the Memorial*; but it has been read by very few, and is indeed not worth reading.

The proposition to the president being taken *ad referendum*, it became a subject of the deliberation of the sovereignty. The Prince, therefore, and the whole court, are legally bound to treat it with respect, and me with decency. At least, it would be criminal in them to treat me or the subject with indecency. If it had not been presented and printed, I am very sure I could not long have resided in the republic; and what would

have been the consequence to the friends of liberty, I know not. They were so disheartened and intimidated, and the Anglomans were so insolent, that no man can say, that a sudden frenzy might not have been excited among the soldiery and the people, to demand a junction with England, as there was in the year 1748. Such a revolution would have injured America and her allies, have prolonged the war, and have been the total loss and ruin of the republic.

Immediately upon the presentation of my memorial, M. Van Berckel ventured to present his *requête* and demand for a trial. This contributed still further to raise the spirits of the good people, and soon afterwards the burgomasters of Amsterdam appeared with their proposition for giving the Prince a committee for a council, and in course their attack upon the Duke; all of which together excited such an enthusiasm in the nation, and among the officers of the navy, as produced the battle of the Doggerbank, which never would have happened, in all probability, but would have been eluded by secret orders and various artifices, if the spirit raised in the nation by the chain of proceedings, of which the American memorial was the first and an essential link, had not rendered a display of the national bravery indispensable for the honor of the navy, and, perhaps, for the safety of the court.

The memorial, as a composition, has very little merit; yet almost every gazette in Europe has inserted it, and most of them with a compliment; none with any criticism. When I was in Paris and Versailles afterwards, no man ever expressed to me the smallest disapprobation of it, or the least apprehension that it could do any harm. On the contrary, several gentlemen of letters expressed higher compliments upon it than it deserved. The King of Sweden has done it a most illustrious honor, by quoting one of the most material sentiments in it, in a public answer to the King of Great Britain; and the Emperor of Germany has since done the author of it the honor to desire, in the character of Count Falkenstein, to see him; and what is more remarkable, has adopted the sentiment of it concerning religious liberty into a code of laws for his dominions, the greatest effort in favor of humanity, next to the American revolution, which has been produced in the eighteenth century.

As my mission to this republic was wisely communicated to the Court of Versailles, who can say that this transaction of congress had not some influence in producing De Grasse in Chesapeake Bay? Another thing I ought to mention; I have a letter from Mr. Jay, informing me, that in the month of June last, M. Del Campo was appointed by the Court of Madrid to treat with him; the exact time when my memorial appeared at Madrid. You may possibly say, that my imagination and self-love carry me extraordinary lengths; but when one is called upon to justify an action, one should look all round. All I contend for, is, that the memorial has certainly done no harm; that it is probable it has done some good, and that it is possible it has done much more than can be proved. A man always makes an awkward figure when he is justifying himself and his own actions; and I hope I shall be pardoned. It is easy to say, "*il abonde trop dans son sens; il est vain et glorieux; il est plein de lui-même; il ne voit que lui;*" and other modest things of that sort, with which even your Malesherbes, your Turgots, and Neckers, are sometimes sacrificed to very small intrigues.

Your veterans in diplomacy and in affairs of state, consider us as a kind of militia, and hold us, perhaps, as is natural, in some degree of contempt; but wise men know that militia sometimes gain victories over regular troops, even by departing from the rules. Soon after I had presented the memorial, I wrote to the Due de la Vauguyon upon the subject of inviting or admitting, in concert, the republic to accede to the alliance between France and America. The Duke transmitted that letter to the Count de Vergennes, which produced the offer to congress from the King, to assist us in forming a connection with the republic, and the instructions upon the subject, which I shall execute as soon as the French ambassador thinks proper. With him it now lies, and with him, thank God, I have hitherto preserved a perfectly good understanding, although I differed from him in opinion concerning the point of time to make the former proposition.

The evacuation of the barrier towns has produced an important commentary upon the conversation I had with the Duke, and his opinion upon that occasion. How few weeks was it, after the publication of my memorial, that the Roman Emperor made that memorable visit to Brussels, Ostend, Bruges, Antwerp, and all the considerable maritime towns in his Provinces of Brabant and Flanders? How soon afterwards his memorable journeys to Holland and to Paris? Was not the American memorial full of matter for the Emperor's contemplation, when he was at Ostend, Antwerp, and Bruges? Was it not full of matter, calculated to stimulate him to hasten his negotiations with France concerning the abolition of the barrier towns? Was not the same matter equally calculated to stimulate France to finish such an agreement with him, as we have seen the evidence of in the actual evacuation of those towns? If this evacuation is an advantage to France and to America, as it undoubtedly is, by putting this republic more in the power of France, and more out of a possibility of pursuing the system of Orange by joining England, and my memorial is supposed to have contributed any thing towards it, surely it was worth the while.

The period since the 4th of May, 1781, has been thick sown with great events, all springing out of the American revolution, and connected with the matter contained in my memorial. The memorial of M. Van Berckel, the proposition of the burgomasters of Amsterdam, their attack upon the Duke of Brunswick, and the battle of Doggerbank, the appointment of Señor del Campo, to treat with Mr. Jay, the success of Colonel Laurens, in obtaining orders for the French fleet to go upon the coast of America; their victory over Graves, and the capture of Cornwallis; the Emperor's journey to his maritime towns, to Holland, and to Paris; his new regulations for encouraging the trade of his maritime towns; his demolition of the barrier fortifications; and his most liberal and sublime ecclesiastical reformation; and the King of Sweden's reproach to the King of England for continuing the war, in the very words of my memorial; these traits are all subsequent to that memorial, and they are too sublime and decisive proofs of the prosperity and glory of the American cause, to admit the belief, that the memorial has done it any material harm.

By comparing facts and events, and dates, it is impossible not to believe, that the memorial had some influence in producing some of them. When courts, princes, and nations, have been long contemplating a great system of affairs, and their judgments begin to ripen, and they begin to see how things ought to go, and are going, a small

publication, holding up these objects in a clear point of view, sometimes sets a vast machine in motion at once, like the springing of a mine. What a dust we raise, said the fly upon the chariot wheel. It is impossible to prove, that this whole letter is not a similar delusion to that of the fly. The counsels of princes are enveloped in impenetrable secrecy. The true motives and causes, which govern their actions, little or great, are carefully concealed. But I desire only that these events may be all combined together, and then that an impartial judge may say, if he can, that he believes that that homely, harmless memorial had no share in producing any part of this great complication of good.

But be all these speculations and conjectures as they will, the foresight of which could not have been sufficiently clear to have justified the measure, it is sufficient for me to say that the measure was absolutely necessary and unavoidable. I should have been contemptible and ridiculous without it. By it I have secured to myself and my mission universal decency and respect, though no open acknowledgment or avowal.

I write this to you in confidence. You may entirely suppress it, or communicate it in confidence, as you judge, for the public good.

I might have added that many gentlemen of letters of various nations have expressed their approbation of this measure; I will mention only two. M. d'Alembert and M. Raynal, I am well informed, have expressed their sense of it in terms too flattering for me to repeat. I might add the opinion of many men of letters in this republic.

The charge of vanity is the last resource of little wits and mercenary quacks, the vainest men alive, against men and measures that they can find no other objection to. I doubt not but letters have gone to America containing their weighty charge against me; but this charge, if supported only by the opinion of those who make it, may be brought against any man or thing.

It may be said that this memorial did not reach the Court of Versailles until after Colonel Laurens had procured the promise of men and ships. But let it be considered, Colonel Laurens brought with him my credentials to their High Mightinesses, and instructions to Dr. Franklin to acquaint the Court of Versailles with it, and request their countenance and aid to me. Colonel Laurens arrived in March. On the 16th of April I acquainted the Due de la Vauguyon, at the Hague, that I had received such credentials, and the next day waited on him in person, and had, that day and the next, two hours' conversation with him each day upon the subject, in which I informed him of my intention to go to their High Mightinesses. All this he transmitted to the Count de Vergennes; and though it might procure me the reputation of vanity and obstinacy, I shall forever believe that it contributed to second and accelerate Colonel Laurens's negotiations, who succeeded to a marvel, though Dr. Franklin says he gave great offence. I have long since learned that a man may give offence and yet succeed. The very measures necessary for success may be pretended to give offence.

The earnest opposition made by the Due de la Vauguyon, only served to give me a more full and ample persuasion and assurance of the utility and necessity of the measure. His zeal convinced me that he had a stronger apprehension that I should

make a great impression somewhere than I had myself. "Sir," says he, "the King and the United States are upon very intimate terms of friendship. Had not you better wait until we can make the proposition in concert?" "God grant they may ever continue in perfect friendship," said I; "but this friendship does not prevent your Excellency from conducting your negotiations without consulting me. Why then am I obliged, in proposing a simple treaty of commerce, which the United States have reserved the entire right of proposing, to consult your Excellency? If I were about to propose an alliance, or to invite or admit the Dutch to accede to the alliance between the King and the States, I should think myself obliged to consult your Excellency." "But," said he, "there is a loan talked of to be opened by the United States here, under the warranty of the King. How will it look for you to go to the states without my concurrence?" "Of this I know nothing," said I, "but one thing I know, that if such a loan should be proposed, the proposition I design to make to the states, instead of obstructing, will facilitate it, and your proposal of a loan will rather countenance me."

"Is there not danger," said he, "that the Empress of Russia and the other northern powers will take offence at your going to the states-general before them?" "Impossible," said I; "they all know that the Dutch have been our old friends and allies; that we shall have more immediate connections of commerce with Holland than with them. But what is decisive in this matter is, America and Holland have now a common enemy in England at open war, which is not the case with the northern powers."

"Had you not better wait, until I can write to the Count de Vergennes, and have his opinion?" "I know already, beforehand," said I, "what his opinion will be." "Ay, what?" "Why, directly against it." "For what reason?" "Because the Count de Vergennes will not commit the dignity of the King or his own reputation, by advising me to apply, until he is sure of success, and in this he may be right; but the United States stand in a different predicament. They have nothing to lose by such a measure, and may gain a great deal."

"But," said he, "if Holland should join England in the war, it will be unfortunate." "If there was danger of this," said I, "a proposition from the United States would be one of the surest means of preventing it; but the situation of Holland is such that I am persuaded they dare not join England. It is against their consciences, and they are in bodily fear of a hundred thousand men from France." "God," said he, "you have used an argument now that you ought to speak out boldly and repeat peremptorily in all companies, for this people are governed very much by fear." "I have, however, spoken upon this subject with delicacy, upon all occasions, and shall continue to do so," said I, "but shall make no secret that I am sensible of it."

After turning the subject in all the lights it could bear, I told him that I believed he had urged every objection against the measure that could be thought of, but that I was still clear in my former opinion. "Are you decided to go to the states?" "Yes, sir. I must say I think it my duty." "Very well; in that case," said he, "you may depend upon it, I will do all in my power, as a man, to countenance and promote your application."

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 24 Février, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Vous aurez vu ce matin, par ma lettre d'avis et traite d'hier de f. 10,000 à vue, lesquelles vous auront été présentées par M. Molière, négociant de votre ville, ce qui concerne la transaction touchant votre hôtel ici. Le nombre de ceux qui m'ont témoigné le plaisir que cela leur fait est grand. Les Anglomanes gardent le silence avec moi. Un seul, des plus outrés, me demanda hier si le fait étoit vrai; je lui dis qu'oui, et qu'il voyoit devant lui le *tentator* et le *patrator* du délit. Sur quoi point de réplique.

Celle-ci est principalement pour vous informer, monsieur, que je sais de science certaine, que l'on a pris en Frise la résolution provinciale de reconnoître l'indépendance dont l'Amérique unie est en pleine possession. J'ai lieu d'espérer, que quelqu'autre chose viendra à l'appui de cette démarche. Laissons leur faire cela sans bouger de notre côté. En attendant, le mauvais temps se passera; vous rangerez votre hôtel ici; et puis nous ferons une petite tournée ensemble qui ne sera pas inutile, et qui pourra nous faire autant de bien politiquement que physiquement. J'espère de recevoir demain de vos nouvelles, et notamment que vous vous portez parfaitement bien.

Votre Très Humble, &C.

Dumas.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 26 Février, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Dans une lettre de ce même jour, qui est déjà à la poste, j'ai oublié de vous faire part d'un article essentiel, qui est, que le rapport de M. Van der Santheuvel, le président, fait à L. H. P., de votre dernière réquisition, a été pris *ad referendum* le dernier jour de l'assemblée d'Hollande, par toutes les villes de cette province. Nous verrons ce qui en résultera. Les États se rassembleront demain Mercredi en huit.

À La Hâte, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO JOHN JAY.

Amsterdam, 28 February, 1782.

Sir,—

I have the pleasure to inform you that Friesland has taken the provincial resolution to acknowledge the sovereignty of the United States of America, and to admit their minister to an audience, and has instructed her deputies in the assembly of their High Mightinesses, at the Hague, to make a motion in eight days from this.

The states of Holland have also taken my last requisition, and transmitted it to the several cities; and to-morrow it is to be taken into consideration in the regency of Amsterdam. Dort has made a motion in the states of Holland to acknowledge American independence and admit me to an audience. Their High Mightinesses have encouraging news from Petersburg, and from the East and West Indies; so that at present there are appearances that our affairs will go very well here, and come to a speedy treaty. If any thing should delay it, it will be the example of Spain; but I do not believe that will, a great while. One thing is past a doubt; if Spain should now make a treaty with you, this republic would immediately follow the example, which, if any thing can, would accelerate the negotiations for peace. By the tenth article of the treaty of alliance between France and America, the parties agree to invite in concert other powers to make common cause and accede. Permit me to suggest an idea. Suppose you write to the French ambassador at Madrid, and cite the words of that tenth article, and request him to join you in an invitation to the King of Spain. Excuse this freedom. You will judge whether it will do.

I should be exceedingly obliged to you for the earliest intelligence, whether there is any prospect with you or not.

With Great Esteem, &C.

John Adams.

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGYON.

Amsterdam, 1 March, 1782.

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.

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 principles, it seems to be necessary for me to go to the president of their High Mightinesses, and, without offering him any thing in writing, to make him the proposition in the following words, or others equivalent.

Monsieur,—I have done myself the honor of demanding this conference, in order to desire you to inform their High Mightinesses, that, by the tenth article of the treaty of alliance between France and the United States of America, the Most Christian King and the United States, “sont convenues, d'inviter de concert, ou d'admettre les puissances, qui auront de griefs contre l'Angleterre, à faire cause commune avec eux, et à accéder à la présente alliance sous les conditions qui seront librement agréées et convenues entre toutes les parties.” That the United States have lately transmitted to their minister plenipotentiary at the Hague a fresh commission, with full powers, general and special, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers by his Most Christian Majesty and their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, of, and concerning 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.

As it is most certain that no member of this republic, nor any impartial power of Europe, can deny it to be “une puissance qui a des griefs contre l’Angleterre,” in the name and behalf of the said United States, and in obedience to their express instructions, and in virtue of the said tenth article of the said treaty of alliance, I have the honor to propose such a triple alliance to their High Mightinesses, the states-general.

A combination of the counsels and arms of all those powers against whom Great Britain, in the wantonness of her ambition, has declared war, appears to be the easiest and the only certain method of preventing the unnecessary effusion of human blood, which is not, however, more sacred nor precious in the sight of Americans than in that of your High Mightinesses and the other powers of Europe,—the only way of bringing this war to a speedy conclusion for the happiness of mankind,—the only way in which a safe, solid, and honorable peace can be soon obtained by any of the powers at war; but if their High Mightinesses should be of a different opinion, they are the supreme judges of the policy of this nation, and have their own choice; and America, with the generous assistance of her august and glorious ally, can sustain the war in future for any given period of time with as little inconvenience as any other of the belligerent powers.

Upon this occasion, moreover, I take the liberty to repeat the requisition of the 9th of January, of a categorical answer to the demand of an audience of their High Mightinesses of the 4th of May last, because, whether their High Mightinesses shall think fit or not to enter into the proposed triple or quadruple alliance; whether they shall think fit or not to enter into the proposed treaty of amity and commerce with the United States, it seems indispensably necessary that their High Mightinesses should declare whether they consider the United States as an independent State or not; whether they consider their inhabitants as friends or enemies; that the men-of-war, privateers, and merchants of each nation may know how to govern themselves in relation to the subject of prizes and reprisals at sea.¹

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, &c.

John Adams.

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THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Translation.)

The Hague, 4 March, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received the letter you did me the honor to address to me from Amsterdam, the 1st instant. I am not in a situation to answer it in the capacity of King's minister, not having any ulterior instructions on the subject to which it relates; but as you request my private opinion, I will give it to you with the greatest sincerity.

After having seriously reflected on the views which you have communicated to me, whatever inclination I may have to adopt your opinions, I cannot conceal from myself the inconveniences attending the execution of the plan, which you appear disposed to follow. I should apprehend that it might retard rather than accelerate the ultimate success, and I believe I have good reasons for this opinion. I shall have the honor of explaining more fully by word of mouth the motives which decide my conduct, if, as M. Dumas gives me to hope, you should visit the Hague in the course of a few days.

Receive, sir, my renewed assurances of inviolable attachment and profound respect, &c.

De la Vauguyon.

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TO M. BERGSMA.

Amsterdam, 5 March, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received from the hands of Mr. Menkema the resolution of the States of Friesland of the 26th of February. I beg you would accept of my best thanks for the honor you have done me in communicating to me so early this important measure; a resolution which does honor to that spirit of liberty which distinguishes your province, and is so apparently equitable, that the example cannot fail to be followed by all the other provinces.

The situation of this republic is such, that she cannot rationally expect peace upon any terms consistent with her honor and essential interests, until there is a general peace. Great Britain will never agree to a peace with this nation, but from motives that will equally stimulate her to make peace with America. She will never make peace with either, while she entertains a hope of any advantage in continuing the war. And there is every reason to believe that nothing would contribute more to extinguish such hopes than a decided acknowledgment of American sovereignty by this republic.

Such an acknowledgment, too, will probably have a great influence with Spain and with all the powers which are parties to the armed neutrality.

In short, there is no event which would have a stronger tendency to accelerate a general peace so much wished for by mankind.

The true system of this republic is to be neutral as much as possible in the wars of Europe. This will also be the true system of America; and an intimate friendship between the two republics will enable each to assist the other in maintaining their neutrality.

The Province of Friesland will have the honor with posterity of having first penetrated into the true plan of policy for the republic; and she is indebted to no man more for this advantage than to you.

I have the honor to congratulate you and the Province upon the occasion, and to subscribe myself, &c.

John Adams.

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TO M. DE LAFAYETTE.

Amsterdam, 10 March, 1782.

My Dear General,—

The proceedings of late in the British parliament, I think, abundantly prove that the British troops will evacuate New York and Charleston, and go to Quebec, Halifax, and the West India Islands, provided they can escape in the course of the ensuing summer.

It cannot be a question to any sensible man, whether it would cost most time, blood, and treasure to France and Spain to take them all prisoners where they now are, or to fight them in detail in the West India Islands. No man knows better than you what is necessary in order to strike this sublime stroke, and thus finish the war, namely,—a superior fleet and a good sum of money.

The Province of Friesland has taken the resolution to acknowledge the sovereignty of the United States of America, and to give audience to their minister, and has communicated to the states-general. Holland has committed the same subject to the committee for great affairs, and the body of nobles and all the cities have it under deliberation. Guelderland, Zealand, and Overijssel, too, have taken the resolution of Friesland into consideration.

With Great Affection And Esteem, I Am, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 10 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Après que vous fûtes parti, je reçus un billet de notre ami, pour me prier de lui envoyer au plus vite une copie du projet de réponse que vous avez vu et désapprouvé, en m'assurant qu'il en feroit un bon usage. Je le lui envoyai avec ce correctif au bas.

“Je crois nécessaire d'ajouter, que M. A. ne se contenteroit pas de cette réponse, et ne la recevrait pas, parcequ'elle ne seroit pas catégorique, comme il l'a demandée. D'ailleurs on ne peut pas dire avec connoissance de cause, que l'admission d'un ministre des États Unis éprouve des difficultés aux autres cours; car il n'y en a pas une des neutres où il y en ait un; et quant au belligérantes, on sait qu'ils y en ont, et que la république en est une. M. A. est venu ouvertement et rondement offrir, avec l'amitié sincère de son souverain, ses lettres de créance et pleins pouvoirs. Il convient de les admettre ou refuser tout aussi rondement. Ce procédé est digne des deux nations.”

J'allois immédiatement après chez l'ami moi-même. Je le trouvai occupé de l'affaire avec une autre personne devant qui il me somma de déclarer hautement et nettement ce qui vous satisferoit. Rien, sinon une audience telle qu'il la demande, ai-je répondu.

La résolution d'avant-hier ne plait ni à l'une ni à l'autre des parties; et par dessus le marché elle est suivie d'un vigoureux protest de huit villes, qui lui servira de pendant.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Amsterdam, 11 March, 1782.

Sir,—

The promise, which was made me by M. Bergsma, that I should have an answer from the Province of Friesland in three weeks, has been literally fulfilled. This gentleman, who, as well as his Province, deserves to be remembered in America, sent me a copy of the resolution in Dutch as soon as it passed. It is now public in all the gazettes, and is conceived in these terms.

“The requisition of Mr. Adams, for presenting his letters of credence from the United States of North America to their High Mightinesses, having been brought into the assembly and put into deliberation, as also the ulterior address to the same purpose, with a demand of a categorical answer, made by him, as is more amply mentioned in the minutes of their High Mightinesses of the 4th of May, 1781, and the 9th of January, 1782; whereupon, it having been taken into consideration, that the said Mr. Adams would probably have some propositions to make to their High Mightinesses, and to present to them the principal articles and foundations upon which the congress, on their part, would enter into a treaty of commerce and friendship, or other affairs to propose, in regard to which despatch would be requisite;

“It has been thought fit and resolved, to authorize the gentlemen, the deputies of this Province at the generality, and to instruct them, to direct things at the table of their High Mightinesses in such a manner, that the said Mr. Adams be admitted forthwith as minister of the congress of North America, with further order to the said deputies, that if there should be made, moreover, any similar propositions by the same, to inform immediately their Noble Mightinesses of them. And an extract of the present resolution shall be sent them for their information, that they may conduct themselves conformably.

“Thus resolved at the Province House, the 26th of February, 1782.

A. I. V. Sminia.”

This resolution has, by the deputies of Friesland, been laid before their High Mightinesses at the Hague, and after deliberation, the deputies of the Provinces of Guelderland, Zealand, Utrecht, and Groningen, have taken copies of it, to be communicated more amply to their constituents. In the states of the Province of Holland and West Friesland, the requisition of the 9th of January had been committed to the committee of grand affairs, and taken into deliberation by the body of nobles, and *ad referendum* by all the eighteen cities.

The sovereignty of the United States of America would undoubtedly be acknowledged by the seven United Provinces, and their minister received to an audience in state, in the course of a few weeks, if the regency of the city of Amsterdam had not visibly altered its sentiments; but all things are embroiled. The opposition to M. Van Berckel, and the glittering charms of an embassy to Petersburg or Vienna, which have been artfully displayed, as it is said, before the eyes of one man, and many secret reasonings of similar kind with others, have placed the last hopes of the English and Dutch Courts in a city, which had long been firm in opposition to the desires of both. The public in general, however, expect that the example of the Frisians will be followed. Wherever I go, everybody, almost, congratulates me upon the prospect of my being soon received at the Hague. The French gazettes all give their opinions very decidedly that it will be done, and the Dutch gazettes all breathe out, God grant that it may be so. I confess, however, that I doubt it; at least, I am sure that a very little thing may prevent it. It is certain, that the Court will oppose it in secret with all their engines, although they are already too unpopular to venture to increase the odium, by an open opposition.

Friesland is said to be a sure index of the national sense. The people of that Province have been ever famous for the spirit of liberty. The feudal system never was admitted among them; they never would submit to it, and they have preserved those privileges, which all others have long since surrendered. The regencies are chosen by the people; and on all critical occasions the Frisians have displayed a resolution and an activity beyond the other members of the state. I am told that the Frisians never undertake any thing but they carry it through, and, therefore, that I may depend upon it, they will force their way to a connection with America. This may be the case if the war continues, and the enemies of Great Britain continue to be successful; but I have no expectations of any thing very soon, because I have much better information than the public, of the secret intrigues both at the Hague and Amsterdam. Patience, however. We have nothing to fear. Courtiers and aristocrats, as well as the people, all say, “you know very well we love the Americans, and will ever be their good friends.” This love and friendship consists, however, rather too much in mere words, “Be ye warmed,” &c., and a strong desire of gain by our commerce.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 12 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

En vous confirmant mes deux lettres d’hier, celle-ci est pour vous faire part d’une résolution que la ville de Dort vient de prendre, par laquelle elle donne à M. de Gyselaer, son digne pensionnaire, une marque touchante et honorable de son estime et de son approbation, et d’ailleurs non équivoque de sa disposition par rapport aux affaires publiques. Par cette résolution elle s’attend qu’il ne se chargera d’aucun emploi ministériel dans une autre ville votante de la province, mais qu’il restera constamment attaché à la ville de Dort; et en revanche elle augmente d’un tiers les appointemens dont il a joui jusqu’ici en vertu de sa place. Partagez avec moi, monsieur, la joie que j’en ressens.

Dans une lettre de la même ville, arrivée ce matin de bonne main, on m’a fait lire ces paroles énergiques: “Nous brûlons ici du désir de reconnoître l’indépendance Américaine.”

Je Suis, Comme Vous Savez, Pour Toujours, &C.

Dumas.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Without Date.)

Monsieur,—

Une petite absence de chez moi durant la plus grande partie de la journée d'hier, a retardé les incluses. J'espère que leur retard est sans conséquence. Elles sont arrivées toutes deux d'Amsterdam, et notamment le cachet de l'une dans l'état où vous la verrez. J'ai une lettre de M. Carmichael, qui me dit entre autres;

“I wish Mr. Adams all the success he can desire. You will please to inform him that I have received letters from our new secretary of foreign affairs, dated the 20th December. If he has not a copy of the resolutions of congress touching this department, I will send it to him, and will forward any letters he may choose to send *viâ* Cadiz. I hear that this Court negotiates a loan for five millions of florins *chez vous*. Please to inform me how the subscriptions fill, and at what periods the money is paid, and whether by bills of exchange or how. I think I shall know this from others; but we never can have too many sources of information.”

Notre ami ici est d'avis, qu'il faudroit que vous eussiez un entretien et explication avec M. le Bourguemaître Hooft, et autres régents d'Amsterdam, pour être assuré de la manière dont ils en agiront ici la semaine prochaine et les suivantes, s'ils insisteront franchement et presseront que votre affaire soit mise au plutôt sur le tapis, et au cas qu'oui, concerter avec eux, si une démarche de votre part, par exemple, d'aller chez M. le Greffier, lui fixer verbalement un terme, par exemple le 15 d'Avril prochain, pour avoir une réponse catégorique; passé lequel terme, vous vous verriez dans le cas d'écrire à votre souverain en conséquence, &c. Vous userez, monsieur, de cette idée, de la manière que vous jugerez vous-même la meilleure. Si ces Messieurs d'Amsterdam agréent et désirent la démarche, qui devra être communiquée comme la précédente aux villes, ils devront vous donner leur parole de la soutenir de tout leur pouvoir à l'assemblée provinciale ici, que l'on vouloit séparer, à quoi Dort, Harlem, et Amsterdam se sont opposées, par la raison de diverses choses importantes à finir avant de se séparer, et notamment le concert des opérations avec la France sur lesquelles les instructions de M. l'ambassadeur sont en chemin pour demander explication catégorique, et l'affaire de votre admission. Ce refus de se séparer a beaucoup surpris et mortifié ceux qui n'y sont pas accoutumés; il a été forcément unanime, car les trois villes susdites auroient pu prendre les résolutions qu'elles auroient voulu en l'absence des autres.

Monsieur. NA Vous aurez reçu ce soir une lettre que j'ai fait enregistrer No. 4, par le chariot de poste, parti d'ici à une heure après Midi. Je dois ajouter de la part de notre ami ici, qu'il est nécessaire que vous vous abouchiez au plutôt avec M. Van Berckel, le pensionnaire, et M. Bicker le fils, et que tous trois vous ayiez une conférence sérieuse et décisive, dès demain s'il est possible, chez M. Van Berckel, sur l'idée que

je vous ai proposée dans la susdite lettre. Notre ami écrit là-dessus ce soir à M. Bicker, et le prévient que vous le mettez au fait, et M. Van Berckel aussi, de ce qu'il propose; car il n'écrit qu'en termes généraux à M. Bicker, pour ne pas exposer le secret au sort d'une lettre. M. Bicker est intime avec M. Hooft. Ainsi cette matière peut le mieux se traiter, comme je le dis ci-dessus, entre vous trois. Il n'y a, pour préambule, qu'à offrir et exiger une parfaite cordialité. Si vous pouviez arrêter là-dessus quelque chose de fixe avant Samedi, notre ami croit que ce seroit un coup de partie. La chose presse, parcequ'il y a toute apparence que votre admission va être incessamment mise en délibération ici. Pour cet effet, notre ami se donne des mouvements, et écrit en divers autres endroits d'une manière dont je suis parfaitement satisfait; car il m'a montré ses lettres. Ainsi, si les mesures réussissent de votre côté (je parle de votre conférence avec les deux messieurs susdits) comme j'espère qu'elles réussiront de ces côtés-ci, votre voyage de Samedi prochain ici pourra avoir des suites importantes. En attendant, je dis à tout le monde ici ce que vous m'avez autorisé de dire hautement *that nothing short of a categorical answer will satisfy you.*

Je n'ai pas eu le temps de signer ma lettre de ce matin. Ce m'auroit fait manquer le chariot de poste. Ce défaut de formalité ne doit pas vous empêcher de vous y fier. Je vous la confirme, et suis prêt à la signer quand vous voudrez, ainsi que toutes celles où il s'agira de témoigner mon zèle et ma fidélité pour les intérêts de notre souverain, et le respectueux attachement avec lequel je suis pour toujours, monsieur, &c. &c.

Dumas.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 13 March, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received your two letters, both without date, and one without name. My respects and thanks to Mr. Carmichael, &c. I have some of the resolutions of congress touching that department, but cannot say whether I have all.

I have had last evening an agreeable interview with the two worthy gentlemen you mention. They are both of opinion that it is better to wait and see what will be proposed by the *grande besogne*. As to any ministerial step to be taken by me at present, it had better be omitted. Let us leave the members to their own inquiries and reflections and judgment.

As to the conciliatory project, I have an utter detestation of it, between you and me. Besides, Friesland will not agree to it, so that it cannot pass, if Holland should adopt it. Friesland has set the right example, and will be followed by all in time. The members of the regency here are thinking very seriously, and will determine right in the end, if we do not furnish them an excuse by talking of conciliatory propositions.

I shall fall naturally in the way of several mercantile houses here, and shall see if their aid can be obtained in their way.

The late visit of the ambassador here, and his conversation with several persons, will have a good effect. The British cause will become more and more disgusting, contemptible, and ridiculous every day. There is no danger of proselytes to that side; so that all must come into the sentiments of Friesland ere long. Do not let us be impatient. It is not possible to make right and wrong meet half way. Is not the grand pensionary at the bottom of the conciliatory project?

I have altered my design of coming to the Hague; shall not come on Saturday; perhaps not for some weeks.

With Great Esteem, Yours,

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Amsterdam, 15 March, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—

Your favor of February arrived last night; and I thank you for the copy inclosed. I think that if the Court of St. James is capable of taking a hint, she may see herself advised to acknowledge the sovereignty of the United States, and admit their minister to the congress.

There seems to be a change of system in England, but the change is too late; the kingdom is undone past redemption. Minorca, St. Kitts, Demerara, Essequibo, &c. gone; fleets combining to stop the channel; and, what is worse than all, deficits of taxes to pay interest appearing to the amount of half a million sterling in three years, and stocks at fifty-four or fifty-three; French and Dutch united, too, in the East Indies, against them. The French have nothing to do but take prisoners the garrisons of New York and Charleston. The volunteers in Ireland again in motion.

The Dutch are now occupied in very serious thoughts of acknowledging American independence. Friesland has already done it. This is the second sovereign state in Europe that has done it. But a certain foreign faction are exhausting all their wiles to prevent it. But, would you believe it, all their hopes are in Amsterdam? But what can be the meaning of these people? How do they expect to get their islands? How do they expect to exist? We shall soon see something decisive.

I am of late taken up so much with conversations and visits that I cannot write much; but what is more, my health is so feeble that it fatigues me more to write one letter than it did to write ten when we were together at Paris. In short, to confess to you a truth that is not very pleasant, I verily believe your old friend will never be again the man he was; that hideous fever has shaken him to pieces, so that he will never get firmly compacted together again.

I have bought a house at the Hague fit for the Hôtel des États Unis, or, if you will, l'Hôtel du Nouveau Monde. It is in a fine situation, and there is a noble spot of ground. This occasions great speculations. But my health was such, that I could not risk another summer the air of Amsterdam. The house will be for my successor, ready furnished. I shall live in it myself but a short time.

I see no objection against your attempt, as you propose to find out the real dispositions of the Empress or her ministers. You cannot take any noisy measures like those I have taken here. The form of government forbids it. You can do every thing that can be done in secret. I could do nothing here in secret. Thank God, public measures have had marvellous success.

My boy should translate Sallust, and write to his papa. Charles sailed 10 December from Bilbao in the Cicero, Captain Hill. Does John study the Russian language?

Pray what is the reason that the whole armed neutrality cannot agree to declare America independent, and admit you in behalf of the United States to accede to that confederation? It is so simple, so natural, so easy, so obvious a measure, and at the same time so sublime and so glorious. It is saying, let there be light and there was light. It finishes all controversies at once, and necessitates a universal peace, and even saves old England from total destruction and the last stages of horror and despair. It is so much in the character and to the taste of the Emperor and Empress that it is amazing that it is not done. However, thank God, we have no particular reason to wish for peace; the longer the war continues now, the better for us. If the powers of Europe will, in spite of all reason and remonstrance, continue to sport with each other's blood, it is not our fault. We have done all in our power to bring about peace. One thing I think certain,—that the British forces will evacuate the United States, if not taken prisoners, this season.

I cannot get a copy of the miniature of General Washington made for less than twelve ducats; but will have it done notwithstanding, if you persist in the desire. We will also endeavor to send you a secretary, and execute your other orders as soon as we can.

Adieu, My Dear Friend, Adieu,

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 16 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Voici une petite cargaison de lettres qui m'ont été remises par M. le Duc de la Vauguyon pour vous.

J'ai bien reçu l'honorée vôtre du 14, et ferai bon usage du contenu, premièrement avec nos amis, et puis avec les autres.

Quant au projet conciliatoire, je puis vous assurer, *that the convalescent is not at the bottom of it*. Ceux mêmes qui l'ont conçu et modifié ne l'ont jamais regardé que comme leur pis aller au cas qu'il ne leur fût pas possible de faire (mieux); et dans ce cas-même ils ont désiré qu'avant d'en faire usage il fût soumis à votre jugement. Ils sont à présent suffisamment instruits que vous ne voulez pas en entendre parler. Au reste on m'avertit de tous côtés que le parti Anglomane prépare toutes ses batteries pour former la plus violente opposition à votre admission, par une résolution de cette province. Faites valoir dans vos quartiers, monsieur, comme je fais ici, l'idée d'un acte de navigation, par lequel les ports des États Unis pourroient être ouverts aux Frisons seuls, à l'exclusion des villes d'Hollande qui ne se déclareront pas actuellement, en récompense de la résolution de Frise; car cette operation trancheroit le nœud Gordien qu'on opposeroit, en prétendant qu'une province seule ne sauroit traiter avec une puissance étrangère, sans le consentement des autres.

J'ai écrit avant hier au soir une lettre par la poste à M. Van Berckel, avec prière de vous en communiquer le contenu. J'espère qu'il l'a fait. Vous y aurez vu, que les ministres des sept villes protestantes sont d'accord ici sur votre sujet, en attendant leurs instructions; que l'on est sûr d'avance de celles de Dort; et très probablement de celles de Leide et Rotterdam; j'ajouterai que la délibération sur votre sujet est renvoyée à Vendredi prochain, afin de laisser le temps aux villes, et notamment à Amsterdam, d'assembler là-dessus leurs conseils; et que le succès, bon ou mauvais, dépend surtout de la vigueur, ou du contraire, du Vroedschap (ou conseil) d'Amsterdam. Ne vous attendez qu'à de la mauvaise volonté de la part de M. R—p. Ayez, s'il se peut, un entretien avec M. de Marseveen, afin que lui et les autres amis déterminent M. Hooft à l'exertion de tout son crédit et pouvoir.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement de lier la république avec nous, qui pourrions peut-être l'abandonner à elle-même sans tant de conséquence, mais aussi et surtout d'achever d'arracher cette république d'entre les griffes du Léopard, ce qui importe à nos amis et à toute l'Europe encore plus qu'à nous; et voilà pourquoi, me dit-on, *we must not be too rash, if a little longer temporizing can do it*.

