States; we think it proper to apprise them of the ground on which they now stand, and that on which they will stand; for which purpose we make to them this solemn declaration of our unalterable determination; that we wish them to live in peace with all nations as well as with us, and we have no intention ever to strike them or to do them an injury of any sort unless first attacked or threatened; but that learning that some of them meditate war on us, we too are preparing for war against those, and those only who shall seek it: And that if ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or driven beyond the Mississippi. He adjures them therefore, if they wish to remain on the land which covers the bones of their fathers, to keep the peace with a people who ask their friendship without needing it, who wish to avoid war without fearing it; in war they will kill some of us; we shall destroy all of them. Let them then continue quiet at home, take care of their women and children, and remove from among them the agents of any nation persuading them to war, and let them declare to us explicitly and categorically that they will do this; in which case they will have nothing to fear from the preparations we are now unwillingly making to secure our own safety.

My Children,

Thus you see the interest your Great Father takes in your welfare; how anxious he is to promote your happiness; how desirous he is to prevent you from taking any measures which will involve you in ruin; how generous in advising you to remain quiet spectators of any differences that may take place between the white people; how candid in warning you of the fate of any tribe who shall have the hardihood to raise the hatchet against us.

My Children,

If you are faithful to yourselves, if you desire to promote your own happiness and that of your women and children, if you expect a continuance of protection, and those friendly offices which you are constantly receiving; if indeed as your Great Father expresses it, you expect to continue in the land which covers the bones of your fathers, you will listen to his paternal council and call the Great Spirit to witness your solemn determination to follow his advice.

My Children,

I expect from you a plain, decided answer, which I shall immediately transmit to the Great Council Fire of the nation.

To which *Nanuame*, a chief of the Potawatamie nation, made the following reply.

Father,

"We have listened to what you said to us yesterday. We have had a council by ourselves, and I now speak the opinion of all my brethren present; and I believe I express the wishes of the whole Pottawatamie nation.

"Father—We thank the great Spirit that our father of the seventeen fires does not wish to involve us in the quarrels of the white people. We hope they will have none. If they have any they had better settle them by themselves.

"Father.—We wish the British would give us the same advice as we receive from our great father the President of the U. S. We believe he is strong because he does not want any aid from us. We believe the British are weak because they want us to assist them.

Father—"We remember former times, how they deceived us. When we pass the banks of the Miami, we see the ruins of the old British fort. It reminds us of our fathers who fell on those fatal plains. It reminds us how they were driven to combat against the Americans and the fatal consequences which followed. It reminds us of the ingratitude of the British; how they shut the gates against us when we were flying to them for protection.

"Father.—We never will again place any dependance on them. They have deceived us once and we will not confide in them again.

"Father.—Why should we fight their battles? If they should be successful we shall gain nothing by the contest, if they should be unfortunate it will end in our destruction.

"Father.—"We live in your country. We are under your protection. You feed us when we are hungry, you clothe us when we are naked, we receive every year money and valuable goods from our great Father the President. Although we have not the advantages of learning as you white people have, we have too much understanding to forfeit all these advantages. We have too much justice and gratitude to injure our friends and benefactors.

"Father—It is true we were invited to Malden—we have been there some time—we have been promised valuable presents, we have received little besides promises.

"Father—We have left them—we will not return to them—we will take the advice of our great Father of the Seventeen Fires, and remain quiet spectators of your quarrels, if you should have any—This is the determination of all the chiefs here present.

"Father—When you first sent for us, we immediately prepared to come and see you. Capt. M'Kee prevented us from coming then; he renewed his promises of presents to us, and gave us a keg of spirits; that fatal keg then stopped us. We were stopped a second and a third time. At last without his knowledge we crossed the river; we are now happy on your shore and safe under your protection.

"Father—Inform our great Father we take him by the hand—we will hold it fast, and always listen to and follow his counsel. May the Great Spirit ever protect him and the people of the U. States."

Then Pooqueboad, chief of the Chippawa nation, spoke as follows:

"Father—Your red children present salute you.

"Father—Your red children, through you take their good and great Father, the President of the United States, by the hand, and to his advice make the following reply:

"Our Great Father, the President of the U. States—Bad birds hover about us, but our ears are shut to their advice; our ears are open to nothing but the counsels of our Great Father.

"Father—You cannot, you must not suppose our intentions bad, or that we are hostile to our Brethren, the Whites of the U. States—for do you not see us here, surrounded by our women and children counseling with you.

"Father—We are informed that it is possible a rupture may take place between the English and the Americans—if that event should happen we are determined not to take a part on either side, but remain quietly in our villages, taking care of our women and children, and cultivating our corn fields.

"Father—Your children wish to enjoy a continuance of the blessings of peace with you, our hopes are in you, our dependence is on you, our only wish is to remain forever with you.

"Father—Many of our people are ignorant, many of them are wicked—we cannot answer for their conduct. If some of them should raise the tomahawk they must answer for the consequences.

"Father—Our solemn determination is never to raise the hatchet against the U. States. We too well know the fatal consequences of it; for if we are hungry our Father feeds us; if we are dry, our Father gives us to drink; if we are naked, our Father clothes us; all which benefits we should forfeit by so doing.

"Father—If the war pipe is offered us to smoke, we will reject it; we will send from among us all persons who give us bad counsel.

"Father—One of our war chiefs is going on a visit to see our Great Father, the President of the United States; we hope he will be received and treated as his son, and we pray the Great Spirit to return him to us in health.

"Father—Bad birds fly among the whites, as well as the red people; we hope you will not listen to them, but trust to the honor of your children. May the Great Spirit watch over us all."

The chiefs of the Ottawa nation and of the Wyandot nation, have made similar determinations, and I have great confidence in their sincerity.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) WILLIAM HULL.

The hon. Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War.

Detroit, 24th November, 1807.

To Henry Dearborn, Esq. Secretary of War.

SIR,

I now have the pleasure to inform you that a number of principal Chiefs have returned from Malden and are now here. I have examined them separately and they give this account in which they all agree. That Aubayway called there on his way home from here—that great attention was paid to him by M'Kee and the British officers—that four days ago they were called to a council—that they were informed that a war would soon take place between them and the Americans, and that they (the Indians) must take up the hatchet in their favor against the Americans—that before they gave an answer they held a council by themselves, and appointed Aubayway to make their answer, which was as follows.

That they had lived under the protection of the United States—that they were treated with justice and kindness by their great Father the President—that they had lately made a treaty in which they acknowledge themselves under the protection of the U. S. and no other power—that they had received and were entitled to valuable presents from the U. S. that their Great Father the President did not ask them to involve themselves in the quarrels of the white people, but to remain quiet spectators; that they were all determined to take his advice; that it was an evidence he was strong enough to fight his own battles; that after this council many of them left Malden, although they were all urged to remain.

I have every reason to believe this to be true; as many as seven or eight hundred have called here within two or three days on their way to their villages. I treat them kindly and give them what they want to eat. I hope in a few days they will go to their villages and hunting grounds and the issues of provisions will cease. You will find the issues of provisions the last month and this very large, on account of the treaty, paying them their Fort Industry money, and vast numbers of them returning from Malden. It is however nothing compared to what has been issued by the British; that you say is no rule for us. I think however we had better feed them, than fight them. The President's advice has a very happy effect on them.

I am very respectfully,
Your most obt. humble sert.
(Signed)
WILLIAM HULL.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10.

Debate on the bill from the Senate authorising the building of gun-boats and for the defence of ports and harbors.

Mr. Elliot's Speech concluded.

But it is a popular system—the people are in favor of it—and this is an overwhelming answer to every argument that can be urged against it.

With whom is it popular? Certainly not with the people in the northern states, for a very great majority of them are opposed to it. Within two or three years we have received addresses from the legislatures of New-York and Rhode Island, passed, I believe, unanimously in both states, in favor of an enlarged and more efficient system of naval defence. Those two states, of course, may be considered as opposed to this project. No one will set down Connecticut as friendly to gun-boats. Is it popular in Massachusetts? One gentleman from that state (Mr. Bacon) protests against being considered as the representative of a people hostile to this mode of defence: But that gentleman will not tell us that a very large majority of his constituents are attached to the system, or that, among those who are, one in fifty has any practical or even historical information upon the subject. Are your constituents, Mr. Speaker, in favor of this mode of defence? I presume not. When, two or three years ago, you opposed this establishment in its infancy, you undoubtedly represented their sentiments and feelings, as most certainly you supported their true interest. The representatives from N. Hampshire, & others from the eastern states, ask you to excuse them from accepting their proportion of these boats, & to give them a few frigates in exchange. You refuse their request—They ask for frigates, and you give them gun-boats. As it respects my own constituents, I have not been able to find any gun-boat men among them. It is probable, however, that there are some, as there may be men in that quarter as in others, willing to believe whatever the executive believes; but I trust there are fewer of these miserable minions in that district than in some others in the union. Here I cannot help remarking upon a singular expression of a gentleman from N. C. (Mr. Sawyer) that most honorable quarter, the North, used ironically, as we may presume, from his manner, in allusion to an observation, perhaps inadvertant, perhaps deliberate, of a gentleman from N. Hampshire (Mr. Durell) that he had the honor to come from the North. The people of the North, sir, are certainly an honorable people, no more so than those of the South; but as honorable a people as God was ever pleased to make. They know, they feel, that they have not their due weight in this Union; that their interest is improperly neglected by the present administration; but they are sincerely attached to the government of their country. They are men, high-minded men, who know their rights, and knowing dare maintain them. To return to the subject. Suppose this despicable system of defence to be popular. Whence does its popularity originate? From what quarter came the original proposition? *Ex quo fonte?* From what fountain has descended this copious and overwhelming torrent of national delusion, degradation, and destruction? The answer is not difficult. Some years ago a strange passion for gun-boats seized upon one of the great departments of the government. Who believes that even ten men in the U. States would ever have raised their voices in favor of this plan of protection, had it not been understood to be a favorite executive measure? But I shall be told that this is inconsistent with the assertion that the President has not recommended it. I have proved, however, by his own documents, that it is his own measure. Every one knows the fact. It is true that he recommends nothing at present. He talks of a moveable force upon the water. This is very clear to some; but, in my view, never was Grecian oracle more inscrutable, more inexplicable, more irresponsible. But what course does the thing take? A committee is appointed to enquire what the executive wishes? One of his secretaries tells them that "it is believed, that, for the protection of our ports and harbors, there ought to be built 188 additional gun-boats." Why does not the secretary give us the grounds of this belief? Why not communicate some information upon the subject? Why not undertake to shew the utility of a plan of defence, for which he asks us to appropriate millions? But by whom is it believed? Do we legislate, do we vote away five millions of the people's money, upon the beliefof the secretary of the navy? Certainly not. It is but little less disgraceful, however, to do it upon the belief of the President. We all know that this business has long been cut and dried by the executive; you have long had upon your tables even the executive apportionment, to every port, bay, and inlet on your coast, of these weak, wretched, contemptible gun-boats; and this before it had been intimated to you that an appropriation of money was wanted for the purpose. I do not understand, or rather I understand too well, this mode of legislation in a republican government. It is miserable management, despicable legislation! If we are sent here to carry into effect the will and the wishes of the President, let him express that will and those wishes in the constitutional way, and not in a secret, sideway manner, through the intervention of secretaries and committees.

It may be proper again to remark that this is but a new edition of the proclamation and gun-boat system, which has reduced the republic almost to the lowest point of degradation and disgrace. Every page of our recent annals affords some melancholy evidence of the fact. The President issues a proclamation, forbidding certain British armed vessels to come within the waters of the United States. Disregarding the proclamation, one of those vessels enters one of our harbors. One of our officers sends the commander notice of the proclamation, and an order to depart. The British officer answers, that the proclamation of the President would disgrace the most petty power of Barbary, and is worthy only of the bloody reign of a Robespierre; and that he shall consult his own convenience in the case. What course is then pursued by the American commander? He sends an express seven hundred miles to inform the President that he has received a most extraordinary letter, which he knows not how to answer, and asks for further instructions from the government. The interdicted vessel continues within your jurisdiction in defiance of the whole power of the nation. Is this the boasted energy and efficacy of the proclamation and gun-boat system? If so, its annihilation ought to be most anxiously desired.—I am astonished to behold so many gentlemen who detest this system, support it with their votes. A gentleman from New York (Mr. Gardenier) to whom I always listen with pleasure and often with improvement, assures us that he has no faith in the scheme, that he has often laughed at it, and yet he will vote for it! The executive wishes it, and he is willing the experiment should be made. But is it right for us to vote away the people's money by millions upon experiments which we know to be vain and delusive? Can it be consistent with our duty, on the eve of a war—when some gentlemen say we are actually in a state of war—to squander the treasure of the nation in such a manner and upon such objects, to gratify the unaccountable passion or whim of the executive for a species of naval machinery, which, probably, has not a solitary advocate in the union, who does not borrow his impressions upon the subject from that executive? Shall we thus add the weight of our voices to that thunder which denounces every man of genius, talent, and independence, who refuses to subscribe to the executive or popular dogmas of this disastrous moment? While the storm of war comes roaring over the Atlantic, the angry demon of denunciation howls within our own borders! The wretched system of the government, however pure may be its motives, tends to cherish party spirit when it should not be known in the land; and to persecute and proscribe genius and talent, when genius and talent alone can save both the government and the nation from ruin. The time must come—it must and will come—when the talents and integrity of our country must be combined. Not to save the people from themselves—I am not an advocate for that doctrine—but to save the republic from discord and destruction. It is one of the political dogmas of the present period that he that doubteth is damned; that he who does not believe in the absolute perfection of the present administration is guilty of the worst of all political heresies. I have never been a subscriber to this confession of political faith. And I will soon give a pledge of the sincerity of my attachment to republican principles, in which it is not probable that I shall find a single imitator in the union. I will retire from this station—and I shall retire rich in the confidence of those who have so long confided in me——and from that moment I will never consent to receive the suffrages of any portion of the people for any office in their power to bestow. Malice, and I will never affect to be totally insensible to its cruel lacerations, will attempt to trace conduct of this kind to the source of disappointment. But the effort will be in vain. I entered into public life under circumstances which precluded the possibility of disappointment. I entered it with a determination never to wait for one moment in the antichambers of the presidential palace; never to solicit or cause to be solicited for myself a single favor from the executive department of the government. This is a determination which, in my opinion, every representative of the people ought to form; and, in my own case, it has rendered it impossible for me, so far as respects the executive, to have been personally disappointed.

In an administration, thus patronizing weak men and measures, thus destitute of the energy and talent which the times require, it is impossible for me to repose great confidence; and as conscience will compel me to make this declaration to every one of my constituents, it may as well be made at once in the presence of my country and the world. When the miserable and futile scheme of gun-boats is substituted for that great and glorious system of national defence which the crisis demands, who can believe the government an able and a wise one? Hailing the day which first smiles upon me as a private citizen, free from the toils, the perplexities, and the calumnies of public life, as the happiest of my existence, and abandoning for ever the field of political ambition, my opinions will be of little consequence to the government or my fellow citizens. But to the government of this nation the attachment of the northern people will always be of immense importance. They are anxious to support the national honor, but they love and are anxious to preserve peace; and in their name I will venture to protest against any measures calculated to plunge them into the horrors of war upon mere points of etiquette. If we can obtain substantial satisfaction for the great outrage which the nation has sustained, we will not refuse it because other and older subjects of dispute remain unadjusted. If we can obtain the desired dish of reparation, we will not go to war because it is presented to us in a silver bowl instead of a golden one. If the conduct of the government shall be just and wise, we shall continue to support it: if it shall improperly involve us in the miseries of war, it will inevitably lose our confidence. If, "in the full tide of successful experiment," it shall devote to persecution and proscription the patriotism and wisdom of the nation, it will no longer receive the support of an enlightened and virtuous people.

To have spoken thus long has required an effort far beyond my strength. One part of the remarks which I intended to make must be suspended. The description of certain politicians to whose disastrous influence upon our concerns I alluded at the outset, would be a task as ungrateful as it is unnecessary. A sense of duty alone has till his time kept me from my seat. In resuming it, I again protest, in the name of the people whom I represent, against a worse than wanton waste of the public treasure for a worse than useless object.