

Paris August 17 1795

Sir,

I have not been honoured with any communication from you since that of the 2nd of May last, though doubtless others are on their way and which I shall soon receive.

“Within a few days past Philadelphia papers were received here as late as the 3rd of July containing M^f Jay’s treaty, together with such proceedings of the Senate upon it as were then published. As the gazettes are circulating every where I conclude some of them are in possession of the committee of public safety, and that the details they contain will likewise soon find their way into the papers of this City: indeed it is said they are already published at Havre. As yet I have heard nothing from the committee upon the subject of this treaty, nor do I expect to hear any thing from that body upon it, let the impression be what it may, otherwise than in reply to such communication as I shall make in regard to that transaction, and in respect to¹ which it may be proper to add that I shall take no step without your particular instruction. For as I presume that some ulterior plan is or will be adopted in regard to that treaty and upon which, in its relation to this republic my conduct will be particularly marked out, so I deem it my indispensable duty to avoid in the interim any the slightest compromitment either of you or myself upon that subject. I mention this that you may distinctly know how completely the final result of this business, so as far as it depends upon me is, as indeed it ought to be, under your controul.

As I have had no communication with this government upon the subject of this treaty, since its contents were known, it is of course impossible for me to say, what the impression it has made is. It is as easy for you, with the lights you have, to form a correct opinion upon that point, in Philadelphia, as for me to do it here. One circumstance however I think proper to bring to your view: soon after the British government had recommenced the seizure of our vessels destined for the ports of France, it was notified to the committee by a secret agent of this government who had just returned from England, that he had been advised there through a channel to be relied on, that the English administration had said, they knew that measure would not be offensive to our government, or in other words that it was a case provided for between the two governments. I treated the communication with contempt and was happy to hear that it was considered nearly in the same light by the committee itself. But since the arrival of the treaty I have² understood that in connection with that report, the attention of many has been drawn with some degree of solicitude to the contents of the second paragraph of the 18th article, and who say that as that article leaves the law of nations unsettled and provides payment for seizures in case of contraband, and of course for those which are not contraband, whereby the complaints of our citizens are prevented and the British construction by implication countenanced this republic has a right to complain of it. I mention this objection to you that you may be aware of it, in case it should ever be brought forward on this or your side of the water: and that it will be brought

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forward I think probably if those seizures are not noticed in some very pointed manner. 'Tis painful to me to give you a detail of this kind, but being an interesting fact, I do not see with what propriety it can be withheld.

It is said that constitution will be complete in the course of a few days and of which I will immediately afterwards forward you a copy. The discussion upon this very important subject has been conducted with great temper, and the harmony of opinion throughout greater than could have been expected.

The report of Pichegru having crossed the Rhine as heretofore intimated was without foundation: the height of the water occasioned by continual rains has hitherto prevented it: 'tis however said he has orders to cross it and is now making the necessary movements for that purpose. The enemy are on the opposite side watchful of his measures: but from his skill, the³ strength and enterprise of his army, success is counted on as certain.

No indication presents itself of an approaching peace between England and France, or even of a negotiation for it. The only indication is to be found in an English ministerial paper, which speaks of the Convention in very respectful terms and of peace as a desirable object. 'Tis probable when a negotiation commences it will be short: for as I presume the overture will come from England so it is equally presumable that none will be made 'till her administration is disposed to accede to the terms of France. This I presume are in some measure known to England, at least I suspect so, a consideration which I particularly suggest at present with a view of turning your attention to those symptoms which may be discoverable on the other side of the channel, as date by which you may estimate either remote or immediate approaches towards this important event.

I have the honor to be, with great respect and esteem, Sir, your very obedient and humble servant.

Ja^s Monroe.