

Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael and William Short, March 23, 1793, in Cypher , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

**DRAFT OF A LETTER TO THE U. S. COMMISSIONERS TO SPAIN¹ J. MSS.
(CARMICHAEL AND SHORT)**

1 Endorsed: “to be in cipher.”

Mar. 23. 1793.

Gentlemen, —It is intimated to us, in such a way as to attract our attention, that France means to send a strong force early this spring to offer independence to the Spanish American colonies, beginning with those on the Missisipi, & that she will not object to the receiving those on the East side into our confederation, Interesting considerations require that we should keep ourselves free to act in this case according to circumstances, & consequently that you should not, by any clause of treaty, bind us to guarantee any of the Spanish colonies against their own independence.¹ Nor indeed against any other nation. For when we thought we might guarantee Louisiana on their ceding the Floridas to us, we apprehended it would be seized by Great Britain who would thus completely encircle us with her colonies & fleets. This danger is now removed by the concert between Great Britain & Spain: And the times will soon enough give independence, & consequently free commerce to our neighbors, without our risking the involving ourselves in a war for them.²

1 Here the following passage is struck out: “But only against all that of Louisiana against those who hold Canada also, & that only in consideration of their ceding the Floridas to us. We are very anxious to hear from you.”

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2 At the bottom is written in Washington's writing: "The above meets the approbation of Go. Washington."