

**Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, June 19, 1806,
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Leicester Ford.**

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY J. MSS. (ALBERT GALLATIN.)

June 19, 1806.

I have had a consultation with Mr. Madison on the application of the British vessel of war for *stores*. We are both of opinion that if by this term be meant *sea-stores* only, or even *munitions de bouche*, or provisions generally, there can be no objection to their taking them, or indeed anything except *contraband of war*. But what should be deemed contraband of war in this case we are not agreed. He thinks that as the English deem *naval stores* to be contraband, and as such take them from our vessels at sea, we ought to retaliate their own definition on them. I think we ought to act on the opinion that they are not contraband; because by treaties between all the nations (I think) having treaties with another they are agreed not to be contraband; even England herself, with every nation but ours, makes them noncontraband, and the only treaty making them contraband (Jay's) is now expired. We ought then at once to rally with all the other nations on the ground that they are non-contraband; and if England treats them as contraband in our ships, instead of admitting it by retaliation, let us contest it on its true ground. Mr. M. thinks France might complain of this; but I think not, as we shall permit both nations equally to take naval stores; or at least such articles of them as may be used for peaceable as well as warlike purposes; this being the true line. This therefore becomes a question on which it will be advisable for us soon to come to a fixed determination. In the mean time, it will be better to

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leave the construction of the term to Mr. Gelston, by not defining the term to him, because any error of his will be easily got over. Affectionate salutations.