Massachusetts whom I see in his place, and my reluctance to vote for it, my meaning may have been misunderstood, & probably because it was not very correctly expressed. When we speak of the government of the U. States, what do we mean? Do we mean the President of the United States and his Secretaries, or the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, but more especially the Executive and Legislature? Now when I spoke of the disposition of the government of the U. S. I had particularly in my eye the manifestation of a spirit in the other House of Congress and in this also, which demonstrated most conclusively to my mind that notwithstanding our celebrated vote of "AND FRANCE"—bringing up France in the rear like a needless Alexandrine, like the latter part of a wounded snake, dragging its slow length along—that there did, under all this smoke of hostility to *both* belligerents, exist a cool deliberate disposition to go to war with one only—and I take motions made in the other branch of the Legislature and motions and speeches made on this floor and on record as a proof of such disposition. I infer the disposition of government not merely from declarations of the President of the United States himself, but from the semi-official oracular sayings of gentlemen supposed to be, and in fact known to be, in his confidence. I did hear, and I confess I heard it with some pleasure, that there existed a difference of opinion on this subject in the cabinet at the late session of Congress; and that the late President of the U. States, (God bless him for it!) on that question *was with* us, and would not be driven into a war with England—and that the leaders of the war party were deplorably chargrined and disappointed by it. So when I speak of the government of the United States, I wish not to be understood as alluding to any disposition which the late President of the United States had to go to war with Great Britain.—But, sir, I do think, after hearing the report of the late committee of foreign relations, declaring that there were but two alternatives, embargo or war, and seeing all the members but two vote to this effect; that war with one of these nations was submission and submission the most base and abject too to the other—and then hearing gentlemen declare they were for war with *one* of those nations—the conclusion is irresistible that they were for making that abject submission to the other nation; or that it was mere hollow hypocrisy for covering the design of going to war with one of those belligerents and succumbing to the other. I should be childish not to believe that there did exist a disposition such as the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Jackson) intimates did not exist in what he calls the government of the U. S.

One other subject I must touch before I sit down. The change in the relations of the U. S. is ascribed to the non intercourse law. Against that law I most certainly voted. If the merit of that change is to be ascribed to the non-intercourse law, be it so. I have no objection. But who were the advocates of that poor miserable measure? Our worthy chairman of the committee of Ways and Means (Mr. Eppes) pourtrayed in hideous colors the horrible features of that law; and another gentleman from the same state (Mr. Jackson) made motion after motion till a very late hour in the night to defeat the law, whilst I sat still voting in its favor until the last stage; and I voted against it eventually, not because I felt any opposition to the law on the grounds which those gentlemen did, but because I believed, if we had not got rid of the embargo on those terms, that we should have got rid of it on better. Mine was a sort of negative opposition to the law; theirs positive and unqualified—they said it was absolute disgrace. Now, therefore, sir, if the change in our foreign relations is to be ascribed to that law, I wish the advocates of it to rise up and assert their share in it in the presence of the House. The fact is, that nobody would advocate it; that though it was carried by a majority of two to one, those who finally voted for it condemned it, and all parties seemed ashamed of it; and that, prior to the late restoration of good understanding, all the high-toned men and high-toned presses in this country denounced the majority of this House for passing that law, as having utterly disgraced themselves. If, therefore, any credit be due to the non-intercourse law, I do not wish it to be run away with by those who were enemies to the measure. I voted against the law because I thought we could have got rid of the embargo on better terms. Are those to have the credit of it, who said, that if their opinion was followed, they were for immediate war and with G. Britain—but who, finding their friends could not be screwed up to the war pitch, had made a sort of compromise of their wishes and agreed to accept this stupid unmeaning non-intercourse law by way of appearing to be doing something? No, sir. Are those to have the merit of the re- [illegible] who moved to issue let- [illegible] and reprisal, [illegible] which, thank God, I had some share in defeating? Are those to have the merit of the good consequences which are alleged to have flowed from the non-intercourse law? Certainly not. I really think, sir, that if there be any merit any where, it belongs to those men who prevented a powerful and energetic party in this and the other House of Congress, a party too standing high in Executive confidence, from dragging the Executive against his will and this House and this nation into a war with G. Britain. It is those men who deserve the credit—and I for one, although a desultory kind of partizan, acting on my own impulse, claim my share; for if the great leaders could have been gratified according to their own shewing, they would have dragged this country into a war with G. Britain, which certainly would have closed the door to the present happy arrangement. Their war speeches were printed by subscription, bound up—and I venture to say, that some fifty years hence they will form a curiosity in literature—they stand on record against their authors. Now, to be sure, sir, those persons who undertook to stop their wild career were composed of heterogeneous materials—even those who have been designated (I know not why) as *ultra*-federalists, and *citra*-federalists, if any such there be, united on this vote. There were minority men, caucus men, protesters—in fact, sir, all parties, catholics, protestants, seceders and all, were united in the effort to prevent the leaders of both Houses from plunging the nation into a war with one power, and knuckling to the other—from rivetting the chains of French influence, perhaps of French alliance, upon us. Thank God that their designs were proclaimed to the nation, that the President did not give his consent, which would have made *us* kick the beam—Yes, sir, federalists, minority men, protesters and all, would have kicked the beam if it had ever emanated from the cabinet that *the President* was for war. It was as much as old Nestor, with trusty Sthenelus by his side, and all the train could do, to arrest these fiery hot-headed steeds who were hurrying the state-carriage down the precipice of French alliance. Suppose that we had given *them* the reins, where should we have been, and what doing, at this time, sir? We should have been here indeed—discussing abstract propositions, as they are called? No, sir, we should have been voting supplies; we should have gone in full committee of supply and of ways and means, and come out of it almost as soon as we did out of the committee on the state of the union, on the President's message—for our whole arcana of raising money appears to consist in borrowing—*loans, loans, loans* are the alpha and omega, the sum and substance of our system of political economy; and the worthy gentleman who presides at the head of the Committee of Ways and Means, would now have been calling for loans with all his might. We should have been marching troops to Canada, passing acts for the relief of sufferers in the bombardment of New-York, discussing whether the owners of slaves stolen from the sea-board should be compensated by the general government, or not—This is the situation in which we should have been in fact, instead of being in the situation in which we now are, the merit of which, if any there be, is not due to those who arrogate it to themselves, but to the late President of the United States and that majority, however discordant the materials composing it, who defeated the CABAL in the two Houses of Congress, that was determined to plunge us into a war—who restrained what have been called (and it is no nomenclature of mine) the *invisibles*—who curbed what has been called (and I am not the sponsor) the *family compact*.