Dans ce moment l'ambassadeur me fait demander de passer chez lui. Je ne fermerai la présente qu'à mon retour, afin de pouvoir y ajouter, s'il y a quelque chose de plus à vous marquer. Mais pour ne plus commettre une incongruité à force d'être pressé, je signerai toujours le respect, &c. &c.

Dumas.

P. S. It may perhaps be worth your while, sir, to come here towards the end of next week, and hear from the ambassador that the C. V. is and will be more your friend than you seemed to apprehend he was.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 16 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

En vous proposant, monsieur, de venir faire un tour ici vers la fin seulement de la semaine prochaine, mon intention étoit simplement de ne pas interrompre les conférences que vous pourriez avoir encore avec quelques uns de ces messieurs, avant qu'ils aient tenu le conseil de leur ville, d'où dépendra la conduite que leurs députés tiendront ici sur le sujet de votre demande. Sans cela, rien n'empêcheroit que je n'eusse plutôt l'honneur de vous revoir ici.

Je vous dirai historiquement, mais de science certaine, que le prince stadtholder a reçu ce matin une lettre des seigneurs États de Frise, résolue le 11^e et expédiée le 12^e, dans laquelle on expose à S. A. S. "qu'il a existé depuis quelque temps parmi les habitans de la province, un mécontentement dangereux au sujet de la direction des affaires, surtout de celles concernant la guerre; que ce mécontentement, loin de diminuer, s'affermir de plus en plus, au grand regret des États; que cette disposition de leurs sujets importe trop aux États, pour ne pas mettre tout en œuvre pour qu'elle n'ait pas des suites plus dangereuses encore; que la personne de M. le Duc de Brunswick, considérée comme conseiller de S. A. S., est tenue généralement pour la cause de la marche lente et pitoyable des affaires, et s'est attiré par-là une haine de la part de la nation, dont les suites sont à craindre; que les seigneurs États, en vrais pères de la patrie, ne sauroient cacher cela à S. A., mais doivent requérir S. A., afin d'écarter autant que possible toute diffidence, de persuader au Seigneur Duc, de la meilleure manière que faire se pourra, de se retirer de la personne de S. A. et de la république."

Il y a dans la Gazette de Rotterdam un article qui vous regarde, monsieur. On y écrit d'Ostende, que les lettres de Londres du 8^e reçues là, annoncent que M. Laurens ayant déclaré n'avoir aucun pouvoir pour traiter, mais que c'étoit vous, monsieur, qui étiez muni de pouvoirs pour traiter avec la Grande Bretagne dans le futur congrès général, le ministère avoit dépêché tout de suite des passeports pour vous en Hollande, et que vous étiez par conséquent attendu à Londres la semaine prochaine. En comparant avec cela, que l'on me dit il y a trois jours que l'émissaire Wentworth venoit de recevoir un courrier de Londres avec d'importantes dépêches, et que ce même jour le nouvel envoyé ajoint de Russie, avoit eu une conférence ici, soit avec M. Adams, soit avec quelque autre agent Américain, je suis violemment tenté de croire que l'article susdit de Rotterdam a été forgé ici par l'émissaire, et lâché dans le public pour donner de l'ombrage et de l'inquiétude, soit à nos amis ici, soit à la France, et pour nous rendre suspects aux uns et aux autres, s'il pouvoit. Je n'ai pas hésité là-dessus devant des gens respectables qui m'ont parlé de l'article, et je l'ai traité avec le mépris qu'il mérite, soit qu'il vienne de Londres ou d'ici.

Je Suis Toujours, &C. &C.

Dumas.

P. S. Demain notre ami prendra des mesures efficaces pour que l'Émissaire
Wentworth parte tout de suite.

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TO JOHN LUZAC.

Amsterdam, 20 March, 1782.

Sir,—

This morning I received the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 19th of this month, with the two copies inclosed, of the petition of the merchants, manufacturers, and traders of Leyden, to the great council of that city, praying for the conclusion of commercial connections with the United States of America.

You will be pleased to present my acknowledgments to the responsible body, whose intentions you execute, for their obliging attention to me, which does me much honor; and it is with great sincerity that I join in their wishes, and rejoice in the pleasing prospect of seeing the two republics acknowledged to be sisters, which cannot fail to have the most favorable effects upon the manufactures, commerce, and prosperity of Leyden.

Accept of my particular thanks, sir, for the affectionate and obliging manner in which you have made the communication, and believe me to be, &c.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 20 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

L'incluse pour vous m'est parvenue, je ne sais d'où ni comment, avec une Gazette de Rotterdam où l'on a inséré la requête des négociants de la dite ville à leurs magistrats. Je suppose qu'il y en a une pareille sous ce couvert. Vous aurez vu par les gazettes, qu'avant hier pareille démarche s'est faite à Leide par 64 négociants et fabricants. J'ai lieu de croire que demain il en sera présenté une semblable par les commerçants combinés des villes de cette province, aux États d'Hollande et Généraux.

On m'a donné la substance de la résolution prise à Amsterdam. À un seul terme près, dont on pourroit vouloir abuser, j'en suis content. Il dépendra toujours de vous, monsieur, pu'on n'en abuse pas avec succès, en refusant d'entrer en conférence et explication, à moins que préalablement on ait accepté vos lettres de créance, et que vous soyez écouté sous le caractère que ces lettres constatent.

Je pense qu'après demain la matière sera tout de bon sur le tapis. En attendant, pour ne pas donner des lumières aux curieux indiscrets, qui voudroient visiter cette lettre, je n'ose y mettre diverses bonnes choses que je sais.

Je crois vous devoir avertir, que selon ce qu'on m'a assuré, le Sieur Wentworth est parti cet après-dîner pour Amsterdam, où il lui reste, dit-il, quelques affaires à régler; et qu'il a envoyé le gros de son bagage par Rotterdam à Anvers, où il continuera peut-être de résider. Car il ne lui sera pas permis de venir et résider ici pour le présent; le sujet prétexté de sa venue ici étant terminé, ainsi que j'en suis informé de la meilleure part.

Je Suis, &C.

Dumas.

J'ai fait un très grand usage de votre excellente lettre du 14. Mais je ne puis vous le dire que de bouche, quand nous nous verrons.

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T. DIGGES TO JOHN ADAMS.

Hotel, First Bible, Wednesday night, 10 o'clock.

Sir,—

I am just arrived here from London, and instead of personally waiting upon you, I make so free as to send a messenger with this and its inclosure, together with a few late newspapers.

I have a matter of public moment to mention to you; as well as to speak to a private affair of consequence to myself, which will, I think, lead me in a very few days to Dr. F., at Paris. My present purpose is to beg for half an hour's conversation with you. I am at present, and shall be for to-morrow, totally unknown in the hotel. A line directed for me, or any message to *the gentleman who arrived this night, and lodges in the room number ten*, will be duly attended to.

With Great Respect, Sir,
Your Very Obedient Servant,

T. Digges.

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(Inclosed In The Preceding.)

D. HARTLEY TO JOHN ADAMS.

London, 11 March, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

Having been long informed of your benevolent sentiments towards peace, I wrote a letter to you on the 19th of last month, through the hands of Mr. Laurens, Jr., to renew that subject with you, because I was aware at that time, from conferences and correspondences to which I had been a party, that the topic of peace would soon become general. I understand that Mr. Jay, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Laurens, and yourself, are empowered, by a special commission, to treat. I hope the powers of that commission will soon be called forth into action, and that success may attend. The public proceedings of parliament, and the proposed bill to enable the crown to conclude peace or truce with America, are, or will certainly be, made known to you. The first object will be to procure a meeting of authorized persons, and to consult upon the preliminaries of time, place, and manner; but the requisites, above all others, are mutual good dispositions to conciliate and to accommodate, in the confident hope, that if the work of peace were once well begun, it would soon become general. Permit me to ask whether the four gentlemen above specified are empowered to *conclude* as well as to *treat*, and whether jointly so, or severally. The bill now depending in parliament on the part of this country, is to *conclude* as well as to *treat*. As to other provisions of it, I cannot speak positively, but I understand, from the best authority, that the general scope of it is to remove the parliamentary obstructions now subsisting, which would frustrate the settlements which may be made at the termination of the war. I heartily wish success to the cause of peace.

I Am, Dear Sir, With Great Respect,
Your Most Obedient Servant,

D. Hartley.

P. S. Mr. Digges, who will deliver this to you, will explain many things of great importance on the subject of peace. I have been witness of the authority upon which they have been delivered to him; when the first application was made to him, he consulted me, as knowing that such topics had more than once passed through my hands. I have recently had many conferences on my own part with the ministry here, relating to the mode of entering into negotiations of peace, and am fully informed of the subject of Mr. Digges's commission to you. You may, therefore, be assured that it comes to you from the highest authority.

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TO T. DIGGES.

21 March, 1782.

Mr. Adams will stay at home, for the gentleman in number ten, whom he will receive at ten o'clock this day, *sans cérémonie*, provided the gentleman is content the conversation should pass in presence of Mr. Thaxter, Mr. Adams's secretary.

But such is the situation of things here and elsewhere, that it is impossible for Mr. Adams to have any conversation with any gentleman from England, without witness; and, indeed, Mr. Adams's advice to the gentleman is to proceed forthwith to Paris, and communicate whatever he has to say to Dr. Franklin and the Comte de Vergennes in the first place, without seeing Mr. Adams, who will certainly think himself bound to communicate whatever may be made known to him, without loss of time, to those ministers, as he has no authority to treat, much less to conclude, but in concert with them and others.

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TO M. DUBBLEDEMUTZ.

Amsterdam, 22 March, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me the 18th of this month, with a copy inclosed of the petition of the committee of the merchants of the city of Rotterdam, to their magistrates, presented last Saturday. You will please to accept of my thanks for this very acceptable present, and of my hearty congratulations upon that remarkable harmony and unanimity in the sentiments of the various cities and provinces of the republic, concerning the present subject of their deliberations,—a treaty with America.

The unanimity of the republic in this important measure, and the forcible arguments adduced in support of it, by the bodies of merchants and manufacturers in the several cities, will probably have a great influence, even in England, for a general peace; in such case the commerce will be free, and the city of Rotterdam, from her situation, will have as large a share, at least in proportion, as any other. I wish it all the prosperity it can desire, and beg leave to subscribe myself, &c.

John Adams.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 22 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Mardi ou Mercredi prochain nous pourrons selon toute apparence dire avec Ovide, *Dicite, Io Pæan, &c.*; c'est à dire, notre sœur la Hollande, comme nous pourrons déjà dire, notre sœur la Frise; et puis les autres ne tarderont pas de compléter la fraternité. Hier l'affaire de votre admission fut tout de bon sur le tapis; il n'y eut aucun débat là-dessus. Neuf villes, savoir, Dort, Harlem, Delft, Leide, Amsterdam, Gouda, Schoonhoven, Purmerend, et la neuvième je l'ai oubliée, donnèrent leurs suffrages pour l'affirmative sans aucune contradiction, pas même de M. le grand pensionnaire, qui se montra fort traitable; et les députés des neuf autres ne gardèrent le silence que parce qu'ils n'avoient pas encore reçu leurs instructions. Notre ami déclara, qu'il ne souffrira pas que cette assemblée se séparât sans qu'on prît une résolution définitive à ce sujet, et lui ainsi qu'un autre ami m'ont assuré qu'elle passera unanimement Mardi ou Mercredi prochain.

Ayez la bonté, monsieur, de me dire d'abord en réponse si la copie de la résolution que vous avez reçue des États de Frise, est ce qu'on appelle une copie authentique, c'est à dire, si elle est signée de la main de M. Sminia, le Secrétaire des États de Frise. On me l'a demandé; et j'ai lieu de croire, que c'est pour se conduire en conséquence; c'est à dire, qu'on vous enverra aussi une copie signée de M. Clotterboke, le Secrétaire des États d'Hollande. Notre ami est surpris que vous ne soyez pas venu aujourd'hui ici. Il dit qu'il est bon de vous montrer ici pendant quelques jours; et je crois que M. l'ambassadeur sera bien aise aussi de pouvoir vous dire ce que je vous ai marqué il y a quelques jours de la part de M. de Vergennes.

Pour le coup je crois être sûr que Wentworth est parti hier tout de bon pour Amsterdam; a moins qu'il ne se soit caché dans quelque gouttière.

Je Suis, &C.

Dumas.

Je soupçonne qu'il s'agira encore d'une petite ruse, pour ôter quelque chose à l'authenticité de votre admission; mais vous pourrez éviter facilement ce petit piège, si tant est qu'on veuille l'essayer, en refusant tout net de présenter vos lettres de créance autrement que comme tous les ministres publics les présentent, c'est à dire, en pleine audience à l'assemblée des états généraux et non à une commission. Après cette première audience, on pourra, tant qu'on voudra, traiter par commissaires, à la bonne heure; mais l'audience doit précéder, pour prévenir toute chicane à l'avenir.

Il est bon de ne rien dire encore du contenu de cette lettre à d'autres qu'à Messrs. Van Berckel, Bicker, et Marseveen; si vous jugez à propos de leur en parler. Tout autre ne doit savoir rien de la résolution que lorsqu'elle sera prise et communiquée.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 23 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Celle-ci n'est que pour confirmer la mienne d'hier, et que l'affaire va grand train. J'ai vu ce matin M. l'ambassadeur qui m'a entretenu très gracieusement et avec une bonne humeur charmante. Il pense, tout comme notre ami, que votre apparition ici pour quelques jours est à propos, non pour faire aucune démarche, mais seulement pour vous montrer sans affectation.

Une dépêche secrète d'un ministre de la république à certaine cour, leur donne l'avis, de la part du souverain de cette cour-là, non seulement de la part intime qu'il prend et prendra toujours aux intérêts de la république, mais aussi celui de ne rien attendre de la prétendue médiation, et d'être persuadée que cette médiation n'aboutira à rien, et n'est qu'un être de raison.

Permettez, Monsieur, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Hague, 26 March, 1782.

Sir,—

One day last week I received, at Amsterdam, a card from Digges, inclosing two letters to me from Mr. David Hartley. The card desired to see me upon business of importance; and the letters from Mr. Hartley contained an assurance that, to his knowledge, the bearer came from the highest authority. I answered the card, that, in the present situation of affairs here and elsewhere, it was impossible for me to see any one from England, without witness; but if he was willing to see me in presence of Mr. Thaxter, my secretary, and that I should communicate whatever he should say to me to Dr. Franklin and the Comte de Vergennes, I would wait for him at home at ten o'clock; but that I had rather he should go to Paris without seeing me, and communicate what he had to say to Dr. Franklin, whose situation enabled him to consult the court without loss of time. At ten, however, he came, and told me a long story about consultations with Mr. Penn, Mr. Hartley, Lord Beauchamp, and, at last, Lord North, by whom he was finally sent to inquire of me if I, or any other, had authority to treat with Great Britain of a truce. I answered, that "I came to Europe last, with full powers to make peace; that these powers had been announced to the public upon my arrival, and continued in force until last summer, when congress sent a new commission, containing the same powers to five persons, whom I named; that if the King of England were my father, and I the heir apparent to his throne, I would not advise him ever to think of a truce, because it would be but a real war under a simulated appearance of tranquillity, and would end in another open and bloody war, without doing any real good to any of the parties."

He said that the ministry would send some person of consequence over, perhaps General Conway, but they were apprehensive that he would be ill treated or exposed. I said that if they resolved upon such a measure, I had rather they would send immediately to Dr. Franklin, because of his situation near the French Court; but there was no doubt, if they sent any respectable personage properly authorized, who should come to treat honorably, he would be treated with great respect; but that if he came to me, I could give him no opinion upon any thing without consulting my colleagues, and should reserve a right of communicating every thing to my colleagues, and to our allies.

He then said that his mission was finished; that the fact to be ascertained was, simply, that there was a commission in Europe to treat and conclude, but that there was not one person in Great Britain who could affirm or prove that there was such a commission, although it had been announced in the gazettes.

I desired him, and he promised me, not to mention Mr. Laurens to the ministry, without his consent, and without informing him that it was impossible he should say

any thing in the business, because he knew nothing of our instructions; because, although it was possible that his being in such a commission might induce them to release him, yet it was also possible it might render them more difficult concerning his exchange.

The picture he gives of the situation of things in England is gloomy enough for them. The distress of the people, and the distractions in administration and parliament, are such as may produce any effect almost that can be imagined.

The only use of all this, I think, is to strike decisive strokes at New York and Charleston. There is no position so advantageous for negotiation as when we have all an enemy's armies prisoners. I must beg the favor of you, to send me by one of the Comte de Vergennes's couriers to the Duc de la Vauguyon, a copy, in letters, of our peace instructions. I have not been able to decipher one quarter part of mine. Some mistake has certainly been made.

Ten or eleven cities in Holland have declared themselves in favor of American independence, and it is expected that today or to-morrow this Province will take the decisive resolution of admitting me to an audience. Perhaps some of the other Provinces will delay it for three or four weeks; but the Prince has declared that he has no hopes of resisting the torrent, and, therefore, that he shall not attempt it. The Duc de la Vauguyon has acted a very friendly and honorable part in this business, without, however, doing any ministerial act in it.

With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DE LAFAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 27 March, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—

I beg you will accept my best thanks for the two letters you have been pleased to write, giving the particulars of your situation in Holland, and favoring me with your opinions upon the operations of the next campaign.

I am happy to find you are likely to get the better of British cabals, and hope our independence will be soon acknowledged throughout the United Provinces. Such a measure from a republican and commercial nation will prove particularly agreeable to America. You will vastly oblige me, my dear friend, to let me hear of the progress of your negotiations, and I do assure you, that independent of public considerations, the high regard and warm attachment I feel for you, will greatly contribute to my satisfaction.

On my departure from America I have been desired by Mr. Morris to represent the necessity of a pecuniary assistance. It has been granted, but four or six millions are wanting to make up the sum. Could it be possible to find them in Holland upon American credit?

The defensive plans of General Conway are so very absurd, that I think, with you, a general evacuation will probably take place. However, we ought not to be too sanguine. *In all cases*, I am entirely of your opinion about what *we ought to do*. I cannot write so confidentially by post as I could wish, and will be more particular when an opportunity offers. I had a letter from Mr. Jay; things there as usual. General Washington writes me that every thing in the several departments is taking a good turn, and great improvements are made. He appears much satisfied with the present situation of affairs.

You are to receive a visit, not from a friend—that I had from the ministers here. You will vastly oblige me with the particulars. But let me know what I am to say and not to say. The next safe opportunity, I will write you a confidential letter, and wish it was in your power to let me have a cipher to correspond with you. I shall remain some weeks more in France, and am sure congress will approve of the delay.

With The Highest Regard, &C.

Lafayette.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 28 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

La grande œuvre est accomplie. Aujourd'hui les États d'Hollande ont résolu, que leurs députés aux états généraux seront instruits de diriger les choses dans l'assemblée de L. H. P. à telle fin, que M. Adams soit admis pour leur présenter ses lettres de créance de la part des États Unis; et les États ont chargé expressément M. le grand pensionnaire de vous donner incessamment connoissance de cette résolution. Le corps des nobles a déclaré, qu'il ne concouroit ni ne s'opposoit à cette résolution. *Sigillum veri simplex.*

Je n'ajouterai donc rien à ce que dessus, qui vient de m'être communiqué par M. Zeberg avec ses complimens sincères pour votre excellence. Je n'ai pu voir les autres, qui sont actuellement à célébrer l'œuvre en bonne compagnie, et le verre en main, au sortir de l'assemblée, sans retourner chez eux, où je les ai cherché en vain.

Je suis d'avis qu'il est convenable, monsieur, que vous témoigniez par une lettre à M. le Duc de la Vauguyon, la part que vous prenez au facheux accident arrivé la nuit du Mardi au Mercredi.

Je Suis, &C.

Dumas.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 29 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

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Traduction De La Résolution De Leurs Nobles Et Grandes Puissances Les Seigneurs États De Hollande Et De West Frise.

Vendredi, 29 Mars, 1782.

“Il a été trouvé bon et arrêté, que l’affaire soit dirigée de la part de leurs nobles et grandes puissances à la généralité à telle fin, et que l’on y insiste de la manière la plus forte, pour que M. Adams soit admis et reconnu au plutôt par leurs H. P. comme Envoyé des États Unis d’Amérique; et le conseiller pensionnaire est chargé de donner connoissance sous main au susdit Sieur Adams de cette résolution de leurs nobles et grandes puissances.”

En attendant que M. le grand pensionnaire fasse ce dont il est chargé, en vous informant officiellement ou ministeriellement de la résolution ci-dessus, qui m’a été communiquée par notre ami, je vous en envoie en mon propre et privé nom la copie et la traduction, sans préjudice de ce que vous en apprendrez de la part de M. de Bleiswyck même. Il envoya hier son secrétaire chez moi, pour savoir si vous étiez ici. Je répondis que vous étiez à Amsterdam, que vous veniez quelquefois ici sur la fin de la semaine, mais que je doutois que vous fissiez le voyage cette fois, parceque vous m’aviez dit avoir des affaires à Amsterdam. Aujourd’hui le secrétaire est revenu me prier de passer chez son maître demain matin à dix heures et demie. Je le ferai, déterminé cependant à ne pas recevoir une information verbale pour vous la transmettre, ni autre commission que de vous acheminer une lettre, s’il m’en remet une pour votre excellence. Car ceci est une formalité entre vous, monsieur, et lui; et je ne suis nullement qualifié pour recevoir ce qui n’est dû qu’à vous dans ce cas. D’un autre côté je crois que l’on ne doit pas vous donner la peine d’un voyage ici pour cela seul, lorsque l’on peut s’acquitter de la commission par écrit, comme ont fait les Frisons. Je consulterai encore ce soir nos amis là-dessus; et si je ne vous dis rien de plus là-dessus demain, c’est qu’ils auront approuvé mon idée.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

Dumas.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Copie De Ma Lettre À Notre Ami.)

La Haie, 30 Mars, 1782.

“Selon vos désirs, monsieur, je vous rends compte de ce qui s’est passé il y a un moment. On m’a reçu très poliment, et tout s’est passé de même. On m’a prié affectueusement de faire la notification, comme un service que je rendrais. J’ai témoigné le grand regret que j’avois, de ne pouvoir, faute de qualification requise pour le cas, exécuter une commission si peu pénible, et même si agréable, moi qui ne plaindrois aucune peine pour des services plus difficiles; mais que la démarche étant un honneur que L. N. et G. P. vouloient faire au caractère, j’étois un canal impropre pour faire parvenir cet honneur autrement que par une lettre cachetée de ministre à ministre, que j’offrois de porter moi-même. On m’a fait entendre alors, que cela n’étoit pas nécessaire, et qu’on se serviroit peut-être de la voie de la poste. On m’a demandé l’adresse (que j’ai portée ensuite au secrétaire en un billet en ces termes, *M. [] demeure au Keyzer’s-gragt près du Spiegelstraet à Amsterdam.*) J’ai raconté alors historiquement, que la copie de la résolution Frisonne avoit été remise en mains propres, de la part et par ordre de qui il appartenoit, en une lettre cachetée, à laquelle je savois que M. . . . avoit fait une réponse, qui avoit été fort goûtée en Frise. Nous avons ensuite parlé de nouvelles courantes, entre autres du bruit d’une prétendue pacification entre la Grande Bretagne et l’Amérique; sur quoi j’ai dit que je savois de science certaine, que la pacification ne pouvoit se faire qu’en Europe, et notamment de la part des États Unis par cinq plénipotentiaires, dont M. NA étoit le premier en date; que ceux près des cours de V. NA et de M. NA en étoient; que rien ne se concluroit que du su, consentement et concert de ces cours, et vraisemblablement aussi de cette république, si elle ne perdoit pas du temps pour serrer le nœud d’une amitié cordiale; que je savois enfin, que quand la Grande Bretagne enverroit la commission la plus solennelle en Amérique, elle seroit renvoyée de là en Europe, pour y traiter avec les plénipotentiaires susdits à un congrès de paix générale.”

Monsieur,—Hier au soir M. le grand pensionnaire m’envoya encore son secrétaire pour me prier de passer chez lui ce matin à dix heures et demie; et vous venez de voir ce qui s’est passé en conséquence. M. l’ambassadeur qui a vu ce qui est dessus, l’approuve. J’espère que ma conduite aura votre approbation aussi. Rien ne presse à présent pour que vous veniez ici; au contraire, je compte d’avoir l’honneur de vous voir chez vous Lundi au soir. Ce voyage est concerté entre M. l’ambassadeur, notre ami et moi, pour une très bonne œuvre de votre part, dont je ne puis vous faire l’ouverture que de bouche. J’irai Lundi à une heure par le chariot de poste. Si votre cocher pouvoit se trouver à l’endroit et à l’heure où le chariot de poste qui part de La Haie Lundi prochain à une heure après Midi arrive, je serois plus vite rendu chez vous, et nous pourrions tout de suite parler de choses pour le lendemain.

Je Suis, &C.

Dumas.

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TO PETER VAN BLEISWYCK.

Amsterdam, 31 March, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 30th, inclosing the resolution of the states of Holland and West Friesland, taken on the 28th of this month, upon the subject of my admission to the audience demanded on the 4th of May, and 9th of January last.

I am very sensible of the honor that is done me, by this instance of personal attention to me in their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, and I beg of you, sir, to accept of my acknowledgments for the obliging manner in which you have communicated to me their resolution.

But my sensibility is, above all, affected by those unequivocal demonstrations, which appear everywhere, of national harmony and unanimity in this important measure; which cannot fail to have the happiest effects in America, and in all Europe, even in England itself, as well as in this republic, and which, there is great reason to hope, will forcibly operate towards the accomplishment of a general peace.

In the pleasing hope that all the other Provinces will soon follow the example of Holland and Friesland,

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Zwol, ce 31 Mars, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Les magistrats de Deventer ont pris Jeudi au soir une résolution, dans les formes, pour recevoir votre excellence en qualité de ministre plénipotentiaire des treize États Unis de l'Amérique. Vendredi au matin la requête des citoyens de cette ville a été présentée et les magistrats y ont répondu qu'ils avoient déjà pris la résolution mentionnée. La ville de Campen, a ce que j'ai été informé, est très bien disposée. Elle a accroché son consentement pour les impôts à la conclusion d'un traité de commerce avec l'Amérique. Une requête présentée à Zwol a opéré une resolution de presser de la part de cette ville le comité chargé de l'examen des mémoires de votre excellence de donner son pré-avis afin d'en faire un point de délibération dans la ville même. Ceci est assez constitutionnel, mais il tire trop en longueur. C'est pourquoi j'ai taché de faire voir la nécessité de suivre l'exemple de Deventer, et de donner ordre aux députés de la ville à la diète de se déclarer immédiatement pour l'indépendance, &c., et j'ai de l'espérance que mes efforts réussiront. Mais je crains les nobles. Ces viles créatures ont ici la moitié de la régence. J'espère néanmoins que les requêtes qui se préparent à la campagne auront quelque influence sur eux. Les prédicateurs même commencent à les appuyer. Un d'eux a prié le bon dieu aujourd'hui, qu'il veuille bénir les efforts du peuple!

Le démon aristocratique a encore joué son rôle à Zwol même. Les corps de métiers qui sont nombreux ici et des centaines de citoyens désiroient de signer aussi la requête, mais quelques uns à qui leur orgueil inspire l'idée d'une superiorité qui n'existe pas, refusoient de signer si cela dut se faire par une *foule*, et l'on fût obligé d'avoir de la déférence pour eux. Je ne suis pourtant pas éloigné de conseiller à ces gens de signer une requête séparée, et je crois que mon conseil a quelque influence sur eux. L'on commence à crier ouvertement que c'est plus-que temps de réparer le tort qu'on m'a fait et de me réadmettre à l'assemblée. Mon attachement à l'Amérique et ma conduite dans l'affaire de la brigade Écossaise m'ont rendu cher aux yeux de mes concitoyens qui sentent à présent combien il auroit été dangereux et nuisible si la république s'eut laissé entraîner insensiblement par l'Angleterre à se ranger de son côté, comme l'on avoit projeté de faire par le moyen de cette demande insidieuse.

La province de Gueldre s'assemble le 16 Avril. Je suis bien fâché que ce ne soit pas plus tôt, et j'ai l'honneur d'être, &c. &c.

Capellen de Pol.

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T. DIGGES TO JOHN ADAMS.

London, 2 April, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

I wrote you from Ostend, the 27th ultimo, and stated what I had done with Dr. Franklin. I arrived here the last mail-day, but too late to look about me, and to write so fully as I could wish. I found the entire kick-up of the great ones to make much noise, and to give universal pleasure. As the parliament is not sitting, no fixed measure of the new people is yet talked of, and other reports are various and vague. Mr. Laurens being out of town, and still in the West of England, I had not the opportunity of making my first communications with him, or of mentioning any thing from you. As General Conway was privy to, and at the bottom of my message to you, I was not many hours in town before I communicated to him the sum and substance of what I brought. From him I went to the man whose province it now is to act in any negotiations with America (Lord Shelburne). I am intimate with him, and he was pleased with the communication and matter of my errand, in every instance, but that of the necessity of communicating any serious or direct proffer, going from hence, to the French ministry. I have had much conversation with him and others of the new ministers, on the matter; they all talk of peace with America, if it can be got by great and direct offers; but what this great offer is, I cannot learn, for they rather draw back when the question is put, is this the offer of independence? Notwithstanding such shyness, their insinuations go to that point; but I should be glad to be ascertained of the real fact. I found all ranks of people delighted with the change of men. All and every visage speaks a general joy from the prospect of getting better times and peace with America; but a quiet thinking American, even in the midst of this clamor, is apt to reason with himself and things, and to say, to what point will all those changes tend? Will my country, or those European friends who have helped her, be benefited by the new system, and set of men? Certainly not, without that new set of men go heartily to the work of peace. Every declaration among the great and leading men, is for peace; but I suspend my opinion, until I see some actual measures adopted for the obtaining that desirable object. A peace with America, separately from France, seems universally scouted; and, within a few days, an opinion seems to go generally abroad, that the present ministers are likely to detach Holland from its present connection with the house of Bourbon. This I look upon as only a manœuvre to help the stocks; yet it is confidently said, that the Marquis of Carmarthen will be sent forthwith to Holland, and that a messenger is already gone to the two imperial courts, to desire them to again open their intercessions for peace. There are vast exertions making in the navy, and no increase of army. The new men have the wishes of the people very much with them, and there is an appearance of unanimity, which during my eight or nine years' residence here I have never seen before. Lord Shelburne is the only new minister suspected of not wishing to go to the length of declaring American independence; but I think his good sense and excellent information of things in America, must make him think the measure a necessary one, whatever he may hold out as his intention. He may

be said to be prime minister, for the *great work* is in his department, he having all the southern district of Europe, the whole of home and Irish matters, the East and West Indies, and every thing relative to America. There seems a little disunion between him and the premier, Lord Rockingham, but I cannot tell where the disunion lays. If the whole of them do not pull together, it will not be long a popular ministry. My communication and interest with Lord Shelburne have procured me a promise of a *carte blanche* to look for any of my papers that may be transferred from Lord Hillsborough's office to his; but this cannot be done till some consequent arrangements take place, and, indeed, I am rather chagrined by his telling me, that it never happens that the whole of papers are turned from one to the other office, when a minister retires; for the custom is to make a sweep of office, as they term it, and to destroy every paper that the retiring minister does not choose to take away with him. I fear, in this way, Mr. Laurens is likely to lose his, or a chief part of them. Mr. Galloway had the examination of them, and, not longer ago than six months, a considerable part of them, and extracts of them, were arranged for publication, for the *virtuous* and *honest* purpose to gull John Bull into a belief that there yet remained a chance from the vast numbers of friends to government in America; their distresses, want of resources, &c., gave every hope of success to his Majesty's arms from another vigorous campaign! Strange as this may appear, I had it from such authority as I cannot doubt. When Lord G. Germaine walked out of office, he took the most of Mr. Laurens's papers with him.

I have been very busy for a day or two in the business of Captain Luke Ryan and Captain Macator, both condemned, and likely to suffer. There were some prisoners brought up from mill prison, by *habeas corpus*, as evidence to prove American property and commission in the last-mentioned ship, Macator's, and I have obtained from the new admiralty a promise, that these witnesses shall not be remanded to prison, but left on parol.

There is a young man soon going to his home, by way of Amsterdam, in one or some American vessel that may be going from thence, provided he can obtain a passage; he has been a hostage, and now set at large, so that likely, in a day or two, I may give you a line by him.

I Am, &C.

T. Digges.

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TO M. DE LAFAYETTE.

Amsterdam, 6 April, 1782.

My Dear General,—

I am just honored now with yours of the 27th March. All things were working rapidly together here for our good, until, on the 3d instant, the Russian ministers at the Hague presented the memorial which you have seen in the gazettes. This will set twenty little engines to work, to embroil and delay; but I believe, that in the course of four or five weeks, we shall triumph over this, which I take to be the last hope of the Anglomans. The voice of this nation was never upon any occasion declared with more unanimity, and the numerous petitions have already done an honor and a service to the American cause, that no artifice can retract or diminish.

As to the visit, Mr. Franklin is informed of the whole. It is nothing. The new British ministry are in a curious situation. There is but one sensible course for them to take, and that is, to make the best peace they can with all their enemies. We shall see whether they have resolution and influence enough to do it.

As to credit here, I am flattered with hopes of it, provided a treaty is made, not otherwise. Whether that will be done, and when, I know not. I can never foresee any thing in this country, no, not for one day, and I dare not give the smallest hopes.

Your confidential letter had better be sent by the Comte de Vergennes express to the Duke de la Vauguyon. I hope we shall have a good account soon of Jamaica.

I am extremely sorry, that Mr. Jay meets with so much delay in Spain. The policy of it is totally incomprehensible.

I am happy to find that your sentiments correspond with mine, concerning what we ought to do, and have no doubt that all will be well done, in time. What is there to resist the French and Spanish force in the West Indies? or in the channel? or in North America? or in the East Indies? If my Dutchmen fairly concert operations with France and Spain, and the seas are kept with any perseverance, all the commerce of Great Britain is at stake. Yet, your caution not to be too sanguine is very good. Spain does not yet seem to be sufficiently awake, and the English admirals, under the new ministry, will do all they can.

I fancy they will try the last efforts of despair this summer, but their cause is desperate indeed. Never was an empire ruined in so short a time, and in so masterly a manner. Their affairs are in such a state, that even victories would only make their final ruin more complete.

With Great Affection And Esteem,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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C. De Gyselaer To John Adams.

6 April, 1782.

Je dois vous communiquer, que Monsieur Van der Capellen du Marsch me marque, que la Province de Gueldres a prise une résolution pour votre admission conforme a celle de la Hollande, Mercredi passé.

Je Suis, &C. &C.

C. de Gyselaer.

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BARON VAN DER CAPELLEN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Zwol, le 6 Avril, 1782.

Monsieur,—

J'ai la satisfaction de communiquer à votre excellence que les États d'Overyssel ont résolu hier, *nemine contradicente*, de reconnoître votre excellence comme ministre des États Unis de l'Amérique septentrionale. Dieu en soit béni!

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C. &C.

J. D Van der Capellen.

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TO M. DUBBLEDEMUTZ.

Amsterdam, 7 April, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received your favor of yesterday, inclosing a gazette, with a new petition or address to the magistrates of Rotterdam.

While the people entertain such sentiments, and hold such a language, their liberties and prosperity can never be essentially in danger.

I should be very happy to see you at any time while I stay in Amsterdam, or after my removal to the Hague. If I should come to the Hague the latter end of this week, or the beginning of next, I should be glad to receive you there, but I cannot at present indicate the day.

With Much Respect,
I Have The Honor To Be, Sir, &C.

John Adams.

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THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, ce 9 Avril, 1782.

Je me suis empressé, monsieur, de transmettre à M. le Comte de Vergennes les témoignages de franchise et de loyauté que vous m'avez donné. Ce ministre me répond qu'ils confirment de plus en plus sa confiance dans votre attachement invariable aux principes de l'alliance; et il me charge de vous communiquer des détails très intéressants dont j'aurai l'honneur de vous faire part incessamment s'il m'est possible d'aller passer quelques jours à Amsterdam, ainsi que je me le propose.

Recevez, monsieur, une nouvelle assurance des sentiments inviolables d'attachement et de considération très distinguée avec lesquels,

J'Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

Le Duc de la Vauguyon.

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TO THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON.

Amsterdam, 10 April, 1782.

Sir,—

I have this moment received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me yesterday, with a letter inclosed from Dr. Franklin.

The approbation of the Comte de Vergennes is a great satisfaction to me, and I shall be very happy to learn from you, sir, at Amsterdam, the details you allude to.

I have a letter from Digges, at London, 2d of April, informing me, that he had communicated what had passed between him and me, to the Earl of Shelburne, who did not like the circumstance that every thing must be communicated to our allies. He says, that Lord Carmarthen is to be sent to the Hague, to negotiate a separate peace with Holland. But, according to all appearances, Holland, as well as America, will have too much wit to enter into any separate negotiations.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that Gillon has arrived at the Havana, with five rich Jamaica ships as prizes. M. Le Roy writes, that the English have evacuated Charleston.

The inclosed fresh *requête* of Amsterdam will show your Excellency, that there is little probability of the Dutchmen being deceived into separate conferences.

With The Most Profound Respect,
I Have The Honor To Be, Sir, &C.

