WASHINGTON CITY, December 2, 1806.

THIS DAY, at 12 o'Clock, the PRESIDENT *of the United States communicated, by* Mr. Coles, *his Secretary, the following* MESSAGE *to both Houses of Congress.*

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

IT would have given me, fellow Citizens, great satisfaction to announce, in the moment of your meeting, that the difficulties in our foreign relations, existing at the time of your last separation, had been amicably and justly terminated. I lost no time in taking those measures which were most likely to bring them to such a termination, by special missions, charged with such powers and instructions as, in the event of failure, could leave no imputation on either our moderation or forbearance. The delays, which have since taken place in our negotiations with the British Government, appear to have occasioned from causes which do not forbid the expectation that, during the course of the session, I may be enabled to lay before you their final issue. What will be that of the negotiations for settling our differences with Spain, existing when I had the pleasure, at the date of the last dispatches, enables us to pronounce. On the western side of the Mississippi she advanced in considerable force, and took post at the settlement of Bayou Pierre, on the Red river. This village was originally settled by France, was held by her as long as she held Louisiana, and was delivered to Spain only as a part of Louisiana. Being small, insulated, and distant, it was not observed at the moment of re-delivery to France and the United States, but continued a guard of half a dozen men, which had been stationed there. A proposition however having been lately made by our commander in chief, to assume the Sabine river as a temporary line of separation between the contending forces, until the issue of our negotiations shall be known, this has been referred by the Spanish commandant to his superior, and in the mean time he has withdrawn his force to the western side of the Sabine river. The correspondence on this subject, now communicated, will exhibit more particularly the present state of things in that quarter.

The nature of that country requires indispensably that an unusual proportion of the force employed in it should be cavalry, or mounted infantry. In order therefore that the commanding officer might be enabled to act with effect, I had authorised him to call on the Governors of Orleans and Mississippi, for a corps of five hundred volunteer cavalry. The temporary arrangement has proposed any perilous resort to this unnecessary. But I inform you with great pleasure, of the promptitude with which the inhabitants of those territories have tendered their services in defence of their country. It has done honour to themselves, and shed lustre on the confidence of their fellow citizens in every part of the Union, and must strengthen the general determination to protect them efficaciously under all circumstances which may occur.

Having received information that in another part of the United States a great number of private individuals were combining together, arming and organising themselves, contrary to law, to carry on a military expedition against the territories of Spain, I thought it necessary, by proclamation, as well as by special orders, to enjoin the utmost care in preventing and suppressing this enterprize, for seizing the vessels, arms, and other means provided for it, and for arresting and bringing to justice its authors and abettors. It was due to that good faith which ought ever to be the rule of action in public, as well as in private transactions; it was due to good order, and regular government, that, while the public force was acting strictly on the defensive, and merely to protect our citizens from aggression, the criminal attempts of private individuals to decide, on their country, the question of peace or war, by commencing active, and unauthorized hostilities, should be promptly and efficaciously suppressed.

Whether it will be necessary to enlarge our regular force, will depend on the result of our negotiations with Spain. But as it is uncertain when that result will be known, the provisional measures requisite for that, and to meet any pressure intervening in that quarter, will be a subject for your early consideration.

The possession of both banks of the Mississippi reducing to a single point the defence of that river, its waters, and the country adjacent, it becomes highly necessary to provide, for that point, a more adequate security. Some position above its mouth, commanding the passage of the river, should be rendered sufficiently strong to cover the armed vessels which may be stationed there for defence; and, in conjunction with them, to present an insuperable obstacle to any force, attempting to pass. The approaches to the city of New Orleans from the eastern quarter also, will require to be examined, and more effectually guarded. For the internal support of the country, the encouragement of a strong settlement on the western side of the Mississippi, within reach of New Orleans, will be worthy the consideration of the Legislature.

The gun-boats, authorised by an act of the last session, are so advanced, that they will be ready for service in the ensuing spring. Circumstances permitted us to allow the time necessary for their more solid construction. As a much larger number will still be wanting to place our sea-port towns and waters in that state of defence to which we are competent, and they entitled, a similar appropriation for a further number of them is recommended for the ensuing year.

