# National Intelligencer.

## & WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. VIII. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. NO. 1175.

FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, MONDAY, APRIL 25, 1808. PAID IN ADVANCE.

### CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5.

*Debate on the passage of the bill for raising an additional military force.*

*Mr. Randolph's speech concluded.*

It has indeed been said that nothing would be more easy than when you have done with this army, to command it to lay down its arms. My worthy friend from North Carolina (Mr. Macon)—of whose sentiments I was apprized before I rose yesterday, and whose dissent from my opinion would have caused me to distrust it if I had not conceived that his own speech in favor of the army was one of the most masterly arguments against it, and I assure him I was not singular in that opinion—tells us that it is easier to raise troops than to get rid of them. Recollect the patriot army of our revolution—was there no reluctance, no aversion there expressed at being disbanded? There was; for from their intimate connection with each other, they felt it as a separation of body and soul; they cannot bear it; it is as taking men from their wives and children, to take them from those with whom they have shared victory and defeat and all the toils and sufferings of war. Was there no expression of a sentiment in that army to disband those who where disposed to disband them? There was; and it was especially honorable to their commander in chief, if indeed any peculiar circumstance could confer honor on that man, that they did not step forth against their country. It is not from the physical force of this army that I apprehend any thing; it is from that connection, that ramification of interests which it extends to every class of society—your son or nehpew holds a commission in the army—my neighbor is a contractor—your uncle supplies this thing, my father in-law that, the evil extends itself through all society, and is so wrought that it requires not only the strongest but the most resolute hand to tear it asunder. I never again expect to see a disposition for reform so radical as that which prevailed in the first session of the 7th Congress, when the army was reduced. I do not, because I have seen a gradual relaxation, a general back sliding from principles which were then considered axioms in politics.

But let me ask where is the crying necessity of immediately passing this bill? Is the occasion for raising these troops so urgent, and have we been sitting here for six months with folded arms, and never thought of it till now? Or is it that we feel impatient to get back to our homes, and by way of saving the expence of keeping Congress in session for a few months—to save the expence of two or three hundred thousand dollars, throw away two millions on the first thing which presents itself as a pretext for adjournment? I will not believe that the urgency is so great as it is represented, & that gentlemen would have permitted the measure to sleep till now. And I repeat that I am not one of those who think we can without a deriliction of principle consent, to raise those troops for a possible emergency; it is our duty to stay here & watch the coming storm, to provide for the event be it what it may. I am not among those who will take these 6000 men as a safeguard from now till next Christmas, supposing that they could be raised *instanter*, though I would underwrite all the loss to which the United States are exposed from this time to that, which could be averted by such a force; I would guarantee the nation from any danger which may accrue from this time until our next meeting, which might be suppressed or repelled by the force now proposed, at the same time that I should not be willing to trust to them against such danger as may arise.

But it seems we have, as we had in '98—when the gentleman from Virginia tell us there was no probability of a war with France—I am afraid he is rather too young to recollect accurately, for we were then at open war—*flagrante bello*—we have wealthy cities and rich banks to defend from plunder, and we want these troops as a rallying point to the militia. These 6000 men are to form rallying points against every attack, fall where it may. If every man of them were placed separate and apart from his fellows there would not be points enough. Are the militia afraid of ghosts? Are they afraid to assemble together in their own defence unless protected by the talisman, the charm of a red coat or a blue one. When the gentleman from Kentucky dwelt so much on the importance of Detroit I was glad to find that the protection of the bank of Detroit, amongst the rest, was not a motive for raising this additional force; although I understand, our positive law to the contrary notwithstanding, that this bank is still in operation and that the troops of the United States are paid in its paper by one who might not improperly be styled President of the bank. But G. Britain who is fortifying Quebec against attack from you is to take Detroit. It must be immediately retaken.—It is impossible she can retain it a day—we have too strong a population in the western parts of New-York and Pensylvania, and in the state of Ohio. It can produce no Indian war unless she can hold it, and would only justify us in rooting her out of the continent. It is on British America, a name so justly offensive to my friend from South Carolina, (Mr. D. R. Williams) that she relies for sustenance and support of her rich possessions in this quarter of the globe, upon which her West India Islands must depend for food, if they were not already fed by us, the embargo to the contrary notwithstanding, on cheaper terms than supplies can be furnished from Canada and Nova Scotia: for such is the unfortunate propensity of our coasting vessels to be blown off, make leeway, spring their masts or stave their water casks that American flour was but a short time ago almost a drug in the Havanna. In no other way can we account for its bearing the price in the market of Baltimore which it even now does. One of my colleagues not long since obtained leave of absence to visit his family; on his return through Fredericksburg a vessel had just arrived from Antigua which left sixteen sail of American vessels at St. John's who had all fallen to leeward since the embargo. The current of the Gulph Stream is changed, sir—it sets from New-Foundland to Cape Florida and sweeps our flour along with it.