John Adams.

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B. E. ABBEMA TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 11 Avril, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Je serois bien flatté, si j'étois le premier a vous informer que les États de la Province d'Utrecht ont pris hier unanimement la résolution de concourir avec les autres provinces à votre admission, comme ministre plénipotentiaire du congrès des Provinces Unies de l'Amérique. Je viens d'en recevoir la nouvelle de mon frere, membre du tiers État de la dite province.

Je profite toujours de cette occasion de vous assurer, &c.

B. E. Abbema.

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TO M. ABBEMA.

Amsterdam, 11 April, 1782.

Sir,—

Your favor of this morning, announcing the unanimous resolution of the States of Utrecht, taken yesterday in favor of American independence, is just come to hand. I had received a few minutes before a French gazette of Utrecht containing the same article; but I am very happy to receive it in a more authentic manner from a gentleman of so distinguished a reputation for patriotism. The unanimity and ardor with which this measure is adopted by the whole nation is to me an affecting circumstance, and an augur of much good to both nations.

With Great Esteem And Consideration,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO J. U. PAULI.

Amsterdam, 11 April, 1782.

Sir,—

I am honored with your letter of the 5th instant, and thank you for your polite invitation to Hamburgh, a journey which it would give me pleasure to make, but which various occupations will oblige me at least to postpone for some time.

In answer to your inquiries, sir, I have only to say, that, at present, I have no powers from the United States of America to treat with the Hanseatic cities; but their situation is such, that there will be infallibly a considerable trade between them and America; and, therefore, I know of no objection against the congress entering into negotiations with them.

If any gentleman authorized by them should have any proposals to make, I will transmit them with pleasure to congress for their consideration, only desiring that they may be either in the English or French language, as the German is unknown to me and to most of the members of congress.

I Have The Honor To Be, Sir, &C.

John Adams.

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JOHN LUZAC TO JOHN ADAMS.

Leyden, 16 April, 1782.

Honorable Sir,—

The corporate body of manufacturers and merchants of this city having presented yesterday to the honorable great council of Leyden an address of thanksgiving and further prayer, concerning the future commerce of our republic with the United States of America, I find myself honored with their orders to present your Excellency with some printed copies of it. This epoch, sir, is one of the most desirable I could ever wish. Zealous for the good of my country, and rejoicing in the noble exertions of my fellow-citizens for its prosperity, by a mutual friendship and intercourse with our sister republic, it is a peculiar satisfaction to me that those very circumstances afford me an opportunity of testifying to your Excellency their ardent wishes for our common cause, the cause of liberty and mankind, and their sincere regard for a minister, who, by his personal talents and character, inspires them with a true esteem and affection for those he represents.

I Am, &E.

J. Luzac.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 16 April, 1782.

Sir,—

Yesterday noon, Mr. William Vaughan, of London, came to my house with Mr. Laurens, the son of the president, and brought me a line from the latter, and told me that the president was at Haerlem, and desired to see me. I went to Haerlem, and found my old friend at the *Golden Lion*. He told me he was come partly for his health and the pleasure of seeing me, and partly to converse with me, and see if he had at present just ideas and views of things, at least to see if we agreed in sentiment, and having been desired by several of the new ministry to do so. I asked him if he was at liberty? He said, No; that he was still under parol, but at liberty to say what he pleased to me. I told him that I could not communicate to him, being a prisoner, even his own instructions, nor enter into any consultation with him as one of our colleagues in the commission for peace; that all I should say to him would be as one private citizen conversing with another; but that, upon all such occasions, I should reserve a right to communicate whatever should pass to our colleagues and allies.

He said, that Lord Shelburne and others of the new ministers were anxious to know whether there was any authority to treat of a separate peace, and whether there could be an accommodation upon any terms short of independence; that he had ever answered them, that nothing short of an express or tacit acknowledgment of our independence, in his opinion, would ever be accepted, and that no treaty ever would or could be made separate from France. He asked me if his answers had been right. I told him that I was fully of that opinion. He said that the new ministers had received Digges's report, but his character was such that they did not choose to depend upon it; that a person by the name of Oswald, I think, set off for Paris to see you about the same time that he came away to see me.

I desired him, between him and me, to consider, without saying any thing of it to the ministry, whether we could ever have a real peace with Canada or Nova Scotia in the hands of the English; and whether we ought not to insist, at least, upon a stipulation that they should keep no standing army or regular troops, nor erect any fortifications upon the frontiers of either. That, at present, I saw no motive that we had to be anxious for a peace; and, if the nation were not ripe for it upon proper terms, we might wait patiently till they should be so.

I found the old gentleman perfectly sound in his system of politics. He has a very poor opinion both of the integrity and abilities of the new ministry, as well as the old. He thinks they know not what they are about; that they are spoiled by the same insincerity, duplicity, falsehood, and corruption with the former. Lord Shelburne still flatters the King with ideas of conciliation and a separate peace, &c.; yet the nation and the best men in it are for a universal peace and an express acknowledgment of

American independence, and many of the best are for giving up Canada and Nova Scotia. His design seemed to be solely to know how far Digges's report was true. After an hour or two of conversation, I returned to Amsterdam, and left him to return to London.

These are all but artifices to raise the stocks; and, if you think of any method to put a stop to them, I will cheerfully concur with you. They now know sufficiently that our commission is to treat of a general peace, and with persons vested with equal powers; and, if you agree to it, I will,—never to see another minister that is not a plenipotentiary.

It is expected that the seventh Province, Guelderland, will this day acknowledge American independence. I think we are in such a situation now, that we ought not, upon any consideration, to think of a truce, or any thing short of an express acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the United States. I should be glad, however, to know your sentiments upon this point.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.1

The Hague, 22 April, 1782.

Sir,—

On the 22d day of April I was introduced by the chamberlain to His Most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange.

Knowing that his Highness spoke English, I asked his permission to speak to him in that language, to which he answered, smiling, “if you please, sir.” Although French is the language of the Court, he seemed to be pleased, and to receive as a compliment my request to speak to him in English.

I told him I was happy to have the honor of presenting the respects of the United States of America and a letter of credence from them to his Most Serene Highness, and to assure him of the profound veneration in which the House of Orange had been held in America, even from its first settlement, and that I should be happier still to be the instrument of further cementing the new connections between the two nations, professing the same religion, animated by the same spirit of liberty, and having reciprocal interests, both political and commercial, so extensive and important; and that in the faithful and diligent discharge of the duties of my mission, I flattered myself with hopes of the approbation of his Most Serene Highness.

His Highness received the letter of credence, which he opened and read. The answer that he made to me was in a voice so low and so indistinctly pronounced, that I comprehended only the conclusion of it, which was, that “he had made no difficulty against my reception.” He then fell into familiar conversation with me, and asked me many questions about indifferent things, as is the custom of princes and princesses upon such occasions. How long I had been in Europe? How long I had been in this country? Whether I had purchased a house at the Hague? Whether I had not lived some time at Leyden? How long I had lived at Amsterdam? How I liked this country? &c.

This conference passed in the prince’s chamber of audience with his Highness alone. I had waited some time in the antechamber, as the Duc de la Vauguyon was in conference with the Prince. The Duke, on his return through the antechamber, meeting me unexpectedly, presented me his hand with an air of cordiality, which was remarked by every courtier, and had a very good effect.

The Prince has since said to the Duc de la Vauguyon, that he was obliged to me for not having pressed him upon the affair of my reception in the beginning. He had reason; for, if I had, and he had said or done any thing offensive to the United States or disagreeable to me, it would now be remembered, much to the disadvantage of the Court.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 23 April, 1782.

Sir,—

On the 23d of April I had the honor of a conference with M. Van Citters, President of their High Mightinesses, to whom I presented the following memorial:—

“High and Mighty Lords,—The underwritten, minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, has the honor to inform your High Mightinesses that he is charged, by the instructions of his sovereign, to propose to the states-general of the United Provinces of the Netherlands a treaty of amity and commerce between the two republics, founded upon the principle of equal and reciprocal advantage, and compatible with the engagements already entered into by the United States with their allies, as also with such other treaties as they design to form with other powers. The undersigned has, therefore, the honor to propose that your High Mightinesses would nominate some person or persons with full powers to confer and treat with him on this important subject.

John Adams.”

Their High Mightinesses, on the same day, appointed a grand committee to treat, to whom I was introduced with great formality by two noblemen, and before whom I laid a project of a treaty, which I had drawn up conformable to the instructions of congress. I prayed the gentlemen to examine it, and propose to me their objections, if they should have any, and to propose any further articles which they should think proper. It has been examined, translated, printed, and sent to the members of the sovereignty.

The greatest part of my time for several days has been taken up in receiving and paying of visits from all the members and officers of government and of the Court, to the amount of one hundred and fifty and more.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 23 April, 1782.

Sir,—

I ought not to omit to inform congress, that on the 23d of April the French ambassador made an entertainment for the whole *corps diplomatique* in honor of the United States, at which he introduced their minister to all the foreign ministers at this Court.

There is nothing, I suppose, in the whole voluminous ceremonial, nor in all the idle farce of etiquette, which should hinder a minister from making a good dinner in good company, and, therefore, I believe they were all present, and I assure you I was myself as happy as I should have been, if I had been publicly acknowledged a minister by every one of them; and the Duc de la Vauguyon more than compensated for all the stiffness of some others, by paying more attention to the new brother than to all the old fraternity.

Etiquette, when it becomes too glaring by affectation, imposes no longer either upon the populace or upon the courtiers, but becomes ridiculous to all. This will soon be the case everywhere with respect to American ministers. To see a minister of such a State as NA and NA assume a distant mysterious air towards a minister of the United States, because his Court has not yet acknowledged their independence, when his nation is not half equal to America in any one attribute of sovereignty, is a spectacle of ridicule to any man who sees it.

I have had the honor of making and receiving visits in a private character from the Spanish minister here, whose behavior has been polite enough. He was pleased to make me some very high compliments upon our success here, which he considers as the most important and decisive stroke which could have been struck in Europe.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 24 April, 1782.

Sir,—

On the 24th day of April I had the honor to be introduced to the Princess, from whom I met a very gracious reception. As it is necessary to say something upon these occasions, I could think of nothing better than what follows.

Madame,—Je suis ravi d'avoir l'honneur de présenter une république vierge, un monde enfant, à la bienveillance et à la protection de votre altesse royale; d'une princesse aussi illustre, par ses perfections et vertus personnelles, que par sa connexion avec la maison d'Orange si révérée en Amérique, et avec un de ces grands monarques dans le siècle desquels on se fait un honneur de vivre.

Votre altesse royale me permettra de faire des vœux pour que ses sérénissimes enfans et leur postérité puissent jouir parmi les générations les plus reculées de l'Amérique, de la même vénération profonde qui y a toujours été entretenue pour leurs ancêtres.

Her royal Highness thanked me for the compliment, and promised to do what depended upon her to render my residence at the Hague agreeable to me; and then asked me several questions similar to those of his Most Serene Highness.

I Have, &C.

John Adams.

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TO M. HODSHON.

Amsterdam, 26 April, 1782.

Mr. Hodshon is desired to make the necessary inquiries, and as soon as he will give me under his hand his engagement to furnish congress with four or five millions of guilders, by the last day of July next, so that I may write forthwith, that they may draw for that sum, I will agree to his opening the loan upon the terms we have agreed upon.

John Adams.

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PROPOSALS FOR OPENING A LOAN.

Mr. Adams Proposes,—

1. If the houses of Fizeaux, Grand & Co., John Hodshon & Son, Messrs. Crommelins, Messrs. Van Staphorst, Messrs. De la Lande and Fynje, and Mr. John de Neufville & Son, will all join together in an American loan, Mr. Adams will open it, without demanding any stipulation for any certain sum.
2. If the first proposition is not agreed to, Mr. Adams will open a loan with as many of those houses as will agree together, and enter into a stipulation with him to furnish the sum of five millions by the month of August.
3. If no number of houses will join, Mr. Adams will open the loan with any one that will first undertake and contract to furnish that sum.
4. Mr. Adams proposes that all these gentlemen should meet and consult upon the matter, and propose their thoughts.

April 30, 1782.

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M. DUMAS TO JOHN ADAMS.

La Haie, 30 Avril, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Vous verrez par l'incluse de M. Nolet, de Schiedam, et par la copie de ma réponse provisionnelle, ce que vous jugerez à propos de leur répondre vous-même; en vous souvenant cependant, que vous avez accepté un déjeuner chez M. et Mad. Boreel ici, le 6e de Mai. On m'a dit que ces Messieurs de Schiedam donneront un repas de cent couverts, et qu'il y aura beaucoup de personnes de Rotterdam. Je dois vous faire souvenir aussi, que ces messieurs voudroient savoir le jour une semaine d'avance, à cause des préparatifs. Si vous pouviez donc dès à présent, leur fixer un jour de la 2e semaine du mois de Mai, vous leur feriez grand plaisir. Je pense que le meilleur seroit, monsieur, que vous leur indiquassiez l'heure où vous serez à Delft dans votre voiture, afin que vous puissiez entrer là dans leur yacht, si vous ne voulez pas qu'il vienne vous prendre ici; ce qui selon moi, vaudroit encore mieux. Vous prendrez après cela le parti qui sera le plus de votre goût.

Je Suis, &C.

Dumas.

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(The Two Following Letters Explain The Preceding.)

JACOB NOLET TO JOHN ADAMS.

Schiedam, ce 19 Avril, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Le corps des négociants de cette ville souhaitant joindre leurs acclamations a ceux de toute la nation, au sujet de l'indépendance des États Unis de l'Amérique septentrionale publiquement reconnue par nos augustes souverains, m'a chargé de m'informer auprès de votre excellence, du jour, de l'heure, et du lieu, qu'il lui conviendra d'accorder audience à six députés du dit corps de nos négociants, chargés d'exprimer en leur nom, les vifs sentimens de joie et de satisfaction sincère, qu'ils ressentent de cet heureux événement, comme aussi de l'avantage de pouvoir vous présenter leurs respects en qualité de ministre des dits États.

Vous complerez les vœux et les espérances de nos négociants si vous daignez accorder à leurs députés l'honneur de s'entretenir quelques instants, avec votre excellence, sur les intérêts du commerce de notre ville.

Oserois je me promettre, monsieur, que vous daignerez condescendre a nos désirs! Une réponse favorable de votre part nous honorera infiniment. Dans cette flatteuse attente, et en implorant sur votre personne et qualité respectables la protection du Tout Puissant, j'ai l'honneur d'être avec les sentimens de la plus haute estime et du respect le plus profond, monsieur, &c. &c.

Jacobus Nolet.

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JACOB NOLET TO M. DUMAS.

Schiedam, ce 29 d'Avril, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Il m'est impossible de vous exprimer le contentement de nos négociants en apprenant la réception distinguée dont votre digne maître, son Excellence Monsieur Adams, a daigné recevoir nos députés de commerce, comme aussi le plaisir qu'ils sentent de se voir honorer dans la première ou seconde semaine du mois de Mai prochain, de sa présence, et de celui de la vôtre.

Excusez moi, monsieur, que je prends la liberté de vous adresser la présente en vous priant de vouloir effectuer, du moins s'il est possible, que la visite de son excellence ne soit dilayée au delà du temps prescrit; à cause que le monsieur et Mtre. B. J. Pielat Van Bulderen, secrétaire de cette ville, qui comme un protecteur fidèle de notre commerce n'a difficulté d'être notre avocat et interprète auprès de son excellence, se voit obligé de sortir de ville au milieu du mois prochain, et lequel nous souhaiterions de le voir assister auprès de la reception de son excellence.

Nous aurons l'honneur, monsieur, d'attendre de votre part fixement de ce jour, et de la manière que son excellence choisira de faire le tour; soit par sa voiture, soit par *jagt*; soit par voiture jusqu'à Delft, et de là (à cause du mauvais chemin) par *jagt*. Espérant que vous tacherez de vouloir persuader son excellence de fixer son arrivée dans la ville un peu à bonne heure, nous vous sollicitons de vouloir être aussi toujours, monsieur, notre protecteur chéri, et de vous assurer de notre estime et affection.

J' Ai L'Honneur De Me Signer,
Avec Bien Du Respect, &C.

Jacob Nolet.

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TO M. DUMAS.

Amsterdam, 2 May, 1782.

Sir,—

Your favor of the 30th I had the honor to receive yesterday, with Mr. Nolet's letter and your answer. What shall I say to this affectionate, as well as polite invitation to dine at Schiedam? I am now, and shall be a long time, exceedingly fatigued with the affair of the loan, which takes up the greater part of my attention and time. The treaty of commerce is also, you know, under consideration, and the merchants of the American Coffee House have proposed a public dinner here; but I have begged to be excused. You see the difficulties, for which reasons I earnestly wish that our kind friends of Schiedam would be so good as to excuse us; but I will leave the whole to you, and if we cannot be excused, I will conform to the day you agree upon. But there is another affair, which not only perplexes me in this business of the dinner, but in many other matters of importance. There is a serious negotiation going on for peace between the Courts of London and Versailles, and Dr. Franklin, who has sent me the whole, has invited Mr. Laurens, Mr. Jay, and me to Paris, to consult and treat. This may make it necessary to go at a short warning.

I hope you are in possession of the house at the Hague, and advise you to live in it. Your answer to Mr. Nolet is very just.

It is my opinion, with submission to congress, that it is the interest and duty of the United States to send you a commission to be secretary of this legation and *chargé d'affaires*, with a salary of five hundred pounds sterling a year during the time that there is a minister here, and at the rate of a thousand a year when there is not; and you have my consent to transmit this opinion to congress, by sending an extract of this letter, or otherwise, by as many ways as you please. I shall write the same myself. I wrote as much, more than a year ago, but know not whether the letter has been received, as a vast number of my letters have been thrown overboard, and many taken.

If the dinner at Schiedam should be agreed on, there will be no difficulties in finding a way for us three to go all together. All that is before said about the negotiation for peace, you know must be kept secret. But if I go to Paris, I shall break up my house here entirely, and dismiss all my servants.

I have the honor to be, with compliments to the ladies, &c.

John Adams.

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VERBAL MESSAGE OF C. W. F. DUMAS TO THE CITY OF SCHIEDAM.

The following verbal message on the part of Mr. Adams to the secretary of the city of Schiedam was given by M. Dumas on the 8th of May, 1782.

Sir,—

The diversity of sentiments which exists in this republic, in relation to the circumstances in which it stands to the United States of America, having appeared to Mr. Adams capable of causing some embarrassment to the merchants of Schiedam, if he accepted their polite invitation, he has thought that he could not better prove the regard and affection which he has for those gentlemen, than by declining their polite request. He has therefore charged me, sir, to assure you of his extreme sensibility for the honor and friendship they have manifested in his person to his sovereign; and of his intention, not only to make mention of it in his first despatches to congress, but also to show on all occasions how much he is disposed to reciprocate this cordial civility, by every means in his power.

Dumas.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Amsterdam, 2 May, 1781.

Sir,—

I am honored with your favor of the 20th of April, and Mr. Laurens's son proposes to carry the letter to his father forthwith. The instructions by the courier from Versailles came safe, as all other despatches by that channel, no doubt, will do. The correspondence by Mr. Hartley I received by Captain Smedley, and will take the first good opportunity, by a private hand, to return it, as well as that with the Earl of Shelburne.

Mr. Laurens and Mr. Jay will, I hope, be able to meet at Paris, but when it will be in my power to go, I know not. Your present negotiation about peace falls in very well to aid a proposition, which I am instructed to make, as soon as the Court of Versailles shall judge proper, of a triple or quadruple alliance. This matter, the treaty of commerce, which is now under deliberation, and the loan, will render it improper for me to quit this station, unless in case of necessity. If there is a real disposition to permit Canada to accede to the American association, I should think there could be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and America, provided our allies also are contented. In a former letter, I hinted that I thought an express acknowledgment of our independence might now be insisted on; but I did not mean, that we should insist upon such an article in the treaty. If they make a treaty of peace with the United States of America, this is acknowledgment enough for me.

The affair of a loan gives me much anxiety and fatigue. It is true, I may open a loan for five millions, but I confess I have no hopes of obtaining so much. The money is not to be had. Cash is not infinite in this country. Their profits by trade have been ruined for two or three years; and there are loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and several other powers as well as their own national, provincial, and collegiate loans. The undertakers are already loaded with burdens greater than they can bear, and the brokers in the republic are so engaged, that there is scarcely a ducat to be lent, but what is promised. This is the true cause why we shall not succeed; yet they will seek a hundred other pretences. It is considered such an honor and such an introduction to American trade to be the house, that the eagerness to obtain the title of American banker, is prodigious. Various houses have pretensions, which they set up very high; and let me choose which I will, I am sure of a cry and clamor. I have taken some measures to endeavor to calm the heat, and give general satisfaction, but have as yet small hopes of success. I would strike with any house that would ensure the money, but none will undertake it, now it is offered, although several were very ready to affirm that they could, when it began to be talked of. Upon inquiry, they do not find the money easy to obtain, which I could have told them before. It is to me, personally, perfectly indifferent which is the house, and the only question is, which will be able to do best for the interests of the United States. This

question, however simple, is not easy to answer. But I think it clear, after very painful and laborious inquiries for a year and a half, that no house whatever will be able to do much. Enthusiasm, at some times and in some countries, may do a great deal; but there has as yet been no enthusiasm in this country for America, strong enough to untie many purses. Another year, if the war should continue, perhaps we may do better.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. DE LAFAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 7 May, 1782.

I heartily give you joy, my dear sir, upon the happy conclusion of your Dutch negotiations. Everybody here congratulates me, not only as a zealous American, but also as your long professed friend and admirer. And though the court air has not so much altered my republican principles as to make me believe the opinion of a king is every thing, I was the other day pleased to hear the King of France speak of you to me in terms of the highest regard. This Dutch declaration, in the present crisis, I take to be particularly important. To the victory you have gained, I wish you may join a successful skirmish, and bring about a useful loan of money. I had a letter from Mr. Livingston, dated February 19th. Nothing important in it, but that he urges the necessity of a pecuniary assistance, and the advantages we are to derive from operations in North America.

As this opportunity is safe, I may tell you the French succor for this year does not exceed six millions of livres. So far as respects operations, I have my hopes.

Mr. Franklin the other day communicated a letter from you, and I entirely coincide with every sentiment you have therein expressed. It suffices to say, that the letter respected propositions of peace. I am entirely of your opinion, that should England amuse us with emissaries, not vested with proper powers, it is not consistent with the dignity of America to continue the correspondence.

But I do not believe it will be the case. Mr. Oswald has returned to Mr. Franklin. A gentleman is expected to Count de Vergennes. It appears they wish for a general peace; our independence to be the ground of it. It remains to know how they understand it. The treaty to be negotiated at Paris. I heartily wish for peace. This campaign, in Europe at least, is going to be a Spanish one. I think it the interest of America to have a peace, on conditions, however, without which, I had rather fight for ten years longer. I may, I hope, before long converse with you at Paris, for, in the present situation of affairs, you will, no doubt, think it the sentiment of congress, and the people at large, that my presence at the French Court is likely to leave our cause better than my immediate return to America.

Mr. Franklin is very desirous you should come here, and I am the more anxious for it, either before my departure, which I continue to announce as immediate, or in case propositions are seriously made, that I have a great desire to converse freely with you.

This will be delivered by Mr. Ridley, so that I have been more confidential than I should have hazarded to be by post. Mr. Jay will have little objection to come, and, as Mr. Franklin says, the Spaniards had four years, we may give them forty.

With The Highest Regard, &C.

Lafayette.

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W. AND J. WILLINK, NIC. AND JAC. VAN STAPHORST,
AND DE LA LANDE AND FYNJE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 11 May, 1782.

Sir,—

M. Fynje having communicated to us his conversation with your Excellency last evening, we beg leave to assure you, that we will gladly do all that lays in our power to give you satisfaction. We, therefore, to convince you of our inclination in this respect, do, without any hesitation, accept of the terms you proposed, of $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. for the remedium and other charges.

The other point we have proposed to your Excellency, since we are greatly of opinion that it would contribute very much to the success of the loan, which we most heartily do wish to execute with honor and reputation. Since your Excellency, however, doth not choose to comply with our wishes, we think it our duty to consider such measures as may enable us to agree with your Excellency in this point also.

As it now will be necessary to have an interview with the undertakers, and we should be glad to have the concurrence of M. Van Vlooten, who yet considers himself bound until he is discharged either by your Excellency or M. Hodshon, we beg leave, therefore, to desire your Excellency to furnish us with a note from him to this purpose.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Wilhelm and Jan Willink,

Nic. and Jacob Van Staphorst,

De la Lande and Fynje.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

The Hague, Hôtel des États Unis, 13 May, 1782.

My Dear Friend,—

Yours of April , is just come to hand. Last night, for the first time, I slept in this house, and I hope that the air of the Hague will have a good effect upon my health, otherwise I must embark for the blue hills.

The independence of America has been acknowledged by this republic with a solemnity and unanimity, which has made it, in a peculiar sense, the national act. The publication of the memorial, of the 19th April, 1781, set all the writers of gazettes and pamphlets to work, to propagate and illustrate the hints thrown out by it, so that in the course of a year's time the people were universally convinced, and their zeal was animated to such a degree, that when the plot came to its unravelling, they threw out testimonies and arguments in their *requêtes*, which must do great service to the American cause. The enemy have perceived this, and have done all they could to prevent an extensive publication of them.

Pray let me know what gazettes or periodical papers are published with you, and in what languages, and whether there is any indulgence to the press with you.

I have laid before their High Mightinesses a plan of a treaty, which I hear no objection to, and am told by the grand pensionary will be settled in about three weeks. The other matter is not yet stirred. I shall wait for the advice of allies in this case, although I ventured to go against it in the former.

Once in my life the words *piddling*, &c., cost me very dear; but I shall never get them out of my head. I shall be plagued with piddling politicians as long as I live; at least, until I retire from the political career to the blue hills. There are at this moment so many politicians piddling about peace, general and separate, that I am sick to death of it. Why is there not one soul in Europe capable of seeing the plainest thing in the world? Any one of the neutral powers saying to the rest, "America is one of us, and we will all share in her commerce. Let us all as one declare it." These words once pronounced, peace is made, or, at least, soon and easily made. Without it, all may nibble and piddle and dribble and fribble, waste a long time, immense treasures, and much human blood, and they must come to it at last.

The new British ministers blunder at first setting out. They had but one system to choose, which could succeed, and that they have missed.

They must come to it finally; but it will be after an opposition is formed and cemented, which will give them much trouble, and make them unpopular.

No news from America a long time, except of the safe arrival of my dear Charles.

Yours, &C.

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. W. AND J. WILLINK, N. AND J. VAN
STAPHORST, AND DE LA LANDE AND FYNJE.

The Hague, 13 May, 1782.

Gentlemen,—

I have received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 11th of this month, in which you agree to accept the terms of four and one quarter per cent. for the remedium and other charges.

To this I answer, that I understand your meaning to be, to accept of the four and a quarter per cent. for receiving and paying the money at first, for receiving and paying off the annual interest, and for finally receiving and paying off the capital, for the brokerage, for the remedium for the undertakers, and for all other charges of the loan. In this sense I agree, in my capacity as agent for negotiating a loan for the United States, that you shall be allowed four and a quarter per cent.

As to the other point, if you will open the loan for three millions only at first, it would be, perhaps, better; but whether you open it for three or five, no other loan in behalf of the United States shall be opened by me, without your consent, or, at least, without the consent of two of the three houses, until it is full, except in one case, which is, that the loan in your hands should linger a long time without filling up, and I should obtain the warranty of the states-general, or of the states of Holland, or of the regency of Amsterdam, for opening a new loan, in which case I should submit the choice of a house to their High Mightinesses, to their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, or to the venerable magistrates of the city and; in either of these cases, your three houses will stand as fair to be employed, as any other. You may, therefore, I think, confidently affirm in your prospectus, that no other loan will be opened, until this is full, by me.

You will please to inform Mr. Van Vlooten, that I have agreed with you, and that I shall be very glad if he will, forthwith, engage in the business with you, upon such terms as you and he shall agree on.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, gentlemen,

Your Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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MESSRS. WILLINK AND OTHERS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 16 May, 1782.

Sir,—

We did not receive the letter, which your Excellency did us the honor to write to us, till yesterday morning about twelve o'clock, in answer to which we now take the liberty to propose to your Excellency the final terms on which we are willing to open a loan in behalf of the United States of North America.

Your Excellency shall authorize us to negotiate a sum of five millions of guilders, though we shall now only open a loan for three millions at the rate of five per cent. per annum for the time of ten years, and to be redeemed in the five following years, each year a fifth part, for which three thousand bonds of 1000 f. each shall be given, signed by your Excellency, and countersigned by us, as also paragraphed by a notary; and the coupons for the annual interest signed by your secretary, or anybody whom you will appoint for it.

The bonds shall all be dated the first of June, though the subscribers have it in their choice to pay or furnish the money in June, July, August, September, or October, as they shall think proper, provided that the first coupon is for 12, 11, 10, 9 or 8 months, according to the term they pay in; your Excellency promising to open no other loan at any other house or houses in the republic, till the whole loan for five millions is completed, for which we are not without hopes of succeeding.

We shall hand to your Excellency the original bonds, on which your Excellency will be pleased to procure us the ratification of congress, as we are obliged to engage ourselves for this to the public; after receiving which, congress may dispose directly of the sums that then shall be in cash.

We must beg leave to observe to your Excellency, that our meaning as to the terms of 4¼ per cent., is, that we charge them for the receiving and paying out of the money now, for the remedium to the undertakers, for brokerage, and for the expenses of the notary, the stamps, &c. We shall further charge, annually, one per cent. on the amount of the interest, for the paying out of it.

And to convince your Excellency that we are willing to make the terms as low as we really can, we shall charge on the final redeeming of the loan, for paying out of the money and charges thereon depending, only one half per cent.

We flatter ourselves with your Excellency's full approbation, and have, therefore, got the prospectus ready printed, to be distributed the moment your Excellency will be pleased to give us your agreement to it.

We Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Wilhem and Jan Willink,

Nic. and Jac. Van Staphorst,

De la Lande and Fynje.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 16 May, 1782.

Sir,—

On the 12th of this month, I removed into the *Hôtel des États-Unis de l'Amérique*, situated upon the canal, called the Fleweele Burgwal, at the Hague, where I hope the air will relieve my health in some degree from that weak state to which the tainted atmosphere of Amsterdam has reduced it.

The American cause has gained a signal triumph in this country. It has not persuaded an ancient rival, and an avowed, natural, hereditary enemy, to take a part against Great Britain; but it has torn from her bosom an intimate, affectionate friend, and a faithful ally of a hundred years continuance. It has not persuaded an absolute monarchy to follow the dictates of its own glory and interest and the unanimous wish of the people, by favoring it; but, availing itself only of the still small voice of reason, urging general motives and national interests, without money, without intrigue, without imposing pomp, or more imposing fame, it has prevailed against the utmost efforts of intrigue and corruption, against the almost universal inclination of persons in government, against a formidable band of capitalists and the most powerful mercantile houses in the republic, interested in English funds and too deeply leagued in English affairs.

Although these obstacles are overcome so far as to have obtained an acknowledgment of our independence, yet it is easy to see that they are not annihilated; and, therefore, we cannot expect to receive such cordial and zealous assistance as we might receive, if the government and the people had but one heart.

I wish it were in my power to give congress, upon this occasion, assurances of a loan of money, but I cannot. I have taken every measure in my power to accomplish it, but I have met with so many difficulties that I almost despair of obtaining any thing. I have found the avidity of friends as great an obstacle as the ill-will of enemies. I can represent my situation in this affair of a loan, by no other figure than that of a man in the midst of the ocean negotiating for his life among a school of sharks. I am sorry to use expressions which must appear severe to you; but the truth demands them.

The title of American banker, for the sake of the distinction of it, the profit of it, and the introduction to American trade, is solicited with an eagerness beyond description. In order to obtain it, a house will give out great words and boasts of what it can do; but not one will contract to furnish any considerable sum of money; and I certainly know, let them deceive themselves as they will, and deceive as many others as they may, by their confident affirmations, that none of them can obtain any considerable sum. The factions that are raised here about it between the French interest, the republican interest, the stadtholderian interest, and the Anglomane interest, have been

conducted with an indecent ardor, thwarting, contradicting, calumniating each other, until it is easy to foresee the effect will be to prevent us from obtaining even the small sums that otherwise might have been found. But the true and decisive secret is, there is very little money to be had. The profits of their trade have been annihilated by the English for several years. There is, therefore, no money but the interest of their capitalists, and all this is promised for months and years beforehand to bookkeepers, brokers, and undertakers, who have in hand loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, for the states-general, the States of Holland, the States of Friesland, the East and West India companies, &c. &c. &c.

But the circumstance which will be fatal to my hopes at this time is this,—there is just now unexpectedly opened a loan of nine millions for the India Company, under the warranty of the States, in which they have raised the interest one per cent. above the ordinary rate. I had obtained an agreement of the undertakers for two millions; but, before it was completed, this loan appeared, which frightened the undertakers so as to induce them to fly off. I must, therefore, entreat congress to make no dependence upon me for money.

There is one subject more upon which I beg leave to submit a few hints to congress. It is that of M. Dumas, whose character is so well known to congress, that I need say nothing of it. He is a man of letters and of good character; but he is not rich, and his allowance is too small at present for him to live with decency. He has been so long known here to have been in American affairs, although in no public character that I know of, but that of an agent or correspondent appointed by Dr. Franklin, or perhaps by a committee of congress, that, now our character is acknowledged, it will have an ill effect, if M. Dumas remains in the situation he has been in. To prevent it, in some measure, I have taken him and his family into this house; but I think it is the interest and duty of America to send him a commission as secretary to this legation, and chargé des affaires, with a salary of five hundred a year sterling, while a minister is here, and at the rate of a thousand a year while there is none.

There is another gentleman, whose indefatigable application to the affairs of the United States, and whose faithful friendship for me, in sickness and in health, demand of me, by the strongest claims of justice and of gratitude, that I should mention him to congress, and recommend him to their favor. This gentleman is Mr. Thaxter, whose merit, in my opinion, is greater than I dare express.

Edmund Jenings of Brussels has honored me with his correspondence, and been often serviceable to the United States as well as friendly to me. His manners and disposition are very amiable, and his talents equal to any service; and I cannot but wish that it might be agreeable to the views of congress to give him some mark of their esteem.

How shall I mention another gentleman, whose name, perhaps, congress never heard, but who, in my opinion, has done more decided and essential service to the American cause and reputation within these last eighteen months than any other man in Europe?

It is Mr. A. M. Cerisier, beyond all contradiction one of the greatest historians and political characters in Europe, author of the *Tableau de l'Histoire des Provinces*

Unies des Pays Bas, of the *Politique Hollandois*, and many other writings in high esteem, by birth a Frenchman, educated in the University of Paris, but possessed of the most genuine principles and sentiments of liberty, and exceedingly devoted by principle and affection to the American cause. Having read some of his writings, and heard much of his fame, I sought and obtained an acquaintance with him, furnished him with intelligence and information in American affairs, and introduced him to the acquaintance of all the Americans who have come to this country, from whom he has picked up a great deal of true information about our affairs, and perhaps some mistakes. His pen has erected a monument to the American cause more glorious and more durable than brass or marble. His writings have been read like oracles, and his sentiments weekly echoed and reëchoed in gazettes and pamphlets, both in French and Dutch, for fifteen months. The greatest fault I know in him is his too zealous friendship for me, which has led him to flatter me with expressions which will do him no honor, however sincerely and disinterestedly they might flow from his heart.

Congress must be very sensible that I have had no money to lay out in secret services, to pay pensions, to put into the hands of continental agents, or in any other way to make friends. I have had no money but my salary, and that has never been paid me without grudging. If I have friends in Europe, they have not most certainly been made by power, nor money, nor any species of corruption, nor have they been made by making promises or holding out alluring hopes. I have made no promises, nor am under any obligation, but that of private friendship and simple civility, to any man; having mentioned such as have been my friends, because they have been friends to the United States, and I have no other in Europe at least, and recommended them to the attention of congress, as having rendered important services to our country, and able to render still greater, I have done my duty, whatever effect it may have. If some small part of those many millions which have been wasted by the most worthless of men could have been applied to the support and encouragement of men of such great value, it would have been much better. It is high time, it is more than time, that a proper discernment of spirits and distinction of characters were made; that virtue should be more clearly distinguished from vice, wisdom from folly, ability from imbecility, and real merit from proud, imposing impudence, which, while it pretends to do every thing, does nothing but mischief.

The treaty of commerce is under consideration, and will not, that I foresee, meet with any obstacle.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. W. AND J. WILLINK AND OTHERS.

The Hague, 17 May, 1782.

Gentlemen,—

Your favor of the 16th instant, I received last night by Mr. Fynje.

In order to give as general satisfaction as may be, and in order to bring this business to a conclusion, I shall agree to the terms proposed in it, with the following explanation and alteration, which are indispensably necessary.

The explanation is this, that my “promise to open no other loan at any other house or houses in the republic, till the whole loan of five millions is completed,” shall be understood to be personally binding upon me alone, and that neither my successor in the agency shall be bound by it, nor congress. This explanation I have all along made, verbally, to Mr. Fynje, who has, no doubt, communicated it to you.