A further appropriation will also be necessary for repairing fortifications already established, and the erection of such other works as may have real effect in obstructing the approach of an enemy to our sea-port towns, or their remaining before them.

In a country whose constitution is derived from the will of the people, directly expressed by their free suffrages, where the principal executive functionaries, and those of the legislature, are renewed by them at short periods, where, under the character of jurors, they exercise in person the greatest portion of the judicial powers, where the laws are consequently so formed and administered as to bear with equal weight and favor on all, restraining no man in the pursuits of honest industry, and securing to every one the property which they acquire, it would not be imagined that any safeguards could be needed against insurrection, or enterprize, on the public peace or authority. The laws, however, aware that these should not be trusted to moral restraints only, have wisely provided for the punishment of their crimes when committed. But would it not be salutary to give also the means of preventing their commission? Where an enterprize is meditated by private individuals, against a foreign nation, in amity with the United States, powers of prevention, to a certain extent, are given by the laws. Would they not be as reasonable, and useful, where the enterprize preparing is against the United States?—While adverting to this branch of law, it is proper to observe that in enterprizes meditated against foreign nations, the ordinary process of binding to the observance of the peace and good behaviour, could it be extended to acts to be done out of the jurisdiction of the United States, would be effectual in some cases where the offender is able to keep out of sight every indication of his purpose which could draw on him the exercise of the powers now given by law.

The states on the coast of Barbary seem generally disposed at present to respect our peace and friendship. With Tunis alone, some uncertainty remains. Persuaded that it is our interest to maintain our peace, with them on equal terms or not at all, I propose to send, in due time, a reinforcement into the Mediterranean; unless previous information shall shew it to be unnecessary.

We continue to receive proofs of the growing attachment of our Indian neighbors, and of their disposition to place all their interests under the patronage of the United States. These dispositions are inspired by their confidence in our justice, and in the sincere concern we feel for their welfare. And as long as we disavow those high and honorable functions with the integrity and good faith which alone can entitle us to their continuance, we may expect to reap the just reward in their peace and friendship.

The expedition of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, for exploring the river Missouri, and the best communication from that to the Pacific Ocean, has had all the success which could have been expected. They have reached the Missouri, early to its source, descended the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean, ascertained with accuracy the geography of that interesting communication across our continent, learnt the character of the country, of its commercial inhabitants, and have given our justice to say that Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, and their brave companions, have, by this arduous service, deserved well of their country.

The attempt to explore the Red River, under the direction of Mr. Freeman, though accompanied with a zeal and prudence meriting entire approbation, has not been equally successful. After proceeding up it about six hundred miles, nearly as far as the French settlements had extended, while the country was in their possession, our geographers were obliged to return without completing their work.

Very useful additions have also been made to our knowledge of the Mississippi, by Lieutenant Pike, who has ascended it to its source, and whose journal and map, giving the details of his journey, will shortly be ready for communication to both Houses of Congress. Those of Messrs. Lewis, Clark and Freeman, will require further time to be digested and prepared. These important surveys, in addition to those before possessed, furnish materials for commencing an accurate map of the Mississippi and its western waters. Some principal rivers however remain still to be explored, towards which the authorisation of Congress, by moderate appropriations, will be requisite.

I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights, which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe. Although from the date of the pass can take prohibitory effect till the first day of the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day.

The receipts at the Treasury, during the year ending on the 30th day of September last, have amounted to near fifteen millions of dollars; which have enabled us, after meeting the current demands, to pay nine millions seven hundred thousand dollars of the American claims, in part of the price of Louisiana; to pay, of the funded debt, upwards of three millions of principal, and nearly four of interest, and, in addition, to reimburse, in the course of the present month, near two millions of five and an half per cents. These payments and reimbursements of the funded debt, with those which had been made in the four years and an half preceding, will, at the close of the present year, have extinguished upwards of twenty-three millions of principal.

The duties composing the Mediterranean fund will cease, by law, at the end of the present session. Considering, however, that they are levied chiefly on luxuries, and that we have an impost on salt, a necessary of life, the free use of which otherwise is so important, I recommend to your consideration the suppression of the duties on salt, and the continuation of the Mediterranean fund, instead thereof, for a short time, after which that also will become unnecessary for any purpose now within contemplation.

When both of these branches of revenue shall, in this way, be relinquished, there will yet be long be an accumulation of monies in the treasury beyond the institutions and purposes to which we are pledged by contract to pay. They cannot then, without a modification, which will require the sanction of the legislature, be applied to the extinguishment of this debt and the completest liberation of our revenues, that most desirable of all objects. Yet, if our peace continues, will they be wanting for any other public purpose. They will accumulate, then, beyond all precedent, to what other objects shall these surpluses be appropriated, but the whole surplus of impost after the entire discharge of the public debt, and carrying into execution such measures of peace as may call for them? Shall we oppress the impost, and give that advantage to foreign manufactures, which our laws give to the arts of more general and necessary use, the suppression, in due season, of duties levied on the first mass of the articles on which impost is paid, are foreign luxuries purchased by persons by whom are rich enough to afford themselves the use of them. Their partition would certainly prefer inconsiderable, but application to the great purposes of the public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement, as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional appropriations of federal powers. By these operations, new channels of communication will be opened between the states; the lines of separation will disappear, their interests will be more and more identified, and their union rendered indissoluble. Education is here placed among the articles of public care, for it would be proposed to take it out of ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages it so much better in general, by which it is equal: not a power is institution can alone supply these sciences, which though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle; all the parts of which, when any are deficient, impair the whole, and some of them to its preservation. The subject is now proposed for the consideration of Congress, because, if approved by the time the state Legislatures shall have deliberated on the question of the federal amendments, and the laws shall be passed, and other arrangements made for its execution, the surplus of our revenues will be in hand, and without employment. I suppose the amendment of the constitution, by means of the state legislatures, to be the objects now recommended are not among those contained in the constitution, and to which it permits the public revenues to be applied.

The present consideration of a national establishment for education particularly calls for this circumstance also, that, if Congress, approving the proposition, shall yet think it expedient to lay it before the states, that body, at their power to consider it with those which will be among the earliest to which their attention is necessary. This foundation would have the advantage of being independent on wars in which they suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes the resources destined for others.

Thus, fellow-citizens, is the state of the public interests, at the present moment, and such the reflections and measures presented, but such is the situation of the nations of Europe, and such too the prudence which they shall with some of them, that we cannot rely with certainty on the continuance of our relations, that may change from moment to moment, during the course of your session, or after your final separation. Our duty is therefore to set upon the things as they are, and to make a reasonable provision for whatever may happen. Were armies to be raised whenever a speck of war is visible in our horizon, we never should have them without them. Our resources would have been exhausted and our country left a prey to the evils thereof, before it could be raised, in reality to take place. A standing garrison is quieted and prepared for the defence of our sea-port towns and waters, an early settlement of the most important of our waters, and a competent force, in the exigence, that its effective portions can be called to any point of the union, or volunteers instead of them, to serve a sufficient time, are means which may avert the impending storm, giving our resources and actually called into use. They will maintain the public interests, which a mere appearance force may be in a course of preparation. But much will depend on the promptitude with which the militia can be brought into service. If war be forced upon us, it spread our long and vain expanse, the practice of national, rapid and vigorous movements, in its outset, will go far towards securing to us a speedy and honorable issue, to avoid throwing the burthens on those who render necessary the resort from the law.

The result of our negotiations, or such incidents in their course, as may enable us to judge, with probable issue, such further measures, on our western frontier, as may have which it may be pressed there, while negotiation is prosecuted elsewhere, shall be communicated to you from time to time, as they come known to me; with whatever other information I possess or may receive, which may aid your deliberations on the great national interests committed to your charge.

TH: JEFFERSON.

December 2, 1806.