Before I sit down, sir, permit me to state expressly and unequivocally, and I deem it more especially my duty to state it because the gentleman is not present, that in the course of that discussion and the votes on the subject, the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations (Mr. G. W. Campbell) did act, as I conceived, a consistent and open part; that after declaring that we could not go to war without going to a war with both France and England, that we could not go to war with one without the most abject submission to the other, he was not willing, if I understood him aright, to make that submission by going to war with that other. Other gentlemen, perhaps, to whom my attention was not so much called, not being placed in so conspicuous a station in the house as that gentleman, may have done the same. There was another gentleman in the House, in respect to whom I feel it incumbent on me to say something. He was one of those who have been marked and branded, and are suspected of being minority men—I allude particularly to a worthy friend of mine, now no longer a member of this House (Mr. D R. Williams) than whom I believe there is not a more honest man breathing, who was not only a minority man, but, worse than all that, "one of the protesters," and whose speech was very much relied [illegible] the best speech made in favor of the war party. Sir, you recollect that that gentleman declared his disposition, together with my friend who sits before me, of clinging to the embargo, and that was the great point of difference between us; and as to the gentleman who sits before me (Mr. Macon) it is only the third point on which I have had the misfortune to differ with him since I came into public life. When they therefore advocated this war-like doctrine, it was under the belief that nothing was left, if the embargo was raised, but submission or war—and they preferred the embargo to war, but they preferred war to submission. It was particularly the doctrine of the gentleman from South-Carolina, who is no longer a member of this House, to whom these observations, loose and unsatisfactory as they may be, are more especially applied. But there is no other point of contact (as far as within my knowledge) but his partiality to the embargo, and his disposition to go to war if it were raised, between him and those who (thank God!) defeated the war-purposes.

On the subject of a desire to excite a war-spirit, I think it necessary to state that motions and speeches were not only made with that tendency, but with that avowed disposition in both House of Congress—and I repeat it: to whatever source the present situation of the country is to be ascribed, it is not to those who were termed thorough-going men in this House in the last Congress, nor to those of the same description in the Senate—tho' they have been checked, to be sure, by an opposition of the strangest kind; but it is unimportant of what materials it was composed, since it had the effect of saving the nation from war with one of the belligerents, and of producing the present state of things, which gentlemen themselves tell us was the consequence of our having avoided war.