The alteration is this,—I cannot agree to allow “the half per cent. for the final redeeming of the loan.” The two per cent. must be both for receiving and paying the money at first, and for receiving and paying off the capital at last.

The one per cent. annually on the amount of the interest, for receiving and paying it out, I agree to.

I agree, also, to two per cent. for the remedium to the undertakers.

And to go as far as I possibly can to give you satisfaction, I agree to allow one half per cent. for brokerage, notary stamps, signatures, and all other charges and expenses whatever, which attend the loan.

These conditions will stand better in one view, thus,—

For negotiating the whole loan, receiving the money, and paying it out to the order of congress, or their minister; to the house, per cent.	1
For finally receiving and paying off the capital, and all charges attending it; to the house, per cent.	1
For the remedium to the undertakers, per cent.	2
For brokerage, notary, stamps, and all other charges and expenses of the loan, one half per cent.	$\frac{1}{2}$
	$4\frac{1}{2}$

To this, add for receiving and paying out the annual interest, one per cent. upon the amount of the interest paid.

These terms will be considered as severe and discouraging, and, to remove all difficulties as much as possible, I have ventured the utmost length I can ever go. I therefore pray the gentlemen to give me their answer immediately, whether they accept them or not. Because if there is the least difficulty about accepting them, I entreat the gentlemen to give me notice of it, and to give themselves no further trouble about the affair, but leave me to strike a bargain with another house, at least as advantageous to the United States.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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MESSRS. WILLINK AND OTHERS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 17 May, 1782.

Sir,—

We received by Mr. Fynje your Excellency's esteemed favor of the 17th instant, by which you are pleased to agree to all the terms we proposed by our letter of the 16th instant, with this exception, that the allowance for remedium of negotiating and paying out the money, brokerage, notary, stamps, and all expenses whatsoever, and also for the final redeeming of the negotiated sum, altogether is to be fixed at 4½ per cent. at once; which being considered by us, we accept of it, to open the loan, and to pay out in consequence of the negotiated sum or subscription 95½ per cent., all expenses of negotiating and redeeming to our charge.

We observe the explanation of the promise of opening no other loan until the five millions are completed, which, by our writing, is also considered only relative to your Excellency's person.

We beg leave to assure your Excellency of our best endeavors to promote the success of this loan, and to desire your influencing recommendation in our favor with the United States, for their commands.

We Have The Honor To Subscribe, &C.

Wilhem and Jan Willink,

Nic. and Jac. Van Staphorst,

De la Lande and Fynje.

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TO M. DE LAFAYETTE.

The Hague, 21 May, 1782.

My Dear General,—

Yours of the 7th of this month was yesterday brought me by Mr. Ridley; and I thank you for your kind congratulations on the progress of our cause in the low countries. Have a care, however, how you profess friendship for me; there may be more danger in it than you are aware of.

I have the honor and consolation to be a republican on principle; that is to say, I esteem that form of government the best of which human nature is capable. Almost every thing that is estimable in civil life has originated under such governments. Two republican powers, Athens and Rome, have done more honor to our species than all the rest of it. A new country can be planted only by such a government. America would at this moment have been a howling wilderness inhabited only by bears and savages, without such forms of government; and it would again become a wilderness under any other. I am not, however, an enthusiast who wishes to overturn empires and monarchies for the sake of introducing republican forms of government, and, therefore, I am no king-killer, king-hater, or king-despiser. There are three monarchs in Europe for whom I have as much veneration as it is lawful for one man to have for another,—the King of France, the Emperor of Germany, and the King of Prussia, are constant objects of my admiration, for reasons of humanity, wisdom, and beneficence, which need not be enlarged on. You may well think, then, that the information you give me, that the King of France was pleased the other day to speak to you of me in terms of the highest regard, gave me great pleasure.

I shall do all in my power to obtain here a loan of money, but with very faint hopes of success. In short, there is no money here but what is already promised to France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, the government here; and what will be fatal to me is, the East India Company have just opened a loan for nine millions of florins under the warranty of the States of Holland, and with an augmented interest.

My hopes of a speedy peace are not sanguine. I have suspicions of the sincerity of Lord Shelburne, Dunning, and others of his connections, which I wish may prove groundless; but, until they are removed, I shall not expect a peace. Shelburne affects to be thought the Chatham of the day, without any of his great qualities. I much fear that all their manœuvres about peace will turn out but artifices to raise the stocks. The British cabinet is so divided, that my expectations are not very high. Let us be upon our guard, and prepared for a continuance of the war. The Spaniards will demand cessions, and the Dutch, restitutions, which the English will not yet agree to, if they should get over all the claims of France and America. I should be very happy to have a personal conversation with you; but this will hardly take place until full powers arrive in Paris from London; and I know very well that, whether in America,

Versailles, or Paris, you will be constantly useful to America, and congress will easily approve of your stay where you are, until you shall think it more for the public good to go elsewhere.

With Great Affection And Esteem,
I Have The Honor To Be,

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. WILLINK AND OTHERS.

The Hague, 24 May, 1782.

Gentlemen,—

I have received the letter from Mr. Van Staphorst of the 22d, with a prospectus, and to-day that of Messrs. Willink has come to hand. I am glad the prospectus is published, and wish the bonds to be prepared as soon as possible, and sent to me to sign. They shall not wait long for my signature. My friend, Mr. Thaxter, is so ill of a fever, that I cannot leave him, and, therefore, cannot come to Amsterdam at present; if this gentleman, who is all my dependence, should not be able to sign the coupons, I must authorize your houses or any of you to sign them.

The report from Cadiz, that I authorized American privateers to take Portuguese ships, and that I should authorize them to take Danish ones, is totally groundless. I have no such authority, nor has any other. On the contrary, all the proceedings of congress enjoin the most exact observance of the principles of the armed neutrality, and the most equitable respect to the vessels of every neutral power, among whom Denmark and Portugal are undoubtedly numbered.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN HODSHON.

The Hague, 13 June, 1782.

Sir,—

I called the day before yesterday at your house, but had not the good fortune to find you at home. My business was to pay you my respects, and to present you my sincere thanks for your kindness and politeness to me in assisting my removal from Amsterdam to the Hague, and to pay you the expense of it. But, not finding you at home, and being obliged to return to the Hague, I do myself the honor to write you this letter for the same purposes, and to beg the favor of you to make out the account, and I shall desire a gentleman to call on you to discharge it.

I have further to beg of you, sir, to accept of my thanks for the generous manner in which you conducted the whole affair of the loan, especially in nobly releasing me from my engagements with you, if, upon inquiry, I should find I could do better for the public. I am very sorry to have been the innocent occasion of giving you any disagreeable feelings upon this occasion; but I found that a party spirit and very disagreeable altercations would have been the consequence of persevering, and, upon the whole, I thought it would be better for you, as well as the public, to proceed with the society who now have the loan under their direction.

But justice and gratitude will forever oblige me to say that your conduct through the whole affair was that of a man of honor, a gentleman, and a true friend of the United States of America.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.,

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

The Hague, 13 June, 1782.

Sir,—

I had yesterday, at Amsterdam, the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of June 2.

The discovery that Mr. Grenville's power was only to treat with France, does not surprise me at all. The British ministry are too much divided among themselves, and have too formidable an opposition against them in the King and the old ministers, and are possessed of too little of the confidence of the nation, to have courage to make concessions of any sort, especially since the news of their successes in the East and West Indies.

What their pride will end in, God only knows. For my own part, I cannot see a probability that they will ever make peace, until their finances are ruined, and such distresses brought upon them as will work up their parties into a civil war. I wish their enemies could, by any means, be persuaded to carry on the war against them in places where they might be sure of triumphs, instead of insisting upon pursuing it where they are sure of defeats. But we must take patience, and wait for time to do what wisdom might easily and soon do.

I have not as yet taken any engagements with the Dutch not to make a peace without them, but I will take such engagements in a moment, if the Dutch will take them, and I believe they will cheerfully. I shall not propose it, however, until I have the concurrence of the Duke de la Vauguyon, who will do nothing without the instructions of his Court. I would not delay it a moment from any expectation that the English will acknowledge our independence and make peace with us, because I have no such expectations. I confess it would be with infinite reluctance that I should see a peace made between England and any of her enemies, unless it is made with all. If France, Spain, and America should make peace with England, and leave Holland alone at war, she would be at her mercy, and she would find the tenderest of it cruelty. The permanent and lasting friendship of the Dutch may be easily obtained by the United States; that of England, never; it is gone with the days before the flood. If we ever enjoy the smallest degree of sincere friendship again from England, I am totally incapable of seeing the character of a nation or the connections of things, which, however, may be the case for what I know. They have brought themselves by their frenzy into such a situation,—Spain has such pretensions, Holland has such pretensions, America has such pretensions, the armed neutrality has such pretensions,—that where is the English minister or member of parliament that dares to vote for the concession to them? The pretensions of France, I believe, would be so moderate, that possibly they might be acceded to. But I fear that Spain, who deserves the least, will demand the most. In short, the work of peace appears so impracticable,

that I am happy in being restrained to this country by my duty, and by this means excused from troubling my head much about it. I have a letter from America, which informed me that Mr. Jay had refused to act in the commission for peace; but if he is on his way to Paris, as you suppose, I presume my information must be a mistake, which I am very glad of. Mr. Laurens did me the honor of a very short visit in his way to France; but I was very sorry to learn from him, that in a letter to your Excellency he had declined serving in the commission for peace. I had vast pleasure in his conversation, for I found him possessed of the most exact judgment respecting our enemies, and of the same noble sentiments in all things which I saw in him in congress.

What is the system of Russia? Does she suppose that England has too many enemies upon her, and that their demands and pretensions are too high? Does she seek to embroil affairs and to light up a general war in Europe? Is Denmark in concert with her or any other power? Her conduct is a phenomenon. Is there any secret negotiation or intrigue on foot to form a party for England among the powers of Europe, and to make a balance against the power of the enemies of England?

The States of Holland and several other Provinces have taken the resolution against the mediation for a separate peace, and this nation seems to be well fixed in its system and in the common cause.

My best respects and affections to my old friend, Mr. Jay, if you please.

Yours, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 15 June, 1782.

Sir,—

This morning I made a visit to the grand pensionary, M. Van Bleiswyck, and had a long conference with him concerning the plan of a treaty of commerce, which is now under consideration, and endeavored to remove some of his objections, and to explain to him the grounds and reasons of certain articles which have been objected to by others; particularly the article which respects France and that which respects Spain. He made light of most of the objections which had been started to the plan, and thought it would be easy to agree upon it; but there must be time for the cities to deliberate.

I asked him, if they did not intend to do us the honor soon of sending an ambassador to congress, and consuls, at least, to Boston and Philadelphia. He thought it would be very proper, but said they had some difficulty in finding a man who was suitable, and, at the same time, willing to undertake so long a voyage. I asked him, if it would not be convenient to send a frigate to America to carry the treaty, their ambassador, and consuls all together, when all should be ready. He said he could not say whether a frigate could be spared.

“Very well,” said I, smiling and pointing to the Prince’s picture, “I will go and make my court to his Highness, and pray him to send a frigate to Philadelphia with a treaty, an ambassador, and two consuls, and to take under her convoy all merchant vessels ready to go.” “Excellent,” said he, smiling, “I wish you good luck.”

We had a great deal of conversation, too, concerning peace, but, as I regard all this as idle, it is not worth while to repeat it. When a minister shall appear at Paris or elsewhere, with full powers from the King of England to treat with the United States of America, I shall think there is something more than artifice to raise the stocks and lay snares for sailors to be caught by pressgangs.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 5 July, 1782.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose copies, in Dutch and English, of the negotiation which I have entered into for a loan of money. My commission for borrowing money promises to ratify what I should do; and the money lenders require such a ratification, which Messrs. Willinks, Van Staphorsts, and De la Lande and Fynje have engaged shall be transmitted. Authentic copies of the original contracts, in Dutch and English, are inclosed for the ratification of congress, which I must entreat them to transmit forthwith, by various opportunities, that we may be sure of receiving it in time, for I suppose the gentlemen will not think it safe for them to pay out any considerable sum of the money, until it arrives.

Although I was obliged to engage with them to open the loan for five millions of guilders, I do not expect we shall obtain that sum for a long time. If we get a million and a half by Christmas, it will be more than I expect. I shall not venture to dispose of any of this money, except for relief of escaped prisoners, the payment of the bills heretofore drawn on Mr. Laurens, which are every day arriving, and a few other small and unavoidable demands, but leave it entire to the disposition of congress, whom I must entreat not to draw, until they receive information from the directors of the loan, how much money they are sure of, and then to draw immediately upon them. These directors are three houses, well esteemed in this republic, Messrs. Wilhem and Jan Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, and De la Lande and Fynje.

I have made the contract upon as good terms as I could obtain. Five per cent. interest. Two per cent. to the house, or rather to the society of houses. Two per cent. to the undertakers; and half per cent. for brokerage and other charges. This four and a half per cent., together with one per cent. for receiving and paying off the annual interest, is to include all the expenses of the loan of every sort. These are as moderate terms as any loan is done for. France gives, at least, as much, and other powers much more.

I must beg that the ratifications of the obligations may be transmitted immediately by the way of France, as well as Holland, by several opportunities. The form of ratification must be submitted to congress; but would it not be sufficient to certify by the secretary in congress, upon each of the copies inclosed in English and Dutch, that they had been received and read in congress, and thereupon resolved that the original instruments, executed by me before the said notary, be and hereby are ratified and confirmed?

The form of the obligations is such as was advised by the ablest lawyers and most experienced notaries, and is conformable to the usage when loans are made here for the seven Provinces. It is adapted to the taste of this country, and, therefore, lengthy

and formal, but it signifies no more in substance, than, “that the money being borrowed must be paid.”

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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C. L. BEYMA TO JOHN ADAMS.

Leeuwarde, ce 16 Juillet, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Je prends la liberté de vous adresser celle ci, pour communiquer a votre excellence l'avis du quartier d'Oostergo, qui très probablement sera changé dans une résolution des États. Votre excellence y verra que ce n'est nullement l'intention de faire trainer les affaires en long, mais que l'on souhaiteroit bien, que dans la conclusion cet avis méritoit quelque considération; et c'est pour cela que je me suis trouvé obligé d'envoyer à votre excellence cette pièce en secret, afin que votre excellence en soit informée, en vous sollicitant d'en faire l'usage que vous trouverez à propos, pour favoriser l'intention de la province, autant que votre excellence le trouvera bon.

Monsieur Dumas, à qui je prie de remettre l'incluse, apprendra à votre excellence les raisons pour lesquelles je ne puisse entrer en des plus longs détails, étant tout-à-fait occupé. En attendant, je profite volontièrement de cette occasion pour vous témoigner que je suis, &c. &c.

C. L. Beyma.

P. S. Nos députés a La Haie sont chargés d'agir en cette affaire avec communication de votre excellence.

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E. F. VAN BERCKEL TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Extract.)

Amsterdam, 22 Juillet, 1782.

Pour ce qui regarde notre traité de commerce, vous m'obligerez infiniment, si votre excellence voudra avoir la bonté de me donner les éclaircissements requis sur la difficulté d'admettre les remarques, que la commission de leurs hautes puissances vous a communiqué, sur le projet que votre excellence leur a délivré. Si vous voudriez me mettre en état de faire sentir la solidité du refus, que l'on m'a dit que vous avez fait, à l'égard de quelques altérations proposées, ce seroit le moyen d'avancer une affaire qui pourroit être trainée, sans cela, encore bien de temps. Mais pour cet effet, il faut que je sois parfaitement éclairé au sujet de vos vues, et de celles du congrès.

Rien ne me sera plus agréable, que de vous donner à toute occasion, des preuves de mes sentiments d'estime et de considération distinguée pour votre excellence, en vous témoignant sincèrement que je suis, &c. &c.

E. F. Van Berckel.

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TO M. VAN BERCKEL.

The Hague, 23 July, 1782.

Sir,—

I have received this morning the letter, which you did me the honor to write me yesterday. All that you say about Madame d'Hogendorp and the "inconnu," is a mystery to me, never having had a visit or application from either, to my knowledge. It would give me pleasure, however, to be of any service to this person, upon your recommendation, if it were in my power; but I have not only no authority to recommend anybody to offices or employments in America, but I am forbidden ever to give any one the least encouragement. There are in America, as in all other countries, two persons who wish for employment, to one employment, and, therefore, whoever goes to America with expectations of getting into public employment will find himself disappointed, and most certainly would not thank me for leading him into an error, and deceiving him with false hopes. If, after this candid information, he persists in his determination to go to America, I will, with pleasure, at your desire, give him letters of introduction to some of my friends at Philadelphia or Boston.

I wish it were generally known, that congress have heretofore been obliged to thank some hundreds of officers and other gentlemen of undoubted good characters, and who carried with them great recommendations. It is near five years ago that they put themselves to the expense of paying the voyages back again to Europe of above an hundred persons, who had gone over in hopes of employments which congress had not to give. They will not at this time of day repeat this expense, and, therefore, I cannot encourage any man to go over, in hopes of public employment.

As to the treaty, sir, I have communicated to several pensionaries that I could agree to most of the amendments proposed by the admiralty, but I cannot agree to leave out entirely the twenty-second and twenty-third articles; and what objection there is to them I am not able to conceive, and no one has been so good as to point out to me any harm or injury they can possibly do this republic. The reason why the congress should insist upon the substance of them is obvious, namely, because they have already plighted their faith to the King of France, to the effect of them. The amount of both those articles is no more than this,—“That this treaty with the republic shall not derogate from those already made with France.” If I were to meet the committee of their High Mightinesses, we could, in such a conference, very easily and very soon agree upon some modification of those two articles, which would be acceptable to both parties, and upon all other amendments which are proper to be made. If Amsterdam agrees to the resolution proposed by the states of Holland on the 18th of this instant July, the treaty may be very easily, and very soon concluded.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.,

John Adams.

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JOHN JAY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 2 August, 1782.

Sir,—

Your friendly letter of the 8th ultimo, should not have remained so long unanswered, had I not been obliged by sickness, which lasted several weeks, to postpone writing to any of my correspondents. Mrs. Jay has also been much indisposed. Indeed, neither of us has been blessed with much health since we left America.

Your negotiations in Holland have been honorable to yourself, as well as useful to your country. I rejoice in both, and regret that your health has been so severely taxed by the business of your employment. I have also had my share of perplexities, and some that I ought not to have met with. I congratulate you on the prospect of your loan's succeeding, and hope your expectations on that subject may be realized. I commend your prudence, however, in not relying on appearances. They deceive us sometimes in all countries.

My negotiations have not been discontinued by my leaving Madrid. The Count d'Aranda is authorized to treat with me, and the disposition of that court to an alliance with us seems daily to grow warmer. I wish we could have a few hours conversation on this subject, and others connected with it; as we have no cipher, I must be reserved. I had flattered myself with the expectation of seeing you here, and still hope that, when your business at the Hague will admit of a few weeks absence, you may prevail upon yourself to pay us a visit. I really think that a free conference between us might be useful, as well as agreeable, especially as we should thereby have an opportunity of making many communications to each other, that must not be committed to paper.

Mr. Oswald is here, and I hear that Mr. Fitzherbert is to succeed Mr. Grenville. Lord Shelburne continues to profess a desire of peace, but his professions, unless supported by faith, can have little credit with us. He says that our independence shall be acknowledged, but it is not done, and, therefore, his sincerity remains questionable. War must make peace for us, and we shall always find well-appointed armies to be our ablest negotiators.

The intrigues you allude to, I think, may be also traced at Madrid, but I believe have very little influence anywhere, except, perhaps, at London. Petersburg and Copenhagen, in my opinion, wish well to England, but are less desirous to share in the war, than in the profits of it. Perhaps, indeed, further accessions of power to the house of Bourbon may excite jealousy, especially as America as well as Holland is supposed to be very much under the direction of France.

Did you receive my letters of 18th March and 15th April? Think a little of coming this way.

I Am, Dear Sir, With Great Esteem And Regard, &C.,

John Jay.

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M. VAN BERCKEL TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 8 Aout, 1782.

Monsieur,—

J'ai le plaisir et l'honneur de vous communiquer que les députés de la ville d'Amsterdam à l'assemblée des Etats d'Hollande vont recevoir, demain, la résolution du conseil de ladite ville, prise aujourd'hui, au sujet du traité d'amitié et de commerce entre leurs hautes puissances et les États Unis en Amérique. Cette résolution du conseil contient les ordres les plus précises pour se conformer avec le rapport Hollandais du 18 Juillet dernier, avec lequel tous les autres membres de l'assemblée s'étoient déjà conformés avant nous; et des ordres pour ne retarder sous aucun prétexte la conclusion de ce grand ouvrage. Aussi doivent ils rejeter l'addition des mots *en Europe*, dans le second, troisième et autres articles du traité, relativement aux *nations les plus favorisées*; ayant été considéré que cette *addition* ou *limitation* n'étoit pas seulement une nouveauté dont il n'y avoit point d'exemple, mais en outre, sujette à de très grands inconveniens. Du reste la Bourse de notre ville nous a suggéré encore quelques remarques, qui sont comprises dans ladite résolution de notre conseil; non pas pour proposer à votre excellence quelque altération essentielle, qui puisse trainer la délibération, mais seulement des remarques qui doivent être communiquées à leurs hautes puissances, pour être jointes aux remarques que leur comités ont mises à la marge du projet que votre excellence a délivré aux états généraux, et pour que les unes et les autres soient le sujet d'une conférence avec votre excellence, afin de faire des arrangemens en conséquence et d'un commun accord; sans que l'on prétende que l'affaire soit encore prise *ad referendum*, mais que la commission de leurs hautes puissances soit munie d'un plein pouvoir pour la conclusion du dit projet, avec les altérations dont on pourra être d'accord entre les deux parties contractantes.

Pour les remarques de notre Bourse, elles sont d'une extrême simplicité, et servent plutôt à donner ou à demander des éclaircissemens que pour ajouter ou retrancher quelque chose d'essentiel. J'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer cette particularité dans le dessein de prévenir des surprises, et pour que votre excellence, en cas que l'on hasarderait de vous proposer quelque chose, qui ne portât pas le dit caractère, et qui pourroit vous causer quelque étonnement, vous puissiez prendre de moi les éclaircissemens nécessaires, si votre excellence jugeât à propos.

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

E. F. Van Berckel.

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TO M. VAN BERCKEL.

The Hague, 10 August, 1782.

Sir,—

I have this day received the letter, which you did me the honor to write me on the 8th, and am much obliged to you for your kind communications, which will be of much use to me, as I hope, in bringing the treaty to a just conclusion. I rejoice that the city of Amsterdam has decided upon the matter so amicably and candidly, and whenever any propositions or remarks shall be made to me, my sentiments upon them shall be communicated with equal frankness and candor. Where the parties are in earnest in searching for the truth, and that only, it is not difficult to find. And I know of nothing that either can wish for in this case, but to make the treaty as perfect and as useful as possible.

The resolution of Amsterdam, to instruct their deputies to have the treaty concluded without delay, and without being again taken *ad referendum*, is peculiarly agreeable to me, because I am very anxious to have it finished. It has been already long under deliberation, and it ought to be upon its passage to congress for ratification, together with a minister from their High Mightinesses to the United States. Gentlemen here seem much at a loss to find a man both qualified for this service, and willing to undertake it. I should think, however, that many might be found. There is probably no office in which a man of abilities might render more important service to his country.

The reports of peace are renewed, and *Mr. Oswald and Mr. Fitzherbert are at Paris. Lord Shelburne promises to acknowledge American independence in the treaty of peace, but he will not perform it; and he means nothing but amusement, which he will keep up for a few months or weeks, and, by degrees, the old ministry and their old system will be revived in England.* When will her enemies be aroused to a sight of their situation and true interests, and be induced to treat that perfidious nation as she deserves!

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

The Hague, 10 August, 1782.

Sir,—

It was with very great pleasure that I received, this morning, your kind favor of the 2d. I am surprised to learn, that yours and Mrs. Jay's health have been disordered in France, where the air is so fine.

That your anxieties have been very great, I doubt not. That most of them were such as you ought not to have met with, I can easily conceive. I can sincerely say, that all mine, but my fever, were such as I ought not to have had. Thank God they are passed, and never shall return, for nothing that can happen shall ever make me so anxious again. I have assumed the *felicis animi immota tranquillitas*.

Nothing would give me more satisfaction, than a free conversation between you and me upon the subjects you mention, and all others directly or indirectly connected with it, or with any of our affairs; but I do not see a possibility of taking such a journey. The march of this people is so slow, that it will be some time before the treaty of commerce can be finished, and after that I have other orders to execute, and must be here in person to attend every step. But besides this, *I think I ought not to go to Paris, while there is any messenger there from England, unless he has full powers to treat with the ministers of the United States of America*. If the three American ministers should appear at Paris, at the same time with a real or pretended minister from London, all the world would instantly conclude a peace certain, and would fill at once another year's loan for the English. In Lord Shelburne's sincerity I have not the smallest confidence, and I think that *we ought to take up Fox's idea, and insist upon full powers to treat with us in character, before we have a word more to say on the subject*. They are only amusing us. I would rather invite you to come here. This country is worth seeing, and you would lay me under great obligations to take your residence, during your stay, in the *Hôtel des États-Unis*. Many people would be glad to see you. I should be very glad, however, to be informed, from step to step, how things proceed, which may be done with safety, by expresses to me, or by those from the Court of Versailles to the Duke de la Vauguyon, in whom I have great confidence; or it may even be done by post.

As you justly observe, further accessions of power to the house of Bourbon may excite jealousies in some powers of Europe; but who is to blame but themselves? Why are they so short-sighted or so indolent, as to neglect to acknowledge the United States, and make treaties with them? Why do they leave the house of Bourbon to contend so long and spend so much? Why do they leave America and Holland under so great obligations? France has, deserves, and ought to have, a great weight with America and Holland, but other powers might have proportionable weight if they would have proportional merit.

If the powers of the neutral maritime confederation would admit the United States to accede to that treaty, and declare America independent, they would contribute to prevent America, at least, from being too much under the direction of France. But if any powers should take the part of England, they will compel America and Holland too, to unite themselves ten times more firmly than ever to the house of Bourbon.

I do not know, however, that America and Holland are too much under the direction of France, and I do not believe they will be, but they must be dead to every generous feeling as men, and to every wise view as statesmen, if they were not much attached to France, in the circumstances of the times.

I received two letters from you in the spring; one I answered, but have not the dates at present; the other kindly informed me of the arrival of my son in America, for which I thank you.

With Great Regard And Esteem, &C.

John Adams.

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TO MESSRS. WILLINK AND OTHERS.

The Hague, 11 August, 1782.

Gentlemen,—

This morning I received your favor of the 8th, but I am not able to inform you what is the amount of the bills drawn upon Mr. Laurens, which are not yet arrived. I have never been exactly informed myself. They cannot, I think, amount to more than two hundred thousand guilders, I hope not half that sum, but cannot say positively.

I am obliged to you for the trouble you have taken to pay four hundred and ninety-one florins twelve stivers to Messrs. Gerb, Rankes, &c., and for sending me the lease of the house.

I am very glad to find that you have received so much as one million four hundred and eighty four thousand florins on the loan, and congratulate you upon it. When I thought it safest to be a little under, rather than exceed, I had in my mind reserving enough to pay the bills on Mr. Laurens, and a few unavoidable expenses here. But I believe you may write to congress to draw for thirteen hundred thousand florins, and so afterwards, from time to time, as money shall be received by you.

I am obliged to you for your care in sending on the despatches to congress, and desire that you would, from time to time, inform that body of every thing, with the utmost exactness, that relates to the loan.

With Great Esteem, I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO MR. MAZZEI.

The Hague, 12 August, 1782.

Sir,—

Your favors of 28th June, and 30th July, I have received. I have not transmitted to congress the first, because I would not give an alarm unnecessarily. The intelligence contained in it is wholly groundless, according to the best information I can obtain, and the best judgment I can form. I am well assured that neither of the imperial courts has ever made any declaration, or expressed any opinion or inclination, against the independence of America. On the contrary, I am in possession of authentic documents, which express clearly, in my apprehension, other sentiments.

There may be a war in Europe, but this would accelerate rather than retard a general acknowledgment of American independence. England, it is certain, cannot carry on the present war, and, at the same time, engage in another, more extensive, on the continent. With the stocks at fifty-six, and a war against four nations, it is impossible she should pay subsidies to foreign nations. If any nation declares against Holland, the house of Bourbon, and America, some other nation will declare for them, so that our cause will rather be strengthened, and we shall certainly be rendered dearer to our allies.

Holland, instead of losing its existence or its name, will, if the war continues, assume all its old character and glory.

What if a war should happen between Russia and the Porte? What can England do? What if a quarrel should arise between the Emperor and Russia? What would England get by that? What if Russia and Denmark should declare in favor of England? which is, however, altogether improbable. I say this would be an advantage to America, for we should make more profit of their trade, than they could do us harm.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

The Hague, 13 August, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

The public papers announce Fitzherbert's commission to be to treat with "the four powers at war with Great Britain." But whether they mean Hyder Ali or the Mahrattas, is uncertain.

I have obtained intelligence of a paper addressed lately from the Court of St. James to the Courts of Vienna and Petersburg, as well as that of Paris, in which are the following words, namely,—

"Sa majesté Britannique dit qu'il ne préjuge, ni ne veut préjuger aucune question quelconque, et qu'il ne prétend exclure personne de la négociation qu'on a en vue, qui pourrait s'y croire intéressé, soit qu'il soit question des états généraux, soit qu'on y veuille faire entrer les colonies Américaines."

You, perhaps, may have seen the whole; if you have, I beg a copy.

For my own part, I am not the minister of any "fourth state" at war with Great Britain, nor of any "American Colonies," and, therefore, I should think it out of character for us to have any thing to say with Fitzherbert, or in the congress at Vienna, until more decently and consistently called to it. It is my duty to be explicit with you, and to tell you sincerely my sentiments. I think we ought not to treat at all, until we see a minister authorized to treat with "the United States of America," or with their ministers. Our country will feel the miserable consequence of a different conduct, if we are betrayed into negotiations, in or out of a congress, before this point is settled; if gold and diamonds, and every insidious intrigue and wicked falsehood, can induce anybody to embarrass us, and betray us into truces, and bad conditions, we may depend upon having them played off against us. We are, and can be, no match for them at this game. We shall have nothing to negotiate with, but integrity, perspicuity, and firmness. There is but one way to negotiate with Englishmen, that is, clearly and decidedly; their fears only govern them. If we entertain an idea of their generosity or benevolence towards us, we are undone. They hate us, universally, from the throne to the footstool, and would annihilate us, if in their power, before they would treat with us in any way. We must let them know that we are not to be moved from our purpose, or all is undone. The pride and vanity of that nation is a disease, it is a delirium, it has been flattered and inflamed so long by themselves, and by others, that it perverts every thing. The moment you depart one iota from your character, and the distinct line of sovereignty, they interpret it to spring from fear or love of them, and from a desire to go back.

Fox saw we were aware of this, and calculated his system accordingly. We must finally come to that idea, and so must Great Britain. The latter will soon come to it, if we do not flinch. If we discover the least weakness or wavering, the blood and treasures of our countrymen will suffer for it in a great degree. Firmness! firmness and patience for a few months, will carry us triumphantly to that point where it is the interest of our allies, of neutral nations, nay, even of our enemies, that we should arrive. I mean a sovereignty universally acknowledged by all the world. Whereas, the least oscillation will, in my opinion, leave us to dispute with the world, and with one another, these fifty years.

With Great Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO HENRY LAURENS.

The Hague, 15 August, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

By a certain anonymous letter, you have had a specimen of the infernal arts which have been and are practised, to create misunderstandings among American ministers. There has been an uninterrupted succession of them ever since I have been in Europe. Whether they are to be attributed to inventions of our enemies, or to still baser intrigues of pretended friends, or to impudent schemes of interested candidates and competitors for the little favors which American ministers have sometimes to bestow, or to all of these together, I know not. The latter supposition is most probable. Enough of this, however.

It seems that your friend Oswald is still at Paris, and Fitzherbert has taken the place of Grenville. He is said to be authorized to treat with the four powers at war with Great Britain. Pray, what is your opinion of this? Ought we to accept of such powers? Can we consistently treat with any man who has not full powers to treat with the ministers of the United States of America? I have one thing to propose to you, sir, in confidence. It is, if you approve it, to endeavor to get Mr. Jenings appointed secretary to the commission for peace. I wish congress would appoint him.

I can give you no news from hence, except that I have been happy enough to obtain a little money for congress. So that they may draw immediately, as soon as they send their ratification of my contract, for about thirteen or fourteen hundred thousand guilders. This you may mention to congress, or to anybody else in America, if you write. The money is in hand of Messrs. Willink, &c., but cannot be drawn out but by congress, after the receipt of the ratification.

The treaty of commerce will probably pass the states of Holland this day.

With Invariable Esteem And Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO JOHN JAY.

The Hague, 17 August, 1782.

Sir,—

The states-general have chosen Mr. Brantzen minister to negotiate for peace. Yesterday, he did me the honor to dine with me. He is represented to be a good man, and well fixed in the true system. I have very authentic information, that his instructions will be such as France and America, as well as his own country, ought to wish them.

I have letters from Boston, 17th June; grand rejoicings on the birth of the Dauphin, everywhere. The States giving strong instructions to their delegates in congress to consent to no peace short of independence, and without concert with France. The offers by Carlton are highly resented; taken much worse from the present ministry than they would have been from the former. The instructions from the States to congress are, to resent as an insult every offer which implies a deviation from their treaties, or the smallest violation of their faith.

I am promised, to-morrow, a copy of Mr. Fitzherbert's commission. I wish to know whether you or the Dr. have had any conferences with him, and what passed. We are told of a Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Oswald, at Paris; have they any powers, and what?

This will be delivered you by Mr. Barclay, the consul, a worthy man, whom I beg leave to introduce to you.

With Great Regard,

John Adams.

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TO HENRY LAURENS.

The Hague, 18 August, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

I have just received the inclosed letter, open for me to read. It appears to be from one who has a remarkable kind of benevolence towards the United States, such as has memorably appeared through the whole war, in almost all countries; I mean the benign inclination to be American agents, jobbers, officers, ambassadors, generals, and kings. Inclosed is a copy of Fitzherbert's commission; pray inclose it to congress, that it may go as many ways as possible. What think you of the words "Quorumcunque statuum quorum interesse poterit?" If we should presume to think ourselves included in these words, will Lord Shelburne be of the same mind?

The states-general have appointed Mr. Brantzen their minister, who did me the favor to dine with me three days ago, and then told me he should set off for Paris in three weeks. Blessed are the peacemakers! Don't you wish yourself one?

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 18 August, 1782.

Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose, for the information of congress, a copy of Mr. Fitzherbert's commission. The words *quorumcunque statuum quorum interesse poterit* include the United States, according to them, but not according to the King who uses them; so that there is still room to evade. How much nobler and more politic was Mr. Fox's idea, to insert the "Ministers of the United States of America" expressly!

The states-general have appointed M. Brantzen their minister plenipotentiary to treat concerning peace, and he will set off for Paris in about three weeks. His instructions are such as we should wish. The States of Holland and West Friesland have determined the last week upon our project of a treaty of commerce, and I expect to enter into conferences with the states-general this week, in order to bring it to a conclusion. I hope for the ratification of the contract for a loan, which has been sent five different ways. Upon the receipt of this ratification, there will be thirteen or fourteen hundred thousand guilders ready to be paid to the orders of congress by Messrs. Wilhem and Jan Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, and De la Lande and Fynje.

The states and the regencies are taking such measures with the stadtholder, by demanding his orders and correspondence about naval affairs, and by reassuming their own constitutional rights in the appointment of officers, &c., as will bring all things right in this republic, which we shall find an affectionate and a useful friend. The communication of the following instructions to me is such a piece of friendship and such a mark of confidence, as makes it my duty to request of congress that it may be kept secret.¹

These instructions will show congress, in a clear light, the disposition of this republic to be as favorable for us and our allies as we could wish it.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 22 August, 1782.

Sir,—

Their High Mightinesses have at length received their instructions from all the Provinces, and I have this day been in conference with the grand committee, who communicated to me the remarks and propositions on their part. To this I shall very soon give my replication, and I hope the affair will be soon ended.

I was received in state by two of the lords, at the head of the stairs, and by them conducted into the committee-room where the business is transacted. The committee consisted of one or more deputies from each province, together with the grand pensionary, Bleiswyck, and the Secretary, Fagel.

I Have The Honor To Be, Sir, &C.

John Adams.

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HENRY LAURENS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Nantes, 27 August, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—

Soon after I had despatched a letter to you this morning, under the 25th instant, I was honored by yours of the 18th, but too late for an answer by this day's mail.

The copy of Mr. Fitzherbert's commission shall be transmitted to congress by a vessel to Boston in a day or two.

