National Intelligencer.

& WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. VIII. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. NO. 1166.

FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, MONDAY, APRIL 4, 1808. PAID IN ADVANCE.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30.

Messrs. Chittenden, Blackledge & *Van Dyke* obtained leave of absence for the remainder of the session.

On motion of *Mr. D. R. Williams* a resolution was adopted to instruct the committee of Post-Office and Post-Roads to enquire into the propriety of providing by law for the transportation by the mail of the late message of the President of the U. S. and documents accompanying the same.

The committee to whom was referred the memorial of Jonathan Grout relative to *Telegraphs*, was discharged from the further consideration of the subject, and it was referred to the Secretary of the Treasury to report thereon at the next session of Congress.

Debate on the bill for raising an additional military force.

Mr. ROWAN observed that it seemed to him that if this addition to the military force was considered as an addition to the peace establishment, the regiment of horse contemplated by the bill was unnecessary; if war was contemplated, the force was too small. The report of the Secretary of War on which this bill was predicated, said he, stated that under existing circumstances, this particular force was necessary. What are those existing circumstances? If I thought we were to have war, I would vote with all my heart for this number and a much larger number if it should be thought necessary. If we have not war, and it appears to be the general opinion that it will not be commenced on our part, certainly the dragoons are not necessary. I do not think it the opinion of the House that any warlike measure should be now adopted; and if not, by striking out these eight troops of horse a sufficient force will yet be left for the peace establishment. Horse are much more expensive than foot; and I cannot see any occasion for Horse on a peace establishment! I could have wished that the bill might have laid over until we have received further information, which it is understood we shall shortly receive, because I hold it the duty of the House to know what our circumstances are, and not to take the *dictum* of any department of the government, from the highest to the lowest. We have had information copious and voluminous laid before us; but from that it does not seem to result that measures of war are to be taken. If not, where is the necessity for troops of horse? I can see no use for them or service which they can render. We all know the extent of our frontier, and have some idea of the situation of the places on it. As I cannot see the necessity for horse, and more especially for this quantity, I move to strike out all that part of the bill relative to the dragoons.

Mr. TALLMADGE said that had the gentleman from Kentucky been present, or if present, had he no forgotten, he would recollect that a provision was introduced to avoid incurring the expense which the gentleman had objected to. There was a distinct section which provided that the regiment of dragoons were to serve either in whole or in part until the President of the U. States shall judge it necessary to mount them; so that in fact the regiment of dragoons was to be a regiment of infantry. In case of war the gentleman would fully appreciate the advantage of cavalry, in which case the President is authorized to mount the whole or in part. So that were any force to be raised this was a necessary part of it.

Mr. ROWAN observed that his object was to diminish the force; and he had chosen the horse because he thought it that part which could most properly be detached. He wished to know whether this force was considered by the House as calculated for peace or war? It was known that we had already a peace establishment to line our frontiers; this bill contemplated an addition of 7000 or perhaps more, which would certainly be too many. Against external assault, wherever the population was tolerably replete, the militia were competent; a regular force was necessary only where the population did not furnish the advantages of militia defence which the interior possessed. A sufficient number of men for garrison duty seemed to him to be as many as were necessary; and a standing army of 10,000 men was certainly beyond the number necessary for that. The existing circumstances, said he, at the time when the report of the Secretary of War was made, were different from what they are at present. It seems now to be the general opinion that we shall not have war; if that be not the general opinion, lay this bill on your table, and apportion the number to the object. If we have peace the quantity is at least by one half too large. I therefore made the motion to strike out the cavalry not so much to get clear of them, as to diminish the force.

