

**Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, December 20, 1817,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

TO PRESIDENT MONROE.

Private

Nashville, December 20, 1817.

Dear Sir, I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 2nd instant, with your message to congress enclosed, for which accept my thanks.

The pro[s]perous state of our country, and particularly our finance, so near the close of our expensive war, must be a source of great gratification to every true american, and profiting from experience, will enable the executive government, with the aid of Congress to place the whole country in a state of defense, which will command respect and Justice from all nations, and thereby perpetuate the blessings of peace.

I have read with great attention your letter; the plan proposed fully meets my approbation; for I see in it that magnanimity of conduct only to be met with in great and good minds; and also System that will produce subordination and harmony, without which an army cannot be beneficial or effective. Whenever an officer is responsible for the defense of a country or place, his means never ought to be taken from him or directed without his knowledge.

I had determined to retire from service, the moment I could with propriety and honor. But I have concluded since the receipt of your letter not to resign until I have the pleasure of seeing you and until you make the Southern tour, you contemplated next Spring and in which I intend doing myself the pleasure to accompany you. It is my wish to retire from

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public life, for I am advancing to that age that makes retirement advisable, but as long as I can be really serviceable to my country, and there remains any prospect of my services being wanted I will not retire, more particularly, as it is your wish that I should not. I am sir with great respect and sincere friendship

Yr mo. ob. serv.