I think an answer to your question on “quorumcunque statuum,” was anticipated in my last, but, if you did not know it before, please to remember I am a very indifferent Latinist; as well, however, as without assistance, I can hammer out a construction upon the sentence taken altogether, there is no difficulty on your side. If the British ministers sit down with, they acknowledge you—acknowledge you to be a state interested, or “whom it doth concern,” and the late act of parliament, for enabling the King to make peace, &c., lame as it is, affords a sanction (but, remember, I plead ignorance); in that case, you may rest tranquil, regardless of Lord Shelburne's “mind.” But I still see it possible that a general peace may be agreed upon by a treaty or treaties which shall terminate the war, independence tacitly or formally assured to the United States, France and America at liberty to lay down their arms, and you gentlemen commissioners not called upon to sit down about the business, except, by the Court of France, for your formal consent. This I know was not the meaning of our ally in 1778, and I have already said it is inconsistent with the honor and the interest of the Court of France to subject the United States to such an affront; wherefore, I am not apprehensive on that score; there is, nevertheless, a possibility. If the formal consent is refused, what then? I have given the answer. Congress, in that year, or the next, bound themselves by a declaratory and explanatory resolve, which only proves that on their side there were doubts. Our ally was pleased by that act, but I know of no mutual obligation. Be this as it may, unless Great Britain has a deep design,—first, to make a general peace, submitting to the letter of our eighth article, then, to pick a quarrel with us, and renew hostilities, she must come to us in the general treaty, or separately, but hand in hand with the other. France will look at this with a jealous eye, and we have enough in reserve; but the United States should be on their guard, and not too suddenly “*lay down their arms.*” I have spoken of possibilities of what may happen, founded on a certain ground of suspicion that the King of Great Britain aims at effecting a general peace, without a direct participation by his revolted subjects. Thence, the apparent ambiguity of the words you have quoted. I have said the Court of France will not, or will not suddenly gratify his humor; there is another Court to whom we are not yet known as an independent nation. You will receive light from the first serious convention. I repeat that I would not so freely commit myself to every man.

“Do not you wish yourself one of the peacemakers?” I have long since given a positive answer, and have only to add, the business is in very good hands; three, especially at this time, is a more convenient and safe number than four; the fourth might prove an incumbrance, but could add no weight of abilities. Proceed quietly; do not be embarrassed by appearances; make a good peace; and you shall partake of the blessing you have pronounced.

Mynheer Brantzen gives time for the surrender of Gibraltar and the recapture of St. Christopher's, &c., for the evacuation of Charleston and New York, events, some of which we may hear of about the day he is to commence his journey diplomatic. To be sure he will enter with a better grace, and have the better ground for demanding restitution and indemnification, but I should have received more satisfaction, had I been assured that yourself and that gentleman were already at Paris.

God bless you and give you success.

Henry Laurens.

The next time a packet from you comes directed to his Excellency, Henry Laurens, &c., Mr. Laurens will disclaim it.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 4 September, 1782.

Sir,—

Your triplicate of the 5th of March, No. 5, triplicate of the 22d of May, No. 6, duplicate of the 29th of May, No. 7, and duplicate of May the 30th, No. 8, together with the despatches for Mr. Dana, came to hand yesterday.

The judicious inquiries in that of the 5th of March, are chiefly answered by the inclosed pamphlet, which I have caused to be printed, in order to be sent into England, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as America. You will find most of your questions answered by great bodies of merchants, manufacturers, and others in the first instance, and by the States of the several separate Provinces in the next place, and lastly by their High Mightinesses.

I wish the truth would warrant a more satisfactory account of the ships prepared and preparing for sea. Those prepared are employed by concert with France, in the North Sea, where they make a useful diversion, having lately obliged Lord Howe to detach a considerable number of ships, and the last accounts say, to go himself with fourteen ships of the line, in order to protect their trade from the Baltic, which has certainly retarded, possibly wholly prevented, the relief of Gibraltar. This, however, is not certain. I cannot assure congress of more than twelve Dutch ships of the line ready for sea. Some of that number are not in a good condition; not more than two or three can be depended on to be added in the course of this season.

As to the leading members of the great council, we must distinguish between the assembly of the deputies of the states-general, and the assembly of the deputies of the States of Holland and West Friesland. The grand pensionary of Holland, who is always a member of the assembly of their High Mightinesses, is constitutionally the most leading member. M. Van Bleiswyck is the present grand pensionary. With him I have frequent conferences, and they have always been agreeable; but the situation of this minister is at present extremely critical and embarrassing. In former times, when there was no stadtholder, or at least when his authority was less extensive, the grand pensionaries of Holland have been in effect stadtholders. They have been a centre of union for all the Provinces; but being more immediately connected with, and dependent on, the Province of Holland, they have been suspected by the other Provinces to give too much weight to that, which has caused them to attach themselves to the stadtholders, as a more impartial support to the whole State.

To speak candidly, a competition between these two great interests and these two high offices seems to have been the cause of the violent storms in this country; but as the stadtholders have had the military power by sea and land at their disposal, and by the pomp and splendor of a court have had the means of imposing more upon the nation,

they have by degrees prevailed. At critical, dangerous times, tragical scenes have been exhibited, and Barnevelt's head was struck off at one time, Grotius escaped by a sort of miracle, and the De Witts were torn in pieces, it is scarcely too bold to say by the open or secret commands or connivance of stadtholders. The stadtholder's power, since 1748, until this year, has been so augmented, and the grand pensionary's so diminished, that M. Van Bleiswyck is to be pitied. More is expected of him than he can perform. He is between two fires; the stadtholderian party on the one side, and the republican on the other. The consequence is, that he manages both as well as he can; is extremely cautious and reserved, never explains himself, but in cases of absolute necessity, and never attempts to assume the lead. If he were to attempt to act the part of some former grand pensionaries, the consequence would be, either he would not be supported, and would perish like Barnevelt or De Witt, or being supported, the stadtholdership must give way, and the Prince fly to his estates in Germany. M. Van Bleiswyck is a great scholar, linguist, natural philosopher, mathematician, and even physician; has great experience in public affairs, and is able and adroit enough in the conduct of them; but not having a temper bold and firm enough, or perhaps loving his ease too much, or not having ambition, or patriotism, or zeal, or health enough, to assume a great and decided conduct, he is fallen in his reputation. They suspect him of duplicity, and in short measures are prepared and brought into the states of Holland without his consent or previous knowledge, and there carried; a thing unknown until these days.

Another great officer of state, who constitutionally has influence in the assembly of their High Mightinesses, is the secretary, M. Fagel. This gentleman is of a family which has ever been zealously attached to the stadtholder, and consequently to England, and strongly prejudiced against France. His ancestor was made grand pensionary in place of the murdered and immortal De Witt; and from that time to this, the family have been invariably friends to the Princes of Orange, and to England, and enemies to France. The present secretary does not belie his lineage. He is supposed to be the least satisfied with the new conventions with us and with France, of any man. I have had several conferences with him. He is a venerable man of seventy, is polite, and has always been complaisant enough to me; but congress will easily see, from this sketch of his character, that he is not the man for me to be intimate with. There is a new president of their High Mightinesses every week. I have had conferences with several,—M. Tjassens, M. Van Citters, M. Boreel, M. Van den Sandheugel, and the Baron Lynden de Hemmen,—but this continual variation prevents any one from acquiring esteem and weight from the office; so that they are to be considered only as common members of the assembly.

There is a nobleman, the Baron de Lynden, who belongs to the Province of Zealand, and who was formerly ambassador in Sweden, and afterwards appointed to Vienna, but refused to go. I have had the pleasure of a great deal of conversation with him, and his advice has been useful to me. He is a sensible and worthy man, and his sentiments are very just. He has been now for some months in Zealand, and the world has seen several striking effects of his presence in that Province. He is much in opposition to the Duke of Brunswick, and consequently to the Court, to whose cause this nobleman's rank, former offices, and connections, have done much damage. There are several other members of the assembly of their High Mightinesses that I

have some acquaintance with, the Baron Van Schwartenbourgh, M. Kuffeler of Friesland, M. Brantzen of Guelderland, and others, whom it is not necessary to name at present. But Holland being full half the nation, the assembly of that Province gives always, sooner or later, the tone to the whole. The pensionaries of the cities are the principal speakers and most active members of this assembly, for which reason I have cultivated the acquaintance of these gentlemen, and will continue to do so more and more. There are three among them with whom I have been the most conversant,—M. Gyselaer of Dort, M. Visscher of Amsterdam, and M. Van Zeeberg of Haerlem.

M. Gyselaer is a young gentleman of about thirty; but of a genius and activity, a candor and prudence, which, if his health is not too delicate, must make him the man of the first consideration in this republic. I am happy in a friendly and familiar acquaintance with him, and shall certainly continue it, because his abilities and integrity, his industry, his great and growing popularity, and his influence in the assembly of the states of Holland, as well as in all the provinces and cities, will render him an important man, in spite of all the opposition of the Court. Nevertheless, although I cultivate the friendship of the patriots, I shall not give offence to the Court. The friendship of this Court we never had, and never shall have, until we have that of England. This gentleman's friendship has already been of vast service to the cause of congress as well as to me, and will continue to be so. There is no intelligence in a political line, which I ought to know, but what I can easily obtain in this way. To detail the conversations, would be to relate all the measures taken or proposed, relative to the negotiations for a separate peace, to the concert with France, the general peace, &c., as well as from step to step, the advancement to the acknowledgment of our independence. There are some of these conversations which ought never to be put on paper until the measures and events which are the fruit of them have taken place.

M. Visscher is a respectable character, an amiable man, and steady in the good system. With him, also, I have been invariably upon good terms; but I cannot but lament the absence of M. Van Berckel, an excellent character, of solid judgment, sound learning, great experience, delicate honor, untainted virtue, and steady firmness, sacrificed to the most frivolous whimsies and miserable intrigues of private pique, *the jealousy and envy of weak, I cannot here add wicked old age*, and individual ambition. Van Berckel and Visscher together would be noble ministers for Amsterdam; but the elder of the "*par nobile fratrum*" is wanting.

M. Van Zeeberg is another excellent character; of great reputation as a lawyer, a man of integrity, and a patriot, with whom I have been, and am, upon the best terms. It is odd enough, that most of these pensionaries have been deacons of the English church in this place, Dr. Maclaine's. *En passant*, young lawyers seek an election to be deacons in the churches, as a first step to advancement in their profession, as well as in the state. M. Van Berckel, M. Van Zeeberg, and others, have been deacons of this church, yet neither speaks English; nor is any of them less an enemy to England for having passed through this stage in his career of life, and I shall be the more so, for hearing once a week, an admirable *moral* lecture in the English language from one of the best preachers in Europe.

I hope this will be sufficient at present, as a sample of sketches of characters that you demand of me among the leading members of the assemblies. I might mention several burgomasters, as M. Hooft, of Amsterdam, Van Berckel, of Rotterdam, &c., &c. &c.; but I must not give too much at once.

You inquire, whether there is no intercourse between the French ambassador and me. I answer, there is a constant, uninterrupted harmony and familiarity between the Duke de la Vauguyon and his family and me. I visit him, and he visits me. I dine with him, and he and his family dine with me as often as you can wish; and he is ever ready to enter into conversation and consultation with me upon public affairs. He is an amiable man whom I esteem very much. He is able, attentive, and vigilant, as a minister; but he has been under infinite obligations to the United States of America and her minister for the success he has had in this country. Nothing on this earth but the American cause could ever have prevented this republic from joining England in the war, and nothing but the memorial of the 19th of April, 1781, and the other innumerable measures taken in consequence of it by the same hand, could ever have prevented this republic from making a separate peace with England. The American cause and minister have done more to introduce a familiarity between the French ambassador and some leading men here, than any other thing could; and if anybody denies it, it must be owing to ignorance or ingratitude. It is at the same time true, and I acknowledge it with pleasure and gratitude, that our cause could not have succeeded here without the aid of France. Her aid in the East Indies, West Indies, and upon the barrier frontiers, her general benevolence and concert of operations, as well as the honorable and friendly exertions of her ambassador, after the decisive step taken by me, contributed essentially to the accomplishment of the work. I have an opportunity of meeting at his house, too, almost as often as I desire, the other foreign ministers; but of this, more hereafter.

You desire also to know the popular leaders I have formed acquaintance with. The two noblemen, the Baron Van der Capellen de Pol, of Overysse, and the Baron Vander Capellen de Marsch, of Guelderland, I have formed an acquaintance with; the former, very early after my first arrival. I have had frequent and intimate conversations with him, and he has been of the utmost service to our cause. His unhappy situation and unjust expulsion from his seat in government, the opposition of the Court and of his colleagues in the regency, make it delicate to write freely concerning this nobleman. He has an independent fortune, though not called rich in this country. His parts and learning are equal to any, his zeal and activity superior. I dare not say in what a multitude of ways he has served us; posterity will, perhaps, know them all.

Two years ago, upon my first arrival at Amsterdam, I fell acquainted, at M. Van Staphorst's, with M. Calkoen, the first gentleman of the bar at Amsterdam; a man of letters, well read in law and history, and an elegant writer. He desired to be informed of American affairs. I gave him a collection of our constitutions, and a number of pamphlets and papers, and desired him to commit to writing his questions. In a few days, he sent me thirty questions in Dutch, which show him to be a man of profound reflection and sagacity. I got them translated, and determined to seize the opportunity to turn his attention to our affairs, and gain his confidence. I wrote him a distinct letter

upon each question, and endeavored to give him as comprehensive an insight into our affairs as I could. He was much pleased with the answers, and composed out of them a comparison between the American and the Batavian Revolution, which he read with applause to a society of forty gentlemen of letters, who meet in a club at Amsterdam. I lent him Burgoyne's and Howe's pamphlets in vindication of themselves, which he communicated also. By this means, this society, whose influence must be very extensive, were made hearty converts to the opinion of the impracticability of a British conquest, and the certainty of American success; points very dubious in the minds of this nation in general, when I first came here, as I can easily prove. With this gentleman, I have ever preserved an agreeable acquaintance. It was he who drew up the petition of the merchants of Amsterdam in favor of American independence.

About the time of presenting my memorial, I became acquainted with another lawyer at the Hague, M. Van Zoon, who has been also, from time to time, active in our favor, and drew up the petitions of Rotterdam.

The gazetteers of this country are not mere printers, they are men of letters; and as these vehicles have a vast influence in forming the public opinion, they were not to be neglected by me, whose only hopes lay in the public opinion, to resist the torrent of a court and government. I therefore became naturally acquainted with the family of the Luzacs, in Leyden, whose gazette has been very useful to our cause, and who are excellent people. M. John Luzac drew up the two petitions of Leyden to their regency.

At Amsterdam, my acquaintance with M. Cerisier enabled me to render the *Politique Hollandais*, and the French Gazette of Amsterdam, useful on many occasions; and by means of one friend and another, particularly M. Dumas, I have been able to communicate any thing that was proper to the public, by means of the Dutch gazettes of Amsterdam, Haerlem, and Delft. By means of these secret connections with printers and writers, I have had an opportunity to cause to be translated and printed, many English pamphlets tending to elucidate our affairs, particularly those valuable documents of Howe and Burgoyne, than which nothing has contributed more to fortify our cause. They are considered as the decisive testimonies of unwilling witnesses and cruel enemies. With these persons, and others, when I could not have conversations, I have had correspondences, as frequent as my time would allow.

At Amsterdam, I was acquainted with several mercantile houses, M. de Neufville and Son, M. Crommelin and Sons, Messieurs Van Staphorsts, De la Lande and Fynje, Madame Chabanel and Son and Nephew, M. Hodshon, M. Van Arp, M. Tegelaer, and several others, who, in their several ways, were useful to our affairs.

I come now to the most difficult task of all, the description of the foreign ministers. The minister of the Emperor is ninety years of age, and never appears at court, or anywhere else. I have never seen him or his secretary. The ministers from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Sardinia, and Liege, I see every week at court, where I sup regularly when the others do, though it is very visible that I am not the guest the most favored by the Prince. I dine with them all sometimes at the French ambassador's and Spanish minister's, but have not dined at any of their houses, nor they at mine. Not one of them would dare to give or receive an invitation, except

France, Spain, and Liege. The minister from Sweden, the Baron d'Ehrensverd, is lately removed to Berlin, to my great regret, as he appeared to me a very good character, and behaved very civilly to me several times when I met him at court and at the French ambassador's. The secretary of legation does the business now, M. Van Asp, who appears to be a worthy man, and is not afraid to converse with me. The minister from Prussia, M. de Thulemeyer, is very civil, attacks me (as he expresses it) in English, and wishes to meet me on horseback, being both great riders; will converse freely with me upon astronomy, or natural history, or any mere common affairs; will talk of news, battles, sieges, &c.; but these personages are very reserved in politics and negotiations. They must wait for instructions.

M. de St. Saphorin, the envoy from Denmark, is a personage of very odd behavior; a Swiss by birth, but an open and not very discreet advocate for England. It should be observed, that the Queen Dowager of Denmark, is sister to the Duke, Louis de Brunswick; and as the King is not a distinguished character among crowned heads, she is supposed to have much influence at court, and the minister here may be complaisant to her. But neither that power nor its minister is able to do more than influence a gazette or two, to publish some very injudicious speculations. I am not the only foreign minister that converses or corresponds with gazetteers; though it at least is certain, that I never give them money. I hope I am not singular in this. This gentleman has been much with another since his arrival, M. Markow, the adjoint minister from Russia, another advocate for the English, without being able to do them any service. He was never more than a secretary of legation before. He has been here formerly in that character, and in the partition of Poland. He was preceded here, by reports of his great talents at negotiations and intrigue, and it was said, that he had never failed of success; but his residence here has made no sensation or impression at all. He talks in some companies indiscreetly in favor of England, but is not much attended to. His behavior to me is a distant bow, an affected smile sometimes, and now and then, a "*Comment vous portez-vous?*" One evening at court, when the northern epidemy was here, he put me this question after supper, in great apparent good humor; "*terriblement affligé de l'influença,*" said I. "*C'est en Angleterre,*" says he, laughing, "*qu'on a donné ce nom, et il ne feroit point de mal, si vous voudriez vous laisser gagner un peu par l'influence de l'Angleterre.*" I had it at my tongue's end to answer, "*C'est assez d'être tourmenté de l'influence qui vient de Russie!*" but I reflected very suddenly, if he is indiscreet, I will not be; so I contented myself to answer, very gravely, "*jamais, monsieur, jamais.*"

The Prince de Galitzin, his colleague, is of a different character; a good man, and thinks justly; but his place is too important to his family to be hazarded; so he keeps a great reserve, and behaves with great prudence. Knowing his situation, I have avoided all advances to him, lest I should embarrass him. The Sardinian minister is very ready to enter into conversation at all times; but his court and system are wholly out of the present question. The Portuguese envoy extraordinary, D. Joas Theolonico d'Almeida, is a young nobleman glittering with stars, and, as they say, very rich. He has twice, once at court, and once at the Spanish minister's, entered familiarly into conversation with me, upon the climates of America and Portugal, and the commerce that has been and will be between our countries, and upon indifferent subjects; but there is no appearance that he is profoundly versed in political subjects, nor any

probability that he could explain himself until all the neutral powers do, of whom Portugal is now one.

The Spanish minister, D. Llano, Count de Sanafée, has at last got over all his punctilios, and I had the honor to dine with him, in company with all the foreign ministers and four or five officers of rank in the Russian service, on Tuesday last. He and his secretary had dined with me some time ago. I shall, therefore, be upon a more free, if not familiar, footing with him in future. He has, indeed, been always very complaisant and friendly, though embarrassed with his punctilios of etiquette. There is one anecdote, that in justice to myself and my country I ought not to omit. The first time I ever saw him was at his house, a day or two after my reception by the states. He sent for me. I went, and had an hour's conversation with him. He said to me, "Sir, you have struck the greatest blow of all Europe. It is the greatest blow that has been struck in the American cause, and the most decisive. It is you who have filled this nation with enthusiasm; it is you who have turned all their heads." Next morning he returned my visit at my lodgings, for it was before my removal to this house. In the course of conversation upon the subject of my success here, he turned to a gentleman in company, and said to him, "this event is infinitely honorable to Mr. Adams. It is the greatest blow (*le plus grand coup*) which could have been struck in all Europe. It is he, who has filled this nation with enthusiasm; it is he, who has disconcerted the admirers of England (*Anglomanes*); it is he, who has turned the heads of the Hollanders. It is not for a compliment to Mr. Adams that I say this, but because I believe it to be his due."

I wish for some other historiographer, but I will not, for fear of the charge of vanity, omit to record things, which were certainly said with deliberation, and which prove the sense, which the ministers of the house of Bourbon had of the stream of prejudice here against them, and of the influence of America, and her minister, in turning the tide.

I hope, sir, that these sketches will satisfy you for the present; if not, another time I will give you portraits at full length.

In The Mean Time, I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 6 September, 1782.

Sir,—

In your letter of the 5th of March, you ask, “whether this power has entered into any treaty with France since the war, and whether any such thing is in contemplation?”

They have made no treaty, but a convention concerning recaptures, which you must have seen in the papers. The East India Company have concerted operations with France in the East Indies, and the Prince, by the resolution of the states, has concerted operations in these European seas for this campaign, and the city of Amsterdam has lately proposed in the states of Holland, to renew the concert for next year, and to revive an old treaty of commerce with France. In my letter of the 18th of August, I have sent you a copy of the instructions to their ministers for peace, “not to make peace, truce, or armistice, but with the simultaneous concurrence of all the belligerent powers,” among whom the United States of America are certainly one, in the sense and meaning of their High Mightinesses.

You observe, sir, “that France is interested with us, in procuring a public acknowledgment of our independence.” You desire me to write freely, and my own disposition inclines me to do so. This is a delicate subject, and requires to be cautiously handled. Political jealousy is very different from a suspicious temper. We should contemplate the vices naturally allied to the greatest virtues. We should consider the fevers that lie near a high state of health. We should consider the maxim that is laid down by all the political writers in the world, and the fact that is found in all histories, “that in cases of alliance between unequal powers, almost all the advantages ever did and ever will accrue to the greatest.” We should observe in the Abbé Raynal’s history of this revolution, that there is a party in France that blames the ministry for putting themselves into the chains (*fers*) of congress, and for not keeping us dependent enough upon them. Is it not natural for them to wish to keep us dependent upon them, that we might be obliged to accept such terms of peace as they should think would do for us? If the House of Bourbon should be suspected by any neutral power to grow too fast in wealth and force, and be disposed to form a league against it, is it not natural for it to wish that we may be kept from any connections with such powers, and wholly connected with it, so as to be obliged to engage with it in all its wars?

It is impossible for me to prove, that the delay of Spain to acknowledge our independence, has been concerted between the French and Spanish ministry; but I candidly ask any man, who has attended to the circumstance of this war, if he has not seen cause to suspect it? For my own part, I have no doubt of it, and I do not know that we can justly censure it. I have ten thousand reasons which convince me that one minister at least has not wished that we should form connections with Holland, even

so soon as we did, or with any other power; although he had no right, and therefore would not appear openly, to oppose it. When I took leave of that minister to return to America, in the spring of 1779, he desired me expressly to advise congress to attend to the affairs of the war, and leave the politics of Europe to them (*et laisser la politique à nous*). In 1778 or 1779, when Mr. Lee and I proposed to Dr. Franklin to go to Holland, or to consent that one of us should go, the Doctor would not, but wrote to that minister upon it, and received an answer, which he showed me, advising against it; and when I received my letter of credence here, the minister here, who follows the instructions communicated by that minister, took all possible pains to persuade me against communicating it; and Dr. Franklin, without reserve in word and writing, has constantly declared, that congress were wrong in sending a minister to Berlin, Vienna, Tuscany, Spain, Holland, and Petersburg, and Dr. Franklin is as good an index of that minister's sentiments as I know.

Now I avow myself of a totally opposite system, and think it our indispensable duty, as it is our undoubted right, to send ministers to other Courts, and endeavor to extend our acquaintance, commerce, and political connections with all the world; and I have pursued this system, which I took to be also the wish of congress and the sense of America, with patience and perseverance against all dangers, reproaches, misrepresentations, and oppositions, until, I thank God, he has enabled me to plant the standard of the United States at the Hague, where it will wave forever.

I am now satisfied, and dread nothing. The connection with Holland is a sure stay. Connected with Holland and the house of Bourbon, we have nothing to fear.

I have entered into this detail, in answer to your inquiry, and the only use of it I would wish to make is this; to insist upon seeing with our own eyes, using our own judgment, and acting an independent part; and it is of the last importance we should do it now thus early, otherwise we should find it very difficult to do it hereafter. I hope I have given you my sentiments, as you desired, with freedom, and that freedom, I hope, will give no offence, either in America or France, for certainly none is intended.

In your favor of the 22d of May, you direct me to draw upon Dr. Franklin for my salary, and to send my accounts to you. My accounts, sir, are very short, and shall be sent as soon as the perplexity of the treaty is over. As to drawing on Dr. Franklin, I presume this was upon supposition, that we had no money here. There is now near a million and a half of florins, so that I beg I may be permitted to receive my salary here.

I have transmitted to Mr. Dana your despatches, as desired in yours of the 29th of May, reserving an extract for publication in the gazettes, which the French ambassador is of opinion, as well as others, will have a great effect in Europe. Your letter is extremely well written, and M. Dumas has well translated it, so that it will appear to advantage. Yours of the 30th of May affords me the pleasure of knowing that you have received some letters from me this year, and I am glad you are inclined to lay that of the 21st of February before congress. By this time I hope that all objections are removed to the memorial; but in order to judge of the full effect of that

memorial, three volumes of the *Politique Hollandais*, several volumes of *De Post Van Neder Rhin*, all the Dutch gazettes for a whole year, and the petitions of all the cities should be read, for there is not one of them but what clearly shows the propriety of presenting that memorial, whose influence and effect, though not sudden, has been amazingly extensive. Indeed the French ambassador has often signified to me lately, and more than once in express words, *Monsieur, votre fermeté a fait un très bon effet ici.*

The cipher was not put up in this duplicate, and I suppose the original is gone on to Mr. Dana in a letter I transmitted him from you some time ago, so that I should be obliged to you for another of the same part.

Rodney's victory came, as you hoped it would, too late to obstruct me. I was well settled at the Hague, and publicly received by the states and Prince before we received that melancholy news. If it had arrived some time sooner, it might have deranged all our systems, and this nation possibly might have been now separately at peace, which shows the importance of watching the time and tide which there is in the affairs of men.

You require, sir, to be furnished with the most minute detail of every step that Britain may take towards a negotiation for a general or partial peace. All the details towards a partial peace are already public in the newspapers, and have all been ineffectual. The states-general are firm against it, as appears by their instructions to their ministers. Since the conversations between me and Digges first, and Mr. Laurens afterwards, there has never been any message, directly or indirectly, by word or writing, from the British ministry to me. It was my decided advice and earnest request by both, that all messages might be sent to Paris to Dr. Franklin and the Count de Vergennes, and this has been done. Dr. Franklin wrote me, that he should keep me informed of every thing that passed by expresses; but I have had no advice from him since the 2d of June. Your despatches have all gone the same way, and I have never had a hint of any of them. I hope that Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay have had positive instructions to consent to no truce or armistice, and to enter into no conferences with any British minister who is not authorized to treat with the United States of America.

Some weeks ago I agreed with the Duc de la Vauguyon to draw up a project of a memorial to their High Mightinesses, proposing a triple or quadruple alliance, according to my instruction to that purpose. The Duke, in his private capacity, has declared to me often that he is of opinion, that it would be advisable to make this proposition as soon as the treaty of commerce is signed; but he could not give me any ministerial advice without consulting the Count de Vergennes. We agreed that he should transmit the project to the Count. Two days ago, the Duke called upon me, and informed me that he had the Count's answer, which was, that he did not think this the time, because it would tend to throw obscurity upon the instructions lately given by the states-general to M. Brantzen, not to make any treaty or armistice, but simultaneously with all the belligerent powers.

By the tenth article of the treaty of alliance, the invitation or admission is to be made by concert. From my instructions, I supposed, and suppose still, that the concert was

made at Philadelphia, between congress and the Chevalier de la Luzerne, by the order of the King, his master; and my instruction being positive and unconditional to make the proposition, I shall be somewhat embarrassed. On the one hand, I would preserve not only a real harmony, but the appearance of it, between all steps of mine and the counsels of the French ministers. On the other, I would obey my instructions, especially when they are so fully agreeable to me, at all events. The proposition would have a good effect in England, in Holland, in France, America, and in all the neutral countries, as I think, and it could do no harm, that I can foresee. Nay, further, I am persuaded that the French ministry themselves, if they were to give me their private opinions, as the Duc de la Vauguyon does, would be glad if I should make the proposition against their advice.

It is possible, however, that they may secretly choose (notwithstanding the offer made at Philadelphia) not to be bound in an alliance with America and Holland. They may think they shall have more influence with their hands unbound even to a system that they approve and mean to pursue. It is amidst all these doublings and windings of European politics that American ministers have to decide and act. The result is clear in my mind, that although it is proper to be upon good terms, and be communicative and confidential with the French ministers, yet we ought to have opinions, principles, and systems of our own, and that our ministers should not be bound to follow their advice, but when it is consonant to our own; and that congress should firmly support their own ministers against all secret insinuations. They must see that a minister of theirs, who is determined, as he is bound in honor, to be free and independent, is not in a very delectable or enviable situation in Europe, as yet.

There is but one alternative. Either congress should recall all their ministers from Europe, and leave all negotiations to the French ministry, or they must support their ministers against all insinuations. If congress will see with their own eyes, I can assure them, without fear of being contradicted, that neither the color, figure, nor magnitude of objects will always appear to them exactly as they do to their allies. To send ministers to Europe, who are supposed by the people of America to see for themselves, while in effect they see, or pretend to see nothing, but what appears through the glass of a French minister, is to betray the just expectations of that people.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

The Hague, 17 September, 1752.

My Dear Friend,—

It grieves me when I think how long it is since I wrote to you. But my head and hands and heart have been all full.

I sent to the care of the Dutch ambassador, General Washington's miniature for you; should be glad to know whether you have received it. I have also sent along several despatches from our secretary of foreign affairs. Have you received them?

Fitzherbert's commission is to treat with the King of France and the ministers quorumcunque principum vel statuum quorum interesse poterit; and Oswald's is to treat, consult of, agree, and conclude with any commissioner or commissioners named, or to be named, by the said colonies or plantations, or with any body or bodies, corporate or politic, or any assembly or assemblies, or description of men, or any person or persons whatsoever, a peace or a truce with the said colonies or plantations, or any of them, or any part or parts thereof. I said his commission; but he has none. He has only an order to the Attorney-General to make out such a commission.

Thus, you see, there is yet no proof of Shelburne's sincerity. In short, nothing will be done until parliament meets, nor then, unless they take upon them to acknowledge the independence of the United States.

If Gibraltar is succored and holds out, Britain will not cede it. In short, we shall have another campaign. No peace until 1784, if then.

What is the story of the insurrection in the Crimea? What powers of Europe are any way connected with that affair, or interested in it? Is it likely to have any consequences, and what?

You have concluded, I hope, to stay another winter. You must absolutely send my son to me, by the earliest neutral vessel to the Texel, in the Spring. My love to him. I have not time to write to him now. He does not tell me how his studies go on.

I shall sign the treaty of commerce next week; all articles, words, syllables, and letters, and points, are adjusted, and nothing remains but to write five fair copies, in Dutch and English, and sign, seal, and deliver them. My loan is in cash, better than fifteen hundred thousand guilders. So that we go on, you see, pretty well.

The standard of the United States waves and flies at the Hague in triumph, over Sir Joseph Yorke's insolence and British pride. When I go to heaven, I shall look down over the battlements with pleasure upon the stripes and stars wantoning in the wind at

the Hague. There is another triumph in the case, sweeter than that over our enemies. You know my meaning; it is the triumph of stubborn independence. Independence of friends and foes. “Monsieur, votre fermeté a fait un très bon effet ici,” has been repeated to me more than once. “Monsieur, vous avez frappé le plus grand coup de toute l’Europe.” “Cette événement fait un honneur infini à M. Adams.” “C’est ce qui a effrayé les Anglomanes, et rempli cette nation d’enthousiasme,” &c. These are confessions “arrachées,” and therefore more delicious.

I am now upon extreme good terms with the ministers of France and Spain. I dine with both, and they dine with me, &c.; and I meet the whole *corps diplomatique* at their houses, as well as at court, and might meet them every morning, at certain *rendezvous* of intelligence, and every evening, at an assembly, at cards, if I had not something else to do.

Adieu, My Dear Friend. Write Me As Often As You Can.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 17 September, 1782.

Sir,—

This morning I was in conference with M. Fagel, in order to make the last corrections in the language of the treaty, which is to be executed in English and Dutch, as that with the Crown of France was in English and French. We have now, I hope, agreed upon every word, if not every point, and nothing remains but to make five fair copies of it for signature, which, however, is no little labor. The secretary thinks he shall accomplish them in the course of this week and part of the next, so that they may be signed by the latter end of next week, or perhaps the middle. The secretary, who has always been complaisant, was more so than ever to-day. He congratulated me upon the prospect of a speedy conclusion of this matter; hoped it would be highly beneficial to both nations; and that our posterity might have cause to rejoice in it even more than we. He says the usage is, for two deputies to sign it on the part of Holland, and one on the part of each other Province, so that there will be eight signers in behalf of the republic.

It is now nearly five months since I was publicly received, and proposed a project of a treaty. All this time it has taken the several Provinces and cities to examine, make their remarks and fresh propositions, and bring the matter to a conclusion. It would not have been so long, however, if the Court had been delighted with the business. But, in a case where unanimity was requisite, and the Court not pleased, it was necessary to proceed with all the softness, caution, and prudence possible, that no ill humors might be stirred. Yet, in a case where the nation's heart is so engaged, in which its commerce and love of money is so interested, what wretched policy is it in this Court to show even a lukewarmness, much more an aversion! Yet, such is the policy, and such it will be. The Prince of Orange is, to all appearance, as incurable as George III., his cousin.

I was afterwards an hour with the French ambassador, at his house. He tells me, his last letter from the Count de Vergennes says that he has yet seen no appearance of sincerity on the part of the British ministry in the negotiations for peace. Of this, congress will be easily convinced by the copies I have transmitted of the commissions of Messrs. Fitzherbert and Oswald.

The subject of our conversation was the means of getting out the Dutch fleet, which is now in the Texel, although the British fleet, under Milbank, is returned to Portsmouth, and probably sailed with Lord Howe for Gibraltar. I asked the Duke where the combined fleet was. His last accounts were, that they were off Cape Ortegál, endeavoring to get round Cape Finisterre to Cadiz. He speaks of it as doubtful, whether they will give battle to Lord Howe, because the Spanish ships, with an equal number of guns, are of a smaller calibre than the English; but hopes that the blow will

be struck before Howe arrives. The means of getting the fleet out of the Texel to intercept a fleet of English ships from the Baltic, came next under consideration. But the wind is not fair. It might have gone out, but they had not intelligence.

I asked who it was that governed naval matters. He answered, the Prince. But surely the Prince must have some assistance, some confidential minister, officer, clerk, secretary, or servant. If he were a Solomon, he could not manage the fleet and the whole system of intelligence and orders concerning it, without aid. He said, it is the college of the admiralty, and sometimes M. Bisdom, who is a good man, and sometimes M. Van der Hope, who may be a good man; he has sense and art, but is suspected. Very well, said I, M. Bisdom and M. Van der Hope ought to be held responsible, and the eyes of the public ought to be turned towards them, and they ought to satisfy the public. The Duke said, the Prince is afraid of the consequence. He knows that the sensations of the people are very lively at present, and nobody knows what may be the consequence of their getting an opinion that there has been negligence or any thing worse, which may have prevented them from striking a blow. I asked, if they had any plan for obtaining intelligence, the soul of war, from England. He said the grand pensionary told him he paid very dear for intelligence.

However, I cannot learn, and do not believe that they have any rational plan for obtaining intelligence necessary from every quarter as they ought. They should have intelligence from every seaport in France, England, Scotland, Germany, and all round the Baltic, and they should have light frigates and small vessels out. But when war is unwillingly made, every thing is not done. The next subject was the proposition from Amsterdam, for renewing the concert of operations for the next campaign.

Congress may hear of some further plans for a separate peace between Holland and England, but they will not succeed. The republic will stand firm, though it will not be so active as we could wish, and the concert of operations will be renewed.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 17 September, 1782.

Sir,—

You will naturally inquire, whether the neutral powers will continue their neutrality, or whether the neutral confederacy will be broken?

No certain answer can be given to these questions. We must content ourselves with probabilities, which are strong for the continuance of the neutrality. Who indeed should break it? The Emperor was thought to be the most unlikely potentate to accede to it; but he has acceded and has taken several steps, which prove that he will not break it, at least by leaning towards England. Sweden is the steady friend of France. The King of Prussia, whose affections and inclinations are certainly towards France and Holland, and alienated from England, would certainly at this age of life be too cautious a politician to wage war for England, against the houses of Bourbon and Austria, Holland and America.

There remains only Russia and Denmark. What can Russia do? This is a maritime war. She cannot assist the English with land forces; a hundred thousand men would do no good to England, on land. Her boasted fleet, added to that of England, would only weaken it, for several reasons; among the rest, because England must maintain it with money, if not with officers and men; for cash is wanting in Russia. Denmark remains, but what can she do? Her islands in the West Indies and her trade, are at our mercy, and she would not have force enough to defend her own, much less to assist England, if she should declare war.

