

Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, August 28, 1806, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

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

Monticello, August 28, 1806.

Dear Sir, —I returned hither the day before yesterday, and found your two letters of the 15th. I am much pleased with the expectation of Mr. Thompson's continuance in office in the Orleans land office. The appointment of Robert Sargent as second mate of the revenue cutter of Delaware is approved. On the subject of the negotiation for the Floridas, not one word further than is known to you has been received. You shall immediately know when anything is received. As to the proposition for employing the *Hornet* to transport money for certain merchants from a belligerent port to the United States, Mr. Miller seems to have viewed one side of the question only. The other would not withstand a moment's reflection. Every neutral vessel, armed or unarmed, transporting merchandise of money or other goods, is rightfully liable to search by the ships of war of a belligerent. Private vessels, even armed, are accordingly searched. The public armed ships are not, because no nation uses them but for the protection of private commerce, not for carrying it on. The honor of the nation is relied on that they are not so employed; and the nation who lend them to such purposes must give up their exemption from search. Should a British frigate, having intimation of the *Hornet's* cargo, demand and make a search, he would find on board the proofs that our public ships abuse their privilege and of course must be denied it. The license to four British vessels to sail to Lima proves that belligerents may, either by compact or force, conduct themselves towards one another as they please; but not that

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a neutral may, unless by express permission of the belligerent. If the money said to have been brought from Jamaica by Murray & Mullony was private property, the act was wrong and ought not to be repeated. There are other insuperable reasons in this case, but this one is sufficient. I must take a little more time to consider and answer as to the Western roads and Louisiana instructions. Affectionate salutations.