

“It is unknown under what authority this enterprise has been projected, from whence the means of its support are derived, or what may be the intentions of its leaders, in relation to the Territory of Orleans. But it is believed that the maritime co-operation will depend on a British squadron from the West Indies under ostensible command of American masters.

“Active influential characters have been engaged in these transactions for six or eight months past, and their preparations are reported to be in such a state of maturity that it is expected the van will reach New Orleans in December, where the necessary organization and equipments are to be completed with promptitude, and it is proposed that the expedition should sail for Vera Cruz about the 1st of February.

“This information has recently reached the reporter through several channels so direct and confidential that he cannot doubt the facts set forth; and, therefore, he considers it his duty to make this representation to the executive by a courier extraordinary, to whom he has furnished five hundred dollars, being persuaded, should it prove unfounded, his precaution will be justified, and that otherwise his vigilance will be applauded.

“JA. WILKINSON.”

The second communication, marked “confidential,” reads:

“Natchitoches, October 21st, 1806.

“Sir:—Whatever may be the general impropriety, I persuade myself that on a subject irrelative to my official obligations, I shall be excused for addressing you directly and confidentially; but I have another and a more cogent reason for deviating, in this instance, from the ordinary course of correspondence.

“It is possible the momentous occasion of this letter, and the vital importance attached to it may have excited solitudes to beguile my understanding and delude my judgment; and in such case I trust the integrity of the intention will secure me your confidence, and this letter, with the communication it covers, may find their graves in your breast. For although my information appears too direct and circumstantial to be fictitious, yet the magnitude of the enterprise, the desperation of the plan, and the stupendous consequences with which it seems pregnant, stagger my belief, and excite doubts of the reality against the conviction of my senses; and it is for this reason I shall forbear to commit names, because it is my desire to avert a great public calamity, and not to mar a salutary design, or to injure any one undesignedly.

“I have never in my whole life found myself under such circumstances of perplexity and embarrassment as at present; for I am not only uninformed of the prime mover, and ultimate objects of this daring enterprise, but am ignorant of the foundation on which it rests, of the means by which it is to be sup-