

Paris 4th July 1795

Sir,

About three or four weeks past one of our vessels which touched at Havre from England was taken in charge by the government and the Captain and passengers confined, upon a suspicion they had brought false assignats with them, with a view of circulating them through the country and thereby subserving the views of its enemies: complete search was made upon the vessel but no assignats were found. As I knew that the suspicion which was entertained, ought not to be extended to three young men who were passengers, I immediately applied to the commissary of foreign relations for their discharge, and obtained an order for it, though fortunately they were released by the Municipality at Havre before it reached them. But as I was not acquainted with the character of the Captain¹ or any others belonging to the vessel, and was aware of the right the government had to protect itself from injuries of every kind and from every quarter and of course to search the vessel, and as I also hoped in case the suspicion proved to be groundless it would prevent the like in future, and especially upon frivolous suggestions, I did not choose in that stage to apply likewise in their behalf. After the search was made, and the government satisfied it had suspected without cause, the Captain was put at liberty and the vessel offered back to him. But being mortified in having been suspected, and as his vessel and cargo were somewhat injured by the search and neglect which ensued his arrestation, he seemed redispersed rather to throw the whole upon the government and demand indemnity for it, and with which view he lately came here to confer with me. I advised him to gather up what he could of his own property and pursue his voyage according to the original destination, limiting his claim merely to the damage sustained and leaving that to be pursued by the consul here under my direction. As yet he waits his protest and other documents from Havre, reserving to himself the liberty of acting after their receipt as he pleases, and according as the light of preceding examples of the like kind, and whose details he will in the interim acquire, may admonish him will be most for his interest. I shall endeavour to obtain justice for him, upon sound principles, and have only now mentioned the case that you may know such a one has happened, and what the circumstances of it are.

The jealousy which is entertained by this government² of the commerce carried on by our countrymen between the ports of this republic and those of England has latterly shewn itself in a more unpleasant form than heretofore and I am fearful it will not yet produce some more disagreeable effect. A M^r Eldred was lately apprehended at Marseilles and sent here under guard upon a charge of having given intelligence to the British of some movement in the French fleet. Upon inquiry I found he had my passport granted too upon the most substantial documents proving him to be an American citizen; but I likewise found that in truth he was not an American citizen, for although born in America yet he was not there in the course of our revolution but in England, nor had he been there since. From what I hear of him, he is not a person of mischievous

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disposition nor one who would be apt to commit the offence charged upon him, but yet I do not see how I can officially interfere in his behalf, for when once a principle is departed from, it ceases to be a principle.

More latterly I was requested by the commissary of foreign affairs to prohibit our consuls from granting passports, which was immediately done. I was afterwards requested by him to furnish a list of the Americans actually in Paris, and to render a like list every decade of those who should in the interim arrive, and which was promised and will be punctually executed. I herewith send you a copy of my instructions to the Consuls and correspondence with the commissary on this subject.

You will readily perceive that this jealousy, proceeds from the circumstance that many of those who are actually engaged in this trade are of that description of persons, who having latterly become citizens³ of the United States are likewise subjects of England: nor can you be surprised when that circumstance is considered without any imputation on the character of the parties, that this jealousy should exist: they are English themselves, their connections are so, and in England their profits will ultimately settle. It is natural that a communication of this kind should draw after it suspicion, or rather it would be unnatural if it did not produce that effect. To the people of America this is an evil of serious import: for by it, it is obvious that the confidence which is due to our national character is daily diminished. Nor can the mortification which is incident to such a situation be otherwise than heightened, when it is considered that we are most a prey to this evil, at the moment when the government to which these persons belong insults our national dignity and tramples our rights. Be assured I shall do every thing in my power to guard us against injuries of this kind, by excluding all who are not, and upon the principles agreed, upon my first arrival here, strictly entitled to our protection; and by which line of conduct I hope I shall succeed, in a great measure if not altogether, in the accomplishment of an object so important to our welfare.

