

Thomas Jefferson to Gouverneur Morris, March 10, 1792, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE MINISTER TO FRANCE (GOUVERNEUR MORRIS)

Philadelphia Mar. 10, 1792.

Dear Sir, —My letter of Jan. 23. put under cover to Mr. Johnson in London & sent by a passenger in the British packet of February will have conveyed to you your appointment as Min. Plen. to the U. S. at the court of France. By the *Pennsylvania*, Capt. Harding, bound to Havre de Grace, & plying pretty regularly between this place & that, you will receive the present letter, with the laws of the U. S. journals of Congress, & gazettes to this day, addressed to the care of M. de la Motte. You will also receive a letter from the President to the King of France in answer to his announcing the acceptance of the constitution, which came to hand only a week ago. A copy of this letter is sent for your own use. You will be pleased to deliver the sealed one (to the Minister I presume according to the antient etiquette of the court) accompanying it with the assurances of friendship which the occasion may permit you to express, and which are cordially felt by the President & the great body of our nation. We wish no occasion to be omitted of impressing the national assembly with this truth. We had expected ere this, that in consequence of the recommendation of their predecessors, some overtures would have been made to us on the subject of a treaty of commerce. An authentic copy of the recommendation was delivered, but nothing said about carrying it into effect. Perhaps they expect that we should declare our readiness to meet them on the ground of treaty. If they do, we have

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no hesitation to declare it. In the mean time, if the present communications produce any sensation, perhaps it may furnish a good occasion to endeavour to have matters replaced *in statu quo*, by repealing the late innovations as to our ships, tobacco, & whale oil. It is right that things should be on their antient footing, at opening the treaty.—M. Ternant has applied here for 400,000 dollars for the succour of the French colonies. The Secretary of the Treasury has reason to believe that the late loan at Antwerp has paid up all our arrearages to France both of principal & interest, & consequently that there is no part of our debt exigible at this time. However the legislature having authorized the President to proceed in borrowing to pay off the residue, provided it can be done to the *advantage* of the U. S. it is thought the law will be satisfied with *avoiding loss* to the U. S. This has obliged the Secretary of the Treasury to require some conditions which may remove from us that loss which we encountered, from an unfavorable exchange, to pay what was *exigible*, and transfer it to France as to payments not exigible. These shall be fully detailed to you when settled. In the meantime the money will be furnished as far as it can be done. Indeed our wishes are cordial for the reestablishment of peace & commerce in those colonies, and to give such proofs of our good faith both to them & the mother country, as to suppress all that jealousy which might oppose itself to the free exchange of our *mutual productions*, so essential to the prosperity of those colonies and to the preservation of *our Agricultural* interest. This is our true interest & our true object, and we have no rea-

-son to conceal views so justifiable, tho' the expression of them may require that the occasions be proper & the terms chosen with delicacy.—The gazettes will inform you of the proceedings of Congress, the laws passed & proposed, & generally speaking of all public transactions. You will perceive that the Indian war calls for sensible exertions. It would have been a trifle had we only avowed enemies to contend with. The British court have disavowed all aid to the Indians. Whatever may have been their orders in that direction, the Indians are fully & notoriously supplied by their agents with everything necessary to carry on the war.—Time will shew how all this is to end.—Besides the laws, journals & newspapers before mentioned, you will receive herewith the State

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Constitutions, the Census, an almanac, and an answer to Ld. Sheffield on our commerce. A cypher is ready for you, but cannot be sent till we can find a trusty passenger going to Paris.