My colleague has said that Great Britain's throwing troops into Canada and Nova Scotia is to him an evidence of her intention to attack us in that quarter. Infatuated as her ministers sometimes have been, such a Quixotic project never entered their heads. No sir, I am more apprehensive of her involving us in war, not as an enemy but as an ally. The race between her and France now will be which shall soonest concede our just claims in the hope of producing a rupture with the adverse party. The only thing which now can lead to war is the giving to the one cause to believe that we incline to the side of the other. If for instance the French Emperor whose opinions have been so emphatically pronounced should consider our late measures as a compliance with his demand for the exclusion of British commerce from our ports, as an expression of those dispositions in security for which American property is held sequestered, and should release this property accordingly—it may lead to war with Great Britain in case she should take up the subject in the same point of view. But if on the contrary she shall view the measure as equally directed against both the rival powers, there is no probability that we shall have war, but that when she shall see the tenor and complexion of the French minister's communication to us it will produce a relaxation of her late illegal, offensive and enormous doctrines, even without supposing (what is probable) a change of ministry.

My excellent friend (Mr. Macon) says that no reparation has been made for the attack on the Chesapeake, and with him I am inclined to think none will be made. But let be recollected, that this government (and by government I do not mean the President alone) has not deemed the failure to make reparation to be a just cause for war—or, rather that it has determined (and I do not say that it is not correct) not to make war upon the aggressor. We are therefore not in a state of actual war at this time with G. Britain; and whatever may be the opinion of my friend as to the disposition in our government in 1798 to provoke a war with France, he must agree, his good sense, candor, manliness and ingenuousness of character must compel him to agree that actual war between two nations, whoever was in fault in the beginning, is a state more imperiously requiring military preparations than a state not of war, however great provocation may have been received. In 1798, even conceding that we were the offending party, (a point not easy to make out) we were at war. In 1808, tho' it is agreed on all hands that we are the deeply, justly offended party, it must be conceded that we are not at war. I believe, if we had taken measures of immediate reprisal, we should have been at war; or when Mr. Rose required that the proclamation should be withdrawn, which he had not a right to do, any more than the French government had to expect that we should renew the negociation in 1798—if we had then taken such measures, we might have been at war. We have not taken such, and we are not at war, although it may be alleged on the very brink of it. It is in vain therefore to urge a state of *quasi* or quid war, as a justification of measures which in 1798 were not conceived to be justified by actual war. But really I was of opinion that a quid war was one of the last in which my friend would be a party, in any manner whatsoever.