Mr. JOHNSON said, that at this extra session he had fondly hoped he should have it his power to be a silent member; but he regretted that duty compelled him to address the Speaker at this late hour of the day, when all must be fatigued, and upon a subject that had involved a discussion unpleasant, unprofitable and even mischievous. The Executive in his communication to us (said Mr. J) has avoided detail upon the subject of the expected negociation in the late settlement of our differences, and we should avoid it as much as possible. But this motion has been introduced for the laudable purpose of discovering the difference of opinion in this place upon the late transactions respecting our foreign relations with G. Britain, by the settlement of the affair of the Chesapeake, and the renewal of commercial intercourse. The gentleman from Virginia believes there are men in this House who disapprove the conduct of the President. I disbelieve it, because I have no evidence of it. I have heard in this body and out of doors universal approbation. The prospect of peace has been hailed as a political jubilee. No difference does exist upon the subject. But, sir, there is a diversity of sentiment or expectation how the promised negociation with Great Britain will ultimate. Some are more, and others less sanguine. And when we consult the volume of experience, and recollect the many important subjects of settlement, it is not wonderful if we should have our fears and our hopes on the subject in different degrees. Let us hope for good, but be prepared for evil, that a reverse of the present prospect may not change excessive joy into deep mourning.

The mover of this resolution has attempted to draw a line of distinction between the late and the present administration, in respect to our foreign relations. The two administrations, so far as Mr. Madison has progressed, are the same in principle, and the same in conduct, animated by the same spirit of moderation, firmness and justice towards other nations. But the mover of this motion says the propositions under the two administrations were different, and that the late adjustment is more advantageous to G. Britain. The propositions made by Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison were the same. In the first instance they were rejected by Mr Canning with a sneering contempt, unworthy a great man. The proposition in each case was this: Rescind your orders in council, and we will suspend the laws interdicting the commercial intercourse between the two nations. Upon what principle did Mr. Canning reject this just offer? Because Bonaparte had blockaded the continent, and he was determined that the present and future generations should see that Great Britain would never relinquish her orders in council until the policy of Bonaparte should be abandoned; that the honor and the power of the British government rested in some good degree upon it. But now the same propositions have been accepted, altho' the continent is more completely blockaked than when the same proposition had been rejected—for even Spain and Portugal, upon which British hopes rested, are now closed. Those who opposed the wise measures of our government may say, to shield themselves, that we have yielded. We have not yielded. Great Britain has abandoned her unjust system of restriction upon our commerce; and the United States stand redeemed from any charge of inconsistency. It will be a difficult task to convince the enlighted citizens of the United States that there has been a difference in the conduct of the present and the late illustrious President. So far from the shadow of proof that such a difference does exist, the very act of the present chief magistrate grew out of the law of Congress passed under Mr. Jefferson's administration. This law gave certain powers and imposed certain duties to be exercised and performed upon certain and defined contingences. Upon the happening of these contingences, viz. the rescinding the orders in council, &c. Mr. Madison promptly performed his duty, by suspending our non-intercourse system as to Great Britain, for the renewal of our commerce. Who is so sagacious in the powers of discrimination as to draw a line of distinction, when the conduct of the administrations are so united and identified, that the act of one grew out of the law of the other? But the measures of our government which have produced such happy results are likely to be popular; and it is necessary for those who tho't we took too high ground to secure a retreat in their defeat, by endeavoring to draw this nince distinction.

But it is said that the late adjustment is more advantageous to Great-Britain than the former proposal by us, because our waters are not interdicted to British armed vessels, and because French armed vessels are prohibited. Sir, the interdict which excludes British and French armed vessels still remains in full force and virtue. It has not been taken off as to British armed vessels. The proclamation of the President has only made the trade renewable on the 10th of June. He had no controul over the interdict; nor did the British minister make it a sine qua non, as did Mr. Rose, in settling the affair of the Chesapeake. Here again we have remained firm, and Great Britain has yielded the improper ground which she had previously taken. It is said that French armed vessels are now excluded our waters, and this was not the case when former propositions were made to the British ministry; and that we are now in the situation, as it respects France, that Great Britain wished. Admit all this, and what is the result? That France had done nothing to induce an interdict of her armed vessels when the attack was made on the Chesapeake, which was the principal, though not the only event which produced the proclamation of interdict against Great Britain—and certainly no American would wish to take hostile measures against a nation without previous aggression. After this proclamation of interdict, Bonaparte executed his Berlin decree, issued his Milan decree, burnt our vessels upon the high seas, interrupted our commerce in the Mediterranean and the channel. Congress convened, and, in consequence of these aggressions, we passed a law extending the interdict to French and English armed vessels. Governed by the same policy, we proceeded against both nations as our injuries multiplied, and not because either nation required it against the other. The measures of this government have been opposed in this House because it seemed to some that their effects would be more injurious to Great Britain than France. I presume gentlemen will now be satisfied of the strict line of neutral conduct which has characterised the American people towards the two rival powers of Europe; or that our measures were equally hostile as it respected both nations, since it has been asserted even in the Parliament of Great Britain. It has not only been proclaimed in the Parliament, but by the government of Great Britain, through their minister at this place, in the late negociations. This is a triumph to good principles.