As connected with this subject permit me to mention another which I deem equally important and more remediable. We have at Hamburgh as Consul for the United States a M^r Parish and who has held that office for some years past. This gentleman is an English subject, and was, as I am assured, never in America. All the Americans⁴ who have been at Hamburgh and who come here united in representing him (comparatively with England) as unfriendly to America; as absolutely unfriendly to France and the French revolution, and which traits are said to be often discernable in his public conduct. It is affirmed that he is likewise an agent of England and that in particular the Prussian subsidy passed through his hands., Upon these facts you may rely and especially the latter (into which I have made more pointed inquiry) for they are agreed in by all the Americans, and I am sure have been stated to me by at least 50. Without observing how wide a door is here opened for England to benefit herself and injure France through us, even whilst its use is confined to that range, which without any imputation on the

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morality of this gentleman, national prejudice alone would allow, there are other considerations which at the present moment make this appointment worthy your attention. Since the commencement of the present war a great proportion of the commerce of the North and from every quarter of the world has centered at Hamburg and will probably continue to center there, till its close, from whence it issues again in different directions France, Holland, England, etc. etc: that this commerce is capable of a serious impression by the public agents of different countries there, and especially by those of the neutral powers, whose connection is sought with great avidity by the subjects of the powers at war, cannot be questioned: nor can it be questioned when it is considered who this gentleman is, that the impression which he made upon it, is a British and not an American one. In addition to which it may be observed that as he resides in the dominions⁵ of an independent power and where we have no Minister, it is in some measure his duty to grant passports to American travellers elsewhere. This circumstance therefore and especially at the present moment increases the importance and delicacy of the trust. In justice however to this gentleman, I must add, that I do not know any instance in which he has betrayed in this respect, and that in others I only apply to him general principles and bring to your view the complaints of our countrymen. Personally I never saw or had any communication with him. There are at present at Hamburg several Americans worthy of this trust among whom are Joel Barlow and William S^t John son of him who by his writings is well known; but in truth so profitable is the post that there are but few American merchants in Europe who would not accept it. In general permit me to suggest for your consideration when ever a vacancy takes place, or whenever it becomes necessary to supersede an existing Consul, whether it would not be advisable to advertise the fact that candidates might offer for the post; for sure I am that it would rarely happen that suitable candidates, American citizens did not offer. In Europe such may generally be found.

Since my last the French have sustained a loss at sea of three ships, which arose partly from accident not to be guarded against and partly from misconduct. It occasioned the immediate dismissal of Dalbarade Minister of Marine, who gave way to a successor believed to be better qualified for the post. The British have likewise landed on the French coast near Mantes about 6,000 emigrants and who being joined perhaps with some of their own troops, and since by some fanatic priests are⁶ said to make up a force of about 10,000 men. It is supposed the British government might hope, that by putting these people in the neighbourhood of the Couans or Vendéans, they might be encouraging a rebellion there, combine a force capable of making some impression: but a wish to rid themselves of these unfortunate men whose support became daily more burdensome is believed to be the more influential motive. All parties united here in the sentiment that they are sacrificed, and consider the act of landing them as an act of barbarity excelled only by those which were formerly perpetrated in the same neighbourhood by the infatuated Carrier.

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It is believed that a treaty has taken place between England and Russia in which the former has stipulate not to take the side of Polan against the latter, in consideration whereof Russia is to furnish England a certain number of ships during the residue of the war. It is likewise believed that England has announced to Spain that in case the latter makes peace with France she will commence immediate hostilities upon her. This may possibly keep Spain in a state of suspence sometime longer. On the other hand it is obvious that the connection between France and Holland, Denmark and Sweden becomes daily stronger, whilst Austria paralyzed by the peace and movements of Prussia, which threaten an entire change in the Germanic system, and such an arrangement of its parts as will give an entire preponderance to Prussia scarcely knows what part to take, and whether to make peace or continue the war: for the pressure of France upon the Empire and which is the consequence of it, tends to favour the views of Prussia, by throwing the members of⁷ the Empire into her arms, with a view of securing their peace with France through the intercession of Prussia.

In conversation a few days past with Baron Stahl, Ambassador from Sweden, he informed me of a communication formerly made by the Court of Sweden to M^r Pinckney at London for our government and upon which no answer was given although it was much wished. I desired his communication in writing that I might forward it to you and which was accordingly given and is herewith transmitted. I have no doubt that whatever he says to me is known to the committee, as I was informed by some of its members in the beginning of the winter, and before the Baron arrived that such an application had been made to us from that quarter. It belongs to me only to forward to you this paper, and which I do not doubting that I shall be instructed relative therto in the most suitable manner.

Col^o Humphreys has just arrived and upon due consideration I presented last night a paper to the committee opening as far as was expedient the object of his visit, and upon which subject generally I shall be more full in my next when I hope to be possessed of answer to it.

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

Ja^s Monroe.