

Dear Sir,

Phila Jan: 8th 1800.

I find my self so fully employ'd here & my dimmers making it so troublesome to write, that I do much less of it than I would wish. Untill lately our proceedings afforded very little with communicating.

The debates yet has not gone beyond the bounds of decency, but some symptoms of bitterness has discover'd itself & I am afraid that I was out in my Calculation as to temper and moderation.

Last week Mr. Nicholas laid on the Table a resolution the spirit of which was to disband the troops raised for the last 12 Regiments & yesterday it was taken up & supported by a long speech from him, and among other reasons offer'd by ~~him~~ was that this Country was not able to ~~support~~ bear such an expense. This day has been spent on the same business when he endeavor'd to explain away the foregoing reason by saying that he meant we ought not to encounter the expense. I feel no doubt but he must lose the Question & I cannot believe that Congress will adopt a measure which at this juncture in time might have an unhappy influence on our Negotiation with France.

No person is fond of paying any legible tax's or improving such on others than my self, but surely it would be a strange kind of Policy to disband these troops or make any change in our present system of defensive measures untill we heard the event of that mission. The Conduct of that Nation to all others has been such as to show the necessity of being on our guard, for want of this caution other Nations have fallen, she has been profuse in her professions of friendship untill she has got them in such a deplorable state as to make the conquest easy & then she has not fail'd to strike.

Untill she saw the American Spirit roused, her language was "we will not hear you untill you do us that Justice which we have a right to expect," but now she says there may be some cause of complaint on both sides, send your Ministers to us, they shall be rec^d. and others appointed

by us who with them will amicably settle all our differences. May she does not
now complain of the National Frigate & the other vessels which we took, but
let us disarm ourselves & there no doubt but the old language would be resumed.
I am afraid that it may be unfortunate for our Country that this motion was made,
for it will soon reach France and she will again calculate on the party which
she supposes she has in this Country and especially is it to be lamented that the Conduct
of the Virginia ^{Assembly} such as to encourage her in such an opinion, but this may
prevent a treaty & it may do more it may induce her to send an Army into our
Country under an Idea that those whom she calls her party here would join it,
I will not however indulge a fear that many would join her Army, in Virginia
I am sure they would not (the blacks excepted) but surely our dissensions go to
encourage them in the attempt. And what is the real cause of these dissensions,
is it because a Law has passed to punish a man for publishing false & malicious
Calumny & thereby encourage insurrection, or is it because an intriguing foreigner
is to be sent out of our Country. This and the measures of defence taken against the
French, seems to take in all the Compliments of the Virginia Assembly, and in
my opinion it will be wise in the people seriously to consider before it is too late
whether complaints like these should be so far encouraged as to throw our
Country into a state of fermentation & thereby hazard our independence.

The Number of complaints of British Captives which I saw in the News papers before
I left Virginia induced me to fear that Great Britain was about to renew the Secours
of 1794 and that a war with her was to be apprehended & this appeared to be the
opinion of those with whom I conversed on the subject. On my arrival here I was
informed by Mr. Mettenry Secretary of War that only one complaint of this kind
had been laid before the Executive. This and coming from such Authority could
not be doubted by me. I was pleased to find my fears removed & considered it proper
that I should remove the fears of others by communicating to them the informa-
-tion which I had gotten on the subject & did write to several to that effect.
A few days ago I was informed that altho these complaints were few, there was
more than one. As I had determined to be perfectly correct in all my communications
I got some assurances, I called on Mr. Mettenry & gave him the information which
I had recd. He appeared to be perfectly satisfied that it was, as he had stated it, &

went with me to the Secretary of State where he said it would be confirmed
It turned out however otherwise, for on examination by Mr. Pickens there
appeared to be seven Cases of complaint where the papers were lodged in full, and
five without papers. But it may be proper to observe that he also informed
me there were many cases of Capture where the owners had carried them
to the Court of Admiralty in England & then had not been brought to his
Office, but that a great proportion of them had been made in illiterate

I have thought proper to give you this information in order
that you might be enabled to set it
that my Authority was such as to justify the Commissioners
meas

Yr
Lve

Jan. 12th

This letter was meant to go by the last Mail for Middleburg but being
too late I kept it up for the Post, I have now sent it by Cutbert
much you earlier. On Friday evening after three days long
was taken on Mr. Nicholas' Violation and as I expected passed
Majority 21, I expect the Majority will not vary much on
Questions. It is probable that the Recruiting business will
we hear from from our Envoys, it will be proper I think

if they succeed in making a treaty this Army is of course disbanded &
we shall save the bounty on all the recruits which would be made in the
mean time. If they fail in a treaty & it should be found necessary to fill
up their Regiments the business may again commence. The debates were
conducted with much temper & decorum by all except Mr. R - of Virginia, this
Young man was better & pray probably being himself into some disagreeable
business before he leaves this.

Jan 8. 1850

Free

Major Gen Powell

McClintock
Landon County

Gen Gen Powell