It is a painful subject, sir, but I must speak of the conduct of the opposition, since they modestly assume to themselves the credit of saving this nation from impending calamity. It is novil, though not surprising, (for nothing now is to be wondered at) that those who vote against measures should claim the credit of the good arising from them, while those who supported these measures only should bear bear the blame, and be resonsible for all the evils which naturally result from the best measures. This doctrine once established will make a new code of politics. Those who oppose measures are entitled to all the good resulting from them; and those who voted for them, are to be responsible to the nation for all the evil they produce. This claim is too absurd and ridiculous to need a comment. But let us examine the conduct connected with the politics of the opposition.—We were advised to repeal the partial non-importation law; to rescind the proclamation of interdict against British armed vessels; to repeal the embargo; and, in short, to retrace our steps and undo every thing we had done to resist the aggressions of Great Britain. In addition to this, we were told by the opposition that Great Britain was fighting for existence; that in fact she was fighting our battles; that she would never yield to our restrictive system; that we had no just cause of complaint against Great Britain; that this government were in the wrong; that we should unfurl the republican banners against the Imperial standard, and much more such language. What humiliation do we find here! The mind of every member of the American community should sicken at the recital. What terms of accommodation would this course have produced? I will not condescend to conjecture them.

But now, sir, of the particular course recommended by the mover of this resolution (Mr. Randolph)——What was his policy? —At one particular period he recommended giving aid to the Spanish patriots against Bonaparte, and fighting Great Britain by taking the Canadas. But when the gentleman matured his system and reduced it to writing, he was for arming your merchant vessels. This was war with our hands tied, the most ineffectual war. Will any gentleman deny that this would have produced war of the most disastrous kind if Great Britain had not yielded? And still that gentleman claims part of the credit in keeping this nation out of war. The republicans did not want war, they preferred the embargo. But they preferred war to submission, when they discovered that the embargo could not be continued, owing to the clamor and infamous conduct of those who violated it. I shall always think war a blessing compared with submission to be taxed by a foreign government. It was that manly stand, it was that warlike attitude which produced the happy result which all are willing to approbate. When the British ministry sent their acceptance to our propositions, did they know of the partial repeal? They did not. They had before them the report of the committee, which declared that we would not submit to foreign outrage. They had before them the proposition from the Secretary of War for raising 50,000 volunteers. They had before them the speeches made upon the extra meeting of Congress, which declared our object to be justice or war.

I have not only voted my own sentiments but the sentiments of my native state upon the measures which have produced so much good to this nation. But these measures have been pronounced by many in this House as ruinous and destructive, and by those too who are now anxious to approbate the result of those measures.

Sir, I am happy to find this a day of reformation, I wish to see it continue. When I voted to make an appropriation for the purchase of supplies after the attack on the Chesapeake I was wrong; when I voted for the embargo I was wrong; when I voted for 6000 regulars to defend Orleans and our frontier settlements against hostile savages, and when British armed vessels hovered on our coast in hostile array, I was wrong; when I voted to give power to the President to suspend the embargo, if Great Britain would rescind her orders in council, I was wrong. The first session ended & a second commenced, and the same word continually assailed my ear. When I voted to enforce the embargo, I was wrong; when I voted for letters of marque and reprisal, I was wrong; and what was most extraordinary with those who denounced these measures, every measure was the very worst measure. And now, sir, we are rejoicing in the happy change produced by these very measures—and rejoicing too, when we had reason to expect, from the predictions of gentlemen, that before this period another Volney might have seated himself upon the ruins of this splendid building, and mourned the downfall of the Great Republic! We were told in the same stile that the republican administration had departed from whig principles; but no time could be agreed upon by gentlemen on which this departure good good principles took place. Some gentlemen declared that republicans quit the true faith in 1805–6, others that it was 1807–8. But the greatest number dated this departure from the time Mr. Jefferson was inducted into office. I have reflected on this subject and this is my conclusion:—That the same principles have governed the whole of Mr. Jefferson's administration—and that if there has been a departure from whig principles it commenced in 1801. Let the nation then judge what administration they prefer, the federal or republican. The policy of Mr. Jefferson has been peace and economy. The principles of many who oppose this policy, would involve us in external war, in search after that phantom the balance of power, which has desolated Europe without any practical good. Neutrality has been the favorite theme of republicans; and the balance has been held with a steady hand. When we are driven into war it must be for our own wrongs; and when we make peace, we must have no power to consult, no common cause, no alliance. Separated as we are from the wars of Europe it would be madness to fi[illegible] France because England is weak; [illegible]