A doctrine prevails that the acknowledgment of the independence of America is a hostility against England, and, consequently, a breach of the neutrality. Our friends have sometimes favored this idea. The Duc de la Vauguyon has often expressed this sentiment to me; and, if I am not mistaken, the Marquis de Verac has said the same to Mr. Dana. If this opinion is not clear, it is very impolitic to favor it. The Court of France, in their public memorials, have denied it; and it would be difficult to prove it, either by the law or practice of nations. Sending or receiving ambassadors, entering into peaceful commercial treaties, or, at least, negotiating at Philadelphia the rights of neutral nations, is not taking arms against Great Britain.

But if an acknowledgment of our independence is a hostility, a denial of it is so too, and if the maritime confederation forbids the one, it forbids both. None of the neutral nations can take the part of Great Britain, therefore, without breaking to pieces that great system, which has cost so much negotiation, and embraces so great a part of mankind.

The neutral powers set so high a value upon it, and, indeed, make so great profit by it, that I think none of them will take the part of Great Britain. The connections of the Duke Louis of Brunswick in Denmark and Russia, have set some little machines in motion, partly to favor him, and partly to hold out an appearance of something fermenting for the benefit of Great Britain. But these will never succeed so far as to draw any nation into the war, or to induce this republic to make a separate peace.

It is to this source that I attribute certain observations that are circulated in pamphlets and in conversation, “that there is at present an incoherence in the general system of Europe; that the Emperor has deranged the whole system of the equilibrium of Europe, so that if ever the northern powers should think of stopping by a confederation the preponderance of the southern powers, Holland will be unable, on account of the demolition of the barriers, to accede to that confederation.”

M. Magis, who has been eight-and-twenty years envoy at the Hague from the Bishop of Liege, and who converses more with all the foreign ministers here, than any other, has said to me, not long since, “Sir, the wheel rolls on too long and too rapidly one way; it must roll back again, somewhat, to come to its proper centre. The power of the house of Bourbon rises, and that of Great Britain sinks too fast, and I believe the Emperor, although he seems perfectly still at present, will come out at length, and take the greatest part of any power in the final adjustment of affairs.”

The Count de Mirabel, the Sardinian minister, said to me, upon another occasion, “Your country, sir, will be obliged in the vicissitudes of things, to wheel round and take part with England, and such allies as she may obtain, in order to form a proper balance in the world.” My answer to both was, “These sentiments betray a jealousy of a too sudden growth of the power of the house of Bourbon; but whose fault is it, if it is a fact (which it does not appear to be as yet) and whose fault will it be, if it should hereafter become a fact? Why do the neutral powers stand still and see it, or imagine they see it, when it is so easy to put a stop to it? They have only to acknowledge American independence, and then, neither the house of Bourbon nor England will have a colorable pretence for continuing the war, from which alone the jealousy can arise.”

The Prince de Galitzin said, not long since, that the conduct of this republic, in refusing a separate peace, &c., he feared would throw all Europe into a war, there were so many pretensions against England.

I quote these sayings of foreign ministers, because you express a desire to hear them, and because they show all the color of argument in favor of England that anybody has advanced. All these ministers allow that American independence is decided; even the ministers from Portugal, within a few days, said it to me expressly. It is, therefore, very unreasonable in them to grumble at what happens merely in consequence of their neutrality.

It is the miserable policy of the Prince of Orange’s counsellors, as I suppose, which has set a few springs in motion here. M. Markow, one of the ministers of Russia, and M. St. Saphorin, the minister from Denmark, are the most openly and busily in favor

of England. But if, instead of endeavoring to excite jealousies and foment prejudices against the house of Bourbon, or compassion towards England, they would endeavor to convince her of the necessity of acknowledging American independence, or to persuade the neutral powers to decide the point, by setting the example, they would really serve England, and the general cause of mankind. As it goes at present, their negotiations serve no cause whatever, that I can conceive of, unless it be that of the Duke of Brunswick, and, in the end, it will appear that even he is not served by it.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 23 September, 1782.

Sir,—

As this is a moment of great expectation, news of the greatest importance from the East Indies, from the West Indies and North America, from Gibraltar, from Lord Howe's fleet, and the combined fleet, being hourly looked for, I took this opportunity to return to the Spanish minister a visit which I owed him.

He told me that he trembled for the news we should have from Gibraltar. I asked him if he thought there would be a battle at sea. He answered, Yes, he believed the combined fleet would meet Lord Howe and give him battle. I said, in this case, it will probably be but a running fight. His Lordship's object was to protect his convoy and get into the port, and he would not stop to fight more than should be unavoidable. D. Llano, however, said that he believed the fate of Gibraltar would be decided before Howe could arrive, either the place taken, or the assault given over. By his advices, the attack was to begin the 4th or 5th of September. Howe sailed the 12th, and would be probably twenty days at least on his way, which would leave a space of twenty-seven or twenty-eight days for the attack, which would decide it one way or the other.

I did not think proper to tell him my own apprehensions, and I wish I may be mistaken, but I have no expectation at all, in my own mind, that the combined fleet will meet Howe; that there will be any naval engagement; or that Gibraltar will surrender. They will make a horrid noise with their artillery against the place; but this noise will not terrify Elliot, and Gibraltar will remain to the English another year, and Lord Howe return to England, and all Europe will laugh. England, however, if she were wise, would say, what is sport to you is death to us, who are ruined by these expenses. The earnest zeal of Spain to obtain that impenetrable rock, what has it not cost the House of Bourbon this war? And what is the importance of it? A mere point of honor! a trophy of insolence to England, and of humiliation to Spain! It is of no utility, unless as an asylum for privateers in time of war; for it is not to be supposed that the powers of Europe, now that the freedom of commerce is so much esteemed, will permit either England or Spain to make use of this fortress and asylum as an instrument to exclude any nation from the navigation of the Mediterranean.

From the *Hôtel d'Espagne* I went to that of France, and the Duc de la Vauguyon informed me that he had a letter from the Count de Vergennes, informing him that he had received, in an indirect manner, a set of preliminary propositions, as from the British ministry, which they were said to be ready to sign; that he had sent M. de Rayneval to London, to know with certainty, whether those preliminaries came from proper authority or not.

Thus we see that two ministers from England, and another from Holland, are at Paris to make peace. The Count d'Aranda is said to have powers to treat on the part of Spain. Mr. Franklin and Mr. Jay are present on the part of the United States, and M. Gerard de Rayneval is at London. Yet, with all this, the British ministry have never yet given any proof of their sincerity, nor any authority to any one to treat with the United States. I believe the British ministry, even my Lord Shelburne, would give such powers if they dared. But they dare not. They are afraid of the King, of the old ministry, and a great party in the nation, irritated every moment by the refugees, who spare no pains, and hesitate at no impostures, to revive offensive hostilities in America. If Gibraltar should be relieved, and their fleets should arrive from the West Indies and the Baltic, and they should not have very bad news from the East Indies, the nation will recover from its fright, occasioned by the loss of Cornwallis, Minorca, and St. Kitts, and the ministry will not yet dare to acknowledge American independence. In this case, Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke will lay their foundation of opposition, and the state of the finances will give them great weight. But the ministry will find means to provide for another campaign.

But to return to the Duc de la Vauguyon, who informed me further, that he had received instructions to propose to the Prince of Orange a new plan of concert of operations, namely,—that the Dutch fleet, or at least a detachment of it, should now, in the absence of Lord Howe, sail from the Texel to Brest, and join the French ships there, in a cruise to intercept the British West India fleet. The Prince does not appear pleased with this plan. He has not yet accepted it. The grand pensionary appears to approve it, and support it with warmth. There is now a fine opportunity for the Dutch fleet to strike a blow, either alone, upon the Baltic fleet, or in conjunction with the French, or even alone upon the West India fleet. But the main spring of the machine is broken or unbent. There is neither capacity nor good will among those who direct the navy.

At dinner, in the course of the day, with M. Gyselaar, M. Visscher, and a number of their copatriots, at the *Hotel de Dort*, they lamented this incurable misfortune. Some of them told me that the sums of money granted and expended upon their marine, ought to have produced them a hundred and twenty vessels of war of all sizes; whereas they have not one quarter of the number. They have no more than twelve of the line in the Texel, reckoning in the number two fifties; and they have not more than six or seven in all the docks of Amsterdam, Zealand, the Meuse, and Friesland, which can be ready next year.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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ROBERT MORRIS TO JOHN ADAMS.

Office of Finance, 27 September, 1782.

Sir,—

I do myself the pleasure to congratulate you on the success of your patriotic labors in Holland. The general tribute paid to your abilities on this occasion will so well dispense with the addition of my feeble voice, that I shall spare your delicacy the pain of expressing my sentiments.

The inclosed resolutions and copies of letters will convey to you so fully the views of congress, and explain so clearly my conceptions on the subject, that very little need be added. If the application to France should fail of success, which I cannot permit myself to believe, you will then have a new opportunity of showing the influence you have acquired over the minds of men in the country where you reside, and of exerting it in the manner most beneficial to our country.

Before I conclude this letter, I must congratulate your excellency on the success of the loan you have already opened, which I consider as being by this time completed.

With perfect respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

Robert Morris.

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JOHN JAY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 28 September, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

Mr. Oswald received yesterday a commission to treat of peace with *the commissioners of the United States of America*. I have reasons for wishing that you would say nothing of this till you see me, which I hope and pray may be soon, very soon.

This is a short letter; but, notwithstanding its brevity, be assured that I am,

With Great Regard And Esteem, &C.

John Jay.

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TO M. DE LA FAYETTE.

The Hague, 29 September, 1782.

My Dear General,—

I should have written you since the 29th of May, when I wrote you a letter that I hope you received, if it had not been reported, sometimes that you were gone, and at other times that you were upon the point of going to America.

This people must be indulged in their ordinary march, which you know is with the slow step. We have, however, at length, the consent of all the cities and provinces, and have adjusted and agreed upon every article, word, syllable, letter, and point; and clerks are employed in making out five fair copies for the signature, which will be done this week.

Amidst the innumerable crowd of loans which are open in this country, many of which have little success, I was much afraid that ours would have failed. I have, however, the pleasure to inform you, that I am at least one million and a half in cash,—about three millions of livres,—which will be a considerable aid to the operations of our financier at Philadelphia; and I hope your court, with their usual goodness, will make up the rest that may be wanting.

I am now as well situated as I ever can be in Europe. I have the honor to live upon agreeable terms of civility with the ambassadors of France and Spain; and the ministers of all the other powers in Europe, whom I meet at the houses of the French and Spanish ministers, as well as at court, are complaisant and sociable. Those from Russia and Denmark are the most reserved. Those from Sardinia and Portugal are very civil.

The ministers of all the neutral powers consider our independence as decided. One of those, even from Russia, said so not long ago; and that from Portugal said it to me within a few days. You and I have known this point to be decided a long time; but it is but lately that the ministers of neutral powers, however they might think, have frankly expressed their opinions; and it is now an indication that it begins to be the sentiment of their courts, for they do not often advance faster than their masters in expressing their sentiments upon political points of this magnitude.

Pray, what are the sentiments of the *corps diplomatique* at Versailles? What progress is made in the negotiation for peace? *Can any thing be done before the British parliament, or at least, the Court of St. James, acknowledge the sovereignty of the United States, absolute and unlimited?*

It would give me great pleasure to receive a line from you, as often as your leisure will admit.

With Great Esteem, I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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M. CERISIER TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 1 Octobre, 1782.

Monsieur,—

Il y a long-temps que j'aurai entamé le sujet important de l'admission des États Unis de l'Amérique dans la neutralité, mais je ne sentais pas avoir des argumens assez forts pour traiter cette matière; et vous savez que, dans ces sortes de cas, il vaut mieux ne rien dire que de ne pas dire assez. Je suis effectivement embarrassé pour montrer comment cette démarche ne serait pas une dérogation aux principes qu'ont énoncés les puissances neutres, de ne rien hazarder qui puisse passer pour partialité de la part d'aucune des puissances belligérantes. Il est vrai que l'on peut considérer les Américains, après le bonheur qu'ils ont eu de chasser les Anglais de leur territoire, comme des peuples que la Grande Brétagne veut conquérir; or, toutes les puissances belligérantes étant dans un état à être conquises l'une par l'autre, elles ne laissent pas de conserver, chacune, jusqu'à cette époque d'une conquête, le droit d'être reconnue indépendante. Donc les Américains qui ne sont vis-à-vis des Anglais que comme un peuple qu'ils veulent conquérir, ont aussi le droit d'être regardés indépendans, même par des puissances neutres. Mais l'Angleterre pourra toujours opposer à ces raisons que les Américains ne sont encore à son égard que comme des rebelles qu'elle veut punir; ainsi, l'affaire étant indécidée quant au droit, il sera difficile de donner des raisons satisfaisantes aux puissances neutres pour agir autrement. On pourroit répondre que l'Angleterre s'est suffisamment déclarée en avouant son impuissance à continuer une guerre offensive, sans laquelle on ne peut espérer de conquête; et surtout par la lettre de Carleton que vous connoissez sûrement. Voilà les meilleurs argumens à cet égard, mais ils prouveraient encore qu'il ne serait pas nécessaire d'admettre les États Unis dans la neutralité, pour accélérer la paix, puisque, les choses étant ainsi, la reconnaissance de l'Amérique par l'Angleterre, le plus grand obstacle à la paix, sera bientôt levé.

J'attends avec impatience vos observations sur cet objet. Quelques lumières communiquées par vous me mettront en état de traiter cette matière avec connoissance de cause. J'aurai soin de remplir votre intention de la manière la plus exacte, quant aux pièces à traduire du *General Advertiser*.

J' Ai L'Honneur D'Être, &C.

Cerisier.

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M. DE LAFAYETTE TO JOHN ADAMS.

Paris, 6 October, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—

Your favor of the 29th last has safely come to hand, for which I am the more obliged to you, as I set the greater value by the honor of your correspondence. I have been long waiting for a safe opportunity to write, and will endeavor this may steer clear of the post-offices, as the itching fingers of the clerks do not permit any secret to pass unnoticed.

I am happy to hear you have walked on with our Dutch friends to the wished for conclusion of the treaty of commerce. Amidst the wonders you have performed in that country, I greatly rejoice at your having succeeded in money matters; the more so as I apprehend our financier needs much a European assistance, and the great expenses they have made in this country give me but little hope to obtain a further supply than the six millions and the balance of accounts which have been determined upon since the time I arrived from America.

Mr. Jay advances but slowly with the Spaniards—in fact, he does not advance at all—and though Count d'Aranda has got powers, though he has with a pencil drawn an extravagant line this side of the Mississippi, yet until powers are exchanged upon an equal footing, and until the Spanish pencil is transported three hundred miles westward, there is no doing any thing towards settling a treaty with that nation.

As to the grand affair of peace, there are reasons to believe it will take place. Many attempts have been made to treat upon an unequal footing, which, by the bye, was a very impertinent proposal, but we stood firm, deaf, and dumb, and as France refused to enter into business until we were made to hear and to speak, at last, with much reluctance and great pains, his Britannic Majesty and Council were safely delivered of a commission to treat with plenipotentiaries from the United States of America. In case we are to judge from appearances, one would think Great Britain is in earnest; but when we consider the temper of the King and his minister, the foolish, ridiculous issue of the attempt against Gibraltar, the collection of forces at New York, the greater part of which are destined to the West Indies, and the combination of the American, French, Spanish, Dutch interests on the one hand and those of a haughty nation on the other, it appears probable that five or six months will pass before the work of peace is happily concluded. But that it will be concluded before next summer, appears to me the most probable idea that can be formed upon this matter.

We have letters from America as late as the 6th September. M. de Vaudreuil and his squadron had arrived at Boston. It was said Charleston would be evacuated and the troops sent to New York. There is a rumor of Madras having been taken—at least, we may look for good news from the East Indies.

As I have no public capacity to be led into political secrets, I beg you will consider these communications as confidential.

And Have The Honor To Be, &C.

Lafayette.

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TO JOHN JAY.

The Hague, 7 October, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

Your favor of the 28th ultimo, was brought me last night. On Friday last I was notified, by the messenger of their High Mightinesses, that the treaties would be ready for signature on Monday, this day. I am, accordingly, at noon, to go to the assembly, and finish the business. But when this is done, some time will be indispensable, to prepare my despatches for congress, and look out for the most favorable conveyances for them. I must also sign another thousand of obligations at least, that the loan may not stand still. All this shall be despatched with all the diligence in my power, but it will necessarily take up some time, and my health is so far from being robust, that it will be impossible for me to ride with as much rapidity as I could formerly, although never remarkable for a quick traveller. If any thing in the mean time should be in agitation, concerning peace, in which there should be any difference of opinion between you and your colleague, you have a right to insist upon informing me by express, or waiting until I come.

8th. The signature was put off yesterday until to-day, by the Prince being in conference with their High Mightinesses, and laying his orders to the navy before them.

With Great Regard, Your Humble Servant,

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

The Hague, 8 October, 1782.

Sir,—

At twelve o'clock to-day I proceeded, according to appointment, to the state house, where I was received with the usual formalities, at the head of the stairs, by M. Van Santheuvel, a deputy from the Province of Holland, and M. Van Lynden, the first noble of Zealand, and a deputy from that Province, and by them conducted into the chamber of business, (*chambre de besogne*,) an apartment belonging to the truce chamber, (*chambre de trêve*,) where were executed the treaty of commerce, and the convention concerning recaptures, after an exchange of full powers.

The treaty and convention are both inclosed, or, at least, an authentic copy of each. If the copy should arrive before the original, which I shall reserve to be sent by the safest opportunity I can find, it will be a sufficient foundation for the ratification of congress. I hope the treaty will be satisfactory to congress. It has taken up much time to obtain the remarks and consent of all the members of this complicated sovereignty. Very little of this time has been taken up by me, as congress will see by the resolution of their High Mightinesses, containing the power to the deputies to conclude and sign the treaty; for although all communications to me were in Dutch, a language in which I was not sufficiently skilled to depend upon my own knowledge, M. Dumas was ever at hand, and ever ready to interpret to me every thing in French, by which means I was always able to give my answers without loss of time. The papers, in which the whole progress of this negotiation is contained, in Dutch, French, and English, make a large bundle, and, after all, they contain nothing worth transmitting to congress. To copy them would be an immense labor to no purpose, and to send the originals at once would expose them to loss.

Several propositions were made to me, which I could not agree to, and several were made on my part, which could not be admitted by the states. The final result contained in the treaty, is as near the spirit of my instructions as I could obtain, and I think it is nothing materially variant from them. The lords, the deputies, proposed to me to make the convention a part of the treaty. My answer was, that I thought the convention, which is nearly conformable with that lately made with France, would be advantageous on both sides; but as I had no special instructions concerning it, and as congress might have objections, that I could not foresee, it would be more agreeable to have the convention separate; so that congress, if they should find any difficulty, might ratify the treaty without it. This was accordingly agreed to. It seemed at first to be insisted on, that we should be confined to the Dutch ports in Europe, but my friend, M. Van Berckel, and the merchants of Amsterdam, came in aid of me, in convincing all, that it was their interest to treat us upon the footing *gentis amicissimæ*, in all parts of the world.

Friesland proposed that a right should be stipulated for the subjects of this republic to purchase lands in any of our States; but such reasons were urged as convinced them that this was too extensive an object for me to agree to; 1st. It was not even stipulated for France. 2dly. If it should be now introduced into this treaty, all other nations would expect the same, and, although at present it might not be impolitic to admit of this, yet nobody would think it wise to bind ourselves to it forever. 3dly. What rendered all other considerations unnecessary, was, that congress had not authority to do this, it being a matter of the interior policy of the separate States. This was given up. A more extensive liberty of engaging seamen in this country was a favorite object; but it could not be obtained. The *refraction*, as they call it, upon tobacco, in the weighhouses, is a thing that enters so deeply into their commercial policy, that I could not obtain any thing more particular or more explicit than what is found in the treaty. Upon the whole, I think the treaty is conformable to the principles of perfect reciprocity, and contains nothing that can possibly be hurtful to America or offensive to our allies, or to any other nation, except Great Britain, to whom it is indeed, without a speedy peace, a mortal blow.

The rights of France and Spain are sufficiently secured by the twenty-second article; although it is not in the very words of the project transmitted me by congress, it is the same in substance and effect. The Duc de la Vauguyon was very well contented with it, and the states were so jealous of unforeseen consequences, from the words of the article, as sent me by congress, and as first proposed by me, that I saw it would delay the conclusion without end. After several conferences and many proposals we finally agreed upon the article as it stands, to the satisfaction of all parties.

The clause reserving to the Dutch their rights in the East and West Indies is unnecessary, and I was averse to it, as implying a jealousy of us. But as it implies, too, a compliment to our power and importance, was much insisted on, and amounted to no more than we should have been bound to without it, I withdrew my objection.

The proviso of conforming to the laws of the country, respecting the external show of public worship, I wished to have excluded; because I am an enemy to every appearance of restraint in a matter so delicate and sacred as the liberty of conscience; but the laws here do not permit Roman Catholics to have steeples to their churches, and these laws could not be altered. I shall be impatient to receive the ratification of congress, which I hope may be transmitted within the time limited.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

10 October, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

I have received your favor of September ; if my son can find a good opportunity to come, I should be glad to have him; but I should not be willing to trust him with every companion. He is too young for such a journey, unless in company with a prudent man.

Mr. 18 has a letter from Mr. 19, of 28th ultimo, informing him that yesterday Mr. Oswald received a commission to treat of peace with the commissioners of the United States of America. This is communicated as a secret, therefore no notice is to be taken of 18 or 19 in mentioning it. 19 presses 18 to come to him, and he thinks of going in ten days.

On the 8th the treaty of commerce and convention concerning recaptures was signed.

You want to know whether the categoric answer was demanded against advice. No. It was advised by several members of the states, and by the ambassador; it was not done neither until we had written to the Count de Vergennes and obtained his opinion, that he did not see any inconvenience in simply going to the states and asking them what answer I should transmit to congress. However, when he came to read the words demand, requisition, and categoric answer, he was shocked, as the ambassador himself told me. These words were my own, but I did not venture them without the advice of some good friends in the states; and to all appearances, these words contained the electric fluid that produced the shock. I was, however, at that time so well known, that it was presumed I should make the demand, although the advice had been against it, as I certainly should have done, supported as I was by the opinion of the members of the states. Take the merit and glory of a measure you cannot prevent, or at least a share in it, although you dislike it, is a maxim with most politicians, and, under certain limitations, it is a lawful maxim. We must be very ignorant of our friends not to know that it is one of their rules; and there are many occasions upon which we, if at liberty, might take advantage of it, by taking upon ourselves measures, which they cannot openly oppose, but must appear to favor.

Yours, &C.

John Adams.

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FRANCIS DANA TO JOHN ADAMS.

(Secret And Confidential.)

October 15, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—

Soon after my arrival here, I intimated to you that I had discovered something, which I thought a clue to account for the advice given me by a certain person, and which you and I then were of opinion was calculated to throw an obstruction in my way, and of course that I ought not to follow it. I told you I would communicate it to you by the first good opportunity. None has offered till now. Here, then, you have it. In the project of a treaty of commerce, which France had proposed to Russia, there is an article to this effect: When the subjects of France shall carry in their own vessels goods, wares, or merchandises of the growth, produce, or manufacture of France, into the dominions of Russia, and shall receive in exchange for them, goods, wares, and merchandises of the growth, production, or manufacture of Russia, that in such cases there shall be a drawback of the duties, both of importation and of exportation, paid by the subjects of France upon all such articles imported or received in exchange by them as aforesaid.

Now, in order to induce Russia to grant this most advantageous privilege to France, France alleges that it will be for the interest of Russia to do it, because France will have a demand for greater quantities of the commodities of Russia, which she will, nevertheless, not be under a necessity of purchasing of Russia, *after the war*; for these reasons, that she can then obtain the same from America, and although, perhaps not at so cheap a rate, yet it will be for her interest, *if Russia shall refuse to grant this privilege*, to pay America from 15 to 20 per cent. more for the same articles, as, by taking those articles from America, France would enable her to take off a greater quantity of the commodities of France, and the more easily to discharge the debts she may contract for them in France.

The foregoing project, and the reasons urged in support of it, were somewhat more detailed than I have given them to you above. As I could not obtain a copy of them, I read them over with care, and, in the time of it, reduced them to writing from my memory. The above is a copy of that memorandum, and I believe I have not made any material mistake in it. Hemp, the article of which Russia is most jealous of a rivalry, is particularly mentioned by France. Thus I found both friends and foes working against us here, for their own private purposes, if to support and maintain a rivalry between the two countries can be said to be working against our interests. However different their views may be, the effect is the same, and equally prejudicial to us, let it proceed from whom it may; and this junction in their systems rendered my task of clearing away such errors much more difficult. The immense profit which France would derive from such a privilege, must have made her consider it as an object of

great consequence to herself. She could not therefore wish to open any communication which might possibly bring an *éclaircissement* that would render her project abortive. Is it unnatural to suppose that the pendency of such a negotiation might have been a sufficient ground for the advice above alluded to, or for others to prevent my forming any connections with persons in government here? I view it, indeed, in this light, but perhaps I may view it with too suspicious an eye. It has had no tendency to convince me that it is an erroneous principle in our policy, that we ought to take care of our own interests in foreign courts. This is, in some places, an unfashionable if not an unpardonable sentiment. Should you think proper to write me upon this subject, I must beg you to do it in so disguised a manner as cannot be penetrated. For I have good reasons to apprehend, that it is next to impossible to avoid a detection of my correspondence through the posts. I this day received a second letter, which had been opened at the office, from Paris. They will open every letter brought by their post, to discover any correspondence they wish to discover, without the least hesitation. For this reason, I desire you would never send me a copy of any despatches you may know I have received, but instead of it, to give me notice when you receive any such, and I will write you what to do with them. By this same opportunity, you will receive a letter for Mr. Livingston. Please to open it, read it, and beg Mr. T., whom we may safely confide in, to be so kind as to make out two or three copies of it, and to forward them by careful hands. I am unable to do this myself, at present, and I dare not send a letter of that sort by the post. Desire Mr. T. not to put up either of them, with any of your, or any other letters, but to send them unconnected with any thing, which, in case of capture, might discover from whence they came. You will pardon the trouble I give you in these matters, and be assured, I shall never be unmindful of the obligations I am under to you. Since the above, one of my bankers has called upon me, and tells me all my letters, which come under cover to them *directly*, will certainly be opened at the office; that it will be necessary, therefore, to send them all by the way of Riga.

I am, my dear sir, your much obliged friend, and obedient humble servant,

Francis Dana.

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J. G. HOLTZHEY TO JOHN ADAMS.

Amsterdam, 20 Octobre, 1782.

Monsieur,—

L'indépendance de votre nation m'a fait inspirer l'idée d'immortaliser ce grand et digne événement par une médaille que j'ai fait sur leur liberté, et dont j'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer la première épreuve, dans l'espérance qu'il fera tant de plaisir à votre excellence que d'honneur pour ma personne de me dire que je reste avec un profond respect, &c. &c.

Jean George Holtzhey.[1](#)

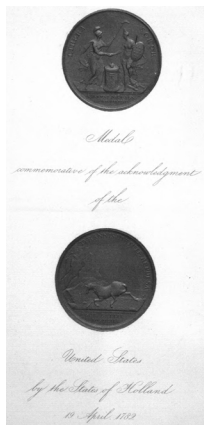
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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Paris, 31 October, 1782.

Sir,—

Having executed the treaty of commerce at the Hague, and despatched four copies of it, by four different vessels bound to America from the Texel, and having signed a sufficient number of obligations to leave in the hands of Messrs. Willinks, Van Staphorsts, and De la Lande and Fynje, and having received information from Mr. Jay, that Mr. Oswald had received a commission from the King, his master, under the great seal of Great Britain, to treat with the commissioners of the United States of America, I set off for Paris, where I arrived on Saturday, the 26th of this month, after a tedious journey; the roads being, on account of long-continued rains, in the worst condition I ever knew them.



I waited forthwith on Mr. Jay, and from him learned the state of the conferences. It is not possible, at present, to enter into details. All I can say is, in general, that I had the utmost satisfaction in finding that he had been all along acting here upon the same principles upon which I had ventured to act in Holland, and that we were perfectly agreed in our sentiments and systems. I cannot express it better than in his own words: "to be honest and grateful to our allies, but to think for ourselves." I find a construction put upon one article of our instructions by some persons, which I confess I never put upon it myself. It is represented by some, as subjecting us to the French ministry, as taking away from us all right of judging for ourselves, and obliging us to agree to whatever the French ministers shall advise us to do, and to do nothing without their consent. I never supposed this to be the intention of congress; if I had, I never would have accepted the commission; and if I now thought it their intention, I could not continue in it. I cannot think it possible to be the design of congress; if it is, I hereby resign my place in the commission, and request that another person may be immediately appointed in my stead.

Yesterday we met Mr. Oswald at his lodgings; Mr. Jay, Dr. Franklin, and myself, on one side, and Mr. Oswald, assisted by Mr. Strachey, a gentleman whom I had the honor to meet in company with Lord Howe upon Staten Island, in the year 1776, and assisted also by a Mr. Roberts, a clerk in some of the public offices, with books, maps, and papers, relative to the boundaries. We have to search the boundaries of Grenada, the two Floridas, ancient Canada according to the claims of the French, proclamation Canada, act of parliament Canada, &c., and the bounds of Nova Scotia, and of most, if not all the thirteen States.

I arrived in a lucky moment for the boundary of the Massachusetts, because I brought with me all the essential documents relative to that object, which are this day to be laid before my colleagues in conference at my house, and afterwards before Mr. Oswald.

It is now apparent, at least to Mr. Jay and myself, that, in order to obtain the western lands, the navigation of the Mississippi, and the fisheries, or any of them, we must act with firmness and independence, as well as prudence and delicacy. With these, there is little doubt we may obtain them all.

Yesterday I visited M. Brantzen, the Dutch minister, and was by him very frankly and candidly informed of the whole progress of the negotiation on their part. It is very shortly told. They have exchanged full powers with Mr. Fitzherbert, and communicated to him their preliminaries, according to their instructions, which I have heretofore transmitted to congress. Mr. Fitzherbert has sent them to London, and received an answer, but has communicated to them no more of this answer than this, that those preliminaries are not relished at St. James's. He excused his not having seen them for six or seven days, by pretence of indisposition; but they are informed that he has made frequent visits to Versailles during those days, and sent off and received several couriers.

How the negotiation advances between Mr. Fitzherbert and the Count de Vergennes, and the Count d'Aranda, we know not.

The object of M. de Rayneval's journey to London, is not yet discovered by any of us. It is given out, that he was sent to see whether the British ministry were in earnest. But this is too general. It is suspected that he went to insinuate something relative to the fisheries and the boundaries, but it is probable he did not succeed respecting the former, and perhaps not entirely with respect to the latter.

With Great Respect, &c.,

John Adams.

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TO B. FRANKLIN.

Paris, 1 November, 1782.

Sir,—

In answer to the letter your excellency did me the honor to write me on the 15th of October, a copy of which you delivered me yesterday at Mr. Oswald's, the original not being received, I have only to say that there is money enough in the hands of Messrs. Wilhem and Jan Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, and De la Lande and Fynje, of Amsterdam, to discharge the interest of the ten millions of guilders borrowed in Holland by the King of France, under the warranty of the states-general, if it is expected and insisted that congress should pay it.

But the question is, who shall order it to be paid. I do not think myself authorized, by any powers I have, to dispose of that money. Congress have only empowered me to borrow that money, and deposit it in the hands of bankers, to be drawn out by congress; and I have advised and requested that assembly to draw the whole, without leaving me the power to dispose of any part of it, beyond my own salary, a little assistance to our distressed countrymen escaped from British prisons, and a few trifling charges that necessarily arise.

There is also another difficulty in the way at present. By the contract, the money is not to be paid until a ratification arrives from congress. A quintuplicate of the contract went by Captain Grinnell, who is arrived at Boston, so that we may expect a ratification, and, too probably, drafts for the whole money, by the first ship.

It is, therefore, impossible for me to engage absolutely to pay it, until we hear farther from congress. But upon the arrival of the ratification, if no contrary orders arrive with it, and your excellency and Mr. Jay advise me to do it, I will direct, if I can, or at least, I will desire the houses who now have the money to pay it, if insisted on by this court, which I hope, however, will be thought better of.

I Have The Honor To Be,

John Adams.

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TO JEAN GEORGE HOLTZHEY.

Paris, 2 November, 1782.

Sir,—

I have this morning received the letter you did me the honor to write me on the 20th of October, together with the present of a medal, in commemoration of the great event of the 19th of April, 1782. The medal is ingeniously devised, and is very beautiful. Permit me to beg your acceptance of my thanks for it.

I think you would find a sale for many of them at Boston and Philadelphia. When I return to Holland, I shall be glad to purchase a few of them to give to my friends.

The influence of this event upon many nations, upon France, Spain, Great Britain, America, and all the neutral powers, has already been so great, and in the future vicissitudes of things will be so much greater, that I confess every essay of the fine arts to commemorate and celebrate it, gives me pleasure.

I Have The Honor To Be, Sir, &C.

John Adams.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Passy, 3 November, 1782.

Sir,—

I am perfectly of your opinion respecting the copy to be sent to Mr. Dana, and I shall have one prepared directly for that purpose.

Is it not also a proper time for you to propose the quadruple alliance offensive and defensive, or at least defensive, which I think you once mentioned to me? For I apprehend this peace may be so humiliating to England, that, on the first occasion, she will fall upon one or other of the powers at present engaged against her; and it may then be difficult for us to unite again.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.,

B. Franklin.

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TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, 6 November, 1782.

Sir,—

Captain Barney arrived here, on the 5th instant, with the letters you did me the honor to write me on the 23d, 25th, 27th September and 7th of October. Captain Barney shall have all the attention due to his character and recommendation. Mr. Paulus has not asked the kind of assistance you mention, in my name, I hope; in all such cases I mean only an introduction, and to ask the hospitality which you delight to show to strangers.

I have transmitted from the Hague my accounts, some time ago, which I presume have arrived before now. I have not transmitted the account of the bills I accepted in Holland, having transmitted them from time to time to Dr. Franklin, who paid them, and will consequently transmit them as his vouchers and in his accounts. I will, however, transmit them, upon my return to the Hague, if it is necessary, but there is nobody now there who can do it, and I cannot do it here.

Your arrangement by which I was to draw upon Dr. Franklin for my salary, I suppose was made upon a supposition that I had obtained no money in Holland. I cannot do this without an additional and unnecessary commission to the Dr.'s banker, and therefore would wish to receive it from Messrs. Willink, &c. at Amsterdam. The Dr., so far from having cash to pay my salary, is calling upon me to pay the interest of the French loan of ten millions in Holland, and even to pay bills you draw upon him. I must, however, obey the resolutions of congress, and have as little to do with money as possible.

I am much obliged to you for the copies of your letters to congress and to Dr. Franklin. They are masterly performances, and let us far into the state of our affairs. I have communicated them to the Marquis de Lafayette, and propose to consult with the Dr. upon them immediately. I would return to Holland, and apply to the states if necessary; but I cannot rely upon any influence of my own, nor what is much greater, the influence of our cause or the common cause, enough to give you hopes of success. If you suppose that my loan of five millions is full, you are mistaken. The direction will inform you how much is obtained, not yet two millions of guilders to be sure; I fear not more than one and an half. There are so many loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, and almost every other power, for the states-general, the states of the separate provinces, the East and West India companies, several of which are under the warranty of the states, and these are pushed with such art and ardor, that I cannot promise you any success. There is scarcely a guilder but what is promised beforehand. France and Spain, as well as England, are so pressed for money, that I know not what to hope for.

The King of Great Britain has acknowledged the sovereignty of the United States; but whether any thing more will follow from it, than a few efforts to get something to excuse the further prosecution of the war, and to silence clamors, I know not. It is to me very clear that the British ministry do not intend to make a peace with France, Spain, and Holland this year, and America will not make a separate peace, if England would come to her terms, which, in my present opinion, the present minister does not intend. The probability is, that he intends to evacuate New York, but whether to go against the French or Spaniards, is the question. If the French and Spaniards permit them to evacuate New York, a good riddance for us; but they will do mischief, or, at least, give trouble, and cause great expense. France might have taken them all prisoners, with the utmost certainty and ease, but chose to go against Jamaica and Gibraltar, and met with the success that every man who knew those places, and the attachment of the English to them, foresaw.

With Great Esteem,
I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO HENRY LAURENS.

Paris, 6 November, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

I have the honor to inclose a resolution of congress, of the 17th of September, enjoining upon us all, attendance on the negotiations for peace; and if it were not presumption to suppose that any thing could be added to so pressing a desire of congress, I would beg leave to add my most earnest entreaties that you would be so good as to join us as soon as possible. It would give me the highest pleasure, and be a constant support, to have your judgment and advice upon the great questions which are under consideration.

I know not how to mention the melancholy intelligence by this vessel, which affects you so tenderly. I feel for you more than I can or ought to express. Our country has lost its most promising character, in a manner, however, that was worthy of the cause. I can say nothing more to you, but that you have much greater reason to say, in this case, as a Duke of Ormond said of an Earl of Ossory, “I would not exchange my dead son for any living son in the world.”