Mr. SMILIE said he did not consider this as a part of the peace establishment; he considered war as a matter of uncertainty. If the gentleman from Kentucky could have confidence in the generosity of the nation with whom we are contending, he was right to lessen the number; for my part, said he, I have reliance neither in the justice or generosity of that nation, but consider it our duty to put ourselves in a situation to await the event. Will any gentleman say that a blow may not even now be aimed at us? I have not that assurance of their forbearance that I will leave my country in this situation. We have granted money for fortifications; we know that the fortified posts must be occupied. Is it to be taken for granted, that those posts shall be filled by militia—that the militia shall do garrison duty? I believe not; there must be a certain number of regular troops. Would the gentleman consent that the militia of Kentucky should be drawn to N. Orleans to form a stationary force there? I think not; and yet I believe that such a force must be maintained there. The truth is, that we ought to consider our situation—that we may have war or we may not. I wish to put the country into such a situation that we may be competent to meet events; and I consider that the number proposed will answer that purpose. If it be the wish of the House however to insert a less number, I should still vote for the bill.

MR. ROWAN said that as to reliance on national justice or generosity, history smiles with contempt if not with derision at an idea of that kind; justice between nations is ideal, and never has existed in reality. I ask whether these troops have not been as necessary in that view ever since the year 1800 as at this time; for we are told that the *sine qua non* on our part is a subject on which that power had rather fight than yield; we know that the impressment of seamen would not be surrendered without a war. There has been then the same occasion for this force since the year 1800 as at this time: The question then is simply this: will we keep up an armed force to prevent invasion? If we do this, we reject the old doctrine, and assume one which was some time ago considered as too bold to advance, but we have slipped up to it gradually. It seems to be the general sentiment that war should not be commenced on our part. I had judged myself that unless reparation was made, war steps would be taken; but instead of that we seem disposed to solace ourselves with a hope that we shall not be troubled in future, and with that to rest content. What measure shall be pursued I have not myself formed a decisive opinion; no view of what measures are proper to be taken has been presented by any department or by any member. The case of Orleans has been mentioned. The militia of Kentucky would not like to go there at any time; and it is not more necessary that they should now go than it has been at any time past. I grant that there should be an established force at New-Orleans, but to what amount? The militia of the territory of Orleans form a considerable body; a garrison of 1000 regulars at the most, aided by the militia, would be competent to every purpose. As to fortification, I hope it is not contemplated that they shall be manned in time of peace by such a regular force as might be necessary in war. All that will be necessary, is a file of men at each post with a sergeant or subaltern to keep them in order who may serve as a rallying point to the militia. If we are to have a standing army for war, I wish it to be declared at once, for this number is incompetent. Our present peace establishment is indeed too small, but with this addition it will be much too large.

Mr. DURELL said it seemed to be the fatality of some gentlemen never to be able to discern the motives by which others were actuated; and as they could not see their motives they could not consent to plans which others advocated. I am very sorry, said Mr. D. that this has so generally been the case during the present session. The gentleman from Kentucky has objected to this bill introduced for the purpose of increasing our military force; he says for a peace establishment the proposed force will be too large; for war it does not come up to the mark. It seems that the objection which the gentleman first made to the bill was in consequence of the number of cavalry; he could not see in any event that a regiment of cavalry could be necessary, and gave as reasons that they were expensive and that he saw no service in which they could be used. Those objections have been totally answered by the gentleman from Connecticut; because, by the provisions of the bill these cavalry may serve as infantry. The gentleman's objections then return to the amount of the force, being too great for peace, and vastly too little for war. The gentleman says he presumes that this House is not at all governed by a belief that we are in a state of war; that this is not considered as a war measure; that we have had no evidence to induce a belief that a state of war is likely to ensue It has been frequently mentioned on this floor, and by that gentleman too more than once, that if not at actual hostilities, we were very near it. We are not now in a state of profound peace or actual war, but in a half way state. We are in a sort of galloping situation, sometimes war and sometimes peace; and the conduct of many gentlemen seems to shew, and I am sorry to see it, that their opinions are not founded on what is before us, but every breath which wafts a scintilla of information across the Atlantic gives new vigor to their action, or damps their ardor. Are we to be influenced by causes so trivial?—Let me call the attention of the House to the time when we were called together by the President of the United States. What was the occassion which gave rise to our extra session? An assault on our sovereignty by an armed ship of Britain, by an outrage of the most flagrant nature ever recorded in history. Congress was convened under the idea that notwithstanding our peaceable relations with that nation, she might refuse to make ample satisfaction for that attack. What is the event? Has she made this satisfaction? Is the lapse of eight months, without a repetition of the injury, to be considered as a satisfaction? I know not how other gentlemen may feel, but it is none to me. What would have been the conduct of this House had she immediately refused satisfaction? For what were we called together? Was it not to meet such a possible event? If Great Britain had refused *instanter*, we should have made a declaration of war upon her: I do not hesitate to say that I would have held up my hand in favor of it. What is *now* our situation? No reparation has been made, and we are under the same obligations now as we were then to prepare for defence. No one will say that we are defended, or that we are in no danger of attack even from Great Britain. Are we then to sit here week after week and month after month, and do nothing? I hope not. It appears to me that the number of men proposed to be raised is proper. I am not squeamish as to figures. If the number called for had been 20,000, I would have voted for it; if but 3000 I would also have voted for them; because in the event of war the latter could be increased, and in the event of peace the former could have been disbanded.