It has been said that our understanding with G. Britain is not quite so good at present as hers was with Turkey and Denmark, at the time of her attempt on the Dardanelles or Hellespont, and of her attack on Copenhagen. Admitting that fact, what does it prove? It is well known to you—you have proof in your pocket, I was going to say—that the motives for the attack on Copenhagen, which I am the last man on earth to defend, was a belief not totally without foundation, that a movement was about to be made by France at the same time against Denmark and Portugal (with the connivance of the former) to put those countries in the possession of France; the Portuguese not manifesting a disposition to play into the hand of France apprized G. Britain of what was going on, and we know what has happened; if they had manifested such a disposition, the same measures would have been taken against Portugal as against Denmark. I am not palliating the attack on Copenhagen; but we know that Denmark was not disposed to resist the intentions of the French emperor—in fact she possessed not the ability—she had no Brazils to fly to. Are gentlemen, when they bid us beware of the fate of Copenhagen, prepared to tell us that G. Britain has any right to believe that we are disposed to connive at the designs of France, or become a passive instrument in her hands? I hope not. I do conceive that G. Britain, if she possesses common sense, will never dream of attempting here any thing like the attack upon Copenhagen, which alone could justify an increase of our military force, and which would demand an effort very disproportionate to this.

It has been admitted on all hands, *nemine dissentiente*, that we are to be governed by circumstances which are not within our control. The difference in this House on this question has been as to the state of those circumstances alone. Two years ago it was said, *fiat justitia*; these are our rights, and we will not attend to circumstances; we know nothing, and care nothing about the balance of Europe; we will not be guided by it. I am glad to find now, however, that circumstances have their due weight in our deliberations; that we are disposed to have an eye upon them, and that they, and they alone prevent us from laying a declaration of war on the table against either or both the two belligerents.

But it has been said that N. Orleans is in the vicinity of the Havanna, and that we are exposed to attack—from whom? Does the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Howard) believe that Spain or France (for they are one and the same) are capable of throwing a force at this time from the Havanna into N. Orleans that can maintain it a day against the force from the upper country, which will be brought down against them—for as to this business of having a force in every town sufficient to ward off an attack *a la Copenhagen*, I am against it, and so is this bill. Norfolk and N. York need such a force as much as N. Orleans; and so do Wilmington, Charleston, and other ports as much as they. This bill does not propose to raise such a force; it is not proposed to give a defence against a *coup de main* from a well appointed fleet and army. When the gentleman mentioned the Havanna, I could not help thinking, for republics too have ambition, that it was a much stronger argument for taking possession of Havanna than fortifying N. Orleans, or rather for garrisoning it, for it was fortified, we all know, against the conspirators. I have no doubt, so far from N. Orleans being attacked from the Havanna, such is the tide of human events, such the cupidity and ambition of man under whatever form of government, that the time will soon come when the Havanna will be reduced by an army from N. Orleans, or some place along that coast; and, after we have got the mouth of the Mississippi to secure the navigation of the river, and the Havanna to secure the mouth of the river, we shall want some other place to secure Havanna; and we shall go on as all other nations have done, trying to keep what we have got, and get what we can.

With regard to the importance of these 6000 men for rallying points, I think, without pretending to know what disposition the wisdom of the Executive may make of them, whether south, west, north, or east—no doubt my worthy friend beside me (Mr. Mumford) would be glad to have them all at New-York—that out of these 6000 there would scarcely be a corporal's guard for each point, and I want to know what claim any one point has more than another to be made a rallying point?