With the most affecting sentiments, I have the honor to be, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

John Adams.

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TO SECRETARY LIVINGSTON.

Paris, 6 November, 1782.

Sir,—

Two days ago arrived by Captain Barney, the letters you did me the honor to write me, the 22d, 29th, triplicate of 30th May, 4th of July, 29th of August, and 15th of September.

I was unconditionally received in Holland, and promised, upon record, conferences and audiences, whenever I should demand them, before I entered into any treaty, and without this I should never have entered into any; and full powers were given to the committee of foreign affairs, before I entered into any conference with them. I have ventured to act upon the same principle in the affair of peace, and uniformly refused to come to Paris, until our independence was unconditionally acknowledged by the King of Great Britain. Mr. Jay has acted on the same principle with Spain, and with Great Britain. The dignity of the United States being thus supported, has prevailed in Holland and Great Britain; not indeed as yet in Spain, but we are in a better situation in relation to her, than we should have been if the principle had been departed from. The advice of the Count de Vergennes has been contrary; but however great a minister he may be in his own department, his knowledge is insufficient, and his judgment too often erroneous in our affairs, to be an American minister.

Intelligence from Holland is impossible through France. Events in Holland can seldom be foreseen one day. When they happen, they are inserted in the gazettes, transferred to the *Courier de l'Europe*, the English and French gazettes, and get to America before it is possible for me to transmit them directly. Besides, sir, I have sometimes thought that my time was better employed in doing business that might produce other events, than in multiplying copies and conveyances of despatches, which could contain nothing but what I knew the newspapers would announce as soon. My reputation may not be so well husbanded by this method, but the cause of my country is served. I am not insensible to reputation; but I hope it has not been a principal object, perhaps it has not been enough an object. I see so much of the omnipotence of reputation, that I begin to think so. I know very well, however, that if mine cannot be supported by facts, it will not be by trumpeters.

If it were in my power to do any thing for the honor of the department or minister of foreign affairs, I would cheerfully do it, because I am a friend to both; and to this end, you will, I am sure, not take it amiss if I say, that it is indispensably necessary for the service of congress, and the honor of the office, that it be kept impenetrably secret from the French minister, in many things. The office will be an engine for the ruin of the reputation of your ministers abroad, and for injuring our cause in material points, the fishery, the western lands, and the Mississippi, &c., if it is not.

I thank you, sir, for the hint about the English language. I think with you, that we ought to make a point of it; and after some time, I hope it will be an instruction from congress to all their ministers.

As to the negotiations for peace, we have been night and day employed in them ever since my arrival on the 26th of October. Doctor Franklin, without saying any thing to me, obtained of Mr. Jay a promise of his vote for Mr. W. T. Franklin, to be secretary to the commission for peace¹; and as the Doctor and his secretary are in the same house, and there are other clerks enough, I suppose he will transmit to congress details of the negotiations. I shall be ready to lend them any assistance in my power; and I will endeavor, as soon as I can, to transmit them myself; but after spending forenoon, afternoon, and evening, in discussions, it is impossible to transmit all the particulars. No man's constitution is equal to it.

The English have sent Mr. Oswald, who is a wise and good man, and, if untrammelled, would soon settle all, and Mr. Strachey, who is a keen and subtle one, although not deeply versed in such things; and a Mr. Roberts, who is a clerk in the board of trade, and Mr. Whithead, who is a private secretary to Mr. Oswald. These gentlemen are very profuse in their professions of national friendship; of earnest desires to obliterate the remembrance of all unkindnesses, and to restore peace, harmony, friendship, and make them perpetual, by removing every seed of future discord. All this, on the part of Mr. Oswald personally, is very sincere. On the part of the nation, it may be so in some sense at present; but I have my doubts, whether it is a national disposition, upon which we can have much dependence, and still more, whether it is the sincere intention of the earl of Shelburne.

He has been compelled to acknowledge American independence, because the Rockingham administration had resolved upon it, and Carleton and Digby's letter to general Washington had made known that resolution to the world; because the nation demanded that negotiations should be opened with the American ministers, and they refused to speak or hear, until their independence was acknowledged unequivocally and without conditions; because Messrs. Fox and Burke had resigned their offices, pointedly, on account of the refusal of the king, and my lord Shelburne, to make such an acknowledgment, and these eloquent senators were waiting only for the session of parliament, to attack his lordship on this point; it was, therefore, inevitable to acknowledge our independence, and no minister could have stood his ground without it. But still I doubt whether his lordship means to make a general peace. To express myself more clearly, I fully believe he intends to try another campaign, and that he will finally refuse to come to any definitive agreement with us, upon articles to be inserted in the general peace.

We have gone the utmost lengths to favor the peace. We have at last agreed to boundaries with the greatest moderation. We have offered them the choice of a line through the middle of all the great lakes, or the line of 45 degrees of latitude, the Mississippi, with a free navigation of it at one end, and the river St. Croix at the other. We have agreed that the courts of justice be opened for the recovery of British debts due before the war; to a general amnesty for all the royalists, against whom there is no judgment rendered, or prosecution commenced. We have agreed, that all the royalists,

who may remain at the evacuation of the States, shall have six months to sell their estates, and to remove with them.

These are such immense advantages to the minister, that one would think he could not refuse them. The agreement to pay British debts, will silence the clamors of all the body of creditors, and separate them from the tories, with whom they have hitherto made common cause. The amnesty and the term of six months, will silence all the tories, except those who have been condemned, banished, and whose property has been confiscated; yet I do not believe they will be accepted.

I fear they will insist a little longer upon a complete indemnification to all the refugees, a point which, without express instructions from all the States, neither we nor congress can give up; and how the States can ever agree to it, I know not, as it seems an implicit concession of all the religion and morality of the war. They will also insist upon Penobscot as the eastern boundary. I am not sure that the tories, and the ministry, and the nation, are not secretly stimulated by French emissaries, to insist upon Penobscot, and a full indemnification to the tories. It is easy to see, that the French minister, the Spanish and the Dutch ministers, would not be very fond of having it known through the world, that all points for a general peace were settled between Great Britain and America, before all parties are ready. It is easy to comprehend, how French, Spanish, and Dutch emissaries, in London, in Paris, and Versailles, may insinuate, that the support of the tories is a point of national and royal honor, and propagate so many popular arguments in favor of it, as to embarrass the British minister. It is easy to see, that the French may naturally revive their old assertions, that Penobscot and Kennebec are the boundary of Nova Scotia, although against the whole stream of British authorities, and the most authentic acts of the governors, Shirley, Pownall, Bernard, and Hutchinson. Mr. Fitzherbert, who is constantly at Versailles, is very sanguine for the refugees. Nevertheless, if my Lord Shelburne should not agree with us, these will be only ostensible points. He cares little for either. It will be to avoid giving any certain weapons against himself, to the friends of Lord North and the old ministry.

The negotiations at Versailles, between the Count de Vergennes and Mr. Fitzherbert, are kept secret, not only from us, but from the Dutch ministers; and we hear nothing about Spain. In general, I learn, that the French insist upon a great many fish. I dined yesterday with M. Berkenrode, the Dutch ambassador, and M. Brantzen, his colleague. They were both very frank and familiar, and confessed to me, that nothing had been said to them, and that they could learn nothing as yet, of the progress of the negotiation. Berkenrode told me, as an honest man, that he had no faith in the sincerity of the English for peace, as yet; on the contrary, he thought that a part of Lord Howe's fleet had gone to America, and that there was something meditated against the French West India Islands. I doubt this, however; but we shall soon know where my Lord Howe is. That something is meditated against the French or Spaniards, and that they think of evacuating New York for that end, I believe. Berkenrode seemed to fear the English, and said, like a good man, that in case any severe stroke should be struck against France, it would be necessary for Holland and America to discover a firmness. This observation had my heart on its side; but without

an evacuation of New York, they can strike no blow at all, nor any very great one, with it.

Mr. Oswald has made very striking overtures to us; to agree to the evacuation of New York; to write a letter to General Washington, and another to congress, advising them to permit this evacuation; to agree, that neither the people nor the army should oppose this evacuation, or molest the British army in attempting it; nay, further, that we should agree, that the Americans should afford them all sorts of aid, and even supplies of provisions. These propositions he made to us, in obedience to an instruction from the minister, and he told us their army were going against West Florida, to reconquer that from the Spaniards. Our answer was, that we could agree to no such things; that General Washington could enter into a convention with them, for the terms upon which they should surrender the city of New York, and all its dependencies, as Long Island, Staten Island, &c., to the arms of the United States. All that we could agree to was, that the effects and persons of those who should stay behind, should have six months to go off; nor could we agree to this, unless as an article to be inserted in the general peace.

I Have The Honor To Be, &C.

John Adams.

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TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Paris, 7 November, 1782.

Sir,—

Yesterday M. le Couteulx called upon me in order to communicate to me the contents of his letters from you concerning the remittance of the money from Holland. I told him he must write to Messrs. Willink, &c., the directors of the loan, upon the subject, and that the whole matter being under your direction, you and the bankers must negotiate it. He said your desires could easily be complied with, and very advantageously for the United States. He had written to the Doctor, and received an answer that he could not yet say whether he could comply or not. Soon after, Mr. Grand came in to show me your letter of credit upon Messrs. Willink, &c., and showed me a state of his accounts, by which he would be a million of livres in advance, after paying the interest of the ten millions of livres borrowed by the King in Holland.

This morning I went out to Passy to consult with the Doctor about your letters. He told me he was preparing a memorial to the King, as strong as he could pen, but could not foresee what would be his success.

There are great complaints of scarcity of money here, and what there is is shut up. The King's loans do not fill. The war has lasted so long, and money has been scattered with so much profusion, that it is now very scarce in France, Spain, and England, as well as Holland. If I could quit the negotiations for peace, and return to the Hague, I have great doubts of success with the states-general; and an application to them which must be taken *ad referendum*, become the subject of deliberations, and be drawn out into an unknown length, and perhaps never obtain an unanimity, which is indispensable, would immediately cast a damp upon my loan already opened, or any other that I might open in the same way, perhaps put an entire stop to it. So that, after reflecting on the subject as maturely as I can, it seems to me safest to trust to the loan already opened. The influence of such an application to the states, in a political view, upon England and the neutral powers, would not be favorable.

The measure you have taken in drawing the money out of Holland will have an unfavorable effect. A principal motive to lend us has been to encourage a trade between us and them; but when they find that none of the money is to be laid out there in goods, I fear we shall get little more.

If I were to lay a memorial before their High Mightinesses, and had authority to propose a treaty to borrow a sum of money and pay the interest annually in tobacco, rice, or other produce of America, delivered at Amsterdam, and to pay the capital off in the same manner, I am not very clear in my expectations of success. But I have no instructions for this, nor do I know that congress would approve it.

In short, sir, I can give you no hopes, nor make any promises, but to do as well as I can.

With The Greatest Respect, &C.

John Adams.

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TO FRANCIS DANA.

Paris, 8 November, 1782.

Dear Sir,—

The King of Great Britain, by patent under the great seal of his kingdom, has created Richard Oswald, Esq., to be his minister plenipotentiary to treat with the ministers of the United States of America. Thus Great Britain is the third power in Europe to acknowledge our independence. She can no longer, therefore, contend that it is a breach of the armed neutrality, or an hostility against her, to acknowledge American independence. This is so essential a change in the state of things, that I think, and Mr. Jay thinks, you will now have a reasonable ground to expect success. The King of Sweden has, some time ago, made some advances to treat with Dr. Franklin, and Congress have sent him a commission to treat with that prince. I see not why neutral vessels may not go freely to America now. You will not mention my name in these matters, but in confidence. Jay is as you would wish him, wise and firm.

I am directed by an order of congress, signified to me by their secretary at war, to transmit them a state of the pay, rations, and subsistence of the troops of the states-general, of Russia, Prussia, and all the northern powers. Will you be so good as to assist me in this? My love to your ward.

Sincerely Yours,

John Adams.

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APPENDIX.

(A. P. 452.)

The following papers are found in Mr. Adams's copy-books. They are but partially given in Flassan's *Histoire de la Diplomatie Française*.

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***Extrait De La Réponse De La Cour De France Aux
Propositions Faites Au Sujet Du Rétablissement De La Paix
Par Les Cours De Petersbourg Et De Vienne.***

PROPOSITION.

Il sera traité à Vienne entre la Grande Bretagne et les colonies Américaines du rétablissement de la paix en Amérique, mais sans l'intervention des puissances belligérantes.

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RÉPONSE.

Les deux Cours Impériales ne peuvent se flatter de conduire la médiation à une heureuse fin, si elles ne préviennent pas les subterfuges, les subtilités, les fausses interprétations dont aucune des puissances belligérantes pourrait faire usage pour entendre selon ses vues les propositions préliminaires. C'est là ce qui arriverait inmanquablement, si l'on ne déterminoit pas d'avance le sens des expressions qui concernent les Américains. La Cour de Londres, qui éludera autant, et aussi longtemps, qu'elle le pourra, l'aveu direct et indirect de l'indépendance des États Unis, s'autorisera des termes généraux dont on se sert en parlant d'eux, pour soutenir qu'elle ne s'est point obligée de traiter avec ses anciennes colonies comme avec une nation libre et indépendante, qu'elle n'est par conséquent point dans le cas d'admettre un plénipotentiaire de leur part, qu'elle est la maîtresse de ne voir dans leur représentant que le député d'une portion de ses sujets qui lui demandent grâce; d'ou il résulteroit, lorsque la médiation serait en activité, et qu'il serait question d'entamer les négociations, que l'on commencerait à contester sur le caractère que pourra déployer le plénipotentiaire Américain; que le Roi d'Angleterre ne voudra le regarder que comme son sujet, tandis que le congrès demandera qu'il soit admis comme représentant un peuple libre, au moyen de quoi la médiation se trouvera arrêtée des le premier pas.

Pour prévenir cet inconvénient, il semble qu'avant toutes choses le caractère de l'agent Américain doit être déterminé d'une manière précise et positive, et que le congrès doit être invité à confier ses intérêts à la médiation. Cette invitation est d'autant plus instante, que la négociation relative à l'Amérique doit marcher d'un pas égal avec celle que suivront les Cours de Versailles et Madrid; que par conséquent ces deux négociations, quoique séparées, doivent être entamées en même temps.

Mais qui invitera le congrès à traiter avec l'Angleterre? Le Roi ne le peut, puisque les articles préliminaires l'excluent de la négociation. Cette tâche ne peut donc être remplie que par les médiateurs eux-mêmes. Tout ce que le Roi pourra faire, et ce qu'il fera avec autant de zèle que de bonne foi, ce sera d'exhorter les Américains à la paix et à toutes les facilités qu'ils croiront compatibles avec leurs intérêts essentiels; mais pour que le Roi puisse faire cette démarche avec sûreté, avec l'espérance du succès, et avec la certitude de ne point se rendre suspect aux Américains, il est nécessaire qu'il sache d'avance la détermination des médiateurs sur les observations que l'on met sous leurs yeux, et que cette détermination soit propre à rassurer les provinces Américaines sur leur état politique. Les deux hauts médiateurs et leur ministères sont trop éclairés pour ne point sentir que sans ces préalables le congrès n'enverra personne à Vienne, et que le Roi ne pourrait faire des tentatives pour l'y engager sans courir les risques de se compromettre; au moyen de quoi, ainsi qu'on l'a déjà observé, la médiation se trouverait arrêtée dans son début. Cette réflexion semble mériter la plus sérieuse attention de la part des deux Cours médiatrices.

Quant aux propositions d'un armistice et d'un désarmement, on observe, qu'en supposant même que l'on soit d'accord sur ces deux points, il en reste un qui n'est pas

moins important, c'est le *statu quo*. Ni la France ni l'Espagne n'ont sujet de le rejeter pour ce qui les concerne personnellement; il n'en est point de même des Américains. Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de jeter les yeux sur les points que les troupes Anglaises occupent actuellement sur le continent de l'Amérique Septentrionale. Il sera donc question d'avoir l'aveu des États Unis, et que cet aveu ne peut leur être demandé que par les deux Cours médiatrices, par les raisons qui ont déjà été déduites.

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Projet De Réponse Aux Trois Cours Belligérantes.

RÉPONSE (*Mutatis Mutandis*).

Les Cours de Versailles et de Madrid venant de faire remettre aux deux Cours Impériales leurs réponses respectives aux articles pour servir de base à la négociation, qui leur avoient été communiqués, ainsi que celle de Londres leur avoit fait parvenir la sienne le 15 Juin dernier, elles croient ne point devoir tarder à les communiquer réciproquement aux trois cours respectives, comme nécessaires à leurs directions mutuelles; et elles ont chargés en conséquence leurs ambassadeurs et ministres aux dites Cours d'en présenter des copies à leurs ministères.

Leurs Majestés Impériales ont trouvé avec beaucoup de satisfaction, dans celle que vient de leur faire remettre sa Majesté Très Chrétienne, l'assurance des sentimens de la reconnoissance et de l'empressement avec lesquels elle avoit reçu les dits articles; mais elles n'ont pu en être que d'autant plus peinées de l'exposé des raisons qui ont paru à sa Majesté devoir s'opposer à leur acceptation.

Il leur paroît convenable, dans l'état actuel des choses, de renvoyer à d'autres temps et à d'autres circonstances les observations, dont elles seroient susceptibles, et qu'il seroit vraisemblablement inutile d'exposer dans ce moment-ci; mais en échange, ce qui ne l'est, ni pour le présent ni pour l'avenir, c'est, que les puissances belligérantes puissent envisager dans leur vrai point de vue les articles qui leur ont été proposés, et les apprécier en conséquence à leur juste valeur.

Les puissances médiatrices n'ont dû se permettre, ni aucune de ces propositions qui auroient pu blesser la dignité ou la délicatesse de l'une ou de l'autre des parties, ni aucune de celles, qui pour préalable auroient entraîné explicitement ou implicitement des décisions, qui ne peuvent être que le résultat de consentemens obtenu par la voye des négociations.

Elles ont dû se borner, par conséquent, à chercher et à trouver quelque moyen propre à mettre les puissances belligérantes dans le cas de pouvoir rassembler leurs plénipotentiaires respectifs dans le lieu du congrès, pour y travailler sous la médiation des deux Cours Impériales à l'arrangement amiable de tous les différens qui sont les causes de la guerre actuelle, et pour, une fois rassemblés et munis d'instructions pour tous les événemens possibles, y être continuellement à portée de pouvoir saisir l'un ou l'autre de ces heureux momens qu'amènent quelquefois les circonstances, et qui souvent sont perdus pour toujours, ou au moins pour long temps, lorsqu'on n'a point été à même de pouvoir en profiter. Elles n'y ont trouvés en même temps aucun inconvénient possible, que peut-être celui d'un progrès de négociation pas tout à fait si rapide qu'il seroit désirable sans doute qu'il put l'être; l'idée d'une suspension d'armes et de la fixation d'un *statu quo* par elle même, indépendante du reste de la proposition, pouvant être à volonté adoptée, ou ne point l'être. Et il leur a paru conséquemment, en pesant avec la plus grande impartialité les avantages et les inconvénients possibles de l'acceptation de leurs propositions, que rien n'étoit plus

convenable à l'intérêt respectif des parties belligérantes, ainsi qu'à leurs circonstances générales et particulières; elles persistent dans cette opinion, et moyennant cela, par l'intérêt sincère qu'elles prennent aux circonstances de toutes les parties belligérantes, elles ne sauroient s'empêcher de souhaiter qu'elles puissent admettre encore entre elles, avec les modifications qu'elles voudront y ajouter, les articles qui leur ont été proposés, lesquels, comme très bien l'observe S. M. T. C., effectivement ne sont point des articles préliminaires, ainsi que par la nature des choses ils n'ont pu l'être, mais ne s'en trouvent pas moins être un moyen qui peut faire parvenir à faire réussir d'un moment à l'autre, non seulement un arrangement de préliminaires, mais peut-être même à ramener la paix, dont par tant de raisons le plus prompt retour possible seroit si désirable.

Les deux Cours Impériales ont cru devoir à la confiance avec laquelle s'est expliquée à leur égard dans sa réponse S. M. T. C. celle avec laquelle elles lui exposent en échange la façon dont elles ont envisagé la démarche de la proposition des articles qu'elles lui ont fait communiquer, ainsi que les vœux qu'elles persistent de faire, pourvu-que les parties belligérantes puissent adopter encore ce qu'elles leur ont proposé, ou au moins, à ce défaut, leur communiquer quelque autre idée propre à produire les même effets ou de plus heureux encore, s'il est possible.

Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne peut-être persuadée d'avance dans ce cas, qu'avec tout le zèle possible, elles s'empressent à en faire l'usage qui leur paroîtra pouvoir être le plus utile et le plus convenable; rien n'étant plus certain que la sincérité des sentimens avec lesquels elles auront soin de justifier en toute occasion, la confiance que leurs ont témoignée les hautes parties belligérantes en acceptant leur médiation.

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Réponse De Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne À La Réplique Des Deux Cours Impériales.

Le Roi a reçu avec autant de sensibilité que de reconnaissance la réponse des deux cours médiatrices; sa Majesté la regarde comme une nouvelle preuve de leur amitié pour elle, de la justice qu'elles rendent à sa confiance dans leur impartialité, et de l'intérêt véritable qu'elles prennent au prompt rétablissement de la paix.

Le Roi n'a point varié et ne variera point dans le désir de seconder des vues aussi salutaires, et les deux hauts médiateurs peuvent être assurés qu'il ne dépendra jamais de S. M., pour ce qui la concerne, qu'ils ne soient bientôt en mesure de donner un libre cours à leur zèle bienfaisant.

Mais la Cour de Londres ôte au Roi tout moyen et tout espoir à cet égard par sa résolution invariable de regarder et de traiter les Américains comme ses sujets. Une pareille résolution rend inutile toute tentative que l'on pourroit faire pour la paix. Elle détruit de fond en comble le plan des deux médiateurs, puisqu'elle préjuge, de la manière la plus péremptoire, la question qui fait le sujet de la querelle, et dont la décision directe ou indirecte doit être la base préliminaire de la future pacification.

Dans cet état des choses le Roi pense que les conférences proposées par les deux cours médiatrices seroient dans ce moment-ci sans objet, et que l'assemblée des plénipotentiaires respectifs ne seroit qu'un vain simulacre qui ne diminueroit ni n'abrègeroit les horreurs de la guerre, et qui pourroit compromettre la dignité de leur Majestés Impériales.

Le Roi est véritablement peiné de voir que les choses ont pris une tournure aussi contraire à ses vœux et à l'attente de leurs Majestés Impériales, et s'il étoit en son pouvoir de la changer, il le feroit avec un empressement qui leur démontreroit la pureté de ses intentions; mais sa Majesté croit devoir observer qu'elle a des alliés avec lesquels elle a des engagements inviolables; qu'elle les trahiroit en abandonnant la cause Américaine, et qu'elle abandonneroit cette cause, si elle se portoit à négocier une paix séparée, indépendamment des États Unis. Les hauts médiateurs ont senti l'impossibilité de cette démarche, puisqu'ils ont eux-mêmes proposé de faire cheminer d'un pas égal la négociation du Roi et celle des États Unis.

Mais en admettant même que le Roi put faire abstraction des affaires de l'Amérique, qu'il se contentât de transiger sur ses intérêts personnels, et qu'il laissât aux Américains le soin de s'accommoder avec leur ancienne métropole, que résulterait-il de cette conduite? Il en résulteroit que la paix seroit illusoire, qu'elle seroit un être de raison; en effet, si, ce qui paroît de la plus grande évidence, les Américains persistoient dans leur refus de rentrer sous l'obéissance de la Couronne Britannique, la guerre continueroit entre l'Angleterre et ses anciennes colonies; et le Roi seroit obligé alors, comme il l'est à présent, de les assister; le Roi d'Espagne, de son côté, seroit dans le cas d'assister sa Majesté; de sorte que la France et l'Espagne se

retrouveroient après la signature de leur traité particulier dans le même état où elles se trouvent actuellement.

Ces considérations semblent au Roi être de la plus grande force, et sa Majesté rend trop de justice aux lumières et à la pénétration des deux hauts médiateurs, pour n'être pas persuadée d'avance qu'ils les envisageront sous le même point de vue, et qu'ils donneront une entière approbation à la conduite réservée qu'elles la forcent de tenir.

Le Roi souhaite avec ardeur de se trouver dans le cas d'en changer; et c'est par une suite de ce sentiment qu'il invite les hauts médiateurs à employer toute leur influence à la Cour de Londres, pour l'engager à manifester des dispositions propre à persuader qu'elle est enfin résolue de donner de bonne foi la main à une paix prompte et équitable.

Le Roi croit devoir prévenir les hauts médiateurs que son ambassadeur à Vienne est dès à présent autorisé à écouter toutes les ouvertures et tous les expédiens tendans à ce but, soit qu'ils viennent de la Cour de Londres, ou qu'ils soient proposés par leurs Majestés Impériales; et il est même autorisé à lier la négociation si on lui présente des bases suffisantes pour la conduire sûrement à une heureuse conclusion sous les auspices de leurs Majestés Impériales.

Of these papers, Mr. Adams himself furnished a translation, in his letters to the *Boston Patriot*, which is here given.

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Extract From The Answer Of The Court Of France To The Propositions Made On The Subject Of The Reëstablishment Of Peace By The Courts Of Petersburg And Of Vienna.

PROPOSITION.

Il sera traité à Vienne, entre la Grande Bretagne et les Colonies Américaines, du rétablissement de la paix en Amérique; mais sans l'intervention des puissances belligérantes.

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ANSWER.

The two Imperial Courts cannot flatter themselves that they can conduct the mediation to a happy conclusion, if they do not provide against the subterfuges, the subtleties, and the false interpretations which any of the belligerent powers may employ, for understanding according to its views the preliminary propositions. There is the difficulty which would infallibly occur, if we do not determine beforehand the sense of the expressions which relate to the Americans. The Court of London, who will elude as much and as long as she can, any direct and indirect avowal of the independence of the United States, will take advantage of the general terms we employ in speaking of them, to maintain that she is not obliged to treat with her ancient Colonies, as with a free and independent nation; that she is not, consequently, in a situation to admit a plenipotentiary on their part; that she is the mistress, to see nothing in their representative but the deputy of a portion of her subjects, who appear to sue for pardon; from which it would result, when the mediation should be in activity, and the question should be to open and commence the negotiations, that they would begin to contest concerning the character which the American plenipotentiary may display; that the King of England will not regard him, but as his subject, while the congress shall demand that he be admitted as the representative of a free people; by which means the mediation will find itself arrested in its first step.

To prevent this inconvenience, it seems that, before all things, the character of the American agent ought to be determined in a manner the most precise and positive, and that the congress ought to be invited to confide its interests to the mediation. This invitation is so much the more indispensable, as the negotiations relative to America must march with an equal step with that which the Courts of Versailles and Madrid will pursue; and, by consequence, these two negotiations, although separate, must be commenced at the same time.

But who will invite the congress to treat with England? The King cannot do it, because the preliminary articles exclude him from the negotiation. This task, then, cannot be fulfilled but by the mediators themselves. All that the King can do, and that he will do, with equal pleasure and good faith, is, to exhort the Americans to make peace, and to give all the facilities to that end which they shall believe compatible with their essential interests. But that the King may take this step with safety, with the hope of success, and with a certainty of not rendering himself suspected by the Americans, it is necessary that he should know beforehand the determinations of the mediators concerning the observations which are here submitted to their consideration, and that such determination be proper to assure the American Provinces concerning their political existence. The two high mediators and their ministers are too enlightened not to perceive that, without these previous conditions, the congress will send nobody to Vienna; and that the King cannot make any attempts to persuade them to send any one, without running the risk of compromising himself. By means of which, as has already been observed, the mediation would find itself at a full stop from its first attempt at motion. This reflection seems to merit the most serious attention on the part of the mediating Courts.

As to the propositions of an armistice and of a disarmament, let it be observed that, even supposing that all parties were agreed upon these two points, there still will remain another, which is not less important, and that is the *statu quo*. Neither France nor Spain have cause to reject it, as it concerns them personally; but it is not so with the Americans. To be convinced of this, it is only necessary to cast an eye upon the points which the English forces occupy at present upon the continent of North America. It will be necessary to have the consent of the United States, and this consent cannot be demanded of them but by the two mediating Courts, for the reasons which have already been explained.

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Project Of An Answer To The Three Belligerent Courts.

Answer (*Mutatis Mutandis*).

The Courts of Versailles and of Madrid having caused to be transmitted to the two Imperial Courts their respective answers to the articles to serve as a basis to the negotiation which had been communicated to them, as the Court of London had communicated her answer to them on the 15th of June last, they think they ought not to delay to communicate them reciprocally to the three Courts respectively, as necessary for their mutual directions. And they have consequently charged their ambassadors and ministers to the said Courts to present copies of them to their ministries.

Their Imperial Majesties have perceived, with great satisfaction, in that which his most Christian Majesty has transmitted to them, the assurance of the gratitude and zeal with which he had received the said articles; but they could not but be so much the more afflicted (*peinées*) at the exposition of the reasons which have appeared to his Majesty to oppose themselves to their acceptance.

It appears to them convenient, in the present state of things, to refer to other times and other circumstances the observations of which they are susceptible, and which it would probably be useless to disclose at this moment; but that which is not (useless) either for the present or the future, is that the belligerent powers may contemplate in a true point of view the articles which have been proposed to them, and, consequently, appreciate them at their just value.

The mediating powers ought not to allow themselves either any of those propositions which have wounded the dignity or the delicacy of one or the other of the parties or any of those which might antecedently have drawn after them, explicitly or implicitly, decisions which can only be the result of consent, obtained by the way of negotiations.

They ought, consequently, to confine themselves to seek and to find some means proper to place the belligerent powers in a situation to be able to assemble their respective plenipotentiaries at the place of the congress, there to labor, under the mediation of the two Imperial Courts, for the amicable arrangement of all the differences which are the causes of the present war; and to the end, that, once assembled and furnished with instructions for all possible events, they may be there continually ready and authorized to seize one or another of those happy moments which circumstances sometimes present, and which frequently are lost forever, or at least for a long time, when men have not been vested with power to take advantage of them. They have not perceived in this plan any other inconvenience possible, than perhaps that of the progress of a negotiation not altogether so rapid as it would no doubt be desirable that it should be. The idea of a suspension of arms and the fixation of a *statu quo*, in itself independent of the rest of the propositions, may be adopted or not adopted, at pleasure. And it has consequently appeared to them, on weighing with

the greatest impartiality the possible advantages and the inconveniences of the acceptance of their propositions, that nothing was more convenient to the respective interests of the belligerent parties, as well as to their general and particular circumstances; they persist in this opinion, and by this means, from the sincere interest which they take in the circumstances of the belligerent parties, they cannot but wish that they may still admit among themselves, with the modifications which they wish to subjoin, the articles which have been proposed to them; which, as is very justly observed by his Most Christian Majesty, are not, in fact, preliminary articles, as by the nature of things they could not be, but are not the less a measure which may cause to succeed, in some moment or other, not only an arrangement of preliminaries, but perhaps even an accomplishment of peace, of which the most prompt return possible is for so many reasons so desirable.

The two Imperial Courts have thought it due to the confidence with which his Most Christian Majesty has explained himself in regard to them, in his answer, to manifest that with which they expose to him in return, the manner in which they consider the measure of their proposition of the articles, which they have caused to be communicated to him, as well as the wishes which they persist to entertain, provided the belligerent parties can still adopt those which have been proposed to them, or at least if that cannot be done, communicate to them some other idea proper to produce the same effects, or still happier effects, if that be possible.

His Most Christian Majesty may be assured beforehand, that, in this case, with all possible zeal, they will exert themselves to make such use of it as shall appear to them may be the most useful and the most convenient; nothing being more certain than the sincerity of those sentiments, with which they will take care to justify on all occasions the confidence which has been reposed in them by the high belligerent parties, by accepting their mediation.

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Answer Of His Most Christian Majesty To The Reply Of The Two Imperial Courts.

January, 1782.

The King has received with equal sensibility and gratitude the answer of the two mediating Courts. His Majesty regards it as a new proof of their amity for him, of the justice they render to his confidence in their impartiality, and of the genuine interest they take in the prompt reestablishment of peace.

The King has not wavered, nor will he vary in his desire to second views so salutary, and the two high mediators may be assured that nothing will be wanting in any thing which concerns his Majesty, to place them in a situation to give a free course to their beneficent zeal.

But the Court of London deprives the King of all means and of all hope, in this respect, by her invariable resolution, to regard and to treat the Americans as her subjects. Such a resolution renders useless every attempt that can be made to accomplish a peace. It destroys from the foundation the plan of the two mediators, since it prejudices in the most peremptory manner the question which makes the subject of the quarrel, and the direct or indirect decision of which ought to be the preliminary basis of the future pacification.

In this situation of things the King judges that the conferences proposed by the two mediating Courts would be at this moment without an object, and that the assembly of the respective plenipotentiaries would only be a vain phantom (*simulacre*) which would neither diminish nor abridge the horrors of war, and which might compromise the dignity of their Imperial Majesties.

The King is really afflicted to see that things have taken a turn so contrary to his wishes and to the expectations of their Imperial Majesties; and if it were in his power to change it, he would do it with a zeal which would demonstrate to them the purity of his intentions. But his Majesty thinks he ought to observe that he has allies with whom he has inviolable engagements; that he would betray them by abandoning the American cause; and that he would abandon it, if he should consent to negotiate a separate peace independently of the United States. The high mediators have perceived the impossibility of this procedure, since they have themselves proposed to cause to march with an equal step the negotiations of the King and that of the United States.

But, on the supposition that the King could make an abstraction of the affairs of America, that he could prevail upon himself to transact his own personal interests alone, and leave to the Americans the care of accommodating with their ancient metropolis, what would result from this conduct? It would result that the peace would be illusory; that it would be a figment of imagination; in fact, if, as is most evident, the Americans should persist in their refusal to return under their obedience to the British Crown, the war would continue between England and her ancient Colonies;

the King would be obliged in that case, as he is at present, to assist them; the King of Spain, on his part, would be in the case to assist his Majesty, so that France and Spain would find themselves, after the signature of their particular treaties, in the same state in which they are at present.

These considerations appear to the King to be of the greatest weight; and his Majesty does too much justice to the information and penetration of the two high mediators, not to be convinced beforehand, that they will perceive them in the same point of view, and that they will give their entire approbation to the reserved conduct which they compel him to pursue.

The King ardently wishes to find himself in a situation to change it; and it is in consequence of this sentiment that he invites the high mediators to employ all their influence with the Court of London to engage her to manifest dispositions proper to convince, that she is finally resolved to give her hand in good faith to a prompt and equitable peace.

The King believes he ought to inform the high mediators that his ambassador at Vienna is from this time authorized to hear all the overtures and all the expedients tending to this end, whether they come from the Court of London, or are proposed by their Imperial Majesties. And he is even authorized to commence the negotiation, if they present to him sufficient foundations for conducting it surely to a happy conclusion under the auspices of their Imperial Majesties.¹

end of volume vii.

[1] In Congress, 28 November, 1778. Congress proceeded to the election of a commissioner at the court of France, in the room of S. Deane, Esq., and the ballots being taken, John Adams, Esq., was elected. *Extract from the Minutes*. Charles Thomson, *Secretary*.

[1] All this is incorrect. General Lafayette's own account of the affair is given in a note to General Washington's letter to the President of Congress. Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. v. p. 171.

[1] See *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. i. p. 349.

[1] Various French idioms will be noticed which it has not been thought necessary to correct where the grammar is preserved.

[1] As to the substance of this conversation, see the *Autobiography*, vol. iii. p. 92.

[2] Several prior letters, written by Mr. Adams for the Commissioners, are omitted here, having been already inserted in the *Diary*, vol. iii. pp. 128, 129, 152, 153.

[1] The words in italics, inserted in Mr. Adams's draft, appear to be in the handwriting of Dr. Franklin.

[1] Taken from the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, with some modifications. The same may be said in all other cases in which translations occur.

[1] This article required the judge personally to visit all the prizes, and to place seals upon the property.

[1] In the volume of *Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard*, published by his daughter, Mrs. Deas, some surprise is expressed by her at the tone here adopted by Mr. Adams in regard to the fisheries. The explanation is to be found in the position of Mr. Izard himself, which was one of undisguised hostility to two of the commissioners who had negotiated the treaty. Whilst Mr. Adams was desirous of avoiding collision with Mr. Izard, on account of what had been done before he became a member of the commission, he was equally anxious not to appear to give countenance to any of that gentleman's complaints. His precautions did not save him from being involved in the sweeping censure which Mr. Izard directed at the eastern members of the commission, as "inattentive to the interests of nine States of America, to gratify the eaters and distillers of molasses." See his letter to Mr. Laurens, President of Congress, in *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 434.

[1] Those letters only of Dr. Franklin are introduced which appear not to have been before published.

[1] The tenth article of the treaty of amity and commerce with France contained these words. A peculiarity of this clause of the treaty, which was drawn up and executed in French and English, is, that the French word *désigné*, and the English word *designed*, are made equivalents.

[1] This gentleman was *premier commis* in the office of interpreters, under the Count de Vergennes, or, in English phrase, an under Secretary of State in the office of Foreign Affairs. He spoke the English language with great propriety and facility; was a man of letters and an excellent writer; a zealous advocate for America, and very friendly to all Americans. He conducted the *Mercure de France*, in which he published many little speculations for me, and indeed himself and his whole family were always very civil and friendly to me. He was the father to M. Genet, the Minister Plenipotentiary from the French Republic to the United States, who has been so much celebrated in this country. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] The name of a periodical publication, then issued for the purposes indicated in the letter.

[2] This was a resolve of the 22d of October, directing the committee to signify to the ministers abroad the desire of congress, that "harmony and good understanding should be cultivated between them."

[1] This letter may not have been sent. It does not appear to have been formally answered. On the 19th of December following, a letter was addressed to congress, signed by the King, notifying that body of the birth of his first child, a daughter. This produced a congratulatory answer from congress on the 15th of June, 1779,

terminating with a similar request for their Majesties' portraits, which request was complied with, and the pictures afterwards sent.

[1] In the *Life of Arthur Lee* a slight mistake is made respecting that gentleman's agency in this case of Dr. Price. The author confounds the official notification by the commissioners of the action of congress, the draft of which is in Mr. Adams's handwriting, with a private letter accompanying it, written by Mr. Lee, to urge Dr. Price's acceptance of the invitation. The private answer of Dr. Price, giving reasons for declining the proposals, is to be found in that work; whilst the formal reply, transmitted to congress through the hands of Dr. Franklin, is inserted in Mr. Sparks's edition of the *Writings of Franklin. Life of Arthur Lee*, by Richard Henry Lee, vol. i. pp. 148, 149; *Works of Franklin*, vol. viii. p. 354, note.

[1] It is proper to state that the original draft of this letter bears the marks of considerable reduction in extent and tone from the hands of Dr. Franklin. The substance, however, is preserved.

[1] See the letter of the committee, page 60, of this volume, and the note.

[1] Addressed to John Jay, elected President of Congress on the 10th of December preceding.

[1] This refers to a conspiracy alleged to have been formed on the passage out from Boston. See Mr. Adams's certificate to Captain Landais, under date 8 March, 1780.

[1] So in the original. It should be Passy.

[1] See page 79.

[1] See the lucid and interesting account of the masterly negotiation of the Baron de Breteuil, which brought about this result, in Flassan's *Histoire de la Diplomatie Française*, tome vi. pp. 177-251.

[1] This letter, growing out of the complaints made by Mr. Izard, already alluded to in a former note, was submitted to congress by the president. But that body, when called upon by Mr. Gerry, refused to take any action upon it, on the ground that Mr. Adams had already, by a formal vote, been excepted from the general censure passed upon the commissioners in Europe, and that their subsequent appointment of him to a new trust had entirely rejected the particular charge.

See in the *Journals of Congress*, 20 April, 1779, the yeas and nays upon each separate name of the commissioners, and, in the general correspondence in this work, the confidential letters of Elbridge Gerry and James Lovell, under dates 27 and 29 September, 1779, further elucidating these movements.

[1] This letter was referred by congress in the first place to the commissioners of accounts, who made a report upon it on the 25th of October, 1779. This report was again referred to a committee of their own body, consisting of Mr. Forbes, Mr. Matthews, and Mr. Houston, who, on the 15th of April, 1780, made the following

report, which was accepted:

“That they do not find any vote or proceeding of congress, nor are they informed of any general or received custom, on which the charge of moneys for the education of the accomptant’s son can be admitted; and though the same is inconsiderable, they are of opinion it ought to be rejected, that a precedent be not established; that they are of opinion that the charge for books ought to be admitted, on the ground of a practice which has obtained in different nations, respecting their public ministers, and which is mentioned by Mr. Adams in the explanations attending his vouchers; that they find the several charges in the said accounts conformable to the strictest principles of economy; and that, as far as Mr. Adams has been intrusted with public money, the same has been carefully and frugally expended. *Secret Journals of Congress*, vol. ii. p. 312.

[1] So in the manuscript. Probably the Confederacy was intended.

[2] These three letters will be found inserted in the *Diary*, vol. iii. pp. 259-264.

[1] *Principes des Négotiations*, chap. vi.

[1] Mr. Carmichael was a member of congress from Maryland in May, 1779, and then gave in a statement in writing respecting the disputes of the first commissioners, from which the passage here quoted appears to be taken. The fact is undeniable that a marked difference was made by the French minister in the confidence reposed in the respective commissioners, and that Mr. Lee was sometimes excluded from the knowledge of what was communicated to the others. The reasons of this are given in a note to Mr. Sparks’s edition of *Franklin’s Works*, vol. viii. p. 260. However strong they may be regarded in this instance, the danger of suffering such an inlet to be opened in similar cases to the most obvious abuses, can scarcely admit of a question.

[1] This letter is to be found in the *Diary*. See vol. iii. p. 266. The correspondence is resumed here at the point at which Mr. Adams left it in his fragment.

[1] This alludes to the duel which took place on the 22d of this month between Lord Shelburne and a Mr. Fullarton, in which the former was wounded. Horace Walpole treats the matter in a very different view. See his letter to Sir Horace Mann, 8 April, 1780.

[1] This refers to the secret and separate article in the treaty of alliance with France, permitting Spain to come in whenever she should think proper.

[1] “Nothing ever happened more fortunately in favor of any administration than the illness, at this peculiar juncture, of the speaker. It seemed as if nothing else could at that time have saved them. The recess, indeed, was not long, but it produced extraordinary and unexpected effects.” *Annual Register*.

[2] Mr. Digges, the writer of many letters under this and other signatures, was a Maryland gentleman who remained in England during the war, and maintained secret communications with several of the American ministers, and not improbably with the

British government likewise; though apparently he was but little trusted by either side. Dr. Franklin, in many of his letters, inveighs bitterly against him for his embezzlement of money remitted to him for the use of American prisoners.

[1] This was probably David Hartley, though no copy or trace of his letter has been found.

[1] Sir John Dalrymple had, in concert with Lord Rochford, prepared a memoir to prevent the war; and he took the present opportunity to submit it to the consideration of the Spanish government. This curious memoir was transmitted to congress in Mr. Jay's despatches, and is printed at large in the seventh volume of the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*. It is also in the Appendix to the eighth volume of Sparks's edition of *Franklin's Writings*.

[1] *Sketch of the History and State of Europe*.

[1] An assumed name. Mr Digges was the writer.

[1] In the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, this letter, which was obtained from Mr. Adams's letter book, is set down as addressed *to an unknown person*. This was owing to the accidental omission of the name in the book. The note of M. Genet which immediately precedes it here, makes every thing plain.

[1] The series of notes here inserted, though unimportant in themselves, have a material bearing upon the subsequent relations of the parties. They show to what an extent communications were voluntarily invited by the French minister, though Mr. Adams was not accredited to his Court. In some late works this seems to have been misunderstood.

[1] This strong letter, apparently designed for publication in England, was directed to W. S. Church, the name most frequently assumed by Mr. Digges in his communications to Mr. Adams. It is signed with the initials F. R. S., suggested by Fernando Raymon San, the name of Mr. A.'s guide in Spain. See *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 247.

[1] This letter was translated into French, and printed in the *Mercure de France* of 3 June, 1780. It was likewise transmitted to London, and published in Parker's General Advertiser. The substance of it was appended to the despatch, No. 70, addressed to the President of Congress, which contained General Conway's speech. In the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution* the parts are separated, and the latter is inserted in the form in which it appears here, with a note of reference to the former.

[1] In Massachusetts.

[1] A forgery. See the letter of W. Lee of the 8th July following.

[1] This refers to the letter of the 17th, which was inserted in the *Mercure*. See p. 176, note.

[2] This refers to a letter addressed to M. Genet on the 28th of the month, and inserted by him in the *Mercure de France* of 17 June, containing the same strictures upon the speech of Lord George Germaine, which were transmitted to the President of Congress in the despatch of the 2d of June, the next letter of the present collection. It was also published in the *General Advertiser* in London.

[1] *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 personal safety, as well as of ruin to their fortunes, characters, and reputations.
3. The ambition and avarice of the minority, 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.

[1] It has already been remarked that every important translation herein given is taken from the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, with such alterations only as seemed more nearly to approach the meaning of the original. But, perhaps, it is proper to state that, in the present case, the changes made affect the entire tone of the paper, which is scarcely felt in the former translation. This instance tends strongly to confirm the view taken at the outset, in this volume, of the propriety of adhering, at least in official documents, to the language in which they are written.

[1] This letter drew from congress a formal vote of thanks. See the letter of Mr. Lovell, under date of 12 December of this year, and the resolutions inclosed.

[1] On the Constitution of Massachusetts.

[1] The title of one of Joseph Galloway's pamphlets.

[1] An allusion to the entertainment under that name given in Philadelphia, in honor of General Howe.

[1] This is unjust to M. Dumas. He was directed by Dr. Franklin and by Mr. Adams to cause this letter to be inserted in the *Leyden Gazette*. At the same time he suspected the trick, and first opened their eyes to it. Perhaps it had been wiser in him not to have so hastily followed his orders.

[1] The resolutions and commission, authorizing Mr. Adams to execute the duties assigned to Mr. Laurens in Holland, are to be found at large in the *Secret Journals of Congress*, vol. ii. pp. 314-317.

[1] See page 137. Among the circumstances deserving of notice in the early part of the Revolution, is the singularly laconic style of the correspondence on the part of the committee of foreign affairs with the ministers employed abroad. The private letters of Mr. Lovell and Mr. Gerry, which in part make up for it, will be found in the General Correspondence.

[1] This correspondence was transmitted to America with the design of procuring the removal of Mr. Adams from the sphere of negotiation in Europe. It actually produced the official instructions which will be found under date of 10 January, 1781, in this volume.

[2] Instead of repeating the paragraphs criticized of Mr. Adams's letter, they have been numbered to correspond with these numbers in the criticism, so that a comparison is rendered easy. See pp. 228-230.

[1] See page 72 of this volume.

[1] The various official papers, transmitted by Mr. Adams with his despatches, are omitted in this collection, they being easily to be found elsewhere.

[1] John Luzac, editor of the *Leyden Gazette*, and Professor of History and of Greek Literature in the University of that place, accidentally killed by an explosion of a quantity of gunpowder in a canal boat, near his residence, in 1807. A biographical notice of him, translated from the *Journal de l'Empire*, is to be found in the *Monthly Anthology*, for October, 1809.

[2] This was Governor Pownall's *Memorial to the sovereigns of Europe*, which I had procured to be translated by a masterly hand, into very good French. M. Luzac published it, and it was much read and admired. It was thought to be highly favorable to the American cause. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] The words italicized alluded to some insinuations of Mr. Hartley, concerning a separate peace between us and England, which I considered as an infamous perfidy. *Letters to Boston Patriot*, 1809.

See vol. iii. of this work, p. 137. Also Mr. Hartley's own letters and explanations in Mr. Sparks's edition of *Franklin's Writings*, vol. ix. pp. 118-126, 213-220. He seems to have erred in judgment more than in motive.

[1] This refers to the provisional commission to negotiate a loan, in case Mr. Laurens should not arrive.

[1] Although, when the foregoing letter was written, there were decisive reasons for concealing names, there are none at present. I consulted many; but the gentleman here intended was Mr. Bicker, a nephew of the two famous Bickers who defended Amsterdam more than a century before against a prince of Orange. He was of one of the most ancient, opulent, and respectable families in that city. This gentleman had been dismissed from the regency in 1748, and had applied himself to commerce in a mercantile house of more than a hundred years' standing, by which he had

accumulated a clear fortune of several millions. A patriot without alloy of French or English influence, one of the most sensible and well-informed men, and the most intimate, confidential friend of Mr. Van Berckel, he was to me a sincere friend and faithful counsellor from first to last. He advised me to inquire and consider what houses were too much connected with the British ministry. These must not be chosen. But he assured me I must ask other questions, such as,—what houses had other connections that would be equally likely to hinder or defeat the loan? He soon afterwards explained himself to mean, houses too much connected with the French ministry, and other houses whose solidity and credit were not sufficiently established, and he cautioned me, in confidence, particularly with regard to M. John de Neufville. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] Here follow, in the original copy, several extracts from General Howe's *Narrative*, showing his disappointments in the performance of the promises of aid given by the royalists in America. These extracts were omitted in the republication in 1809, and are therefore omitted here.

[1] M. Bicker recommended the Vollenhovens as a house of unquestionable solidity, wholly Dutch, biased neither by France nor England. But these were too rich to hazard so dangerous an experiment. They declined, upon my application to them at that time, and have repented since, as I believe, for they have endeavored to retrieve their error, and have succeeded, though not to so great advantage as they might have reaped, if they had accepted my offer.

***Letters To The Boston Patriot*, 1809.**

[1] Of Baron Van der Capellen, see an account in the note to page 270 of the *Diary*, in vol. iii. of the present work.

[1] Upon this occasion I ought to observe that although M. Van Berckel, with all that honor, integrity, and fortitude, which marked his character through the whole course of his life, frankly avowed the measure, and although the Regency of Amsterdam resolved to support it, yet it is certain, the discovery of it spread a universal consternation throughout the seven Provinces. I do not remember to have found one person who pretended to see the wisdom of it, though no man doubted the purity of the design. It was irregular. Mr. Lee had no authority. The city could scarcely be said to have authority to bind itself to a man who had none. The city could not pledge the faith of the nation. The utmost amount of it could be no more than an invitation to congress to send an ambassador to the Hague. I have always believed that the regency was importuned into this measure by M. de Neufville, who was then a very busy and a very popular man upon the exchange of Amsterdam. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] This Mr. Bowens and sons was a capital house in Amsterdam, near relations of Mr. Bicker, who recommended them to me after the Vollenhovens had refused. Although these gentlemen received me very kindly and politely, as the Vollenhovens had done, and had given me some hopes, yet the Prince's denunciation of M. Van

Berckel and the burgomasters of Amsterdam had excited such an alarm that the Bowens were intimidated and refused.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] These capitals correspond to those found in the letter to which it is an answer, p. 324.

[1] This name, which is found frequently in the letters written in Holland at this period, is supposed to mean the King of England.

[1] The memorial is here omitted. It may be found in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. v. p. 372.

[1] The Abridgment of Pownall's Memorial, which had been translated into French at my request, and printed by Mr. Luzac under the title of *Pensées Extraits, &c.* It was afterwards published in English, in London, under the whimsical title of *A Translation into Common Sense and Plain English. Letters to Boston Patriot, 1809.* The title and translation were both made by Mr. Adams himself, as appears from the copy remaining among his manuscripts.

[1] Congress took into consideration the report of the committee on the letter of June 26th, from the Hon. J. Adams; whereupon,—

Ordered, That the said letter be referred to the committee of foreign affairs, and that they be instructed to inform Mr. Adams of the satisfaction which congress receive from his industrious attention to the interests and honor of these United States abroad, especially in the transactions communicated to them by that letter.

[1] I cannot pass this letter without an observation upon it. This conduct of the Court of London and the Court of Holland was very skilfully adapted to the constitution and the state of society in the United Provinces. The sovereignty, by the constitution, is a pure aristocracy residing in the regencies, which consist of about four thousand persons. The common sense, or the common feelings of human nature had instituted, or rather forced up by violence, an hereditary stadtholder, to protect the common people or democracy against the regencies or aristocracy. But as the stadtholdership was always odious to the aristocracy, there had been frequent disputes between them, which must have terminated in the expulsion of the House of Orange and the abolition of the stadtholdership, if it had not been for the interposition of the commons,—the common people. These, having no house of commons, no house of representatives to protect them, or even to petition, had no mode of interposing, but by mobs and insurrections. This kind of democracy has always been dreadful in all ages and countries. Accordingly Barnevelt had been sacrificed at one time, the De Witts at another, and in 1748 more sacrifices would have been made, if the aristocracy had not learned some wisdom by tragical experience, and given way in some degree to the popular enthusiasm. If there is any credit to be given to history or tradition, there has never existed on this globe a character more pure, virtuous, patriotic, or wise, than John De Witt, or a greater hero than Cornelius. Yet these two citizens were murdered

by their fellow-citizens at the Hague, with circumstances of cruelty and brutality too shocking to describe. Yet the most savage of these assassins is universally believed in Holland to have received a pension for life from our great deliverer, King William.

The apprehension at this time was very general, that M. Van Berckel and one or two of the burgomasters, Hooft at least, were to be immolated like the De Witts; and not a few expected that the American ambassador would not escape. I do not accuse, nor will I suspect that the two courts wished to proceed to such bloody extremities as in the case of De Witt; but that they expected to excite insurrections that should compel the republic to submit to the English policy, there can be little doubt. There is nothing so instructive to aristocracy and democracy as the history of Holland, unless we except that of France for the last five-and-twenty years; nothing which ought so forcibly to admonish them to shake hands and mutually agree to choose an arbitrator between. Let me not be misunderstood. I have been too often misunderstood already, sometimes ignorantly, and sometimes wilfully. I mean not an hereditary arbitrator. An hereditary executive power can be limited by nothing less than an hereditary aristocracy. When one is admitted the other must be as the only antidote to the poison. A proper equilibrium may be formed between elective branches as well and perhaps better than between hereditary ones. And our American balance has succeeded hitherto as well as that in England, and much better than that in Holland. May it long endure! But to that end, in my humble opinion, the president's office must be less shackled than it has been.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] Presumed to be Silas Deane. See a letter of Dr. Franklin to R. R. Livingston. Sparks's *Franklin*, vol. ix. p. 177.

[1] In this place a few words of explanation are necessary. Such was the dejection and despondency of the whole nation, that I was candidly told by all the gentlemen in whom I had any confidence, that a loan was desperate; except M. de Neufville, who was very confident that he could obtain a considerable sum, and was extremely importunate with me to open a loan in his house. That gentleman's politeness and hospitality drew all Americans to his house; and he had made them believe that he could do much, if I would authorize him. I had spies enough upon me from England, France, and America too, very ready to impute blame to me. Congress were constantly drawing upon me, and there was the utmost danger that their bills would be protested. If this event should happen, I knew that representations in private letters would go to America and to France, that this fatal calamity was wholly owing to my negligence and obstinacy in refusing to open a loan in M. de Neufville's house. I thought it my duty, therefore, to try the experiment. It could do no harm; for we had certainly at that moment no credit to lose. *Letters to the Boston Patriot, 1809.*

[1] The allusions in this letter are not perfectly easy to explain. From the tenor of the answer, which is even more enigmatical, it is inferred that *D. D.* and *Fun* stand for Dr. Franklin and Count de Vergennes. Francisco is Silas Deane. The references to General John Sullivan and T. Pickering, then Quarter-Master-General, grew out of

publications made by them at the time, explaining the depressed condition of the army, which terminated in the revolt of the Pennsylvania line.

[1] I soon returned to Leyden, and determined to begin by communicating the resolution of congress to the ambassadors of the neutral courts; first, to that from Russia. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] Upon this letter a few notes may be necessary. I found, by experience, that there was in Holland a public and a secret doctrine among the merchants, capitalists, and brokers, like those of the ancient Egyptian priests; and I am afraid there is something too much like it in all countries and in all ages in society, which sometimes greatly embarrasses honest men and sincere inquirers after truth. A very respectable gentleman told me,—“If, sir, you were to write me a letter, and ask my opinion, whether M. de Neufville’s house is a solid house, and M. de Neufville’s credit a solid credit, I should answer you in the affirmative. Yes, sir, a very solid house and a very solid credit. Nevertheless, I caution you, in confidence, to have a care.” M. de Neufville was generally, and I believe justly, reputed an honest, well-meaning man; but the knowing ones thought he had not a clear head, and remembered various injudicious speculations in which he had been engaged, which had proved very disadvantageous to him. Such, however, was his public reputation, that I still flattered myself he would obtain something to help me discharge my American bills, and lessen the burden on the Court of France; and in this I was encouraged by Mr. Luzac, Mr. Dumas, and several others of my friends, which occasioned my writing as I did in this letter. Again, there was an ambitious burgomaster in Amsterdam, Mr. Rendorp, secretly in the interest of the stadtholder and the English, who found means upon this occasion and upon several others to insinuate discouragement to M. de Neufville. And at this time he began to find by experience that he should dispose of very few, if any, of my obligations, and was very desirous that I should impute his ill success to the hope of peace held out by a confused rumor which began to spread in Europe of an intended mediation of the two imperial courts. After all, whatever was the cause, my hopes were blasted as well as those of M. de Neufville. I obtained only the three thousand guilders which M. Luzac had promised; and M. de Neufville obtained only two thousand among all his friends.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] Congress.

[1] The counter-manifesto of the states-general to Great Britain.

[1] The black cloud that hung over the whole of the southern provinces; the solemn gloom that pervaded the whole nation; the universal uncertainty and timidity that had seized upon all minds, determined me to bring my own mission to a trial. If I should be rejected and ordered out of the country, our situation would not be worse. If I should be received, my object would be gained; but, if I should neither be received nor rejected, but taken *ad referendum*, as the most intelligent men assured me I should be, I should then stand in a fair diplomatic character, waiting the result of the national deliberations, under the protection of the government, the public faith, and the

national honor. Both myself and my friends would be in a situation of more safety and security. I determined, therefore, to communicate my commission and credentials to the government, both to their High Mightinesses and to the Stadtholder. I wrote my memorials, and signed them on the 19th of April, 1781,—one to the states-general, the other to the Prince of Orange. It was my wish that Mr. Luzac, who wrote admirably well in French by the acknowledgment of all Europe, should translate the memorials into French, but Mr. Dumas was very desirous of performing that service; and Mr. Luzac undertook to get them translated into Dutch by his brother-in-law,—a bookseller, printer, and editor of a gazette at Delph,—who had the reputation of one of the most masterly writers in the nation in their own language.

About this time, considering the connection between the United States and France, it was very obvious that prudence required I should communicate my design to the French ambassador. I was not, however, without apprehensions of the consequence of it, for I could not doubt that the Count de Vergennes had information of my appointment sooner than I had; and I had a thousand reasons to believe that my whole system in Holland, and even my residence in it, was disagreeable to him. I might presume, and I did presume, that the Duke had instructions from the Count to counteract me. But the inconveniences that would arise from concealing my design from the French ambassador, appearing to overbalance those in the other scale, I wrote to his Excellency information that I had received from congress full powers and credentials as a minister plenipotentiary to the states-general and the Prince of Orange. I received a reply from the Duke immediately, “that he had received my letter, but that I had not informed him whether it was my design to present my full powers to their High Mightinesses; if such was my intention, he desired a previous conference with me.” I went immediately to the Hague, and made my visit to the Hôtel de France. The Duke entered at once into conversation with me, to dissuade me from presenting my credentials. He detained me two hours. I answered all his questions and replied to all his arguments. But, as is usual, neither was convinced; and I took my leave with as full a determination as ever to pursue my plan. The next morning, at eight o’clock, the Duke appeared at my lodgings, at the principal inn of the city, at the sign of the Parliament of England, and renewed his efforts to divert me from my purpose. He went over all the ground we had trod the day before, and ran about all Europe, especially the northern maritime confederation, to find arguments against the step I proposed to take. Although his topics appeared to me extremely frivolous, I listened to them with all the respect which was due to the ambassador of France, and to the personal character of the Duke, which I sincerely esteemed. It is but justice to say, that in all my intercourse with the Duke de la Vauguyon, I was uniformly treated by him, his Duchess, their children, and domestics, with the utmost politeness, and indeed with the freedom and familiarity of friendship.

In this transaction I committed two faults:—1. In not insisting that these discussions should be in writing. 2. In not committing them to writing when they were fresh in my mind. The only excuse that can be made for both is that I had not time. Too many objects pressed upon me at once. At the distance of eight-and-twenty years it would be in vain to attempt a recollection of them by memory, and they must be lost forever, unless some future Dalrymple or Fox, after a century or two should find access to the diplomatic archives of France, and there find some account of them in the Duke’s

despatches to his Court.

The Duke detained me between four and five hours at this second interview, urging all the time his objections and reasons against my going to the States. There was no solidity in them; I knew them to be mere pretexts.

At last, when he found I was not convinced, he desired me to postpone my visit to the president of their High Mightinesses, until he could write to the Count de Vergennes, and have his opinion. I answered, by no means. Why? Because I know beforehand the Count's opinion will be point blank against me; and I had rather proceed against his judgment, without officially knowing his opinion, than with it, as I am determined in all events to go. The Duke had one resource still left. It was, to persuade me to join him in writing, or let him alone write a request to the King of France, that he would order his ambassadors to unite with me in my endeavors to obtain an acknowledgment of my public character. I answered again, by no means. "Why?" "Because, Monsieur le Duc, if I must speak out in plain English or plain French, I know the decision of the King's council will be directly and decidedly against me; and I am decidedly determined to go to the president, though I had a resolution of the King in council against me and before my eyes. Besides, the moments are critical, and there is no time to be lost; whereas, the correspondence and negotiations you propose may be spun out for years. Moreover, I think that neither the King nor his ministers ought to commit themselves in this business." "What!" said the Duke; "will you take the responsibility of it upon yourself?" "Indeed, Monsieur le Duc, I will; and I think I alone ought to be responsible, and that no other ambassador, minister, council, or court, ought to be answerable for any thing concerning it." "Are you willing to be responsible, then?" "Indeed, I am; and upon my head may all the consequences of it rest." "Are you then determined?" "Determined, and unalterably determined I am."

The Duke, upon hearing this, changed his countenance and the tone of his voice, and said, very pleasantly, "Well, I can say no more. If you are determined, and actually go to the states-general, though it will be against my opinion and advice, and although I can give you no assistance in my official capacity, yet, as a man and an individual, I will give you all the countenance in my power." I thanked his Excellency for his declaration, which I received in the most friendly manner; and I assured him it was all the aid I expected or desired, as I fully agreed with him, that neither his public character, or the conduct of his Court, ought, in any manner or degree, to be compromised in the affair.

Notwithstanding all this, after our treaty was made with Holland, the Count de Vergennes ordered the French minister to announce formally to congress, in the name of the King, that his Majesty had assisted the United States in forming the connection between them and the states-general of the United Provinces; and his Majesty received a formal vote of thanks from congress for that favor. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] At the foot of this letter to congress I find in my handwriting a note.—20 February, 1782. "The late evacuation of the barrier towns, and the demolition of their fortifications, may serve as a comment on the Duke de la Vauguyon's opinion against

the point of time. But if it shows that he was right for his country, it shows also that I was right for mine, and the Dutch only have been wrong in being blind.” I had been very busily and confidentially employed in consultations with my Dutch friends, many of whom were members of the sovereignty, and among the best characters and most respectable men in the nation. I had not taken a step without their advice and full approbation. They were unanimously of my opinion, that our American negotiations, both for a political and commercial connection, and for a loan of money, should be kept as distinct as possible from French influence. They were also unanimous for sending a copy in three languages to every member of the constitutional sovereignty in all the Provinces, amounting in the whole to between four and five thousand persons. This was accordingly done. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] Another letter of the same tenor and date was addressed to Baren de Ray, secretary of the Stadtholder.

[1] Let me here recapitulate. I was minister plenipotentiary for making peace; minister plenipotentiary for making a treaty of commerce with Great Britain; minister plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, the states-general; minister plenipotentiary to his Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange and Stadtholder; minister plenipotentiary for pledging the faith of the United States to the armed neutrality; and what perhaps, at that critical moment, was of as much importance to the United States as any of those powers, I was commissioner for negotiating a loan of money to the amount of ten millions of dollars; and upon this depended the support of our army at home and our ambassadors abroad.

While I was ardently engaged and indefatigably occupied in studies and efforts to discharge all these duties, I was suddenly summoned to Versailles to consult with the Count de Vergennes upon something relative to peace. What should I do? My country and the world would consider my commission for peace as the most important of all my employments, and the first to be attended to. I hesitated not a moment, left all other business in as good a train as I could, and set off for Paris. *Letters to the Boston Patriot*, 1809.

[1] These articles were given me in French, and they graciously condescended to let me see the original communication from the two Imperial Courts as far and no farther than these three articles extended. All the rest was carefully covered up with a book. I desired to see and have a copy of the whole; but no, that could not be permitted.

I returned to Paris, where I was alone. Congress had taken from me my bosom friend and fellow sufferer,—in whose society I always found satisfaction, and in whose enlightened counsels, ample assistance and confidence,—Mr. Dana, and sent him on a mission to Russia. My private secretary, Mr. Thaxter, I was obliged to leave in charge of my family and affairs in Holland. I had, therefore, every thing to write, translate, and copy with my own hand.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] As I received no answer to my letter to the Comte de Vergennes, of the 13th of July, and as I was very desirous of obtaining his sentiments, or at least some further information or explanations from him, I wrote again with this view, on the 16th.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] This letter was addressed in these words:—"À Monsieur Adams, Agent des États Unis de l'Amérique Septentrionale, à l'Hôtel de Valois, Rue Richelieu, à Paris; (franked) de Vergennes," all in the handwriting of the clerk who wrote the letter. The letter was signed by the Count de Vergennes. Whether the word *agent* was a blunder of the clerk, or the art and design of the Count, is of no consequence now. He knew I was minister plenipotentiary, both for peace and to the states of Holland; but what reason he had for avoiding to acknowledge it, I know not. It excited some reflections and suspicions at the time, because it seemed to be conformable to the views of the mediating courts, which the Court of France ought not to have countenanced.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] I lived in daily and hourly hopes and expectations of an answer to some of my letters and communications, or of an invitation to some personal conference, in which I might be favored with some intimations of his Excellency's sentiments of approbation or disapprobation, or his advice, criticisms, or corrections of any thing he might think required any alteration. But nothing appeared. All was total silence and impenetrable mystery. Such a dead reserve, such a fixed determination not to commit himself to any thing, not even to an acknowledgment of the obligations of his own treaty with the United States, appeared to me to be poor encouragement to us to be over-communicative with the French ministry. I waited till the 21st of the month, when, being very anxious to return to Holland, where I had reason to believe I could negotiate for peace with Great Britain much more rapidly than in France, I wrote the following letter.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] The answer to the articles relative to America, proposed by the two Imperial Courts, and the letters to the Count de Vergennes, I have the satisfaction to believe, defeated the profound and magnificent project of a congress at Vienna, for the purpose of chicaning the United States out of their independence.

It moreover established the principle, that *American ministers plenipotentiary were not to appear without their public titles and characters, nor to negotiate but with their equals, after an exchange of full powers.*

The correspondences of the cabinets of Madrid, London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, relative to this negotiation, are impenetrable secrets; and those of Versailles would

have been equally so to this hour, if my friend, Mr. Dana, had not been in Russia.

(The letters of the Marquis de Verac, of the 2d and 12th September, to Mr. Dana, here alluded to, as explaining the views of the French cabinet, are to be found imperfectly translated in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. viii. pp. 291-304. So striking is the coincidence of thought and tone between Mr. Adams's answer, and the answers of the Court of France afterwards given to the mediators, that for facility of comparison the latter are placed in the Appendix A to this volume.)

Mr. Adams further says:—

The letters of the Marquis de Verac to Mr. Dana are so perfectly concordant, paragraph by paragraph, and almost word for word, with the conversations of the Duke de la Vauguyon with me at the Hague many months before, that I have no doubt both were dictated at Versailles by the Count de Vergennes and his confidential secretary, M. de Rayneval. It is to be regretted that these conversations were not reduced to writing at the time. But the Duke endeavored to avoid a written correspondence on the subject, and I had very powerful reasons for not forcing him to it. I will not venture to say, that the advice to both was not wise. I leave it to the judgment of more learned and experienced statesmen. I did not see or feel the force of it at the time, and ventured to proceed in opposition to it. And my temerity was rewarded with success, and even beyond my own expectations.

Letters To The Boston Patriot, 1809.

[1] By the United States in congress assembled, 12 July, 1781,—

Resolved, That the commission and instructions for negotiating a treaty of commerce between these United States and Great Britain, given to the Honorable John Adams on the 29th day of September, 1779, be, and they are hereby revoked. *Extract from the Minutes.* Charles Thomson, *Secretary*.

[1] These papers are all found in the *Secret Journals of Congress*, vol. ii. pp. 434-449.

[1] See the *Secret Journals of Congress*, vol. ii. pp. 470, 472.

[1]

Instructions Of Congress To John Adams.

In Congress, 16 August, 1781.

On the report of the committee to whom was recommitted their report on the communications from the honorable, the minister of France, and who were instructed to report instructions to the Honorable John Adams, respecting a treaty of alliance with the United Provinces of the Netherlands,—

Resolved, That the minister plenipotentiary of these United States at the Court of Versailles be directed to inform his Most Christian Majesty that the tender of his endeavors to accomplish a coalition between the United Provinces of the Netherlands and these States has been received by congress as a fresh proof of his solicitude for their interests; that, previous to the communication of this, his Most Christian Majesty's friendly purpose, congress, impressed with the importance of such a connection, had confided to Mr. John Adams full powers to enter, on the part of the United States, into a treaty of amity and commerce with the United Provinces, with a special instruction to conform himself therein to the treaties subsisting between his Most Christian Majesty and the United States; that congress do, with pleasure, accept his Most Christian Majesty's interposition, and will transmit further powers to their minister at the Hague to form a treaty of alliance between his Most Christian Majesty, the United Provinces, and the United States, having for its object, and limited in its duration, to the present war with Great Britain; that he will be enjoined to confer, on all occasions, in the most confidential manner, with his Most Christian Majesty's minister at the Hague; and that provisional authority will also be sent to admit his Catholic Majesty as a party.

Resolved, That the minister plenipotentiary of these United States at the Hague be, and he is hereby 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.

That the indispensable conditions of the alliance be, that their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, shall expressly recognize the sovereignty and independence of the United States of America, absolute and unlimited, as well in matters of government as of commerce; that the war with Great Britain shall be made a common cause, each party exerting itself according to its discretion in the most effectual hostility against the common enemy; and that no party shall conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the whole first obtained; nor lay down their arms, until the sovereignty and independence of these United States shall be formally or tacitly assured by Great Britain in a treaty which shall terminate the war.

That the said minister be, and he hereby is further instructed to unite the two republics by no stipulations of offence, nor guarantee any possessions of the United Provinces; to inform himself, from the minister of these United States at the Court of Spain, of the progress of his negotiations at the said Court; and, if an alliance shall have been entered into between his Catholic Majesty and these United States, to invite his Catholic Majesty into the alliance herein intended; if no such alliance shall have been formed, to receive his Catholic Majesty, should he manifest a disposition to become a party to the alliance herein intended, according to the instructions given to the said minister at the Court of Spain.

That in all other matters, not repugnant to these instructions, the said minister at the Hague do use his best discretion.

Resolved, That the minister plenipotentiary of these United States at the Hague be, and he hereby is instructed to confer in the most confidential manner with his Most Christian Majesty's minister there.

Ordered, That the foregoing resolutions be communicated to our ministers at the Courts of Versailles and Madrid, that they may furnish every information and aid in their power to our minister at the Hague in the accomplishment of this business.

Resolved, That the following commission be issued to Mr. John Adams for the purpose aforesaid.

The United States, in congress assembled, to all who shall see these presents, send greeting:—

Whereas a union of the force of the several powers engaged in the war against Great Britain may have a happy tendency to bring the said war to a speedy and favorable issue; and it being the desire of these United States to form an alliance between them and the United Provinces of the Netherlands; know ye, therefore, that we, confiding in the integrity, prudence, and ability of the Hon. John Adams, have nominated, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute, and appoint him, the said John Adams, our minister plenipotentiary, giving him full powers, general and special, to act in that quality, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers by his Most Christian Majesty, and their High Mightinesses, the states-general of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, of and concerning a treaty of alliance between his Most Christian Majesty, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the United States of America; and whatever shall be so agreed and concluded for us and in our name, to sign, and thereupon to make such treaty, convention, and agreements as he shall judge conformable to the ends we have in view; hereby promising, in good faith, that we will accept, ratify, and execute whatever shall be agreed, concluded, and signed by him our said minister.

In witness whereof, we have caused these presents to be signed by our president and sealed with his seal.

Done at Philadelphia, this sixteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, and in the sixth year of our independence, by the United States in congress assembled.

Thomas M'Kean,*President*.

[1] This draft will be found materially to vary from that found in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*. There can be no doubt that this is the perfected one.

[1] The letter to Secretary Livingston of 19 April, containing the official documents of the several States of Holland, relative to the acknowledgment of Mr. Adams as minister, is omitted. It may be found in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, vol. vi. p. 330.

[1] The instructions are omitted.

[1] An engraving of this medal, now become quite rare, accompanies this volume.

[1] A mistake. See vol. iii. p. 299, note, for the correction.

[1] Upon these papers Flassan, who seems to have had access to all the records, makes the following singular comment:—

“On ne pouvait refuser la médiation des deux Cours Impériales avec plus de grâce et d’apparence de candeur; mais dans la réalité la Cour de Versailles ne voulait point faire la paix par leur entremise, moins par rapport aux intérêts des Américains, *qui n’était là que le motif ostensible*, que parce qu’elle croyait sa dignité blessée en terminant sous des auspices étrangers une guerre commencée avec tant d’éclat, et qu’elle se croyait capable de conduire par ses propres moyens à d’heureux résultats.”
Histoire de la Diplomatie Française, vol. 6. p. 300.