We were told by a gentleman (Mr. Upham) when this bill was before the House on a former occasion, that no system was followed, that there is a want of energy, and that he had no confidence in the Executive; if the thing be fairly considered and understood, all these objections fail in my opinion. The attempts which have been heretofore made to get up the army bill have been experimental; it was not presumable that we should agree to the number or detail of the bill in the first instance. The very nature of the negociation then pending was I presume a sufficient motive for delaying the business. The same gentlemen who now object to the bill would possibly have objected to it pending the negociation, and its decision might have irritated the British ministry; that was my opinion, and therefore I did not press it all, but thought it better that it should lie on the table. Would it either have been proper to lay information on the subject before the House during the negociation? No one can say that it would have been proper. I should not have expected at this time of day that objections would have been made to this bill on the score of confidence in our security. What is the situation of the relations between foreign powers and of our own country with those powers? Is the prospect of our foreign relations more cheering than it was immediately after the attack on the Chesapeake? I say not, and no one will gainsay it. That insult is yet unatoned for; no reparation whatever has been made for it. I feel myself under the same obligation to seek redress by such means as God and nature have placed in our power, as if that government had absolutely and immediately refused to make reparation; for they have made none. Instead of our relations being better they have grown from bad to worse, and in consequence of no fault of ours. Let gentlemen contemplate the late decrees and their bearing on our commerce. Will they say that our situation is better? Foreign powers are already at war with our commerce, and as likely as not, when they have gathered up the fragments of that, they will make an attack upon our soil. What is the situation of our exposed points, of which we have so many, and of our sea coast of 2000 miles? Are not our cities defenceles? Assuredly they are. A million of dollars have been expended for fortifications, and this money could not have been more economically expended: We want these forts garrisoned by these very troops; we do not want them left defenceless for English, French or Spaniards to possess and turn the guns against us. No, sir, the situation of the world will by no means admit of our sitting still with our fingers in our mouths, and taking no steps of defence. It has been said that the present session is drawing to a close. I for one shall not rest satisfied with departing and leaving the country in its present defenceless situation. I hope, for these reasons, that the gentleman's amendment will be negatived.

Mr. ROWAN did not see why this artillery of Executive confidence should be levelled at him. I have (said he) before said, that confidence or diffidence in the Executive was unimportant to the decision of any question in my mind, and therefore I have not expressed my sentiments on the subject; why then it should be lugged in and levelled at me I do not understand. [Mr. Durell did not intend to level at the gentleman any expression other than what he had used in direct reply to his observations on another point.] Upon that subject then, said Mr. R. I have confidence in what comes from the Executive, so far as to give it that weight to which all information coming from an Executive is entitled. I hope this House will always understand their situation, the rights of the people and the Executive rights; that they will understand and make a proper discrimination between confidence and diffidence. I believe confidence to be unfriendly to civil liberty, and vigilance and diffidence to be friendly to it. When a recommendation is made by any department of the government, it is entitled to confidence in proportion to the information which accompanies it, and no further. I deprecate the day when any department shall only have to say that "under existing circumstances" so many troops are necessary. Will not the Representatives of the nation enquire what are the circumstances, and deliberate what they are and whether they will authorise the erection of such a force? Surely they will. What are our circumstances then at this time? Are they such as lead to a belief that we shall have immediate war? This nation is liable at all times to attack; and if gentlemen will raise an army upon that predication, there ought to have been one since the commencement of the government. It is agreed on all hands that a certain force for our peace establishment is necessary; our naked frontier requires it. It then becomes a matter of consideration what should be the nature of that peace establishment, and how far it should be increased. It is my opinion that the addition proposed by this bill is too large, and therefore as a peace establishment I am opposed to it, but am willing that it should pass with the amendment which I have proposed. I have not questioned, nor ever do arraign the motives of those who oppose this bill or any measure; but if it be a war measure, let us so understand it, and those who view it in that light will be willing to provide more troops. It is either for war or peace. If peace, the language of all republicans excludes the idea of maintaining a standing army during peace; they are only necessary with an eye to war. If the latter is to be our course, let it be known and I am ready to concur in preparatory measures.

But as I am averse to questioning the motives of the advocates of any measure, and therefore avoid it, so also I wish my motives not to be questioned; neither do I understand another argument, which is common, "how can any gentleman have the hardihood to say this or that?" I trust I shall always have the hardihood to pursue what I deem my duty. As little do I understand the mode of enquiring whether a person will hazard his reputation on this or any measure. That man who is afraid to hazard his reputation or considers his reputation as hazarded on any measure which he supports, is unfit for his station. So much for motives, hardihood, and hazard of reputation. I challenge any member of this House to name an instance in which I have ever questioned the motives of any member; I consider that the decency of legislative deliberation excludes it. I trust I shall always have the hardihood to advocate any measure which reason tells me is right, and oppose those which reason declares incorrect. And therefore am I under the necessity of opposing this bill, because it is suited neither for war nor peace. But the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Smilie) tells us our situation is doubtful; so it always has been. He says we may be assailed; we have always been liable to assault. The question still returns to this single point: Is it necessary to have a standing army to ensure perpetuity to our government? If we have war, we must have a regular army; that is my opinion: perhaps it is rather heterodox, but I believe that is the opinion of a majority of the House. If we are neither at war or peace, we are then reduced to a doubtful situation, for which if the militia are not competent the wise framers of our contitution have fundamentally erred, and we must come into the old destructive doctrine of a standing army, with its whole concomitant train of corruption. It is the fear of the prostration of our civil liberty which makes me feel averse to the bill if considered as a dubious measure.

We get nothing from abroad; we have demanded atonement for an injury, and it has been refused. If we choose to take it, then we go to war; if not, and it is intended to rest for justice on future prospects, say so, and we remain at peace. The quantity of force proposed by the bill then is either too large or to small. For the maintenance of our government a standing army is not necessary; it would be a reproach to a representative government, and to our boasted republican institutions, that a standing army was necessary to support it. If we are to go to war, it is not avowed; if peace, that is not admitted; it must then be that doubtful state which has always existed. And therefore I hope my amendment will prevail.

Mr. FINDLEY. It has always been considered as prudent conduct in neutral nations when they had only even a remote probability of war, to make precautionary preparations to prevent being taken by surprize, the fate of Copenhagen and numerous other cases justify the measure and strongly condemn the neglect of it. If this is at all times necessary, how much more now when the spirit of war so extensively and with such an uncommon degree of violence prevails among all the nations with whom we have relations. But the gentlemen from Kentucky (Mr. Rowan) gave us assurances near fifty times repeated, that there is no danger of war, that whatever ground there might have been to apprehend war early in the session, there is no danger of it now, there is no disposition with us to go to war, that there was as much danger any time since 1804, as at present, &c.

Mr. F. said the gentleman had pledged his responsibility with sufficient confidence, but without assigning any solid reasons on which our confidence can rest. We are indeed at a distance from Europe, but some of these nations bring themselves near to us, they have committed aggressions and hostilities on our coasts and in our harbors, these proceedings were attempted to be prevented or mitigated, and reparation to be procured by negociation. Negociation seemed to be encouraged with friendly professions and flattering hopes, but treated with evasion and delay, till finally all hopes from that quarter are vanished without having obtained either reparation for the past or se-