

Thomas Jefferson to John Moody, June 13, 1797, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JOHN MOODY J. MSS.

Philadelphia, June 13. 97.

Sir, —I might sooner have acknowledged the receipt of your favor of May 15. but I could not sooner have done it with anything satisfactory on the subject it concerned. The first opening of the session of Congress was rather inauspicious to those who consider war as among the greatest calamities to our country. Private conversation, public discussion, & thorough calculation, aided by the events of Europe, have nearly brought everyone to the same sentiment, not only to wish for a continuance of peace, but to let no false sense of honor lead us to take a threatening attitude, which to a nation prompt in its passions & flushed with victory might produce a blow from them. I rather believe that Congress will think it best to do little or nothing for the present to give fair play to the negotiation proposed, & in the meantime lie on their oars till their next meeting in November. Still however both English & French spoliations continue in a high degree. Perhaps the prospects in Europe may deaden the activity of the former, & call home all their resources, but I see nothing to check the depredations of the French but the natural effect they begin to produce of starving themselves by deterring us from venturing to sea with provisions. This is the best general view I am able to give you of the probable course of things for the summer so far as they may be interesting to commerce. The liberties which the presses take in mutilating whatever they can get hold of, obliges me to request every gentleman to whom I write to take care that nothing from me may be put within their power.