An argument of mine with regard to the efficiency of military force has been much misrepresented. I did not say these troops would be equivalent to the militia of the cities. They are not equivalent; I would not give a pinch of snuff for them. If this army be so necessary, if the occasion for it be so urgent that we are to be precipitated at once into the measure, what are we doing with the force around us (the marine corps?) I might have been well justified if I had supposed these to be the piping times of peace, for, with a trifling exception, I never heard of any service which those troops we have, have ever performed. Where are they? Why are they not sent to intercept the Tygress? It is evident to me if you cannot find employment for those troops which you have, except to play on the pipe and tambourine, and I know not what on Sunday, it is a plain demonstration that you have already more than you can put to any beneficial use. And that gentlemen should at the same time declare that they deem fortifications unnecessary and as money thrown away, and yet should wish more regular troops, when the main reason given in favor of the bill (God forbid that I should accuse any gentleman of inconsistency—much less the gentleman who made that observation) that we want these men to take care of these fortifications and keep them in repair, is to me astonishing. What are six thousand men to man a line of coast of two thousand miles in extent? The arguments in favor of the bill will not hang together. The reasoning of its advocates, if true, would shew that the bill ought not to pass. Dangers have been held up to your imagination, and if there were ground to believe their existence, you ought to bestow two millions of dollars on implements of war, to be put into the hands of every one capable of using them, instead of throwing out of your treasury millions on these mercenaries, and dealing out with a niggardly hand a scanty pittance to purchase arms; and it is because I believe the balance in your treasury will be too much diminished by the enormous and useless appropriation which must follow this bill, that I wish it to be postponed that we may make a liberal appropriation to the former object. I am more astonished and surprized, and permit me to say concerned, for I feel the deepest concern whenever I differ with the gentleman in question (Mr. Macon) and nothing but the impulse of honest duty, knowing as I did of the difference which existed between us, on this subject, could have prevailed upon me to rise yesterday—I say it is a matter of surprize and regret to me that he should support this bill; that he should declare the present establishment useless, and at the same time declare his willingness to increase it three-fold. I hope the gentleman will pardon me for taking this notice of his arguments, as well as the gentlemen from Georgia and Kentucky, for it is the strongest evidence of my respect for them.

We are told that military science ought to be fostered. I agree that this is a military age. The century before the last was an age of religious fanaticism—the world was ruled by priestcraft; the next was the century of political intrigue and negociation—the taking of a single town was the work of a campaign; this is the military age, a great portion of the civilized world being over-run and subjugated by military despotism; and if you wish to quench forever the military ardor in the great mass of your own citizens, who alone are to rescue you from the general chaos, take it from the whole, kindle it in a portion, and make them exclusively military men—Confine the profession of arms to a particular class, speak tauntingly of the militia, or at least damn them with faint praise. "The militia are the only defence of a free nation; *but* they are defective in organization and not armed;" yes, sir, and as long as you waste all your pains and treasure in organizing and arming regulars, defective and unarmed they will remain to the end of the chapter; and by a perpetual recurrence to this standing army, your children will read in your history that of every nation who has preceded you.

It is said too that to preserve peace you must prepare for war. To this observation I agree in one sense, but not in that in which it is applied; for it admits of very different constructions. If it is meant by the observation that every man in the community should be armed and trained, it is true; because whenever it is the interest of the community to go to war they will rise with one accord. You may safely trust questions of peace or war to the unbiassed minds of the great body of the people; though, sometimes, in moments of ebullition and effervesence their good sense may be carried away, their interest will soon recall them to reason. To attempt to preserve peace by raising an army, which for the purposes of war is a mere nothing, though for the purpose of producing a state of war it is most cogent, is to me a strange way of avoiding war. My principal objection to the bill is that by passing it you raise a force which for the purposes of war is totally futile; but for bringing you into a state of war it is one of the most powerful engines you could erect: for this bevy of colonels, majors, captains, and corporals, to say nothing of the poor privates, and with these take the contractors for their supply, with all their whole tribe of relations—uncles, aunts, and grandmothers, will leave nothing undone to counteract the true interest of the nation, and inoculate every neighborhood with the fever of war. The people who are receiving two millions a year from the public purse, will never let go; they will hold on as long as they can; they will even set up newspapers to support the cause—and why? Because you put this great question of peace or war in the hands of a sort of privileged class, whose peculiar interest it is to go to war for commissions, contracts, bonusses, and douceurs—while the interest of the great mass of society may call aloud for peace.

But my friend and worthy colleague (Mr. Burwell) tells us, that the state of Virginia, so much opposed to armies, has now got to the war pitch, so far as to want one regiment for the defence of half a million of souls and 70,000 square miles. What is the consequence? That this business of 6000 men, instead of being sufficient for offensive or defensive war, either to take Quebec or defend New-York, will be dispersed in companies—a mere maggot of the