

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, March 16,
1794, from Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
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James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Philadelphia March 16th. 94

Dear Sir

Mr. Madisons propositions are yet depending & their fate uncertain. The probability is they will pass in the H. of R & be rejected in the Senate. The steady zeal with which any thing like a systematic operation on the British commerce or indeed any branch of her interest is opposed, you have long witnessed & can of course readily conceive upon the present occasion. The opposition as you have seen commenced in the most open declarations in favor of G. Britain, justifying her in all her enormities; but latterly it has assumed a new tone passing into the opposit extreme. Mr. Sedgwick introduced the other day a proposition for raising 15,000 provisioned troops founded upon the idea of providing for our defense aganst invasion, & the probability of such an event considering the unfriendly conduct of G.B. towards us for some time past. It is believed this was not only concluded by the leaders of the faction, but that all its members will support it. A change so extry. must have a serious object in view. At first I believed it was only to counteract by a new maneuver the propositions of Mr. M. shewing that the crisis was more urgent thn they cod. remedy & to remove at the same time the imposition their partiality for B. had created among their constituents but I am inclined to think that it contemplates

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some thing still further and is designed to lay the foundation of measures more destructive to the publick happiness. As they are to be raised in no given quarter & altho' they may be deemed a king of minute men in respect to their situation except in time of war, yet in every other aspect they will be regulars. As such they will be officered by the genl govt. as such paid, and most of the officers will consider it as the commencement of a military establishment, embark in it with that view & in their utmost efforts to convert it into one. The order of Cincinnati will be plac'd in the command of it, & being a part of the military establishment, one common chief will be at the head of the whole, as generalissimo, & immediately supercede Wayne. A particular character here is contemplated for this office, & two of our countrymen H. L. & C are spoken of as persons deserving high rank in it. The influence of such an institution upon the measures of the govt. in the patronage it gives &c your will readily conceive. Nor can it be doubted that if it shod. be so disposed as it leaders will be, it may even remodel & form it by the Engh. standard. It will likewise completely supercede the militia, who will afterwards become an useless & dormant body, scarcely retaining arms in their hands. Thus we see this faction in our councils seizing with avidity every incident that may possibly tend to promote the great object of a change in the government.

What course it will be proper for us to take in the present emergency becomes daily more difficult to decide. The aggressions of Britain

have increased to a height to silence the view of her friends, or nearly so. She regards no kind of form in the pursuit of our property, seizing whatever she can lay her hands on. Our vessels wh. remain are driven into harbour here & will I apprehend scarcely leave it again for the present. An embargo is proposed with the view of cutting off supplies from the Bh West Indias, necessary in and of her present operations there.

Urgent as the crisis is, the embarrassment increased still further from the consideration that not the least confidence can be reposed in our Executive council.. To embark in a war when the whole force of the country will be in the hands of the enemy of the publick liberty

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a few characters only excepted will be more dangerous than any now menac'd from B. and yet to take no step seems to evince a pusillanimity wh. will degrade us as a nation, & likewise suffer the ruin of our commerce & every other interest connected with it to take place.

Prior to the excln. of Gallatin several votes had been taken & carried in the Senate wh. indicated a change in the general measures of the body. A particular one calling for the correspondence of G. Morris was more especially felt in a certain quarter. At that period R. informed us that a certain person began to doubt the views & principles of a certain faction & to think more favorably of others. And the members of that faction began to express similar doubts of him. But from the time of his removal we have heard

nothing further of those doubts, on his part, and on things the antient spirit of confidence & affection has been revived. What will be the issue of our affrs. time can only develope, but certain it is that at present the prospect is most wretched & gloomy. I had like to have omitted mentioning that as a remedy it was talked of by the fiscal party, to send an Envoy Extry. to Engld. to complain of these injuries & seek redress, & that H. was spoken of for this mission. As the situation is in some measure a parallel one I shod think it more suitable to employ John Dickinson, who I believe drew the last petition of Congress to the King, in the course of the late revolution. With great respect & esteem I am dear Sir yr. affectionate friend & servt. Jas. Monroe

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress).